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Deconstruction and the Question of Palestine: bearing witness to the undeniable.

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To my Parents,
for all their love and support.

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Introduction

Deconstruction and the Question of Palestine: Why?

While deconstruction has been taken up widely in the field of Postcolonial Studies, there is very little work done on the relationship between deconstruction and the question of Palestine. This thesis maintains that deconstruction has both something to offer the discourses surrounding the question of Palestine and that deconstruction needs to be opened up to *the undeniable* if it is to continue to be relevant to contemporary emancipation struggles, specifically here the Palestinian struggle. This is not to say that the Palestinian struggle needs deconstruction, or that deconstruction can provide some magical solution. The aim of this thesis is rather to explore Derrida's own attitudes towards Israel/Palestine and to ask whether deconstruction is hospitable to the needs of Palestinian self-determination. This question arose from my interest in the work of both Jacques Derrida and Edward Said while studying for my M.A. in Critical Theory in the School of English at the University of Kent, England. Said's *Beginnings* (1975) and Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1988) had resonances for me in their critique of totalitarianism, an affirmation of language's non-realist representation, and the movement away from structuralism. The relationship between Said and Derrida has been commented upon by a number of scholars, mostly working in the field of Postcolonial Studies rather than by scholars of deconstruction, although not exclusively[1]. However, the trajectory of the thesis became more and more specific, such that I began to move away from the specifics of Edward Said's thought and onto the question of Palestine more generally as a contemporary example of settler colonialism. The question I kept coming back to was whether deconstruction's critique of presence was implicated in the erasure of Palestinian presence, and how language's performativity related to the on-going and daily struggle of Palestinians.

[1] Rooney (2009), Docker (2007), W.J.T.Mitchell (2007)

As far as I know, there has been no extended study on the relationship between deconstruction and the question of Palestine. Christopher Wise's article 'Deconstruction and the Palestine Question' from 2004 is the most direct attempt I have found to situate the work of Derrida alongside Palestinian concerns. The article takes *Spectres of Marx* (1994) as its target and criticizes Derrida for having a Jewish bias. Wise has also written articles on Derrida and Zionism, implicating Derrida as a covert Zionist, as well as a monograph entitled *Derrida, Africa and Middle East* (2010), which explores the possibility of Derrida's work being taken up in the fields of African and Middle Eastern Studies. He writes in the introduction to this text that Derrida 'tends to subordinate deconstruction to serve a myopic, if not exclusive, Jewish politics and political agenda.' However despite this, 'his writings have a great deal to offer scholars in these fields' (Wise 2010, xi). While Wise's arguments are interesting and thought-provoking, I have tended to distance myself from his work in this thesis. Even if I also ultimately read Derrida's politics as liberal in the case of Israel/Palestine, this thesis attempts to be more hospitable to Derrida and deconstruction than Wise appears to be, as I believe there are significant opportunities and meetings between the concerns of Palestinian emancipation and deconstruction, and vice versa, and cannot go as far as Wise in his critique of Derrida.

More recently than Wise's work, two collections have been published which testify to the interest, importance and fruitfulness of this intersection between deconstruction and the politics of Israel/Palestine. The first is *Living Together: Jacques Derrida's Communities of Violence and Peace* (2013) edited by Elisabeth Weber. The collection is not exclusively on the Middle East, but six of the fourteen articles centre around Israel/Palestine, including work by Joseph Massad, Gil Anidjar, Raef Zreik, Sherene Seikaly and Richard Falk.

The second is *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics* (2014), edited by Gianni Vattimo and Michael Marder, which explores a wide range of angles by which Zionism is understood as an oppressive political regime in need of dismantling. The texts collected here do not specifically relate to Derrida, but rather employ deconstruction more generally in their approach to Zionism. What is highlighted here is deconstruction's relevance to the critique of Zionism and also that deconstruction lives beyond its specific inculcation by, and association with, Derrida: deconstruction haunts the academy almost as a by-word for critique.

Finally, an article by Caroline Rooney exploring the relationship between Edward Said and Jacques Derrida, which proposes that 'the Palestinians are where deconstruction could be in the future' (Rooney 2009, 49) provided much of the impetus to think about a future of deconstruction that could be hospitable to the Palestinians and what kind of inheritance deconstruction could gain from being exposed to the reality of the Palestinian struggle. This thesis seeks to think about what this potential future of deconstruction could look like.

However, in my aim to explore the potential relationality between deconstruction and settler colonialism in the case of Palestine, I hope to escape the reductive categorization of being labeled either deconstructive or postcolonial. However, I would like to begin by introducing my reading of deconstruction and the question of Palestine in the context of earlier readings of deconstruction and the postcolonial, so as lay the foundation to move onto thinking about settler colonialism and Palestine.

Derrida and Postcolonial Studies

Derrida is not a postcolonial scholar. Yet this does not exclude his work from having relevance in the field of Postcolonial Studies. A quick glance at his writings makes clear that many of his themes and concerns - hospitality, cosmopolitanism, identity, phallogocentrism, the political, and inheritance, to name just a few - overlap with those of postcolonial scholars. Yet these overlaps do not secure a firm relationship between Derrida's writing and the postcolonial. This is due, in part, to the 'apparent slipperiness' of Derrida's writing and 'his refusal to stay within a singular and definitive frame' (Grosz 1995, 60). However, securing a firm relationship between Derrida's writing and any discipline is perhaps not the right project, as '[Derrida's] position defies ready-made categories and clear-cut characterizations' (61)[2]. Thus, any desire to assess Derrida's credentials for acceptance into, or expulsion from, Postcolonial Studies would prove futile. However, it is this refusal of readymade categories and stable positions which enables Derrida's writing to provide challenges and provocations for Postcolonial Studies, as it provokes the rethinking of traditional notions of identity, politics, the nation, origins and responsibility, by critiquing every aspiration to totality and mastery.

[2] Grosz (1995) makes an excellent case for the affirmatory critique that deconstruction enables, not only of feminist politics, but of any field which desires a stable and fixed position from which to work.

Jacques Derrida's writing is contentious in the field of Postcolonial Studies; phrases such as 'provocative and highly controversial' (Hiddleston: 2009, 53), 'highly charged', and 'a subject of extensive and heated debate' (Hiddleston: 2010, 1) being used to describe the prevailing atmosphere in which Derrida's work is situated in relation the field. The use of such language to describe debates within the academy may appear a little over-blown; however, what is clear in such debates is that the relationship is fraught and fought over. The common concern of the Left, which Geoffrey Bennington identifies as the 'desire for Derrida to "come clean" about politics' (Bennington 2001, 193) is easily found within Postcolonial Studies. Yet, there are various approaches, and concerns, which do not allow for a simple 'for' or 'against' attitude towards Derrida's writing in this context. These will be explored below. Yet as a starting point, the division between those postcolonial scholars who choose to 'engage' with Derrida's work, and those who do not (think they do) or 'engage' only in order to dismiss it, will focus this discussion. The question pivots around whether Derrida's work bears any 'political' weight for the situations and contexts of postcolonialism, following the assumption that his work is too focused on the textual and discursive nature of reality, rather than a material one. The heated nature of this debate comes from certain Marxist orientated critics, such as Aijaz Ahmed, Benita Parry and Terry Eagleton[3]. Ahmed claims that post-structuralism (including Derrida) dismisses the ideas and reality of the nation, historical agency, and materiality, leaving only 'theoretical posturing.' He concludes that such thought is both '*repressive* and *bourgeois*.' (Ahmed 1992, 35-36). A problem with such a critique is the use of such large brush strokes in the condemnation of all 'post-structuralist' thought, resulting in a lack of evidence or specificity for such a claim. The simple questions of who, where, and when, of his supposedly materialist critique are lacking in Ahmed's attack on the spurious category of 'post-structuralism'. Furthermore, pointed attacks such as Eagleton's claim that deconstruction is an 'ersatz form of textual politics' (Sprinker 2008, 84), fall prey to a pre-formed argument ready to be rehearsed. In Eagleton's case it is of the propriety and necessary primacy of Marxism's radical economic critique, as it is for Parry, who dismisses Derrida on the grounds that he '[refuses] a Marxist eschatology' (Parry 2004, 74). While there may be more to explore in regard to Derrida's relationship to Marxism, Eagleton, Parry and Ahmed all place Marxism in the

[3] Ahmed (1992); Parry (2004); Eagleton (1994). Although Eagleton is also not a postcolonial scholar, his Marxist critique of Derrida informs and is deployed by postcolonial scholars against Derrida.

place of a transcendental signified and repeat 'the demand for the concept of "politics"[4] to be placed in the very transcendental position it is self-righteously supposed to reduce and explain, but to which it remains blind' (Bennington 2001, 195). Derrida's refusal to repeat this gesture results in his work being dismissed.

As mentioned above with regard to Ahmed, one of the problems with approaching Derrida's work in the context of Postcolonial Studies is that many commentators conflate deconstruction with post-structuralism. Yet the latter is not a term that Derrida identifies with, and therefore, while some criticisms of deconstruction and of post-structuralist thought may have similar resonances, they cannot be taken as synonyms. Interestingly, the locus of much recent work on Derrida's relationship to Postcolonial Studies is found within larger projects which situate the relationship of post-structuralist thought to postcolonial theory. Three important books to come out in recent years are Philip Leonard's *Nationality between Poststructuralism and Postcolonial theory: A New Cosmopolitanism* (2005), Pal Ahluwalia's *Out of Africa: Poststructuralism's Colonial Roots* (2010), and Jane Hiddleston's *Poststructuralism and Postcoloniality: The Anxiety of Theory* (2011). All three books include chapters on Derrida's work in connection to postcolonial discourse in the context of other writers who share similar concerns[5]. While none of these studies conflates Derrida's work with post-structuralism *per se*, it is important to remember that there is a certain amount of appropriation within the academy, which works to 'fit' Derrida's writing into accepted and recognisable discourses. The chapters within these books on post-structuralism can be seen, in part, to serve this desire.

Deconstruction is the other trope used to identify the Derridean connection, seen in Robert Young's essay 'Deconstruction and the Postcolonial' (2000), and repeated, or supplemented[6], in Michael Syrotinski's *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory* (2007). Syrotinski's choice of this term is due to his belief that the lack of distinction in some fields between Derrida's work and post-structuralism 'restrict[s] accounts of the intellectual history of deconstruction to those elements of structuralism...which deconstruction is said to be the natural successor or heir to'

[4] Here Marxist politics.

[5] These other writers include, Bhabha, Spivak, Kristeva and Deleuze in Leonard; Camus, Sartre, Fanon, Cixous, Althusser, Bourdieu, Foucault and Lyotard in Ahulwalia; and Cixous, Lyotard, Barthes, Kristeva and Spivak in Hiddleston. Derrida is the only writer to cross all three studies, while Lyotard, Cixous, Kristeva and Spivak are all discussed in two places each.

[6] Ben Grant (2010), review of *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory* in *Oxford Literary Review,* Vol.22. No.2. 291-293.

(Syrotinski 2007, 3). In lieu of its often chosen counterpart, deconstruction is used to identify a closer heritage with, and inheritance from, Derrida's writing, and its resistance to strict linear causality. Yet, while Syrotinski is clear in stating that 'given the necessary internal self-division of all conceptual fields (the deconstructive 'law' of supplementarity), the 'postcolonial' and deconstruction are always already inhabited by or exposed to, one another' (4), there seems to be a discrepancy between his treatment of the 'postcolonial', which he puts within quotes, and deconstruction, which is free from quotes. Deconstruction appears to take on a rather solid form, whose intellectual history needs to be defended, assuming any 'history' of deconstruction is possible to write. The danger here lies in setting up the term 'deconstruction' as a theory, or conceptual framework, which becomes synonymous with Derrida's writing.

Of the term 'deconstruction' Derrida writes, '[it is] a term I never liked and one whose fortune has disagreeably surprised me.' (Derrida 1983, 44). This dissatisfaction is due in part to the fact that the term was never used by Derrida in the way that it has been 'forced' upon him and his work. He states: 'this word which I had written only once or twice (I don't even remember where exactly) all of a sudden jumped out of the text and was seized by others who have since determined its fate in the manner you well know' (Derrida 1988, 86). Derrida's resistance to this word follows from its deterministic aspiration to reduce his work to a homogenous body of ideas. Instead, Derrida says deconstruction was one term amongst others, in a chain of signifiers, which was never meant to dictate a theory. To use 'deconstruction' as a substitute term for Derrida's writing is at odds with the movement within his work which resists totalization. However, Derrida does use the term, as he says, 'for the sake of rapid convenience' (Derrida 1983, 44).

This is more than likely the strategy of its use in Syrotinsk's work, and his book offers much useful articulation for the questions that Derrida's writing poses to postcolonial theory, and vice versa. But I bring it up here to highlight the difficulty of using any proper name to note and describe Derrida's work. In this thesis I follow suit by using the term deconstruction for the sake of rapid convenience, in assuming that there is, at least, the recognition in the term of a difference between the vague sprawling mass of what could be termed post-structuralist thought and deconstruction, all the while keeping in mind the danger posed by assuming the givenness of what deconstruction 'is'.

What is perhaps at stake here is the relationship between deconstruction and reading. That is to say, the impossibility of a catch all phrase, or theory, for the movement of Derrida's writing requires readers of Derrida to resist the homogenising gesture of categorisation, and instead, to read closely and patiently. This type of engagement with Derrida's writing on the postcolonial seems to be missing, in large part, from the field. There is no deterministic genealogical relationship between Derrida's writing and the postcolonial, but a relationship that needs exploration via close reading, which I attempt to do in Chapter 1.

However, I would like to mention two cautionary hiatuses. Firstly, in seeking to look at Derrida in the field of postcolonial theory one runs the risk of simply wanting to 'apply' Derrida's work to postcolonial questions. The second is the risk of privileging the place of European theorists in the struggle for anti-colonial liberation. These two concerns emerge from the respective intellectual trajectories of 'deconstruction' and 'postcolonial theory', and it is in the work of Caroline Rooney that a bridge between such fields can be found. In the introduction to *African Literature, Animism and Politics* (2000) Rooney writes of the common (mis)conception that Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak inaugurated the theoretical discipline of postcolonial theory, and argues that this desire for an origin of the discourse can obscure both non-European orientated discourses of liberation and those critiques which pre-date such writers:

> What is implied in such a popular framing of an instituting moment is that a properly theoretical, philosophically grounded, study of colonialism, neo-colonialism and post-colonialism can only get going once intellectuals from the East apply themselves to Western intellectuals (Foucault, Lacan and Derrida[7]), where this is then to provide models for or be extended to [a critique] of colonialism (Rooney 2000, 28).

What is at stake here is both an acknowledgment of active anti-colonial resistance in non-Western centres of power, and the recognition of non-European forms of philosophical engagement with colonial critique. While it is clear that the writing of one philosopher does not necessarily obscure other anti-colonial thinkers, it is important to acknowledge the political implications that such a choice can invoke. As Said reminds us, representation is always at the expense of the exclusion of something else (Said 2003, 21). However, instead of bemoaning the use of European theorists

[7] While Foucault and Lacan are both 'French' and can be seen more easily as Western theorists, it is the proposal of Chapter 1 that Derrida's identity is rather more problematic.

within the field of Postcolonial Studies, as do those such as Ahmed, Dirlik and Tiffin, Rooney engages with a range of thinkers, philosophers and theorists from many parts of the world, some of whom are European. She also mentions that her own work could be accused of focusing too much on Western intellectual traditions, but that the task of engaging with such writers

> is not only one of tracking what they serve to distort or evade but one of trying to reconceptualise, if possible, the limits of this thought in the hope of opening it up to other thought. Then, Western thought is not just Western thought, in more ways than one...Western thought is hardly just *Western* (Rooney 2000, 29).

Here, Rooney displays willingness to refuse the binary distinctions of European/non-European, postcolonial/post-structuralist, and to open up 'European thought' to its other, while embracing an attitude of 'both/and', rather than either/or. It is my contention that the approach of both/and is hugely significant when it comes to opening Derrida's work up to Postcolonial Studies, and more specifically the Question of Palestine.

It is also clear that Derrida's work is 'hardly just Western'. It is the contention aroused by Derrida's resistance to totalising gestures (Western or European thought), homogenising theories (post-structuralism) and stable political positions (Marxism), which makes his work all the more crucial for projects of emancipation and liberation, as these resistances work to avoid the logic of dialectical violence which has added to the need for emancipation in the first place.

'Applying' Deconstruction

As mentioned above, a frequent desire of those sympathetic to Derrida's work within postcolonial theory can be to *apply* Derrida to their field. Yet application suggests an ability to consume, digest and re-work Derrida's writing for its 'use' in another context. One such example of this is seen in the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the foremost scholar associated with both Postcolonial Studies and deconstruction. Spivak's short essay at the end of *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999) entitled 'The Setting to Work of Deconstruction' briefly explores the use of the word deconstruction in Derrida's earlier work, and proposes a 'turn' in his project identified in 'The Ends of

Man' from 1982. Spivak claims that Derrida's work moves from 'guarding the question...the question of *différance* - to a "call to the wholly other"' (Spivak 1999, 425); in other words, a move from the philosophical to the ethical and thus to questions of the political. Spivak notes that the double movement she identifies in 'The Ends of Man', that of differing and deferring, has been 'figured in [Derrida's] work from the start' (Spivak 1999, 425), but is now said to also be affirmative. What Spivak suggests here, as indicated by her title, is that there is a self-acknowledged turn in Derrida's work that begins to release the potential within deconstruction into the wider spheres of ethics and politics: where deconstruction is seen to be 'set to work'.

But is 'setting to work' a reductive gesture towards deconstruction, and can it be seen as different from 'applying' deconstruction? Stephen Morton argues in his commentary on Spivak that her work 'expands Derrida's deconstructive thinking beyond the framework of western philosophy and sets it to work in diverse fields ranging from 'Third World' women's political movements to postcolonial literary studies and development studies' (Morton 2003, 25). Countering this, Philip Leonard notes that this approach would suggest that 'an appropriative translation of Derrida's ideas is needed so that they can speak to theorists whose concerns lie with questions of colonialism, postcoloniality, and the emerging operations of global capital' (Leonard 2005, 114). The contention lies in the idea that Derrida's writing is not already 'at work', and needs chivvying into action. Or even that to be 'useful', deconstruction needs to be supplemented. Again, this is implied by Morton when he writes that 'what crucially distinguishes Spivak's employment of affirmative deconstruction from the work of Derrida is the way that Spivak also interrupts the strict theoretical and philosophical terms of Derrida's argument with 'political' examples from the histories of subaltern agency and resistance in the 'Third World'' (Morton 2003, 44).

While it may be correct to identify Spivak as someone who deploys the 'strategies' of deconstruction in a wider field than many other readers of Derrida's work, the belief that deconstruction is just a passive theory to be applied is based upon a metaphysical assumption of a strict differentiation between the active and the passive, the political and the non-political. This recurrent attitude towards Derrida is addressed by Geoffrey Bennington in a paper given at a conference called "Applied Derrida", in which he says that the demand for application takes a familiar argument by '[presupposing] something like theory and something like practice or praxis.' He goes on to maintain...

But as the distinction between metaphysics and non-metaphysics just is metaphysics, the demand for application typically ends up being the least applicable demand for all...the pretext for smuggling in what Derrida calls transcendental contraband of all sorts' (Bennington 2000, 80).

The desire for application is the desire for method, theory and 'the practical', in place of too much theorising, too much thinking, and too little 'action'. But it is the assumptions hidden in the distinctions of theory and practice, passivity and action, metaphysics and non-metaphysics, that cannot go unchecked in Derrida's writing, and that his work precisely seeks to deconstruct. The refusal of such binary distinctions is what enables Derrida's writing to systematically resist appropriation at every juncture, so that 'Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one' (Derrida 2008, 4), and thus cannot be applied.

Therefore, the 'setting to work' of deconstruction can be seen as a category error as it supposes that deconstruction has defined boundaries and is somewhere 'outside' of situations and contexts to which it needs to be 'applied'. Sarah Wood suggests that deconstruction can be more helpfully thought of as 'that which happens', suggesting that to put deconstruction to work might have the same misunderstanding as the thought that one could put love to work, or an earthquake, or grieving[8]. Rather, these are things which happen, the effects of which one feels. Deconstruction can be seen to be affective, something to be received, instead of a strategy to take hold of. This can be seen when Derrida writes in *Memoires for Paul De Man* that

deconstruction is not an operation that supervenes afterwards, from the outside, one fine day. It is always already at work in the work. Since the destructive force of deconstruction is always already contained in the architecture of the work, all one would finally have to do to be able to deconstruct, given this always already, is to do memory work (Derrida 1989, 73).

If we are to follow this conception of deconstruction, the need to put it to work is redundant, as deconstruction is always already at work within experience, and needs to be recognised as such, rather than being identified as a theory and then applied to something outside of itself. Derrida's suggestion that a focus on 'memory work' might be a better place to begin when thinking about how deconstruction relates to certain political and ethical situations may help to avoid both the 'application' approach from

[8] In conversation.

both sides of the concern, thus sidestepping application *of* Derrida *to* colonial/postcolonial situations. Perhaps Spivak's generosity in relation to deconstruction is indeed a type of memory work; however, she still holds herself at a certain distance from deconstruction, admitting in an interview that 'I am not as worshipful as the big deconstructivists, I was outside. I haven't fully followed them...I can't make all the moves that Derrida made. I can go up to a point, but after that I can't make those moves' (Moor 2011, 64). In short, this hesitation would be in relation to Marxism: 'I have always had trouble with Derrida on Marx' (Spivak 1995, 64) writes Spivak at the opening of 'Ghostwriting'. Seeing herself as 'on the outside' would be by virtue of her continued association with Marx, which in turn, leaves her on the outside of the Marxist community also[9]. This refusal of complete commitment to a community or school of thought (if deconstruction can be understood to mean this) can be read as in fact a closer following of Derrida than many others[10]. The difficult nature of the relationship between Spivak's writing and deconstruction is probelmatised by many critics such as Leonard, Syrotinski, Hiddleston and Young, who all suggest a contradiction in her thinking and affiliation with Derrida's thought. For example, Leonard writes that 'as much as Spivak at times associates her thinking with Derrida's, at other times she argues that Marxism offers greater insight into global power than the critical strategies provided by deconstruction' (Leonard 2005, 125). Why this is a problem is interesting to think about. Do some critics associated with Derrida feel the need to protect and defend deconstruction from other avenues of thought and critique, which in turn might be seen as a way of instituting deconstruction as a metaphysics, or meta-discourse by which everything else need pass? The other feeling here is of frustration that Spivak's work doesn't fit into a 'school of thought' neatly, that critique of Derrida amounts to blasphemy. Yet this moving between 'disciplines' that Spivak practises is described by Young as the heterogeneous nature of her work, which he says does not conform to a system (of either Marxism or deconstruction), but is rather like encountering 'a series of events' (Young 1990, 199). This description has resonances with descriptions of Derrida's

[9] See Terry Eagleton's scathing review of *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 'In the Gaudy Supermarket' LRB, 1999

[10] Spivak describes herself as 'touched by deconstruction', in a short piece of the same name, which I find to be an apt description, in light of Derrida's own comments on touching. However, there is also a sense in this piece that, as much as she refused full association with deconstruction, there was in fact a longing to be accepted as 'one of the gang'. See Spivak, ' Touched by Deconstruction' in *Grey Room,* Summer 20, pp. 95-104, 2005

writings as individual events to be experienced rather than 'books' or systematic philosophy, and with Derrida's own resistance to pigeon holing.

Finally, Spivak speaks of herself as 'une forme tachée [a stain] in the field of deconstruction', (Spivak 2005). This phrase acknowledges her comfort in being an outsider, a stain on what she sees as 'deconstruction-proper'. However, she also recalls Derrida's proposal of 'task' as an alternative meaning of the word *tachée* in French, rendering the phrase 'a task in the field of deconstruction' (Spivak 2005). The alternative meaning hints at an acknowledgement that Spivak's work and association with Postcolonial Studies sends waves 'back' to 'deconstruction', leaving marks and tasks left to be thought in the field of deconstruction. Yet, the notion of 'deconstruction-proper' or a 'field of deconstruction' would be problematic for many of those who may be labelled Derrida's disciples. As mentioned above, deconstruction cannot be understood as a theory, method or 'school of thought'. However, Derrida's remarks above allow us to open up deconstructive thought to otherness, i.e. the postcolonial, which may in turn send back signals or waves to what one might think of as 'deconstruction-proper'. Spivak's relation to deconstruction might then emphasise Derrida's claim that 'there is no *one* deconstruction' (Derrida, 2002, 103), i.e. there is no 'deconstruction-proper', there is no homogenous deconstruction.

The idea that deconstruction needs to be 'set-to-work' in order to redeem it from a-political theoretical posturing rests upon the metaphysical distinction between theory and practice. This gesture assumes to know what politics is and that it is a stable phenomenon. As the foundation of an argument decrying Derrida's a-political nature, these dialectical oppositions are themselves complicit with the very notions of the transcendental that they wish to oppose. Derrida's writing does not need to be supplemented in order to be political; rather it is always-already political if seen through a different lens: a lens which is willing to move beyond Western Metaphysics and the logic of dialectics. Spivak's relationship to deconstruction, while not being unproblematic, might rather be seen to demonstrate a resistance to such a logic of dialectics, as her work is too heterogeneous to be labelled in any simple way. Her unwillingness to make some of the moves the 'big deconstructivists' have, superficially rendering her 'out-side' of 'deconstruction-proper,' may in fact recall Derrida's own approach to belonging, and his hostility to 'being one of the family' (Derrida 2001, 28).

Thesis outline

In a similar way, this thesis seeks to avoid the pitfalls of being categorised and desires to open itself up to a wide range of thought while trying to explore the relationship that deconstruction may/could have to the question of Palestine. Rather than a 'setting to work', I want to explore what happens when deconstruction is opened up to a context of settler colonialism and the question of Palestine. More specifically I want to ask if deconstruction's commitment to the law of performativity can be hospitable to the undeniable existence and struggle of the Palestinians? And if not, is there a way by which exposure to this undeniable struggle can enable deconstruction to mutate so that it can become hospitable? The following section outlines each chapter in my attempt to explore these questions.

Chapter 1 explores how Derrida's work deconstructs notions of identity, origins and responsibility in relation to Derrida's own identity as an 'Algerian'. Derrida's writing suggests that identity, origins, and responsibility need to be put under erasure in order move beyond the curtailing desire to name and define. This then will be the first proposal of a desire to move beyond identity politics in this thesis, but the discussion will not end here, and touches on the question of how notions of identity, origins and responsibility can be rethought in light of the indeterminacy Derrida proposes.

Chapter 2 begins by discussing the relationship between Postcolonial Studies and Palestine and the debates around whether Palestine fits into this discourse, before asking what sort of solidarity Derrida showed to the Palestinians. I move on to look at some of Derrida's comments on Palestine which helps highlight the need to be more specific in the language used over the settler colonial nature of the Palestinian struggle. I argue that one of the on-going problems for the Palestinians is the lack of recognition of their struggle as colonial, and that Derrida's comments leave much to be desired in their solidarity with the Palestinians' struggle, asking whether this amounts to a betrayal.

Chapter 3 develops the exploration of whether Derrida's attitude towards the Palestinians can be said to be a betrayal by moving on from him comments to more particular instances of how deconstruction might be seen as problematic for an ethics of solidarity. I explore Derrida's essay on Jean Genet and suggest that perhaps Derrida was both 'right and wrong, today more than ever' when it came to his attitude towards

the Palestinians. This is explored through Genet and Derrida's divergent attitudes towards writing as betrayal. The second half of this chapter then begins to develop a critique of the pervasiveness of the undecidable in deconstruction and the logic of différance, and offers that the undeniable be taken as a complementary term which seeks to address the nature of reality. Reality is then explored through the work of contemporary feminist theorists, Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Vicky Kirby and Caroline Rooney to think through how the undeniable is neither a claim to the transcendental or a naïve desire for a fixed ground. What is at stake here is the possibility to claim the undeniable while not rejecting the undecidable of deconstruction.

Chapter 4 moves on to further explore the notion of the undeniable in terms of Palestinian presence through the discussion of two taxi journeys. One is described in Mourid Barghouti's *I was Born There I was Born Here,* in which the travelling companions reach an impasse which must be overcome. And the second is depicted in Elia Suleiman's film *The Time That Remains,* in which a Palestinian is picked up from an airport and driven through the West Bank, again reaching a type of impasse, this time more existential. What both of these situations explore is the responsibility to bear witness to the undeniable and its possibility.

Chapter 5 moves away from the undeniable to explore whether deconstruction can be seen as a critique of Zionism. Through a reading of Derrida's essay 'Edmund Jabès and the Question of the Book' I argue that, as was explored in Chapter 1, the loss of locatable origins that deconstruction opens on to, is a useful tool and an implicit critique of political-Zionism. I highlight this by placing the thought of deconstruction alongside two speeches, one from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and another from the founder of Christians United for Israel, John Hagee, in order to show the political trajectory of the notion of origins Derrida is critiquing, worked out through the State of Israel and political Zionism. The second half of this chapter turns to the thought of Levinas and explores Derrida's distinction from Levinas on the issue of ontological indeterminacy and argues that this is a key strategy for the context of the Question of Palestine as it enables an avoiding of privileging one race or people over another.

Chapter 6 is a reading of David Grossman's novel *The Smile of the Lamb* which aims to deconstruct the liberal Zionism there within, and highlight the importance of

the undeniable reality of the Palestinian people as a necessary complement to the ontological indeterminacy explored in Chapter 5 regarding Zionism.

Chapter 7 explores the Derridean notion of hospitality and asks whether it is possible to be hospitable to identity politics. Another way of asking this is whether deconstruction can be hospitable to the undeniable. My argument is that when identity and the undeniable are seen as that which becomes rather than fixed transcendental positions, it is possible, and necessary, to think of these concepts within/alongside deconstruction. I posit that this possible when the undeniable is seen as complementary to the undecidable.

Chapter One

Deconstruction and Algeria: aporias of origins, identity and responsibility.

This chapter explores how Derrida's work deconstructs notions of identity, origins and responsibility in relation to Derrida's own identity as an 'Algerian' (here in scare quotes until what is at stake in calling Derrida an Algerian has been discussed.) Rather than rendering Derrida's writing non-political, a-political or a form of political quietism, the disassociation of presence in general, proffered in Derrida's writing, and the indeterminacy this brings to identity politics is both productive and necessary if we are to move beyond the dialectical violence inherent in the dualisms of 'me' and 'you', 'us' and 'them', 'right' and 'wrong'. The trajectory of this chapter is to trace the proposal that identity, origins, and responsibility are concepts which need to be put under erasure in order to move beyond the curtailing desire to name and define.

The subversive dislocation of identity in general

Derrida's resistance to 'being one of the family' expresses his desire to escape the trapping of identitarian politics. It is this commitment to non-belonging that gets him into trouble with those seeking a political commitment or position from him. As well as not being Marxist 'enough', Derrida is often thought to be too Eurocentric for his work to make any significant contribution to the field of Postcolonial Studies. Bart Moore-Gilbert writes that Derrida is taken to be 'the 'chief bogeyman' in the belief that postcolonial theory is overly complicit with European philosophy and theory' (Moore-Gilbert 1997, 193). That Derrida is too European advances the belief that, at best, deconstruction reduces colonial oppression to the effects of textual play, and at worst,

is seen to be a tool of European neocolonialist hegemony[11]. This attitude, in turn, leads to the charge that Derrida disavows his Algerian heritage in favour of the culture of the coloniser. A striking case in point is Mustapha Marrouchi, who accuses Derrida of excluding, covering up, and continuing 'to deny in the most fashionable of manners', his Algerian heritage (Marrouchi 1997, 3-5)[12]. This type of attack aims to both chastise Derrida for 'not having done enough' for Algerian solidarity, and to delegitimise any potential contribution Derrida's work may be able to make in the spheres of Postcolonial Studies. But for both of these attitudes to have any legitimacy themselves, very strict notions of identity politics must be in play. Yet, from the beginning of Derrida's career stable identity categories have not been given rest from questioning.

Derrida's identity is much contended. I give here a short non-definitive list of identities given to him: European, French, Jewish, North African, Magrebian, Algerian, French-Algerian, Algerian-French, Franco-Maghrebian, Euro-African, Jewgreek, greekjew, a little black and very Arab Jew, and Egyptian. Some seek to appropriate Derrida, others to distance him from their identity. In order to think through the contours of Derrida's identity, it is to the proposal offered by Geoffrey Bennington that I will now turn, which explores the notion of Derrida as an Egyptian.

The essay in which this suggestion comes is entitled 'Mosaic Fragment: if Derrida were an Egyptian...' (Bennington 1992). There are clear echoes in both parts of the title of Freud's essay 'If Moses were an Egyptian' (Freud 2010). This connection offers immediate associations that the concept of identity is unlikely to remain intact, and the first part of the title, 'Mosaic Fragment' suggests that this proposal of identity is but one piece of the larger mosaic of Derrida's identity, and that it is characteristically like Moses' identity, i.e. Mosaic.

The main tenet of Freud's essay is that, because '[e]verything new must have its roots in what was before' (Freud 2010, 35), the founder and origin of the Jewish people could not be purely Jewish. Thus, Freud argues that Moses and the monotheistic religion he founded were Egyptian; the concept of mixed origins, complicit histories, and inter-connected cultures are announced by Freud. But to what intent? Part of this intent is surely to discredit the notion of mastery of self. For Freud, the splitting of the

[11] See Stephen Slemon and Helen Tiffin in their introduction to *After Europe: Critical Theory and post-colonial writing*, (1990) and Benita Parry, 'Problems in current theories of colonial discourse' in *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique, (*2004).

[12] Another example of this opinion is Ahluwalia who writes that Algeria remains 'the repressed, the silent, the forgotten origin of [Derrida's] autobiography' (2011, 75)

self into (at least) the ego, the super ego and the id, offers a new perspective on the traditional understanding of selfhood. Rather than a unified and innate self, independent from others, Freud offers us a radically new perspective, which shatters identity into fragments by acknowledging that the self is always constituted by its relationship to the other.

In Bennington's essay, Freud's text on Moses [along with others from Joyce, Wittgenstein, and Derrida] is scattered throughout the essay, interrupting the flow of the 'main body' of the essay, performatively making up a mosaic of textual fragments: the essay's form mirroring the suggested formation of identity that Bennington is offering. The essay begins after negotiating some of these fragments by exploring two ways of reading Derrida, 'the one as Hegelian in spite of itself, the other as anti-Hegelian' (Bennington 2000, 98). The first reading understands deconstruction to be a continuation of Hegelianism, in the appropriation of that not found within philosophical discourse, which would leave deconstruction as a 'totalizing philosophy blind to its own hegelianism' (99). The second opposing reading understands Derrida's writing to be an attack on the totalisation of Hegelian dialectics which therefore destabilises the Western philosophical tradition. Yet both of these readings continue a Hegelian dialectics. Instead, Bennington wants to suggest an alternative non-dialectical reading 'through the suggestion that Derrida is neither Jew nor Greek but 'Egyptian' in a non-biological sense to be explored' (99). The proposal of Derrida as an Egyptian, removed from a biological or familial, and cultural context, serves to sever traditional associations and causal relationships of identities. Firstly, Bennington critiques essentialism, by doubling Freud's argument about Moses: each reading of Derrida is contaminated by its other(s), for example, 'any attempt to make Derrida essentially a Jewish thinker will always end up finding that he is somehow not Jewish enough, still too Greek (but the problem is that the attempt to find Derrida 'essentially' Jewish is already a Greek gesture: the Jewish reading is a Greek reading)' (104). Hellenistic and Hebraic thought, if such purity of terms could be defined, are supplanted by the 'non-site' of Egypt, as Bennington attempts to go beyond the dialectics of identity, a movement he identifies in Derrida's work itself.

But why Egypt? It can be argued that any justification of such a naming is irresponsible, as any identification without recourse to origins, homeland, or national culture, is an attempt at appropriation. But similarly, why not 'if Derrida were Japanese, or Palestinian?' The connection to Freud serves as the first response;

Bennington is playing with intertextuality. But he also writes that 'Egypt repeatedly returns to haunt Derrida's writing' (97). He traces Egypt throughout Derrida's work as a reference to an 'unnamable necessity', the 'non-site', which eludes the question 'what is..?' (104). One example of this occurrence in Derrida's writing is the Egyptian god of writing, Thoth, who appears in Derrida's *Dissemination.* Bennington summarises Derrida's description of Thoth as the one who

> supplies and supplants, repeats and contests the sun-god, Rê or Amon or Osiris. Thoth is the ungraspable god of death, of calculation, or ruse, of history, of the plurality of languages, of the game, with no fixed character or place, a principle of mobility and (therefore) of subversion in the pantheon of the gods (105).

Derrida is tempted to say that such characteristics of Thoth would come to 'constitute the permanent identity of this god of the pantheon' if it were not for his function 'to work at *the subversive dislocation of identity in general*' (Derrida 2004, 91, *my emphasis*). Thoth engenders a figure who refuses all appropriation and whose identity is unable to be fixed - 'he is the precisely the god of *nonidentity*' (Derrida 2005, 96, *my emphasis*). Thoth's embodiment of unidentifiability adds to Bennington's proposal of Egypt as that which eludes naming, which could be added to a list of other 'non-sites' or 'non-concepts' in deconstruction, such as différance, hymen etc., which are deployed in Derrida's writing to name the unnamable.

In a further description of Thoth, Derrida writes,

> the figure of Thoth is opposed to its other (father, sun, life, speech, origin or orient, etc.), but as that which at once supplements and supplants it. Thoth extends or opposes by repeating or replacing. By the same token, the figure of Thoth takes shape and takes it shape from the very thing it resists and substitutes for. But it thereby opposes itself, passes into its other, and this messenger-god is truly a god of *the absolute passage between opposites* (96, *my emphasis*).

Again, Thoth is described with traits close to those desired by Bennington for Derrida's own writing. The absolute passage between opposites, which refuses binaries, recalls Derrida's comments about the movement of deconstruction at the beginning of *Of Grammatology*,

> The movements of deconstruction do not destroy from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Inhabiting them *in a certain way*

because one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect. Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally, that is to say without being able to isolate their elements or atoms, the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work. (Derrida 1998, 24).

Derrida's understanding that it is necessary to deconstruct European philosophy from within sheds light on his own intellectual trajectory and helps explain, in part, why he focuses on European texts[13]. He believes the most effective and accurate way to dismantle the power structures of Western Philosophy is to come as close as possible to them. However, this risks falling prey to being interpreted as just another Western discourse. He admits that his work to deconstruct these structures will always already have contaminated his attempts; but how could he not inherit from European philosophy? While deconstruction may be seen in some ways to follow in a tradition of European philosophy, Derrida's argument is that nothing is 'pure' and everything is always supplemented by its other(s). In terms of inheritance, those who claim to dismantle and deconstruct European colonial structures from the 'outside' are, writes Derrida, all the more likely to be subject to their influence, by virtue of fact that there can be no 'outside', no separation, and no uncontaminated space of intervention.

This complicated relationship of being neither fully 'inside' nor 'outside' of Western Metaphysics locates, as far as this is possible, the identity Derrida holds in relation to such philosophy. By evoking Thoth to refer to an identity which refuses the simple classification of Derrida's work as Hegelian or anti-Hegelian, Greek or Jewish, Bennington implicitly suggests that Derrida himself can be seen in the figure of Thoth. 'If Derrida were an Egyptian' is neither a claim to biological birth, nor even a philosophical tradition, but rather to a provocation to read Derrida's work as the dislocation of identity in general, resulting in sites of non-identification, or a non-site of identification.

Through Bennington's reading of Derrida through Freud via Moses, traditional notions of the self are fractured. Identity is dislocated by Derrida's insistence that no entities, ontologies or epistemologies, are ever able to be fully separated from what is other to them. The purity of identities, whether ethnic, religious or national, is an illusion. This refusal of binaries and oppositional identities in favour of a commitment to the movement between positions renders identity non-stable for Derrida. As with

[13] Rooney holds some reservations on this point. For more discussion see Rooney (2009), (2013).

Thoth, Derrida can be seen to work at the subversive dislocation of identity in general. Thus, the argument 'if Derrida were an Egyptian' cannot be used to commandeer Derrida into association with what some would want to call his 'African roots' and presents a counter-argument to those who see too great a complicity with Europe[14].

Algeria: the 'origin' of deconstruction?

In normative and traditional notions of identity politics, if there is anything which gives Derrida the 'right' to speak on questions of postcolonial identity, it is his identity as an Algerian. But how does Derrida's dislocation of identity affect the concept of origins and the desire to (re)connect Derrida and his writing with Algeria? And what is at stake in this refusal of strict identity categories for colonial and postcolonial subjects? The undermining of identity may be thought possible only from a privileged position and as an unhelpful move for those who have been marginalised, erased and persecuted under colonialism.

In order to approach these questions, it is important to look at current attitudes towards Derrida's relation to his Algerian 'origins' first. I would like to move to Robert Young, whose work has been concerned with situating Derrida's writing and identity with postcolonial identity, namely Algeria. After tracing this link, I will then go onto think about how the dislocation of identity in general affects the causality of Derrida's 'homeland' of Algeria and his writing.

Writing in 1990, Young asserts that 'if so-called 'so-called post-structuralism' is the product of any single historical moment, then that moment is probably not May 1968 but rather the Algerian War of Independence' (Young 1990, 1), situating 'so-called' post-structuralism's origin within a particular postcolonial history. In a more candid account of how deconstruction is related specifically to the postcolonial, Young writes in his essay 'Derrida and the Postcolonial' that Derrida can be situated in what he names 'Franco-Maghrebian theory' which is described as 'theoretical interventions [which] have been actively concerned with the task of undoing the ideological heritage of French colonialism and with rethinking the premises, assumptions and protocols of European imperial culture' (Young 2000, 188). This essay sets out to stake a claim for

[14] However, it also introduces questions of a European discourse recasting Africa as a non-site in a continuation of a colonialist disregard for the reality of Africa. See Rooney (2000), for a detailed consideration of this.

Derrida in the field of Postcolonial Studies and to position Derrida as an anti-colonial thinker from the beginning. Young asserts rather brashly that he 'knew all along' what Derrida was doing in relation to colonial power structures, and that his work has sought to translate what has been taken up elsewhere into the context of colonial and postcolonial history (Young 2000, 189)[15]. For Young, Derrida's project is one which seeks to deconstruct the essentially oppressive logic of Western metaphysics, which can be seen as a challenge to the powerful structures and apparatus of colonial oppression. Derrida is said to have acknowledged to Young, after receiving his book *White Mythologies,* that he 'has indeed detected a thread that ran through [his own] writing' (188). This thread, for Young, began on the very first page of *Of Grammatology* where 'logocentrism - the metaphysic of phonetic writing' is described as 'nothing but the most original and powerful ethnocentrism in the process of imposing itself upon the world' (Young 2000, 189). This aspect at work in deconstruction is seen to be an implicit confrontation of colonial domination and corresponds with Bennington's description of Thoth as a 'subaltern and supplementary god of writing' (Bennington 2001, 105). This naming of the non-identifiable resonates with the rebuttal of the argument that Derrida's work is Eurocentric, therefore being another tool of oppression wrapped up in convoluted language. Young responds to this genre of opinion by saying such critics 'never apparently [imagine] that 'the Other' could now be writing the book him or herself' and goes onto quote Spivak on the same subject: 'When Benita Parry takes us [Spivak, Bhabha, JanMohammed] to task for not being able to listen to the natives, or to let the natives speak, she forgets that the three of us are "native" too...' (Young 2001, 191). While Derrida can't really claim to be subaltern, it is important not to forget that Derrida did go to France from the margins of metropolitan life, from the other shore of Algeria. His identity cannot be said, in any simple fashion,

[15] Referencing a lecture given by Derrida at Oxford in the 1970s, Young highlights Derrida's refusal to adhere to the simple constructions of dialectic identities, as Bennington has done above, but with a claim to the presence of an underlying Postcolonial project inherent in Derrida's work. Young recalls the challenge posed at Derrida during a question and answer session, which claimed that Derrida's writing used the terms 'Western metaphysics' in an unjustified and unexplicated way, thus homogenising and essentialising the West within the process of deconstructing that very gesture. Derrida, we are told, is said to have responded by affirming that 'there was nothing 'which would be considered the essence of the West in Western philosophy'... [he] didn't believe in the continuity of the philosophy of the West, that the unity of 'Western philosophy' was an illusion' (Young 2000, 188) This recalls Rooney's remark at the beginning of this essay. Yet, Rooney still goes so far as to call Derrida Eurocentric, given the extent of his focus on European thinkers and writers, as opposed to say North African intellectuals and writers. On a different note, Rooney also reads this comment by Young as a potential colonising of origins. See (Rooney 2000, 166-169).

to be only European and/or French, and thus neither can his work. In a much more direct fashion, Young asserts that poststructuralism was

> developed in large part out of the experience of colonialism. The structure to which it is post is the colonial apparatus, the imperial machine. Its deconstruction of the idea of totality was borne out of the experience of, and forms of resistance to, the totalizing regimes of the late colonial state particularly French Algeria' (Young, 2000, 192).

While the phrase 'in large part' allows room for manoeuvre, Young is more or less locating the origin of deconstruction in the experience of colonial Algeria.

This argument has been taken up by Pal Ahluwalia in his book *Out of Africa: post-structuralism's colonial roots*, where he claims 'in order to understand the project of French post-structuralism, it is imperative both to contextualise the African colonial experience and to highlight the Algerian locatedness, identity and heritage of its leading proponents' (Ahluwalia 2010, 3). He goes on to quote Young in a move which leads him to look directly at the impact of Derrida's childhood experience and Algerian roots upon his writing. Ahluwalia concludes that the deconstruction's origin is the postcolonial and that 'post-structuralism...ultimately must be seen through the lens of the postcolonial' (Ahluwalia 2010, 109). However, while Ahluwalia is right to suggest that Derrida's 'childhood experience' had an impact on his work, I agree with Syrotinski when he writes that Alhwalia's reading 'for all its neat elegance, [is] a strangely deterministic reading' (Syrotisnki 2007, 13); one which leads us back to Young, and some of the criticism employed against his reading of Derrida and the postcolonial.

While Young's reading offers a helpful insight into the connections and relations between Derrida and the postcolonial, his argument flows out of a historical determinism that Derrida's writing seeks to discredit, and paradoxically, that Young also seemingly wants to argue against. Jane Hiddleston paraphrases 'the proofs' which Young's work offer as evidence that deconstruction is knowingly complicit with anti-colonial liberation:

> Young draws a series of parallels between Derrida's concepts and tropes on the one hand and certain empirical manifestations of colonial ideology on the other: the deconstruction of the notion of the centre is a response to France's administrative centralisation; the concept of writing 'sous rature' echoes Bugeaud's attempts to subjugate the Algerian interior by means of a literal 'silencing'; and the idea of

'difference within' helps minority groups to assert the same rights as others despite their differences (Hiddleston 2010, 22-23).

Syrotinski pursues this critique further, writing

> Young appears to elide the very manoeuvre of Derrida's work that he is at the same time celebrating...in proposing empirical or experimental grounds where we could locate the 'origins' of deconstruction, [Young] is repeating the rhetorical manoeuvre that thinkers such as Claude Lévi Strauss and Michel Foucault perform, as Derrida pointed out in his early essays: namely, the reduction of the logically anterior 'archi-violence' of writing, in the strong theoretical sense of the term, to historically or empirically determinate local manifestations of violence (Syrotinski 2007, 13-14).

Syrotinski is not denying the reality or conditions of oppression, but trying, rather, to argue that the origins of deconstruction cannot be reduced to such conditions. Instead of trying to tie Derrida's work to historical instances of colonial oppression, either experienced or acknowledged, Syrotinski goes on to emphasise how Derrida's work cannot be centred on his own experience or psycho-biography. In a phrase I find particularly useful, Syrotinski proposes that we need to 'go further "upstream" in the decision chain' when thinking about the origins of deconstruction. He writes,

> [i]f we are to take the operation of this 'archi-violence' seriously (or indeed any of Derrida's quasi-concepts that compromise the possibility of thinking about origin at all), the status of Derrida's 'own' experience as a victim of French colonialism cannot be somehow exempt from, or external to, the theoretical strictures he articulates (14).

Mapping deconstruction onto questions of the postcolonial and happily concluding that *this* was what Derrida had been doing all along is too reductive. Jane Hiddleston agrees with Syrotinski writing that 'Derrida's impact on postcolonial studies certainly does not lie in the ability to 'theorise' the mechanics of any specified colonial situation' (Hiddelston 2010, 22). Neither does it lie, I would add, in locating the 'origins' of deconstruction in 'the postcolonial', that is to say, Algeria.

Yet between Young and Ahluwalia's location of Algeria as the origin of deconstruction, there is a distinction to be made. Alhuwalia's insistence on a colonial legacy for deconstruction is not only one of affiliation, but of strict filiation, tying it to a particular historical moment in a genealogy of thought so that it can be incorporated into a tidy narrative. Instead of postcolonial theory being indebted to post-

structuralism, Alhuwalia is claiming that post-structuralist thought arises due to, and only because of, the colonial realities of French Algeria. Although Alhuwalia seems to acknowledge the importance of the conceptual work Derrida has offered us on the notion of origin, he is still insistent on claiming a one-way causal influence of Algeria and Derrida's childhood on his writing. Young's work, on the other hand, seems to hold more resonance with Derrida's thought, which allows for affiliation and crossover. And while there might be a certain 'uncharacteristic historicism' (22) in Young's argument, his work is still instructive for thinking through some of resonances Derrida's work has (always) had with a critique of colonialism, even if we don't go so far as to claim Algeria as the origin, or moment, of deconstruction's emergence. Young's identification of the postcolonial as a thread in Derrida's writing, [like Bennington's fragment], is significant as it signifies itself as a part of a larger multiplicity, which does not allow for the reduction of Derrida's work to a single idea, application, or telos.

Reading Algeria as the origin of deconstruction is to follow a deterministic and causally linear trajectory that Derrida's work deconstructs. If we are to follow the movement of deconstruction which dislocates identity, then origins must suffer the same fate. As with identity, no origin is pure, and 'there is no longer a simple origin' (Derrida 1998, 38). Bennington contends that 'Derrida's 'originary' insight, if there were such a thing, would be something like that there is no origin...that there is complexity at the origin' (Bennington 2010, 21), making any rendering of Algeria as the origin of deconstruction hugely reductive.

But this is not to say that it is unimportant that Derrida was born in Algeria. The materiality of his experience there, while not causally deterministic in the readings seen above, obviously remains and plays a part in Derrida's life and writing.

What might be useful then is to put Young's assertion of Derrida's connection to Algeria under-erasure. At first glance this could be seen to acquiesce to those claiming a disavowal of Derrida's Algerian identity. Yet the movement of *sous rature* is not an erasure, but a reframing of a conception. This move would be to highlight the importance of acknowledging Derrida's Algerian connection, but would not foreground it, or treat it as an original light by which to interpret Derrida's work. This latter formulation would reduce deconstruction to a specific area of concern, something that Derrida's writing, and indeed writing in general, overflows. Putting Derrida's Algerian identity under erasure will lead us back to the dislocation of identity in general, or we might say, of putting all identity under erasure. I will now go on to look briefly at the

movement of *sous rature* so as to highlight what this strategy brings to this a discussion.

Identity under-erasure

In her preface to *Of Grammatology*, Spivak notes that 'Derrida never discusses '*sous rature*' at great length' (Spivak 1998, 1xxx). This is perhaps because Derrida wishes for this gesture to remain a movement rather than a concept or strategy. However, Derrida does discuss the idea briefly in relation to Heidegger, writing

> he lets the word "being" be read only if it is crossed out (*kreuzweise Durchstreichung*). That mark of deletion is not, however, a "merely negative symbol"...That deletion is the final writing of an epoch. Under its strokes the presence of a transcendental signified is effaced while still remaining legible. It is effaced while still remaining legible, is destroyed while making visible the very idea of the sign (Derrida 1998, 23).

The movement of *sous-rature* erases a word and, at the same time, retains its legibility. But it is not a merely negative or impotent action. It opens up a space and time for transition and movement. Spivak writes that it is a gesture which 'implies "both this *and* that" as well as "neither this nor that" undoing the oppositions and the hierarchy between the legible and the erased' (Spivak 1998, 320). It creates a new 'non-concept' within the space between one thing and another, a space that is difficult, if not impossible to think. *Sous rature* thus recalls Thoth, who 'is truly a god of the absolute passage between opposites' (Derrida 2004, 96). What is being conjured here is the realm of passage, gesture, and a moving between, a fluidity that resists solidification, identification and the totality of dialectical oppositions.

This space, or rather perhaps it is better to speak of the effect, of putting something under erasure, is the creation of a certain trembling, a sensation that could be said to go beyond the location of being here or there, but as a sense which can be detected, or experienced in the body. When related to identity, *sous rature* enables a resistance to appropriation and of the violence of language, while putting the concept of identity into crisis.

But what is at stake in putting identity into crisis by placing it under erasure? A main point of contention would be the challenge to identity politics, which, as Carolyn

D'Cruz says, 'cannot function without the underlying assumption that it very much matters who I am, who you are, and what possibilities are open to, or closed for, us in order to form a 'we'' (D'Cruz 2008, 11). Identity politics is concerned with the project of liberation to overcome discrimination, prejudice and oppression of all types. Yet, following Derrida, it becomes clear that at the 'origin' of identity is an irreducible supplement, or an internal division. This notion goes back to *Of Grammatology* where Derrida deconstructs the idea of self-presence. The effect that this has for the ability to say 'I' in any singular or concrete manner is devastating for those who desire to claim that it very much matters who I am when speaking about political issues. This concern is birthed by an essentialist idea that the most legitimate voice to speak about a particular identity is one that has experienced that identity, as the experience produces valid and legitimate knowledge regarding the specific traits related to such an identity that cannot be understood without the lived experience. On the surface this sounds like a sensible and valid point of view. However, problems arise when we become aware of the different experiences between those claiming the same identity, if identity is conceived of as a singular phenomenon. Putting identity under erasure then may enable a different approach to the question of identity, which neither wholly valourises nor dismisses the importance of the 'I' in questions of 'who' is speaking, but rather seeks to negotiate the dangers of both essentialism and social-constructivism.

I will now explore the stakes of identity politics in relation to the specific context of Derrida's identity as an Algerian and the ways in which his identity and origins can be understood as under erasure. This will translate the 'in-between' nature that *sous rature* brings to fixed concepts, while making clearer how the mastery and sovereignty of identity is always-already ruptured. It will also show how any genealogical, located or defined attempt to situate Algeria as a simple origin of Derrida's work and life must be rethought while still maintaining the legibility of Algeria in these areas, but by the logic of a different order; an order outside of a genealogical temporality, where identity cannot be traced linearly, reductively located, or simply defined.

New understandings of belonging: Algeria, France, Judaism

Within identity politics, the questions of responsibility and belonging are intimately bound together. For example, because Derrida was born in Algeria, it is assumed, by those with a strong commitment to identity politics, that he 'belongs' to the Algerian

nation and people, and is thus also responsible to speak out and act on behalf of the Algerian cause by virtue of this belonging. However, a commitment to the dislocation of identity as mentioned above leaves the notions of belonging and responsibility unreadable in their common form.

In this section I will look at how Derrida figures his commitment to non-belonging. Without trying to locate the origin of Derrida's commitment to non-belonging in his experience in Algeria, Derrida does make explicit that these experiences had a lasting effect on him. In light of these comments/confessions, I will trace the disassociation of identity through what Derrida had spoken of in relation to these early experiences, before discussing how these can't be taken as any type of causal origin, but might be better understood through the rubric of *sous rature*.

Derrida's family had lived in Algeria for many generations, and he was born in El-Biar, just outside Algiers; but they were 'not simply Algerian' (Derrida 1995, 203). In an interview from 2001 with Maurizio Ferraris Derrida speaks of the difficulty of belonging to any one community, which were all part of his identity: 'I am a Jew from Algeria, from a certain type of community, in which belonging to Judaism was problematic, belonging to Algeria was problematic, belonging to France was problematic' (Derrida 2001, 27-28). Here are three markers of Derrida's identity, all of which were problematic. This dislocation of identity was three fold: from France/French culture; and from Judaism/Jewish culture; and from Algeria/Arabic culture. I will detail each one briefly in order to trace their entanglement, which will shed light on Derrida's commitment to non-belonging.

I will firstly look at the dislocation of French identity, which begins, in paradoxical form, not with France, but with being Jewish. Being Jewish, Derrida was born in Algeria with French citizenship, by virtue of the 1870 Crémieux decree; 'at once a Maghrebian (which is not a citizenship) and a French citizen. One and the other at the same time. And better yet, at once one and the other by birth' (Derrida 1998a, 11). In colonial Algeria, French-Algerians were most commonly understood as being French settlers, the colons, but in the instance of the Jews, the distinction between the colonised and the coloniser becomes more complicated. Their 'privilege' as French citizens led to increasing anti-Semitism and further separation from non-Jewish indigenous Algerians. This French citizenship makes the question of French identity for Derrida intimately related to his identity as a Jew. Before 1942, he was both French by nationality and culture; yet distinctly cut off from both. He was physically distant from

France, writing that the sea separating Algeria from France was 'symbolically an infinite space for all the students of the French school in Algeria, a chasm, an abyss' (Derrida 1998a, 44). Derrida didn't leave Algeria until he was nineteen, when he left for Paris. In Derrida's childhood, France was referred to as 'the metropole', 'the other shore', and as a 'strange, fantastic, and phantomlike' entity (Derrida 1998a, 41), emphasising a spectrality in Derrida's experience from the beginning. Culturally, Derrida was schooled in a colonial education system, which would have taught the same principles of French culture and life that a young boy in Paris would have learnt. Yet again, although being exposed to French culture in this way, especially via the French language, Derrida has always felt that he was 'never able to call French...'my mother tongue'' (Derrida 1998a, 15), exposing another, more subtle separation between himself and France.

There were also levels of differentiation within French identity, which are common in colonial situations, Derrida occupying the lowest rung, just above non-French indigenous Algerians. Jewish French-Algerians were not as French as the French-Algerian settlers, and the settlers born in Algeria were not as French as those who had been born in France and moved to Algeria, and these French settlers were not as French as those who were 'French-proper', i.e. French nationalists, by virtue of having been born and living in France. Being an indigenous Algerian with French citizenship placed Algerian Jews in closer proximity with the coloniser, but only just, at the same time as leaving them more open to vulnerability by no choice of their own. In 1942, under the Vichy government, the French removed this citizenship from the Jews of Algeria, leaving Derrida, and those like him, stateless. The removal of French nationality was an anti-Semitic act, which doubly complicated the feeling of being French for Derrida. Already French, but not fully French, the act of revoking Jewish citizenship came as a harsh blow to the Jewish community. Although, paradoxically, Derrida suggests that this removal of citizenship only served to reinforce the Algerian-Jews' French identity for them, regardless of the anti-Semitic oppression they received from the French. When asked if he suffered from this French anti-Semitism unleashed in Algeria 'in the absence of any German occupier', Derrida responds:

> It is an experience which leaves nothing intact, an atmosphere that one goes on breathing forever. Jewish children expulsed from school. The principal's office: You are going home, your parents will explain. Then the Allies landed, it was the period of the so called two-headed government (de Gaulle-

Giraud): racial laws maintained for almost six months, under a "free" French government. Friends who no longer knew you, insults, the Jewish high school with its expulsed teachers and never a whisper of protest from their colleagues (Derrida 1995, 120-121).

It was a horrendous and lasting experience, which caused Derrida's as yet unquestioned identity to be radically challenged. This increased distrust of the French, and more generally of all forms of communitarian identity. Derrida says that 'I do not doubt that exclusion...could have a relationship to the disorder of identity' (Derrida 1998a, 17). This difficult and precarious relationship to France and French identity can be seen as one aspect of Derrida's predisposition to non-belonging. But more generally, it leads to an understanding of the vulnerable and precarious foundation of citizenship and identity for all. Derrida writes,

a citizenship does not sprout up just like that. It is not natural. But, as in a flash of privileged revelation, the artifice and precariousness of citizenship appear better when it is inscribed in memory as a recent acquisition: for example, the French citizenship granted to the Jews of Algeria by the Crémieux decree in 1870. Or, better, in the traumatic memory of a "degradation", of a loss of citizenship, for example, the loss of French citizenship, less than a century later, for the same Jews of Algeria (Derrida 1998a, 16).

Derrida denaturalises the concept of citizenship to demonstrate its precarious and artificial nature by deconstructing the idea that citizenship is a natural right. Citizenship is thus dislocated and exposed for its complicity with power, abuse and oppression. This is not to say that it is refused wholly, as though Derrida wants us all to become stateless. It is the recognition of citizenship's status as artificial and precarious that is important, rather than its dismissal. It is a putting into question, a deconstructing, in order to re-define what it could mean to be a citizen. For now, citizenship will be under erasure.

The second dislocation is Derrida's Jewish identity. Derrida speaks in numerous places of his expulsion from the Ben Aknoun high school in 1942[16]. This is part of the experience which he says 'leaves nothing intact.' He writes in *Circumfession,* 'expelled from the Lycée de Ben Aknoun in 1942 a little black and very Arab Jew who understood nothing about it, to whom no one ever gave the slightest reasons, neither his parents, nor his friends' (Derrida 1999, 58). Having been expelled from school by the French, a school for Jews led by Jewish teachers was set up in Derrida's home town.

[16] See (Derrida 1995, 120-121; 1998a, 109; 1999, 58.)

He was enrolled, but he speaks of cutting classes for a year. When asked why Derrida says he felt 'just as out-of-place in a closed Jewish community as [he] did on the other side (we called them "the Catholics")' (Derrida 1995, 121). Elsewhere, in a dialogue with Elisabeth Roudinesco, Derrida says 'I could not tolerate being "integrated" into this Jewish school, this homogenous milieu that reproduced and in a certain way countersigned - in a reactive and vaguely specular fashion, at once forced (by outside threat) and compulsive - the terrible violence that had been done to it'. Interestingly, the experience of not-belonging to France and French culture increased awareness for Derrida about the similar desire within the Jewish community, which he reads as reproducing the violence done to the Jewish community by the community itself. He goes on to say, 'This reactive self-defence was certainly natural and legitimate, even irreproachable. But I must have sensed that it was a drive [*pulsion*], a gregarious compulsion that responded too symmetrically, that corresponded in truth to an expulsion (Derrida 2004, 111). It is interesting that Derrida here calls this self-protection of the Jewish-Algerian community a *natural* drive to expulsion. Could it be a type of autoimmunity? But still, he chooses not to accept this type of closing in on itself that a community, even after experiencing oppression and suffering, can choose[17].

The word natural is not a word which appears unchallenged in Derrida's work too frequently, but here it would seem to be used in order to affirm his acceptance of such a drive, an understanding of it. However, he simultaneously chooses not to be part of this community, excluding himself because of what he sees as an exclusionary tendency/drive which is reproducing violence that has been done to this community. This 'natural' is then counter-signed by a movement away from such an action, helping to deconstruct, and denaturalise this exclusionary drive, offering an alternative. The fact that Derrida didn't and couldn't feel integrated into the Jewish community in this way shows that even within communities where some form of hospitality is shown to those who have been excluded by another community, i.e. the Jewish school, any closed form of community will always be inhospitable to some who feel they do not belong, i.e. Derrida in this case. Thus, Jewishness is the second aspect of Derrida's identity '[w]hence an experience of non-belonging [he has] no doubt transposed...Everywhere' (Derrida 1995, 121). Religious identity must also then be placed under erasure.

[17] This will be an important factor to keep in mind when coming closer to exploring Derrida's understanding of relation to Israel.

The third aspect is Derrida's specifically Algerian or Maghrebian identity. It is one which many feel is too far removed from Derrida's performed identity, and absent from a community of interpretation that keeps Derrida's memory and work alive. It is clear that Derrida did not really begin to speak of this aspect of his identity more thoroughly until later in his life, but this by no means corresponds to a disavowal. He speaks of being an African in 1978, in Benin, and 1981 in Paris, in philosophical essays: 'the sort of uprooted African [that] I am, born in Algiers in an environment about which it will always be difficult to say whether it was colonizing or colonized' (Derrida 2002, 103); 'I was born in Africa' (Derrida 2007, 322). He also responds to the idea that he might want to oppose his birth in Algeria to a 'true birth' (which I take to mean an intellectual re-birth in France) by saying that, 'if there is anything that cannot be "up to me," then [the place of my birth] is it' (Derrida 1995, 339). The shows that despite the dislocation of identity and the movement of *sous rature*, which aim to combat strict causal genealogy, the desire here is not to erase the material realities of where Derrida was born or raised.

As integrated bourgeois Jewish-French-Algerians, the Derridas lived in a suburb outside Algiers, 'on the edge of an Arab quarter' (Derrida 1999, 287). Few Arabs enrolled to Derrida's high school, and Arabic was as good as forbidden;

> given the disappearance, then in progress, of Arabic as the official, everyday, administrative language, the one and only option was still the school, and the study of Arabic was restricted to school, but as an alien language, a strange kind of alien language and the language of the other, but then of course, and this is the strange and troubling part, the other as the nearest neighbour. *Unheimlich*. For me it was the neighbour's language. For I lived on the edge of an Arab neighbourhood, at one of those hidden frontiers, at once invisible and almost passable; the segregation was as efficacious as it was subtle (Derrida 1998a, 37).

Derrida says that he 'submitted passively to the interdict' at school against Arabic, and speaks of growing up in a monolingual environment: 'Around me, although not in my family, I naturally heard Arabic spoken, but, except for a few words, I do not speak Arabic. I tried to learn it after but I didn't get very far' (Derrida 1995, 204). Separated in such an uncanny way from such a prominent language and culture in Algeria is often taken as situating Derrida on the side of the coloniser. Both Lynne Huffer and Marrouchi make this interpretation. But, as we can see from the social, legal, educational and spacial aspects of Derrida's childhood, his inability to speak Arabic,

thus rendering him monolingually French, cannot be used to identify him with the coloniser. This move reproduces the binaries of us and them, coloniser and coloniser, good and bad that Derrida is trying to negotiate and deconstruct, and which are represented in a specific form by the Jewish-Algerian community he came from. Derrida is separated from one site of Algeria by virtue of language, and also cut off from Arabic and Berber culture by way of his Jewishness.

But Algeria still remains for Derrida an important part of his identity; 'I guarantee you that I retain something of [my African] heritage' (Derrida 2007, 322). He also speaks of a 'nostalgeria' in *Monolinguaism of the Other* (1998a), but also, according to Geoffrey Bennington, elsewhere before 1993 (Derrida 1999, 330). But the other two aspects spoken of here, his French and Jewish identity also separated him from 'Algeria' even while having been born there, and thus being native. This is why Algeria for Derrida also needs to be put under erasure, as Algeria for Derrida will signify something quite different to many other Algerians born in the same country. This is because Algeria cannot be said to signify any one experience. As Cixous says of Algiers, there is no one Algeria[18]. It will no doubt be a mixture of his French and Jewish identity within and separate to his Algerian/ Maghrebian identity that inform this mosaic fragment of his identity. But it is the specificity of this particular intersection of Derrida's identity which is both unique to him, and that he wishes to open up and generalise regarding identity in general.

While these well-known biographical details above are not unimportant, Derrida did not see them as the origin of his work. These dislocations of his identity go far beyond his own specificity. He even suggests that he 'shouldn't place so much emphasis on this episode [the time of his expulsion from high school in Algeria] of his life' (Derrida 2004b, 55). Instead of this specificity he expresses the desire to take his sense of non-belonging 'beyond the particular idiosyncrasies of [his] own story...to indicate the sense in which an 'I' does not have to be 'one of the family' (Derrida 2001, 28). The notion of the family (domestic, national, linguistic, humanity) is deconstructed by Derrida to suggest again that these concepts rest upon as assumption of an illusionary stable unit of identification. In a familiar Derridian move, where the possibility of something relies on its impossibility, he states that '[t]he desire to belong to any community whatsoever, the desire for belonging *tout court*, implies that one *does not*

[18] 'I say 'Algiers.' But I hasten to add that this is a name for countless interior and exterior mysteries, like the name of Venice or the name of God' (Cixous, 2007, 15).

belong. I could not say 'I want to be one the family' if in fact I was one of the family' (28). The logic here is that if one belonged, one would not have the desire to belong, thus the desire for belonging reveals the more 'essential' or 'deeper' reality of 'not-belonging'. This acknowledgement renders the communities of family, nation, and religion etc. fractured in their unity and totality. The political consequence, says Derrida, is that 'there is no identity' (28). This radical claim would appear disastrous if not blasphemous to those concerned with identity politics, but it is not a dismissal of identity altogether. When asked if he does not want to have an identity, Derrida replies 'On the contrary, I do, like everyone else. But by turning around this impossible thing, and which no doubt I also resist, the 'I' constituted the very form of resistance' (Derrida 1995, 340). The logic of resistance of the 'I' makes it impossible for any stable identity categories to remain intact, despite one's desire to 'have' an identity. And this does not preclude identification with a group or community; it just acknowledges that this identification is not 'natural' or 'inherent' to one's person. Derrida is quite insistent that those who seek to create and maintain communities based upon this false sense of belonging 'have to know [that]...the family (national, humanity) has no self-identity. It is never a state' (28). Again, this is not to dismiss the concept of the nation, the family, and identity altogether, but it avows and acknowledges these concepts' always-already fractured nature. It is not that Derrida wants to destroy identity, or nationality, but rather to make us aware that there never has been such unified, total and self-same concepts as such[19]. Deconstruction punctures mastery and sovereignty of these ideas used by powerful institutions which proclaim the naturalised sense of belonging, and lead to unnecessary exclusionary practices in the name of 'belonging'. The stakes of such a claim are held high, as Derrida insists that this 'essential' non-belonging is for him 'the condition not only for being singular and other, but also for entering into relation with the singularity and alterity of others' (27)[20].

[19] 'I have never said that the subject should be dispensed with. Only that it should be deconstructed. To deconstruct the subject does not mean to deny its existence. There are subjects, 'operations' or 'effects' *(effets)* of subjectivity. This is an incontrovertible fact. To acknowledge this does not mean, however, that the subject is what it *says* it is. The subject is not some meta-linguistic substance or identity, some pure cogito of self-presence; it is always inscribed in language. My work does not, therefore, destroy the subject; it simply tries to resituate it' (Derrida, 1984, 125).

However, that identity and community are not 'natural' does not perhaps result in the need not to identify with a group, but rather just changes the foundation from which one goes on to do so. This will go onto be discussed in relation to an ethics of solidarity in Chapter 7

[20] The relationality between self and other and what makes this possible will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

Thus, Derrida's own 'history' or childhood experience cannot be located as any 'origin' for deconstruction. But again, this is not to dismiss it. It rather needs to be put under erasure. Writing in *Monolingualism of the Other,* and in conversation with Mustapha Cherrif, Derrida says 'A Judeo-Franco-Maghrebian genealogy doesn't explain everything, far from it, but can I ever explain anything without it?' (Derrida 1998a 71; Derrida 2008a, 32). The subtle difference of emphasis here on the question of his Algerian genealogy is poignant. Not being able to explain anything without this genealogy is hugely different to only being able to explain things because of it.

When thinking about a 'causal link' between his own childhood experience and the effect and repercussion this has had on his writing, Derrida states in *The Postcard*

> Would they [the French] not start all over, if they could, prohibiting me from school? Is it not for this reason that I have for ever ensconced myself in it in order to provoke them to it and to give them the most urgent wish always at the limit, to expel me again? No, I do not at all, but not at all, believe these hypotheses, they are seductive or amusing, manipulable, but without value, they are clichés (Derrida 1987, 88).

Derrida is clear here how he feels about such posturing on the causal links between personal anecdote, childhood experience, and his writing. The cliché is too much for Derrida, emphasised by the repetition of 'No, I do not at all, but not at all', '*pas du tous, mais alors pas du tout*' (Derrida 1980, 97). Yet, in the English translation of this passage it feels as though there might be room to question this double assertion, if only slightly, and 'non-literally'. The phrase 'No, I do not at all, but not at all, believe these hypotheses' brackets the repetition of the negation of these hypotheses in between commas, which isolates it from the hypotheses in a way not seen in the original French. Is Derrida opening a space in his dismissal of the causal influence of his childhood on his work for a deconstruction of the idea that one can assert something completely, the 'not at all' coming rather to signify 'but not 'not at all'', indicating the impossibility of disbelieving these hypotheses in their totality[21]. In fact, by inscribing such ideas in *The Postcard* in order to dismiss them 'altogether', Derrida undoes his own assertion by containing that which he is marginalising within the text. Thus, deconstruction is seen to be already at work within Derrida's own view of his Algerian childhood to his

[21] Elsewhere Derrida has written that 'The undeniable, here as always, is what one can only disavow' (Derrida 2002a, 104). This will be discussed further in relation to the undecidable in deconstruction later in this thesis.

writing. This 'not at all' implies a non-specific or even non-locatable influence or effect of such childhood traumas upon Derrida's later life and writing. Could it be that pronouncing this '*pas du tout*' is similar to the sentiment expressed when speaking of his Jewishness, where an 'active, even energetic distraction turns [me] away, then, from what no doubt remains most "constitutive" in me...' (Derrida 2004a, 112)? This logic would be similar to that of *sous rature*, suggesting that the idea of Algeria as 'constitutive' is put under erasure by Derrida within his own text.

The intersectionality of Derrida's identity as a Judeo-Franco-Maghrebian resonates with Derrida's view of non-simple origins. But this complexity does not emerge from the specificity of Derrida's biography, but is rather proffered by Derrida to be a universal phenomenon regarding identity. As we have seen, national, religious and cultural identities are not naturally occurring phenomena, and may be challenged or taken away at any instance. Therefore, the building of communities based on the divisions of inclusion and exclusion will always already be a violent one. Thus, if identity politics is to move beyond this adherence to belonging, identity (familial, national, cultural, sexual, religious, etc.) must be put under erasure. This is not to deny or annihilate the concept of identity, but an attempt to move beyond the drive to exclude by forming closed groups, and to find ways of articulating new forms of identity.

Algeria as primal scene

When Sarah Wood speaks of Derrida's childhood in Algeria she connects it with Hélène Cixous, writing that 'They were surrounded by tensions between Arabs and French settlers. There was pervasive, sometimes brutal anti-Semitism. It was an *unreadable situation*' (Wood 2009, 9, *my emphasis*). This phrasing helps to portray the social difficulty within which Derrida and Cixous grew up, and highlights how experience, particularly traumatic experience, can be difficult to interpret. We are given a sense of this inability to read what was going on around Derrida in his youth when he speaks of

> the first underground rumblings of the Algerian war. As a child, I heard them coming in an animal fashion, with a feeling of the end of the world which was at the same time the most natural habitat, in any case the only one I had ever known. Ever for a child who was unable to analyze things, it was clear that it would all end in fire and blood (Derrida 1995, 120).

The sense building here is of an experience received/lived before interpretation is possible and therefore beyond an ability to rationally understand. This lived experience is not detailed in a specific memory of an occurrence or an event, as when he speaks of his schooling, but rather of the general milieu of an imprecise, vague, childhood memory. It is a recollection of a feeling and a sensation of the 'end of the world' - which is said to have been a natural feeling in the sense of the only world he had known. There is a sadness here in the pervasive extent to which he deems the atmosphere of violence to have affected him. The image of hearing 'the rumblings of war...in an animal fashion' brings to mind the innocent child becoming sensitised from afar to the dangers and horrors of war. As an animal feels the vibrations through its body, or hears a predator approaching without seeing it or knowing its form, Derrida expresses his childhood with respect to this bodily phenomenon of experience. Hence, it can be described as both 'unable to analyse' and 'clear'.

We can then begin to think about Algeria in Derrida's writing through the concept of the primal scene. This is a term first used by Freud in 1918. In its traditional sense it seeks to 'designate the universal childhood imagination of parental sexual intercourse' (Akhtar 2009, 220) generally thought to be a traumatic experience. However, more recent work on the primal scene has developed this notion of an early traumatic childhood memory to describe any number of experiences which are seen as impossible to recollect. Ned Lukacher writes that '[r]ather than signifying the child's observation of sexual intercourse, the primal scene comes to signify an ontologically undecidable intertextual event' (Lukacher 1986, 24). This definition is particularly helpful for thinking about the place of Algeria in Derrida's writing, as it seeks to aid in

> solving the crisis of interpretation that emerges when the question of the origin becomes at once unavoidable and unanswerable, when the origin must be remembered but memory fails utterly, when all the evidence points towards an origin that nevertheless remains unverifiable. The primal scene is the figure of an interpretive dilemma...The primal scene is an effort to answer the unanswerable call of the Real, a call that emerges from the undisclosed essence of language itself (25).

Hence, Algeria can be understood as the uninterpretable origin, an unreadable experience, both present and not present, or as said previously, under erasure for Derrida.

In another example of this broader understanding of the primal scene, Stefan Polatinsky and Anthea Buys explore childhood experiences of Blanchot and Cixous as

primal scenes, employing the word 'ineluctable' to describe them (Polatinsky and Buys 2011, 15). The term ineluctable is taken from Derrida's introduction to Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe's book *Typograhy, Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics* (1998), where he writes

> What announces itself as ineluctable seems in some way to have already happened, to have happened before happening, to be always in a past, in advance of the event. Something began before me, the one who undergoes the experience. I'm late. If I insist upon remaining the subject of this experience, it would have to be as a prescribed, pre-inscribed subject, marked in advance by the imprint of the ineluctable that constitutes this subject without belonging to it, and that this subject cannot appropriate even if the imprint appears to be properly its own (Polatinsky and Buys 2011, 15).

What is striking about this understanding of the ineluctable is the out-of-time nature of experience that it is impossible to own or recollect as proper to the subject. Being late to an experience one has lived through; as an experience of that which happens to us before we experience it. The question must be asked, how can I account for an experience which I am only able to remember after the fact of its occurring? This nature of experience challenges traditional notions of time, and the chronologically distinct categories of past, present and future. The concept of the primal scene as ineluctable seems to be important when thinking about Derrida's own understanding and relation to his childhood in Algeria.

To look at this more specifically, I will now turn to an anecdote that Derrida recalls from school which he says is 'engraved [burnt] in his spirit', denoting an awareness not specific to understanding of the mind.

> *la violence [à l'école] prenait la forme non seulement des bagarres entre élèves, des propos antisémites, mais aussi de ceci : le pétainisme partout, les photos du maréchal partout... Une anecdote est restée gravée dans mon esprit : j'étais le premier de la classe. Cela accordait quelques privilèges. Tous les matins, il y avait une levée du drapeau avec le Maréchal, nous voilà! Et je me suis aperçu un jour que, bien que premier, parce que juif, on ne me faisait pas lever le drapeau! Alors que c'était les premiers de la classe qui devaient hisser le drapeau. Et d'un coup, je comprends... sans comprendre! pourquoi on ne me laissait pas lever le drapeau... Donc bon élève... mais écriture impossible. J'avais une graphie illisible, et qui l'est restée depuis, toujours. (Derrida 1989)*[22].

[22] This interview was not edited by Derrida before publication. The anecdote is not necessarily 'comprehensible' and Derrida makes jumps that must be filled in by the reader regarding the inference of Derrida's point. The translation is my own.

at school, violence took not only the form of fights between students, regarding anti-Semitism, but also this: Petainism was everywhere, photos of the Marshal were everywhere ... An anecdote has stuck in my mind: I was the best (*premier*) student in the class. This gave some privileges. Every morning there was a flag was raised which brought the Marshal before us. And I'm guessing that, although I was the best in the class, because I was Jewish, they didn't let me raise the flag! Because it was best in the class that should raise the flag. And suddenly, I understood ... without understanding, why they wouldn't let me raise the flag ... So, I was a good student …but my writing was impossible. My hand writing was illegible, and it has remained so, ever since.

What is recalled here is a memory of anti-Semitism in the school room which relates specifically to Derrida's own academic abilities. Even though he was top of the class, and thus should have been given the right to raise the flag of Marshal Pétain as was done in the Vichy years, his teacher uses his poor handwriting as an excuse to exclude Derrida from this task, when in fact Derrida understood, without understanding, that it was actually due to his being Jewish. Yet the experience of enlightenment and his own poor handwriting are joined here in both memory and testimony, to allow the experience of comprehension to echo the notion of an 'impossible writing'. While it is clear that Derrida is referring quite literally to his own illegible handwriting, which he says has always remained, I would like to make the link between the impossible writing of experience in general with Derrida's own handwriting and his difficulty or inability to write of this ineluctable primal scene of Algeria, which may point to a new articulation of identity.

The dream of an impossible book

Polantisky and Buys write that in the attempt to write of an ineluctable primal scene what is required is 'a creative and hospitable response from language that is pushed to its outer limits' (Polintsky and Buys 2011, 16). Invariably, when Derrida speaks of his childhood experiences in Algeria, it is coupled with the difficulty and impossibility of writing. The unexperienced experience of these wounds then come to structure and affect what is said and written about them. When speaking of the wound of anti-Semitism to Elisabeth Roudinesco, Derrida describes the experience as that of a

double suffering, then, a divided cruelty, a wound whose bleeding had a source that was perhaps more distant, and much earlier. It will have come, since always, to give a path and a form ("my" form) to everything that could be recounted, to everything that I myself could write under the rubric of a

"formation novel". For this is perhaps also a reconstruction, a story, a fiction I am telling myself. So much work remains to be done (Derrida 2004a, 111-112).

Derrida takes us further back upstream by suggesting that these experiences have their origin in a 'more distant' and earlier moment. This would be the 'out-of-joint' nature of all experience, the event of the ineluctable in general. Experience is not fully comprehensible because the onslaught of signs and sensations we go through at each moment are not all accessible or available to us. Therefore traces and marks are left upon us without our 'knowing' in the rational and self-present sense of this word, thus allowing encounters like the primal scene to be experienced at any time. This causes an '[unraveling of] the notion of experience because it erases the notion of a present in which experience might be configured' (Polatinsky and Buys 2011, 19). So what would this type of experience become in the attempt at writing it? How does one write an unexperienced experience that continually escapes recollection? It may have something to do with dreams.

The 'double suffering' of Derrida's childhood is encircled in the ineluctable and is said to give a path and form 'to everything that could be recounted, to everything that I myself could write under the rubric of a "formation novel"'. Derrida never wrote a bildungsroman, but he speaks elsewhere of the type of book that would have to be written detailing his life. He said that it would include 'not only my history, but culture, languages, families, Algeria first of all...' (Derrida 1995, 119). That this list ends with Algeria being emphasised as having preliminary importance is significant in this context. It again speaks to the necessity to think about the place of Algeria in Derrida's work, but always slightly 'out of joint'. Any narration of his life, Derrida says, would never just be 'simply a memory of the past' (Derrida 1995, 206) as it is 'a past that is inaccessible to me' (207). Recapitulating the logic of the ineluctable primal scene, Derrida announced that the book he would want to write could never access 'the past' as he is cut off from it. But it would also suggest a challenging of the traditional notions of temporality, where past, present and future become more entangled, and causality between one experience and another, known and unknown, are more complicated than any linear description of Derrida's life could ever account for.

Any form of writing on Algeria in this linear causal sense, even 'the least statement on this subject' would be for Derrida, he says, 'a mutilation in advance' (203), as it would adhere to the violence of metaphysical language and dialectical

identity he seeks to avoid so as not to repeat that violence. Instead of this, Derrida speaks of what he writes resembling a dotted-line drawing that would be circling around a book to be written (119). Both the dream of this narration and the dream of this book are said to weigh down on what is actually written, thus impacting his work in an altogether different logic to that of linear cause and effect. Could it be that Derrida joins Cixous' and Blanchot's attempt to 'adumbrate the ineluctable through the writing "of primal scenes" (as expressions of living in the wake of the ineluctable)' (Polatinsky and Buys 2011, 16), not through traditional autobiography, but in the unnamable genre of writing which is Derrida's?

If so, Derrida's oeuvre could be seen as the product of the effect of this dream, this primal scene of writing and experience that elude knowledge and thus cannot be captured in language as they 'happened' before language was present to the subject. Reinforcing this link to Derrida's work more generally, it is suggested to him in the interview quoted above that this notion of the inaccessible narration can be seen *across his work* in the notion of loss, to which he responds

> I would say that what I suffer from inconsolably always has the form, not only of loss, which is often! - but of the loss of memory: that what I am living not be kept, thus repeated, and - how to put it? - decipherable, as if an appeal for a witness has no witness in some way, not even the witness that I could be for what I have lived (Derrida 1995, 207).

Moving beyond childhood experience as primal scene Derrida seems to suggest that at the heart of experience one is always in a position of being unable to interpret life and that it is this 'experience which is unexperienced' that shapes life, from beyond a place that we might be able to grasp in language. Derrida is not here trying to discredit knowledge or dispossess us of our ability to understand anything. But what is 'radical' about his approach, and perhaps one of the reasons that he is indigestible to many postcolonial theorists, is that he submits himself to the ambiguity of knowledge and understanding, but does so unrelentingly. He admits that he is even unable to be a witness to what he has experienced in life. This would again fracture the central component of identity politics, which proclaims that those who have lived an experience are the ones who have a right to speak about it. If, following Derrida, we agree that even one's own self-experience is not identical to itself, then we must admit that this component of identity politics must be displaced, dislocated.

However, the 'under erasure' nature of such a part of one's identity again is not dismissed or seen as unimportant. It is merely the causal relationship that is refigured, deconstructed and conceived of. Derrida says that, in terms of his Jewishness, it remains

> obscure, abyssal, very unstable. Contradictory. At once very powerful and fragile. As if some depth of memory authorized me to forget, perhaps to deny what is most archaic, to distract me from the essential. This active, even energetic distraction turns me away, then, from what no doubt remains most "constitutive" in me...Nothing for me matters as much as my Jewishness, which however, in so many ways, matters so little in my life. I know very well that such statements seem contradictory, lacking in common sense. But they would be so only in the eyes of someone who could say "I" only in one whole piece, only be expelling from himself all alterity, all heterogeneity, all division, indeed all altercation, all "explication" or "coming to terms" with oneself. (112)

Two ways to read that which remains most constitutive would be that of his Jewishness or, secondly that of the living in the wake of the ineluctable, the most 'archaic' or 'originary' experience, which could be read as the disastrous realisation that we live in a world which, at base, remains ultimately undecipherable and which is caught in a trembling of meanings.

As we have seen above, Derrida's Jewishness cannot be untangled from his identity as a French-Algerian, and what it means to be both French and Algerian/Maghrebian. In this sense, what remains most constitutive is also Derrida's relationship to Algeria, not in a simple genealogical relationship, but rather one which places Algeria under erasure and follows the logic of the ineluctable primal scene: one which we may associate with the Derridean concept of hauntology [23]. The spectral logic of placing Algeria under erasure, so that it is (one) complex origin of Derrida's work allows interpreters of Derrida to refer to, acknowledge and discuss Algeria, while at the same time not putting its importance into the sacred place of an origin, whence springs all interpretative ability. For to maintain this latter approach would not be a responsible reading of Derrida's writing.

The aporia of responsibility

[23] We might here agree with Soraya Tlatli, who writes that Algeria, for Derrida, equates to the concept of the archive (Tlatli 2009), or with Grant Farred, who writes that Algeria, for Derrida, is a ghost (Farred 2011).

What then does responsibility mean in the relationship between Derrida and Algeria in light of the above? It would be easy to list Derrida's political interventions in relation to Algeria in order to satisfy those dismissing and accusing him of political quietism (or would it? The charge of irresponsibility surely exists in order to secure the accuser's own responsibility). But this would really get us nowhere, as it would pander to the existing order of legitimation and would not do justice to the larger question that Derrida's writing presents to its readers. Listing Derrida's interventions as proofs of responsibility assumes that we already know what responsibility means, and that it can be legitimated in certain ways. But responsibility is not 'a thing', as responsibility 'can only exceed (and must exceed) the order of theoretical determination, of knowledge, certainty, judgement, and of statements in the form of 'this is that,'' (Derrida 1993, 20). The 'this or that' approach relies upon the metaphysical structure which assumes presence and stability. But who and/or what is watching over 'politically responsible acts' in order to judge them acceptable? What are the conditions of receiving this approval? And from whom? When levelled at a person in order to judge their political worth, responsibility also claims to know the identity of the person, as though this was also a stable phenomenon. Derrida's writing does not seek to offer a new definition of responsibility (in the form of 'this is that'), but to acknowledge that the concepts we already have are themselves constructed and not natural. Responsibility, then, is as indeterminate as identities and origins have been shown to be.

In an attempt to account for the strong dislike of Derrida in contemporary criticism, J. Hillis Miller suggests that 'the scandalized resistance to Derrida and to so-called deconstruction, may be, in part at least, a resistance to confronting the wholly other otherness of the other as it enters his work' (Miller 2001, 334). The resistance to the wholly other is a refusal to witness indeterminacy as an aporetic origin of experience and knowledge. Confronting the wholly other otherness of the other calls the notion of responsibility into question.

The problematic of how radical alterity challenges a stable concept of responsibility can be paraphrased in the following way: if each person is unique and to be valued in their individuality this means that every other is completely other, and the distinction between one being and another is arbitrary, rendering each individual deserving of the same respect. Thus my 'responsibility' (ethical, political, moral etc.) is subject to an unlimited demand by all others, between whom I can make no

'responsible' choice if I commit to the idea that they are all unique in their otherness. In light of this dilemma, Derrida opens up the impossible nature of such a responsibility:

> The general concept of responsibility, like that of decision, would thus be said to lack coherence or consequence, and even to lack identity with respect to itself, paralyzed by what can be called an aporia or an antinomy...What is found at work in everyday discourse, in the exercise of justice, and first and foremost in the axiomatics of private, public, or international law, in the conduct of internal politics, diplomacy, and war, is a lexicon concerning responsibility that can be found nowhere, even if we wouldn't go so far as to say that it doesn't correspond to any concept at all. It amounts to a disavowal whose resources, as one knows, are inexhaustible (Derrida 1998b, 84-85).

This passage proffers that political responsibility is founded on a lexicon that can be found nowhere, upon the idea that we know what we mean when we speak of responsibility - and thus responsibility is taken in 'good faith', to be a stable concept. But, as Derrida says elsewhere, these acts of good faith are in fact more irresponsible than being open to the aporia that is responsibility: 'Each time [responsibility is] reduced to what [it] must exceed, error, recklessness, the unthought, and irresponsibility are given the so very presentable face of good conscience' (Derrida 1993, 20), and, in order to be able to affirm, judge legitimate and assure oneself that you are acting responsibly, 'One simply keeps denying the aporia and antimony, tirelessly, and one treats as nihilist, relativist, even post-structuralist, or worse still deconstructionist, all those who remain concerned in the face of such a display of good conscience' (Derrida 1998b, 85).

The question of radical alterity, via '*Tout autre est tout autre*', would beg the question of how to square this idea with one heard earlier in this discussion, which suggests that the 'I' is never singular, but always already connected and constituted by alterity? What would the material realities of connections with others do to the radical alterity from every other? In short, this individuality would not be at the expense of interconnection and entanglement, but would acknowledge that, even through our material entanglement with the world and our constitution by alterity, each individual is still unique and radically other in their emergence as a being in the world. As Karen Barad writes, 'Separability...is a matter of irreducible heterogeneity that is not undermined by the relations of inheritance that hold together the disparate without reducing difference to sameness' (Barad 2010, 265).

Like that of the undecidable, this approach to responsibility is raised, not as alternative to the current manifestation, but as a critique[s] in order to puncture the self-righteous attitude to those that profess them as beyond reproach. This notion of responsibility as an aporia allows for the indeterminacy of deconstruction to be unleashed everywhere, even onto political positions. But it does not equate to constant deferral, but incommensurate relation between philosophy and politics. What if responsibility, instead of having a determinate form then, was instead, an unconditional openness to alterity, an openness without containment, and thus without definition? As Karen Barad says, in the context of an essay on Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*, responsibility is 'to open oneself up to indeterminacy' (Barad 2010, 264).

The difficulty with this approach to responsibility is Derrida's resistance to any simple and single position, and the refusal to allow deconstruction to become a political-philosophy. What is at stake in such an approach may be, for some, akin to a constant deferral of political responsibility in the face of urgent life or death situations. However, deconstruction would hold to the opinion that for any such urgency to be met, careful consideration of the situation must be in place before action can be taken: to dismiss this and act without thinking would be irresponsible, surely? Deconstruction is often condemned for its unwillingness to take political positions, but this is because deconstruction is not a political philosophy: 'the available codes for taking [a] political stance are not at all adequate to the radicality of deconstruction' (Derrida 1989, 119). Derrida even writes that his own political engagement 'remains incommensurate with my project of deconstruction' (Derrida 1989, 120). Therefore when it comes to questions of postcolonial responsibility, identity politics, and the question of witnessing and testimony, deconstruction will never give those who need a political position recourse to turn to deconstruction. It is the desire to resist the totalising violence of metaphysics at all costs, to undermine, deconstruct and puncture the mastery that such claims to politics affirm, where the 'political' weight of Derrida's writing emerges.

I would like to follow this proposition in response to an account of Derrida's responsibility towards Algeria, an account which, by not being open to alterity, may reveal its own irresponsibility towards Derrida in its very attempt be responsible.

In his essay 'Decolonizing the Terrain of Western Theoretical Productions' from 1997, Mustapha Marrouchi states that it is his task to tell 'the story about Derrida's

debt to Algeria' (Marrouchi 1997 4-5). Marrouchi goes on to accuse Derrida of a 'politics of denial' (11), excluding Algeria from his 'enterprise' (as though deconstruction were a business) (19) and as such, claims that Derrida continues to 'lay an embargo on the truth' (25). Marrouchi then goes on to write,

> What I want to assert...is the intuitive conviction I have, and I think most of us (*presumptuous to say the least!*), that what we are dealing with here is the separation of the sense of a beginning from the sense of a continuing that there is a connection between childhood adolescence, adulthood, and old age on the one hand, and life and art on the other. For me to read Derrida has been to discover how he disconnects the former from the latter, and he seems to be doing it casually, almost backhandedly (19).

And thus in trying to account for Derrida's responsibility towards Algeria, it is Marrouchi's aim to 'regard every stand as moral or immoral' (19).

There are serious problems with Marrouchi's self-stated task. The first is that Marrouchi takes on a responsibility to account for and speak for Derrida on a subject that Derrida himself has said he cannot speak, admitting that 'the least statement on this subject' would be for him 'a mutilation in advance' (Derrida 1995, 203). Thus, Marrouchi's essay is an appropriation of Derrida's history, to take the 'responsibility' of speaking for Derrida, for, what we will have to assume, a cause of greater importance than respecting the life/history/desire of another.

Secondly, Marrouchi's 'intuitive conviction' rests upon strict notions of inheritance and genealogy, founded on linear temporalities and simple understandings of origins, where he believes that there is a separation in Derrida's 'life', between his childhood, adolescence etc., and his life and art. Yet it is these binary oppositions between life and art, childhood experience and adult experience that collapse under Derrida's philosophy.

As well as appropriating Derrida's narrative, Marrouchi takes it upon himself to act as judge to what a valid politics can be, taking on the role of legislator, by virtue of some 'intuitive conviction', which allows him to decide what constitutes morality and immorality. However, as Bennington points out, 'the legislator *always* might be a charlatan' and hence,

> This moment at which the legislator always might be a charlatan (and to that extent always in a sense is, can never be shown not to be), just is the moment of the political, and it is irreducible because it is undecidable. This is why there is no end to politics (Bennington 1994, 2)

Marrouchi's claim to decide between morality and immorality places him in the position where he is open to being seen as a charlatan, from which he cannot escape, by virtue of an aspiration to the position of legislator.

These three claims, to responsibility, inner convictions, and morality, all rest upon the structure of 'good conscience' that was discussed above, and therefore fail, in my mind, in their response-ability towards Derrida. An ability to respond to Derrida would need to take into account the non-teleological aspirations, a resistance to totalisation and an openness to the wholly other in order to be considered as a 'response' at all. Marrouchi's accusations demonstrate out rightly his desire to complete a story and make a statement on Derrida's responsibility towards Algeria.

I would now like to demonstrate how an unwillingness to be open to Derrida's approach to responsibility, stemming from a desire to master Derrida's writing and life in order to pronounce judgment upon it as either moral or immoral, will only ever fall prey to the very irresponsibility it seeks to charge Derrida with.

Marrouchi writes that 'Derrida remains mute on the subject of a dirty and savage war, and a territory that was subjugated for over a century and a quarter, and a country with which his name will always be associated' (Marrouchi 8). Then, in a footnote just following this claim, Marrouchi informs us that 'In a desperate gesture, Derrida signs a petition that called for solidarity of the Algerians who, for fear of being killed in Algeria, must leave it and seek asylum in France among other countries' (29). Why desperate? The choice of this word would presumably indicate the opinion that, this was a 'too little too late' gesture. Marrouchi's unwillingness to take this signature as a politically valid form of support in view of Derrida's other relative silence shows how despite itself, Marrouchi is not willing, or perhaps able, to see or hear the singularity of Derrida's relation to Algeria. Might it be that, after writing a cascading denunciation of Derrida, and stating not only that he *has been silent*, but *remains silent* on Algeria, that when a colleague reads over Marrouchi's article, and reveals a crack in his argument [that Derrida has not remained silent on Algeria], that Marrouchi can't allow his whole essay to tumble down, be deconstructed just before publication, so it is dismissed and relegated to a footnote. Mere speculation of course[24]. And who is to

[24] But the footnote includes an ambiguous acknowledgment for a reference to an article by Bourdieu on the Algerian war. Could this acknowledgment also be for making Marrouchi aware of Derrida's signature?

judge whether one signature on a petition of solidarity amounts to a valid form of political responsibility?

Marrouchi's attempt to account for Derrida's responsibility towards Algeria will always have been impossible, as it is impossible to 'measure' responsibility, as there is no position from which it is possible to stand as legislator, judge, (or God for that matter) that is not always already open to and contaminated by its other. Marrouchi's desire to pronounce judgement on Derrida would thus fall into this crack that deconstruction opens up. The inability to cordon off Derrida so as to asses him and his work and his political interventions (as if these things could be distinctly separate from one another) fails to grasp what the project of deconstruction and Derrida's writing more generally seeks to accomplish.

While there does not have to be a linear genealogical correlation between Derrida's assumed political concerns and his identity, to evidence this further, I will mention one or two instances of Derrida's 'lack of silence' or 'politics of non-denial' that present difficulties for those wishing to dismiss, attack, and chastise Derrida as 'irresponsible' even in their own lexicon. Marrouchi claims that he is writing in and for the memory of Tahar Diaout and Abdelkebir, two Algerian writers murdered for their public opposition to injustices committed by the Algerian government - a 'spokes-man' of Algeria, a 'responsible Algerian intellectual' who speaks in and for those who have been killed. Yet he is unaware that, together with Bourdieu, Derrida had, in 1993, helped to found the International Committee for the Support of Algerian Intellectuals [CISIA, *Comité International de soutien aux intellectuels algériens*], and also spoken out, and in the name of the Tahar Diaout and other Algerian intellectuals, writers, artists etc. Marrouchi also fails to mention a speech given at a public event in the Sorbonne's Grand amphitheater in 1994. Marrouchi's long and detailed assessment of Derrida's connection and writing on Algeria fails to mention this speech[25], a text which can be seen to perform and enact that which resists and escapes Marrouchi's attempt to master Derrida's texts in order to make the accusation that he lacks a certain responsibility towards his 'motherland'. The logic demonstrated here would refer back to the texts such as 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences', which speaks of totalisation as both impossible and dangerous. The attempt at mastery is always out-witted. And Marrouchi's text is deconstructed from within itself by its

[25] The speech was made in 1994, published in French in 1995, and in English in both *Acts of Religion*, *Negotiations*, and *College Literature*

inclusion of the footnote mentioned. This speech of Derrida's from 1994 was in fact published by Marrouchi in *College Literature* in 2003. Would this subsequent publication of Derrida's speech signal Marrouchi's approval and belief that the text holds a significance which he had believed was continually deferred in Derrida's oeuvre? It is an unanswerable question. Yet Marrouchi's attempt at a responsible assessment of Derrida's own responsibility thus fails to be responsible to Derrida by relying upon linear notions of temporality and inheritance. It is irresponsible.

As there 'is no inherently determinate relationship between past and future' (Barad 2010, 261), and the past constitutes an unfinished genesis that continues to live on in the present (Rooney 2013, 479) it may be more responsible to place Algeria *sous rature* and see it as the figure of the ineluctable primal scene of Derrida's writing and/or life, which affects Derrida's writing in ways which cannot be reduced to those of linear causality. Algeria would instead have a spectral effect on Derrida's work due to the challenge Derrida presents to temporality. This would be an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of irresponsibility displayed by Marrouchi's essay in the name of a different type of responsibility. Derrida's work may well be 'out of join' with some concerns of colonial discourse and postcolonial theory, for example, on the issue of reversing the hierarchy of power relations between coloniser and colonised. However, Derrida is clear that, even in the face of the ineluctable aporia of responsibility, such reversals are still to be sought and enacted in certain situations. For example, he says

> Frontal and simple critiques are always necessary; they are the law of rigor in a moral and political emergency...This opposition must be frontal and simple to what is happening today in Poland, or the Middle East, in Afghanistan, El Salvador, Chile, or Turkey, or to the manifestations of racism closer to home and to say many other more singular things that do not go by the name of the State or nation...[...]...the classical inversion of reversal...is also unavoidable in the strategy of political struggles: for example, against capitalist, colonialist, sexist violence. (Derrida 1995, 82-84).

Deconstruction may not be the first recourse of some colonial/postcolonial situations, and thus Derrida's work can be seen in a certain way to be 'out of joint' with some postcolonial research, perhaps, even, 'before its time'. But, as we have seen from the logic of Derrida's analysis, the coherence of linear historical causality cannot be asserted in any authoritative fashion without resting upon a mythical originary foundation of history. Hence, if we accept the spectral nature of time, and the

entanglement of the past, present and future, deconstruction can just as well be said to be of its time, and far too late, as 'before its time.'

In light of this exploration of Derrida's approach to writing Algeria as the response to the primal scene of the ineluctable, coupled with the difficult nature of what this means for responsibility, I would like to propose that what has been seen in Derrida's approach is an attempt to respond to the aporias of identity, origins and responsibility with a commitment to 'non-belonging' as the refusal of a dialectical movement of identity which would continue a legacy of appropriation and violence towards alterity. Instead, Derrida's writing displays an openness to the irreducible alterity and indeterminacy within identity and responsibility. This commitment to the wholly other otherness of the other speaks directly to the concept of hospitality which I will go onto discuss in the Chapter Seven. Therefore, along with David Carroll, we might see what remains of Algeria throughout Derrida's oeuvre as 'a commitment to the hospitality of those who do not belong' (Caroll 2006, 828) in the attempt to go beyond the exclusionary and dialectical violence in identity politics.

Chapter Two

Derrida and the Palestinians: interrogating attitudes towards settler-colonialism.

Having discussed the relationship between Derrida's thought and Postcolonial Studies in the previous chapter, I will now follow this by discussing Derrida's relation to Palestine. I want to move on to explore how the concepts discussed above, the aporias of identity, and responsibility, and a commitment to 'non-belonging' can be situated in the context of the Palestinian struggle. But there are two moves that I will make before getting to this stage. First, this exploration will necessitate a discussion of the relationship between Postcolonial Studies and Palestine and the debates around whether Palestine fits into this discourse, or whether by virtue of Palestine's colonial situation, Postcolonial Studies obscures the reality of Israel's oppression, as argued by Jospeh Massad and Gabriel Pitterberg, in which case another terminology is needed, such as Settler Colonial Studies?

The second move I will make is to work through some of Derrida's comments on Palestine which will help highlight the need to be more specific in the language used over the settler colonial nature of the Palestinian struggle. These two moves will then facilitate a discussion of whether or not deconstruction can be said to be hospitable to the need to bear witness to the Palestinian struggle in its settler colonial nature, and what the Palestinian struggle might offer deconstruction. I will do this by exploring Caroline Rooney's aphorism that 'The Palestinians *are* where deconstruction could be in the future' (Rooney 2009, 49).

Postcolonial Studies and Palestine

Palestine is largely absent from the field of Postcolonial Studies. Patrick Williams writes that there is a 'general absence of questions about Palestine on the postcolonial

agenda' (Williams 2010, 91), which he explains as a potential result of the 'triumphs of the Israeli propaganda machine' in convincing academics (and the world) that Israel is not a colonial state. Anna Ball also observes that 'critical inquiry into Palestinian culture, particularly in the 'Western' academy, is currently subject to a number of discursive limits' (Ball 2012, 1) and Anna Bernard concurs, adding that Palestine is a blind spot within postcolonialism (Bernard 2010, 1). These observations are undoubtedly true, although, as they also acknowledge, things are slowly changing in scholarship and degree courses in Postcolonial departments across the UK and these three scholars have made a significant contribution to addressing this absence[26]. The most pressing reason for this absence is that Palestine is not thought of, at large, as a (post-) colonial situation, and where it is seen as post-colonial, this is in reference to the narrative of Israel's independence struggle.

Williams and Ball write that the explanation that Palestine is a current colonial situation, not postcolonial, is 'the easiest (though sadly not the most accurate) explanation' (Williams and Ball, 2014, 128) for Palestine's relative absence from Postcolonial studies. Williams would prefer to work with an understanding that postcoloniality is 'not in any sense an achieved condition, but…[...]…an anticipatory discourse, looking forward to a better and as yet unrealized world' (Williams 2010, 93). Many postcolonial scholars work with this understanding, which 'facilitates the analysis of multiple forms of inequality, oppression and struggle' (Williams, 93) and is not restricted to 'literal' colonial situations, but rather deals with current, past, and the ongoing legacies and effects of colonialism, imperialism and globalisation. Not being too literal about the 'post ' of Postcolonial Studies, and accepting the non-linearity of its concerns, while also containing a future orientated utopianism is a highly commendable position to undertake. Yet this approach is not without its opponents, such as Ella Shohat, who raises concerns over the ambiguity between the philosophical and historical teleologies in the "postcolonial", which Williams and Ball don't address despite their redefining and inclusion of utopianism. I also have a reservation, which I will express in relation to a further reason Williams and Ball give for the absence of Palestine from the discipline, that being the lack of 'permission to narrate' when it comes to the realities and conditions of Palestine. This is again undoubtedly true; however, is it not the case that the elision of the settler colonial reality of Palestinian

[26] See, for example, the excellent intervention in this area in the special issue of the *Journal of Postcolonial Literature* 'Palestine and the Postcolonial: Culture, Creativity, Theory' (Williams and Ball 2014).

oppression is added to by the literality of the overarching term postcolonial? Are not the two concerns, questions of naming and the permission to narrate, coalescing rather than opposing reasons for Palestine's omission from the field of study, despite a handful of committed scholars? This ties in with another reason given for Palestine's absence, which is that many are convinced that Palestine is indeed not a colonial situation. Williams writes that it is perhaps one of the 'triumphs of the Israeli propaganda machine in convincing postcolonial scholars that they are not in fact witnessing a particularly brutal, if belated, form of colonialism' (Williams 2010, 91). Thus, it would appear that the naming of what is and is not colonial is still an important factor within Postcolonial Studies and thus, perhaps, another term/field of study is not the worst thing that could arise from this problem within the discipline.

Does not the absence of Palestine within Postcolonial Studies, due to the three outlined reasons (1. the colonial, not postcolonial, nature of the situation, 2. the lack of permission to narrate this colonial reality, and 3. the widespread belief that Palestine is not a colonial situation) necessitate that work is done to highlight, confirm and address the colonial reality? This line of thought is confirmed by others within the field, who have less institutional/disciplinary restrictions than the three scholars above (that of Postcolonial Studies within English Literature departments in the UK)[27], who continue to argue that Palestine is, in many ways, incompatible with Postcolonial studies. Joseph Massad and Ella Shohat both argue that describing Israel/Palestine as postcolonial is politically obfuscatory of the present situation, and potentially depoliticising via an 'a-historical' and universalising tendency within Postcolonial Studies. While debates over the prefix of Postcolonial Studies may be an old one[28], it is still important to readdress here in the context of Israel/Palestine and alongside the politics of naming and the currency the word postcolonial carries with it. Shohat argues that she does not wish to 'anatomize the term "postcolonial" semantically, but to situate it geographically, historically and institutionally, while raising doubts about its political agency' and 'unfold its slippery political significations' (Shohat 1992, 100). The term for Shohat 'collapses' specific colonial histories with 'the easy stroke of the "post"' and in relation to settler colonialism of Australia and the USA, she argues that it masks 'white settlers'

[27] Shohat identifies that postcolonialism is widely visible in Anglo-American academic (cultural) studies. (Shohat 101). Postcolonial Studies emerged out of Commonwealth Studies, and has only recently begun to be connected to Middle Eastern Studies.

[28] Indeed, Shohat's essay is from 1992, and this debate seems to have plagued Postcolonial Studies from its inception.

colonialist-racist policies towards indigenous peoples not only before independence but also after the official break from the imperial centre, while also de-emphasizing the neocolonial global positionings of First World settler-states' (102-103). Interestingly, this problematising of the term is in reference to settler colonial situations, which speaks directly to Israel's colonial rule over Palestine and the Palestinians. Pre-postcolonial is a term offered by Shohat (104) but this feels cumbersome, and does not hold the same clarity as settler colonial, although it does hold something of the utopianism that Williams desires. Using Shohat's thesis, I would argue that in the specific instance of Israel/Palestine, the globalizing gesture of "the postcolonial condition" or "postcoloniality" downplays the multiplicities of location and temporality (104) which are at play in this land. This is not to dismiss Postcolonial Studies, but rather to affirm the need to continue to distinguish and allow for difference, which may necessitate new fields of study emerging allowing for co-constituting knowledges to fight the common cause of oppression in its many guises. Shohat confirms that she is not disregarding the term postcolonial either, but rather asking for 'more flexible relations among the various conceptual frameworks' which allow us to address the 'politics of location' and help identify 'openings for agency and resistance' (112). The need to contain all movements, liberations, struggles and situations under the banner of postcolonial is perhaps a little worrying in light of the openness that Shohat suggests. In the case of Palestine, Shohat identifies a need to transcend the temporal gap between 'post' and 'pre' colonial, which is taken up by Joseph Massad in his essay 'The "Post-Colonial" colony: time, space, and bodies in Palestine/Israel' (Massad 2006).

In this essay, Massad also problematises the idea of Palestine as a postcolonial arena, both spatially and temporally. This is due to the 'synchronicity of the colonial and the postcolonial' that operates in Israel/Palestine when considering that for many, the formation of the State of Israel is a narrative of liberation from European oppression and an independence struggle, while at the same time, colonising the land of the Palestinians. Massad asks, 'Can one determine the coloniality of Palestine/Israel without noting its "postcoloniality" for Ashkenazi Jews? Can one determine the postcoloniality of Palestine/Israel without noting its coloniality for Palestinians?' (Massad 2006, 14). Massad proposes the idea of the "postcolonial" colony, which both acknowledges the history of Ashkenazi Jews and the originating difference to other colonial projects as one of opposition to European oppression and subjugation, while maintaining the colonial nature of this supposed postcolonial nation. Massad further

argues that the naming of 1948 as the 'Declaration of Independence' was a key political strategy:

> 'Israel's establishment in 1948 followed and coincided with the independence of many formerly colonial territories. Naming the "Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel" as the "Declaration of Independence" is then to be seen as an attempt to recontextualize the new Zionist territorial entity as one established against not via colonialism. Also, given the waning of the European empires, this renaming was equally an attempt to rehistoricize the new Zionist era as a post-colonial one' (19).

The link to postcolonial trajectories of nationhood that is highlighted here in changing the narrative in Israel's founding history is, I believe, a crucial element in this discussion over naming. It would appear that scholars with personal links to Israel/Palestine continue to recognise the need for a separation and differentiation when it comes to naming and associating the postcolonial with Palestine, while others believe it is still important to reinvigorate and shake up hegemonic Postcolonial Studies, but attempt to include Palestine within its field of inquiry. Both projects are necessary and can only help to create awareness of the colonial conditions under which Palestinians are forced to live.

Settler Colonial Studies

A field of study called 'Settler Colonial Studies'[29] has arisen in part due to the perception that Colonial and Postcolonial Studies have not developed the analytical tools in relation to the differences *between types of colonialism* in order to adapt and cope with the specificities of settler colonialism. Lorenzo Veracini argues that the work which has come to constitute this field was 'collectively suggesting that settler colonial phenomena could no longer be appraised with the interpretative tools developed by colonial studies' (Veracini 2013, 325). This field has mainly arisen outside of Literature departments, by scholars in anthropology and history, which may signal the lack of crossover between Postcolonial Studies and Settler Colonial Studies and the seeming resistance of Postcolonial Studies to concede its lack of attention and therefore failings

[29] On settler colonialism, see Daiva K. Stasiulis and Nira Yuval–Davis (1995); Patrick Wolfe (1999); Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (2005); Lorenzo Veracini, (2010).

in addressing the specificities of settler colonialism[30]. Lorenzo Veracini states in his introduction to *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (2010) that this field of study concentrates on 'settler colonialism as distinct from colonialism', which, he goes onto say is 'often stated but rarely investigated' (Veracini 2010, 4). Settler colonialism, Veracini writes, is 'a global and genuinely transnational phenomenon, a phenomenon that national and imperial historiographies fail to address as such, and colonial studies and postcolonial literatures have developed interpretative categories that are not specifically suited for an appraisal of settler colonial circumstances' (2). What then are the specificities that *Settler Colonial Studies* seeks to highlight in distinction from other forms of analysis? And why might this be helpful in a study on deconstruction and Palestine?

A definition of settler colonialism which has become prominent is that of Patrick Wolfe, who states that 'settler colonialism is not an event it is a structure' (Wolfe 1999, 1). Wolfe distinguishes between the prominent theoreticians (Fanon and Cabral are mentioned) whom he sees to have founded Postcolonial Studies, and the need for a new type of analysis. He states that 'For all the homage paid to heterogeneity and difference, the bulk of 'post'-colonial theorising is disabled by an oddly monolithic, and surprisingly unexamined, notion of colonialism' (1). Wolf proposes that this is a result of a pervasive Eurocentrism and the accident (which he questions) of the fact that most of the prominent theorists who founded the postcolonial canon came from franchise or dependent - as opposed to settler or creole - colonies (2)[31]. Colonialism is classically defined as domination by a foreign minority over an indigenous majority and controlled by a metropolitan centre from afar, often with the motivating impetus of gaining military and /or economic advantage. Colonialism moves in to exploit the natives' labour and land, and uses the indigenous population for its benefit. Settler colonialism however, while overlapping with these factors, is not structured in the same way.

Settler colonialism then, as distinct from colonialism, is motivated by (at least) three distinct and different factors. These can be summarised as: 1) the settler's

[30] With the exception of Caroline Rooney, who organised a Settler Cultures Workshop, with involvement from Piterberg, Morton and Parry in 2010.

[31] See Rooney (2013), for a discussion of the difference and distinction between postcolonial theory and liberation theory. Also, Wolfe's analysis here doesn't take Edward Said into account, who is often seen as one of the founding theorists of post-colonial theory, alongside Fanon, Spivak, and Bhabah. Despite Said's colonial rather than postcolonial situation, as described above, Palestine as colony has been all but missing from Postcolonial Studies.

relationship to the land and the desire to create communities on 'virgin' territory with religious or ethnic ties to the land; 2) the relationship between coloniser and colonised is radically different, as the settler society hopes to expel the indigenous population from the land rather than to exploit the colonised for labour; and 3) the legacy and possibility for decolonisation is problematised, because whereas colonialists in their various forms (administrators, military etc.) generally return to their metropole, particularly in the process of decolonisation, settlers stay and remain, as they are perceived to have already 'returned' to their homeland.[32] Veracini categorises the specific aspects of the divide between colonialism and settler colonial phenomena under the banners 'population', 'sovereignty', 'consciousness' and 'narrative' – and states that his aim is 'not so much to confirm a conceptual distinction, but, rather to emphasise dialectical opposition' (Veracini 2010, 4) – even while he recognises that the two forms of colonialism, 'intertwine, interact, and overlap' (4). What is interesting about this approach (especially when putting this approach in conversation with deconstruction), is the desire to break conceptually and theoretically with a field and the analytical tools there within, while simultaneously recognising the entanglement of these fields of study. Yuval-Davis and Stasiulius in their edited collection *Unsettling Settler Societies* (1995) write, contra Veracini, that they are resistant to 'drawing an unambiguous line of demarcation between settler and other (colonial, postcolonial, metropolitan) societies', an approach which they see as 'consistent with [their] understanding that the circuits of power are vastly more complicated both globally and in specific locations than any binary division allows' (3). Instead they suggest that 'settled societies must be seen as falling along a continuum rather than within clear and fixed boundaries' (3).

We see the same kind of arguments in the above regarding the position of Palestine within Postcolonial Studies, but here the question is of the clear distinction of one thing from another, i.e. settler colonialism from colonialism. Can this be understood as pure academic argumentation over disciplinary boundaries? Or is it more a question of the importance in the separation of one thing from another,

[32] These three points are informed by Elkins and Pedersen (2005), Veracini (2010) and Wolfe (1999). It must also be noted that Veracini does not make connection to Israel's dependent relationship on the United States, which troubles, to some degree, the notion that Israel as a settler colonial state is separate from Western centres.

difference, while acknowledging the blurring of boundaries and complementary knowledges, rather than opposing ones[33].

Distinction and difference, however, continue to be emphasised in this context. Some figures, such as Gabriel Pitterberg, write that 'the frequent placement of settler colonial literature in larger bodies of discussion on postcolonial literature' is problematic, emphasising the need to separate the discussion because of 'scholarly, political and moral' tensions which arise at this collapsing of these differences (Pitterberg 2011, 48). He goes on to include the description of settler colonialism by Wolfe, who argues that 'one of the most distinctive features of settler colonialism—materially and culturally—is arguably its 'present perfectness' ('invasion is a structure, not an event')' before asking very bluntly, regarding Palestine, 'In precisely what sense is this formation postcolonial? And, momentarily putting aside Gaza and the West Bank, how does one convince the Israeli Palestinians in the Galilee or the Triangles that theirs has been a postcolonial experience after 1948?' (Piterberg 2011, 47). What is at stake for Pitterberg is not only that settler colonialism is a separate historical phenomenon to colonialism, but that not calling attention to this reality in specific terminology has larger ramifications in the Israel/Palestine context than appear to be assumed by those within Postcolonial Studies. What then is the argument outlined by Settler Colonial Studies for the need for a new field of inquiry? Or, more straightforwardly, what is Settler Colonial Studies concerned with that Postcolonial Studies is not? A simple and easy answer would be that, if Israel/Palestine is absent from Postcolonial Studies, that cannot be said to be the case in Settler Colonial Studies.

My approach henceforth will be to neither disregard the tools and discipline of Postcolonial Studies, accepting that it as an act of opposition to all forms of colonial and imperial oppression that is interested in the memory work that uncovers, dissects and analyses the forms of power relations and suppression that have been imposed on colonial subjects. However, I will also adopt the language and tools of Settler Colonial Studies in conjunction with the memory work and deconstruction of power that Postcolonial Studies embodies – so as to resist the border controls of scholarly fields and embrace the entanglement and necessary evolution of 'fields of study', such as settler colonial analysis, as I do agree that there is a need to be more specific in our language over the settler colonial situation in Palestine, as the following discussion of

[33] This line of thought on difference, sameness and separation has echoes of a discussion I will be moving onto surrounding Haraway's situated knowledges and Karen Barad's conception of agential-realism.

Derrida and the Palestinians will go onto highlight. My incorporation of settler colonial as a description and mode of analysis for Israel/Palestine is because of the avowal of the historical and ongoing structure of domination that this terminology makes clear, and because it allows for an analysis of the situation to issue forth from this understanding rather than becoming embroiled within the liberal discourses of peace talks, security and terrorism, which disavow the context, history and structure of settler colonialism as the root and ongoing cause of the 'conflict'. While this root is in many ways a 'fiction', as 'it is extremely important to avoid explanations that reduce everything to the marionette movements of a monolithic colonialism' (Gregory 2004, 7), changing the emphasis of the 'conflict' in Israel/Palestine and championing the understanding of its colonial 'roots' rather than its 'religious' nature, is not, in my view, to obscure other factors or to be reductive, but rather to help change the framing, while acknowledging that the framing is but a tool of understanding. Thus, within Settler Colonial Studies, the nature of the colonial situation becomes unavoidable in a way that Postcolonial Studies has perhaps not yet made so evident, and can therefore be used strategically. This is not to say that Postcolonial Studies has deliberately disavowed the nature of the Palestinian situation, but that is has just been absent, and the terminology and naming that Settler Colonial Studies illuminates can only be a helpful thing in bringing to light the situation and history of Israel's settler regime. My efforts here will not be to specifically argue and defend the line of argument that Israel is a settler colonial state, as that has been demonstrated aptly in other places[34], but to confirm that is it through this understanding that I will be interpreting and reading Israel/Palestine.

I will now move onto the second move mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, and discuss some of Derrida's comments on Palestine and how I see it to be necessary to counterpoint his comments with the context and language of Israel as a settler colonial state, which in turn helps highlight some of the problems in Derrida's thinking and attitude towards the Palestinians.

Derrida and the Palestinians

[34] See Piterberg (2008), Gregory (2004), Veracini (2006).

This section will explore the type of solidarity Derrida demonstrated towards the Palestinians and whether or not this support amounts to a 'betrayal' of the Palestinians. The ambiguity of the phrase 'Derrida and the Palestinians'[35] will haunt this discussion, as its potential formulations are multiple. '*Derrida* and the Palestinians', emphasises Derrida as the main focus, which can also be read as 'Derrida *on* the Palestinians'; secondly, 'Derrida *and* the Palestinians', denotes a symmetrical consideration of the relationship between the two parties; and finally, there is the consideration of 'Derrida and *the Palestinians*', where Palestinian concerns come first and are related to Derrida, better written as '*The Palestinians* and Derrida.' This is to say nothing of how the signification of deconstruction, in place of Derrida, would come to affect this discussion, as it surely will. But here I will be more concerned with Derrida's comments on the situation of the Palestinians.

In relation to Chapter 1, which argued that because responsibility is structured by an aporia, making it impossible to assess, or make a judgement, regarding what constitutes responsibility, this discussion is not an attempt to pronounce judgement on Derrida for his comments on Israel/Palestine. Rather, I will seek to highlight the implicit assumptions and undeconstructed attitudes in Derrida's comments, and look at the consequences that such unquestioning brings to the possibility of justice in this situation. My desire is not to chastise, but to read closely and think about how his mode of solidarity with the Palestinians is understood in the context of those seeking justice for Palestinians, and not just peace in the region.

When the question of justice is brought to bear on the paring of Derrida and the Palestinians, the relationship becomes considerably more strained, in each formulation. For the question of whether it is possible to do justice to both Derrida *and* the Palestinians, indeed *the Palestinians* and Derrida, is at stake. This question is of course multiplied (perhaps to the nth degree) in this context with the demand to *do justice to* the Palestinians. And this would not only be a question of doing justice to, but also to demand justice *for* the Palestinians and to heed the sustained call for justice *in* Palestine[36].

The question of what justice means will have to be posed, alongside whether justice for Palestinians is incommensurable with justice for Israelis and others living in

[35] I use this phrase with the knowledge that a singular entity, on either side, has of course, never existed.

[36] The call I will be responding most clearly to in this chapter is that of the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC).

the land of historic Palestine. When I speak of justice for the Palestinians, I follow the work and thought of Omar Barghouti and the BDS movement, which takes a rights based approach and is in compliance with International Law. Justice for the Palestinians in this sense means three things: 1. Ending the occupation and colonisation of all Arab lands and dismantling the Separation Barrier; 2. Recognition of the fundamental rights of Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; 3. Respect, protection and promotion of the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194. These conditions ask for the basic rights of Palestinians to be granted in accordance with those given to other peoples, as well as the right to self-determination.

The stakes are raised when we consider the phrase 'deconstruction is justice'. The assumption implicit in this phrase is that deconstruction is incompatible with injustice, and therefore the relationship between deconstruction and the Palestinians must necessarily be a just one. By association then, Derrida's comments and support for the Palestinians should automatically be taken as just. But these assumptions would move far too quickly, without deconstructing implicit and overlooked problems within Derrida's comments. The endeavour of this discussion then is to do justice to *both Derrida and the Palestinians*. In many ways, this will remain an impossibility, for if we follow Derrida's idea that 'justice is to come', then it will be impossible to do justice in this situation. But that will not stop me proceeding, because as we have been reminded on numerous occasions, we must 'do the impossible.' This begs the question of whether justice is possible at all, which entails the question of justice for all who now live on the land of historic Palestine. In this regard I concur with the thoughts of Judith Butler, who says that 'what will be just for the Jews will also be just for the Palestinians, and for all the other people living there, since justice, when just, fails to discriminate, and we savor that failure' (Butler 2013).

Obviously, the question of 'justice' emerges here in a context that demands sensitivity, and with different objects/subjects. Derrida is 'a dead' (in the most empirical sense possible) philosopher, while the Palestinians are an oppressed, colonised and exiled people: the stakes for justice are not comparable. It also arises because in the work done on this relationship, there is a tendency *not* to do justice to one party in the conjunction, 'in the name' of doing justice to the other.

Derrida writes in 'To Do Justice To Freud', 'When one says "one must do justice," "one has to be fair" ["*il faut être juste*"], it is often with the intention of correcting an

impulse or reversing the direction of a tendency; one is also resisting a temptation.' (Derrida 1998d, 81). The temptation that arises on the side of those concerned with Palestinian liberation is to attack Derrida for betraying the Palestinian cause by way of silence, avoidance, and dubious politics in relation to the State of Israel. This attitude is seen in the essay, 'The question of Europe: Said and Derrida', where John Docker accuses Derrida of betraying the Palestinian cause by way of being Edward Said's 'historical betrayer'. He is given this name because Docker believes that Said's protest would have been all the more powerful 'if Derrida, the world-famous deconstructionist, had joined him in a common effort to denounce Zionism and Israel for their treatment of the Palestinians and Sephardim' (Docker 284). Noting, but moving on from, the patronising and Orientalising gesture of this phrase, Docker wants to pass judgement based on what Derrida did or didn't say about the Palestinians, and the Arab-Jewish community in Israel. However, if Docker is to be judged by his own standards, his awareness of suffering in Israel fails to mention the Mizrahi Jews or Bedouin peoples of Israel/Palestine, and thus demonstrates that those who wish to be able to pronounce judgement on somebody's ethical and moral standards can only do so from an incomplete place of justification.[37] Docker does raise some interesting points in regard to Derrida's comments and silences on Israel/Palestine, but the question remains as to whether these comments and silences amount to a betrayal?

On the other side, those who I will for brevity call the Derrideans, the temptation is to give Derrida a get out of jail free card and attempt to exculpate Derrida from any mistakes (a different accusation to that of historical betrayer). For example, Martin McQuillan argues that

> when Derrida writes of the logocentrism, Western thought, Europe, the remainder [*cindres*], the enlightenment, nationalism, the religious, the messianic, the Abrahamic, Marxism, friendship, hospitality and so on, he will have been writing, according to a certain index, about nothing other than Palestine' (McQuillan 2009, 167).

This type of argument stands on the back of the 'assumption' that if 'deconstruction is justice' then Derrida's work is necessarily 'just' when put in conjunction with any situation, and thus is 'always-already' able to speak to the question of Palestine. This is

[37] Docker writes patronisingly of Edward Said's own effort to protest against Zionism, implying that if only a famous French philosopher had spoken out too, Said's resistance would have been amplified, as though to imply that Derrida's words would have somehow magically changed the course of history for the Palestinians, in a way that Said's efforts weren't capable of achieving.

not a reading of Derrida or deconstruction that I can follow, as I hope to go on to show. But the idea that deconstruction in its current manifestation does not have all the answers when it comes to the question of Palestine will sound to some like a betrayal of deconstruction. Thus, does being just to the Palestinians, in the relationship between Derrida and the Palestinians, necessitate something that resembles a betrayal of Derrida and/or deconstruction?

The question of betrayal will be a significant one in this discussion, in its numerous potentialities. I will attempt to steer between two extremes in this chapter: that of defending Derrida without question, and of disregarding Derrida without exception. If there is a desire to 'correct an impulse' in this situation, it would be against the impulse of making a judgement too quickly, or having a pre-formed response to the subject in hand. My desire then is to open a space of listening and consideration as to what Derrida's attitude towards the Palestinians may have been, but with the right to also ask some difficult questions of Derrida and deconstruction. I am aware that this request may be suspected as both a type of posthumous apologetic or defence on Derrida's behalf, or as a naive reading of Derridean politics, for which I may be accused of 'too quick a reading'. But I risk these interpretations in the name a justice to come, both for Derrida and the Palestinians, and perhaps also for a future of deconstruction, that is yet to be realised. For it is my argument that, to do justice to Derrida on the Palestinians, it is necessary to forsake solidarity and loyalty for criticism. However, this may in fact be the most Derridean gesture possible, even while its aim in this instance is Derrida himself.

Solidarity, Event, Context

Did Derrida support the Palestinians?

The answer will have to be both yes and no. In what follows I will go onto respond to a text of Derrida's which makes no appearance in the commentary on Derrida's relationship and attitude to Israel/Palestine. The text is a short message which Derrida wrote in response to a call for peace in Palestine, which was launched by the International Parliament of Writers (IPW) on the 6th of March 2002[38]. It coincided

[38] The text was published in 'Le Voyage en Palestine' (Paris: Climats 2002). No translation of this text could be found; therefore all translations are my own. The full text is included as Appendix 1 of this thesis. There is

with the request of poet Mahmoud Darwish, for a delegation of writers[39] from the IPW to visit the Occupied Territories in order to witness for themselves, and to subsequently write about, the continued occupation and conditions under which the State of Israel forces Palestinians to live. It was in the context of an evening of cultural exchange in Ramallah, where Mahmoud Darwish spoke, and the IPW writers shared their shock at the conditions under which the Palestinians were forced to live[40], that this message of solidarity from Jacques Derrida was read. The main body of the message is made up by three long quotations from previous texts[41] where Derrida touches on his solidarity with those in the region, but it also includes fresh thoughts and expressions of support.

It begins like this:

> Dear friends, Without neglecting any difference or singularity, I would like to speak here to all those who, Palestinians or Israelis, in my eyes have exemplary courage, have taken all risks to testify publicly, in speaking or writing, and by political and poetic engagement, of the necessity to oppose the forces of death and military repression, wherever they come from, whether on the side of an instituted state, or of a state on its way to being instituted[42].

For anyone engaged in the Palestinian struggle, there are immediate problems with this opening statement, namely the implication of symmetry between coloniser and colonised. But before going on to discuss the problems in this first paragraph, I would like to explore what I perceive to be the desire of Derrida's opening sentence, even if we find fault with the desire's expression. Derrida's desire not to neglect any difference or singularity either on the Palestinian or Israeli side is a significant trajectory for Derrida's attitude towards the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. He was always keen to express his support and solidarity for both Palestinians and Israelis. In another example from a previous visit to the region (the first citation in this message) he says, 'I made it plain that my desire was to demonstrate my solidarity and friendship, to meet

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also recording of Derrida reading this message which accompanies Safaa Fathy's *D'ailleurs, Derrida.* Whether or not this was presented in Ramallah is unclear. A message from Hélène Cixous was also delivered.

[39] The writers included Russell Banks, Breyten Breytenbach, Vincenzo Consolo, Bei Dao, Juan Goytisolo, Christian Salmon, José Saramago and Wole Soyinka.

[40] Saramago caused controversy by comparing the situation in the O.T. to Auschwitz. He responded to the Israeli press by saying 'If the word Auschwitz is so shocking, I will call it a crime against humanity" (Al-haram, 'An incurable malady: hope' Issue 580, accessed online, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/580/cu1.htm)

[41] 'Interpretations at War: Kant, the Jew, the German', *Counterpath: Traveling with Jacques Derrida,* 'Nous?' *in* Un très proche Orient, Paroles de paix

[42] For the whole text see Appendix 1. All quotations are my own translation.

not only Israeli intellectuals, writers and colleagues, but also Palestinian intellectuals, writers and colleagues.'[43] While this sentiment is not without its problems, which I will move onto later in a discussion of the symmetry between coloniser and colonised that it implies, I want to try and trace why Derrida emphasises the desire to show solidarity with those who oppose terror and the forces of death on either side. It appears to me as an expression of his respect for the singularity of human life. In the essay 'Whom to Give to (Knowing Not to Know)' (Derrida 1998b), which is an appropriate context for this discussion due to its geographical and religious significance, Derrida explores the concept of singularity. The text is a discussion of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah, which Derrida argues is the 'most common and everyday experience of responsibility' (Derrida 1998b, 68). The duty of responsibility to the other, laid out in the story of Abraham and Isaac, is one which demands the betrayal or sacrifice of another other, or other others. In this scenario, the other to whom Abraham is being faithful is God, and the one whom he is asked to sacrifice, in order to show his unconditional faithfulness to God, is his son Isaac. Derrida uses this example in order to suggest two things; firstly, the duty to love or be faithful is unable to be justified; he writes 'What binds me to singularities, to this one or that one, male or female, rather than that one or this one, remains finally unjustifiable' (71). The reason here would be that, if it is universal that every human being's life is an absolute singularity, and thus demands our responsibility, our choice to love certain people must betray this responsibility. Secondly, that response-ability to another, my love or faithfulness, will require me to sacrifice the same response towards others. Derrida writes 'As soon as I enter into a relation with the other, with the gaze, look, request, love, command, or call of the other, I know that I can respond only by sacrificing ethics, that is to say by sacrificing whatever obliges me to also respond, in the same way, in the same instant, to all others' (71). Thus, the only thing we are able to do in such a situation is to choose. Our response-ability is both finite and limited, but we can nonetheless respond to a singularity, rather than remain paralyzed by this aporia. While this sacrifices our responsibility to others, Derrida suggests that by responding, we uphold an ethical responsibility. Anne Norton agrees, writing that, in Derrida's argument, 'the exception is not the occasion for violence but the moment when violence is arrested' (Norton 2009, 163), and thus we maintain the duty to the absolute, and remain ethical, albeit it 'otherwise'.

[43] See Appendix 1.

In relation to Derrida's commitment to both Israelis and Palestinians, it is via this logic of respect to the absolute singularity of life that the inability and unjustifiable nature of the choice between the two groups of friends arises in his comment above. But, as Derrida says, a sacrifice has to be made in every form of political responsibility, in every commitment, and this 'joint' solidarity is no different. We must ask here, what is being sacrificed in this form of solidarity? It might be seen in similar terms to those described by Anne Norton when she suggests that Derrida offers us 'a happy ending' in his reading of Abraham and Isaac where 'the sacrifice that faith demands never has to be made' (Norton 2009, 163). That is to say, the sacrifice appears to have been passed over, but as we know, a lamb appears to take Isaac's place. Norton equates this lamb with Abraham's other unmentioned son, Ishmael, who in the logic of Derrida's commentary is sacrificed for the covenant and promise made to another; the chosen son Isaac. Following this, Ishmael, a much over-looked figure in the grand narrative of Judeo-Christian discourse, can be taken for a symbol of Palestine in this instance.

What does Derrida's insistence on this type of equality mean in a colonial situation? Joseph Massad writes, witheringly, that the type of equality Derrida aspires to is a liberal one; 'it is not an Aristotelian or a Marxist notion of justice - wherein justice means treating equal people equally and unequal people unequally - that Derrida [invokes], but rather a bourgeois liberal notion of justice - wherein equal and unequal people must be treated equally - to which he seems committed' (Massad 2013, 76). While Derrida puts into question standard and accepted notions of justice, asking whether or not the concept even exists as an ideal, and challenging traditional notions of Marxism's' calls for justice (which can be seen to avoid significant sectors of society) Derrida's insistence on his support for both sides needs to be probed in order to answer Massad. The problem, in my mind, rests upon the acknowledgement, or not, that Israel is a settler colonial state. It becomes increasingly more difficult to state an 'equal solidarity' with both sides when this fact becomes understood. And this is not to say that one cannot demonstrate solidarity with Israelis and support Israel's right to exist, while remaining vigilant on criticising its subjugating colonial practices.

In Derrida's message of solidarity, Derrida chooses to express solidarity with both Israelis and Palestinians, but the lamb to be sacrificed must be found somewhere. One could argue that the sacrificial lamb takes the form of all the other causes that Derrida has to forsake in order to speak out for this particular struggle. Or he could, in more serious terms, be said to sacrifice a solidarity with the Palestinians, by insisting

on equality, in the name of the absolute singularity of human life, to both the colonised and the coloniser. For example, in the first paragraph quoted above Derrida equates the 'forces of death, of terror, and military repression' on both sides on the conflict. There is no acknowledgement here of the lack of symmetry between the Israeli State and the Palestinians, and an implicit disavowal of the colonial nature of the situation. On the Israeli side, the forces of death, terror and military repression take the form of an illegal daily occupation, which employs one of the most well financed armies in the world, comprised of the most advanced forms of military weaponry; committing indiscriminate killing of civilians, including children, on a regular basis; State sanctioned racial discrimination; the violation of numerous international laws, including the continued building of the separation wall and settler colonies in the Occupied Territories. A few home-made rockets, from an un-financed, un-military, small section of Palestinian society being described in equal terms to this is laughable. Not to mention how resistance to colonial subjugation is not described as terror under international law. Therefore, Derrida's pairing in this way maintains a misrepresentation of symmetry.

Just as Ishamel is passed over for the calling of Isaac, so too the Palestinians and their cause are sacrificed with Derrida's desire not to sacrifice anything or anyone, and have an ecumenical happy ending, in a situation where that ending is far from close. It is in the name of a universalism, an absolute demand to responsibility, that Derrida does this. But is this universalism sacrificing other, more fundamental rights? As I hope to go onto show, this demand might be met through another route, through a different type of sacrifice.

As mentioned above, Derrida's message includes three large quotations from pervious texts, which touch upon the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The first citation is from 1988, on Derrida's 3rd visit to Jerusalem/Al-Quds[44]. This is the first of three quotations that make up this message of solidarity. The repetition of these passages signals Derrida's insistence on his attitude towards Israel/Palestine, and he quotes them here years after they were first spoken, as if to say that his attitude has not changed. This first quote is from 'Interpretations at War', which can be read as a trenchant critique of Zionism. This would imply that it can also be read as a critique of Israel as a racist colonial state, which continues its discrimination of Palestinians both

[44] As Massad and Wise point out, Derrida unanimously refers to Jerusalem and not the historic Arab name, Al-Quds. Therefore, any mention of Al-Quds in this chapter is my inclusion, unless otherwise stated.

inside and outside Israel. However, Derrida doesn't connect the dots, or rather never acknowledges Israel as a settler colonial state. At the beginning of this paper he writes that he had expressed to his Israeli hosts '[his] wish to participate in a conference where Arab and Palestinian colleagues would be officially invited and actively involved' and expressed solidarity with all those who 'condemn the crimes of terrorism, of military and police repression, and those who advocate the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories as well as the recognition of the Palestinians' rights to choose their own representatives.'[45] Again, on the surface this appears to be a clear support of Palestinian rights and peace in Israel/Palestine. But when placed in the context and understanding of Israel as a settler colonial state, the support falls short. Those who show support for people on both sides need ask themselves nothing of why this violence is occurring in the first place; it is too easy to be a mere advocate for peace. What Derrida's avoids, or disavows, in his support and solidarity is to avow and bear witness to the unequal power relation that exists between Israel and the Palestinians, and the colonial nature of the situation. As Joseph Massad writes, 'It is unclear to what notion of hos(ti)pitality Derrida was appealing when he expressed his wish for an "invitation" to be extended "officially" by the racially privileged citizens of a conquering and racially discriminatory state to their conquered, racially inferior victims' (Massad 2013, 76). While Derrida mentions the occupation, there is no reflection on the difficulties Palestinians face both within Israel, and in the diaspora, in regard to Israel's racial and legal discrimination.

In the message of solidarity, Derrida goes on to describe his meeting with Palestinian intellectuals in the Occupied Territories. And this visit does go some way as to expressing and supporting Palestinians, albeit within the confines of an understanding of the conflict that does not avow its apartheid nature. This visit is the meeting mentioned in Geoffrey Bennington's Derridabase biography, which seems to be a touch point for many glosses on Derrida's support for Palestinians[46]. The Israeli authorities had closed all of the Universities in the Occupied Territories during the first Intifada, another context which Derrida does not explicitly name. Due to this circumstance, Derrida was received in the house of the late Dr. Gabi Baramki to meet with Palestinian academics. Derrida writes that he remembers an afternoon 'during

[45] See Appendix 1.
[46] See for example the Introduction to *Derrida and the Time of the Political* (2010) and Benoit Peeters *Derrida: A Biography* (2012), which also references this meeting.

which [Palestinian colleagues] told me, described and analysed their suffering, every kind of limit that was imposed upon them, whether regarding passports, the freedom of movement, of teaching activities or political expression.'[47] One of the intellectuals present was Professor Geroge Giacaman, who remembers a general discussion of their working conditions and Derrida's opposition to the closure of Birzeit University. The atmosphere was friendly and sympathetic, and Giacaman expresses his feeling that Derrida's 'political views were comparable to those on the left in the Israeli political spectrum, meaning he is a supporter of Israel but not necessarily of occupation.' This would equate to liberal Zionism. However, his feeling was still that 'The mere fact of making a point of visiting Birzeit while closed was interpreted as a statement of solidarity of sorts.'[48]

An important question for this debate is what kind of support does Derrida offer to the State of Israel, and does this diminish his understanding and solidarity with the Palestinians? In various instances, while expressing his solidarity with both Israelis and Palestinians, Derrida adds an explicit concern for the right of Israel to exist. In the text presented at the visit of 1988, it is expressed twice in the context of his support for the end of violence; 'the state of Israel (whose existence, it goes without saying, must henceforth be recognized by all and definitively guaranteed)', and '[My presence here] is meant also as an expression of respect for a certain image of Israel and as an expression of hope for its future.'[49] There seems to be an unconditional and unquestionable solidarity that Derrida has with 'a certain image of Israel' and its future, which he does not explicitly mention in the same way for the Palestinians[50]. It is almost as if this concern for Israel has the final say at every corner of his expression for peace in the region. What must be insisted on here is that criticism of Israel is neither anti-Semitic nor an expression of the desire for Israel to have no future. It is necessary to recognise that unconditional support for Israel is support for an apartheid and racist state which cannot, and should not, be supported unconditionally when there are others being oppressed, killed, and ethnically cleansed by the object of this unconditional support. The question that then arises in this context is whether it is possible to express support for the future of Israel, but not for its current form to be

[47] See Appendix 1.
[48] Personal correspondence.
[49] See Appendix 1.
[50] And when it is asked - which people are more likely to be erased from history, the answer can no longer be the Jewish people, it must be acknowledged that being written out of history and ethnically cleansed is now an issue for the Palestinians much more than for the Jews.

unconditionally recognised by all? The answer has to be yes. This is because its current form is a Jewish State for Jewish citizens, rather than an Israeli state for Israeli citizens, and thus by definition is not democratic. Support for Palestinian rights, in their various situations, is in conflict with the current expression of Israel as a settler colonial state. Examples of the ability to go beyond an unconditional support for Israel, while still supporting a certain image of Israel, can be seen in the work of Edward Said and Judith Butler. Butler is a particularly helpful example in this context, as she also admits to having an emotional attachment to Israel, yet refuses to let this dictate her attitude to the Palestinians. Butler writes in 2003,

> What do we make of Jews such as myself, who are emotionally invested in the state of Israel, critical of its current form, and call for a radical restructuring of its economic and juridical basis precisely because we are invested in it? It is always possible to say that such Jews have turned against their own Jewishness. But what if one criticises Israel in the name of one's Jewishness, in the name of justice, precisely because such criticisms seem 'best for the Jews'? Why wouldn't it always be 'best for the Jews' to embrace forms of democracy that extend what is 'best' to everyone, Jewish or not? (Butler 2003, 19)

Derrida argues something similar, not expressed in the comments of his message, of the importance in distinguishing between Israel, Zionism, Jews etc., in various places. Below, I cite a long example which shows Derrida is at pains to articulate himself correctly over the intricate language needed when discussing the State of Israel.

> One must be able to oppose such and such a politics of such and such a government of the state of Israel without being in principle hostile to the existence of this state (I would even say: on the contrary!), and without anti-Semitism or anti-Zionism. I would even go further with another hypothesis: to go so far as to ask oneself uneasily about the historical foundation of the state, its conditions and what followed from it, this need not, even on the part of some Jews, were they to espouse the idea of Zionism, imply any betrayal of Judaism. The logic of opposition to the state of Israel or to its de facto politics does not necessarily imply any anti-Semitism, or even any anti-Zionism, or certainly any revisionism in the sense I spoke of earlier. There are some very great examples one could cite (such as Buber, speaking of the past). But, to go no further than principles and generalities, don't you think that our duty today demands that we denounce confusion and guard against it from *two sides*? On the one side, there is the nationalist confusion of those who slip from the left to right and confound every European project with the fact of the actual politics of the European Community today, or the anti-Jewish confusion of those who cannot recognize any dividing line between criticizing the Israeli state and anti-Israelism, anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism, revisionism, etc. There are at least five possibilities here, and they must remain absolutely distinct. These metonymic slips are all the more serious politically, intellectually, and philosophically, in that they threaten from both sides, so to speak: those who yield to them in practice and those who, on

the other side, denounce them while symmetrically adopting their logic, as if one could not do this without doing that - for example, oppose the actual politics of Europe without being anti-European in principle; or question the state of Israel, its political past or present, even the conditions of its foundation and what has followed from it for over the past half-century, without thereby being anti-Semitic, or even anti-Zionist, or even revisionist-negationist, etc. This symmetry between adversaries links obscurantist confusion to terrorism. It requires relentless determination and courage to resist these hidden (occulting, occultist) strategies of amalgamation. To stand up to this double operation of intimation, the only responsible response is never to relinquish distinctions and analyses (Derrida 2002b)

It is clear that Derrida is aware of the need to be careful with such language, of the difficulties which exist in the discourses surrounding Israel. However the same care and nuance is not seen in Derrida when it comes to the Palestinian side of the struggle. Again this has been pointed out by various critics[51], namely in Derrida's use of Jerusalem over Al-Quds, and the Hebrew names for the religious locations rather than their ancient Arabic names. The problem can, in a generous reading perhaps, be said to come down to the problem of emphasis. But this type of 'emphasis' is far too persistent to be dismissed as such. On every occasion that Derrida speaks of Israel/Palestine, his emphasis is on the right of the State of Israel to exist. It is not that what Derrida says or expresses here is wrong in any way, in fact it is right to detail and pause over the need to distinguish between anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism etc., but to do this and remain silent over the concerns and needs of the colonised on every occasion has to be read, whether intended or not, as a political bias. The difficulty in this language must be accompanied with clear support for the colonised. One has to ask, or indeed the question asks itself, has Derrida got his emphasis right?

An example which I feel betrays Derrida's bias appears in a discussion with Jacqueline Rose and Hélène Cixous at an event hosted by Jewish Book week in London in March 2004. In the course of the conversation, Derrida had been discussing his relationship to Judaism etc., and then in the final question Rose says 'I would love to hear you talk about Israel, how you see that in relationship to the question of Jewish identity today' (Rose 2004). Derrida's response is to give an anecdote from the lecture he gave in Jerusalem, which was discussed above - the one he quotes first in his message of solidarity. He mentions that his request for Palestinians to attend the conference was met with 'surprise'. He says, 'My Israeli friends were first, not shocked, but surprised, and did their best to have at least one Palestinian at the conference. It

[51] See Wise (2002) (2010), Docker (2009), Massad (2009)

was not only their fault because the Palestinians wouldn't come' (Rose 2004). The question of the Palestinians being unwilling to attend is surprisingly naive for Derrida. He effectively blames the Palestinians for refusing to be collusive with their oppressors, and those complicit in their colonial subjugation. The question of Boycott is important here - as Derrida took a similar approach to dialogue over boycott towards some Palestinian writers at a conference in Norway.

On the 23rd of September 2002, Derrida felt deeply disappointed. After attending *Kapittel*, the *Stavanger International Festival of Literature and Freedom of Speech Festival of Literature*, entitled *Axes of Evil - Letters of Hope* in Norway, Derrida was to give the closing remarks on the final day. The festival was focused on The Middle East, and aimed at crossing borders, creating dialogue and discussion. Derrida had not only attended the festival, but partaken in it- he had listened with intent and joined in discussions when called upon to comment. There had been tense moments, and some pointed disagreements, but overall the festival had been a success and achieved its aims of bringing together those with differing opinions into dialogue. But rather than focus on this, Derrida launched into a polemic. He had discovered over lunch on the final day that some of the Palestinian writers had refused to sit on a panel discussion with Israelis. The organisers had rearranged the panels rather than cancel the session, but when Derrida found out, he was deeply disappointed. 'Had I known that this would be the case, I would not have joined this conference.'[52] He challenged the Palestinians directly, saying that even in times like these 'if anyone should take responsibility and have a dialogue, and listen to the other side, it should be the writers.'[53]

In both instances, Derrida's prized dialogue never takes into account the normalisation of colonisation and oppression that both situations present. In the discussion of dialogue versus boycott, Omar Barghouti writes that dialogue in this context 'produces absolutely nothing on the ground. It is morally flawed and based on the false premise that this so-called conflict is mainly due to mutual hatred and, therefore, you need some kind of therapy or dialogue between those two equivalent, symmetric, warring parties...' (Barghouti 2011, 172). In another essay, he connects this attitude to the erasure of justice:

[52] Correspondence with Runo Isaksen, Chair of the session in which Derrida spoke.
[53] Ibid.

> Those who think they can wish away a conflict by suggesting only some intellectual channels of rapprochement, détente, or "dialogue" are crucially seeking only an illusion of peace, and one that is devoid of justice at that. Striving for peace divorced from justice is as good as institutionalizing injustice, or making the oppressed submit to the overwhelming force of the oppressor, accepting inequality as fate (Barghouti 2011, 103).

For Barghouti, the conflict is the result of settler colonialism and has resulted in an apartheid state and, therefore, any attempt to prioritise dialogue as a means to gain peaceful co-existence which does not recognise the inequality of the present situation neglects justice. Barghouti again writes,

> To have a dialogue you have to have a certain minimal level of a common denominator based on a common vision for the ultimate solution based on equality and ending injustice. If you don't have that common denominator then it's negotiation between the stronger and weaker party and, as I've written elsewhere, you can't have a bridge between them but only a ladder where you go up or down not across … I call this the master/slave type of coexistence (Barghouti 2011, 172).

Derrida's attitude then, in the context of these comments, again betrays an unwillingness to listen to Palestinian concerns and the full spectrum of needs in relation to their rights, by espousing that his attitude towards how Palestinians should respond to their oppressors is better than that of the Palestinians themselves. It is this attitude which is present again and again in his silence on justice for the Palestinians beyond an end to the Occupation. This type of approach to Palestinians' right to resistance via a strategy of boycott[54] is described by Barghouti:

> A call signed by more than 170 Palestinian political parties, unions, non-governmental organizations and networks, representing the entire spectrum of Palestinian civil society — under occupation, in Israel, and in the Diaspora — cannot be "counter-productive" unless Palestinians are not rational or intelligent enough to know or articulate what is in their best interest. This argument smacks of patronization and betrays a colonial attitude that we thought — hoped! — was extinct in liberal Europe. (Barghouti 2011, 144).

The point to be made here is that those who proclaim dialogue and have expectations of Palestinians to engage in ways of 'peace' without considering their attitude towards this continues a legacy of colonialism, whether conscious or not.

[54] Although this comment is in relation to a call for boycott which came after Derrida's death, I believe that the general attitude is helpful and sheds light on a patronising attitude to the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Returning to the discussion with Rose, Derrida continues the anecdote, which suggests he felt himself being persecuted by his friends for supporting an end to the Occupation.

> I gave a lecture, and in the footnote of the lecture, which had been circulated before the discussion, I said very clearly, now published, my opposition to the occupation of the territories, that was in the early 1990s. And suddenly, at the table – we were about twenty colleagues around the table – suddenly, all my Jewish friends and colleagues got angry at me, the object of the discussion was totally lost and just my footnote was the focus of the discussion. They took from their bags all the most terrible texts by Arafat and others, and I was totally isolated in this... (Rose 2004).

This is an interesting view on this particular lecture, as the comments on supporting Israel have caused lots of discussion in terms of trying to identify Derrida's support, or lack of it, for the Palestinians, as this was during the first intifada. Derrida's response, however, is what I feel betrays his underlying bias towards Israel, which demonstrates a lack of awareness of the situation for the Palestinians. He replied to his Jewish Israeli friends by saying,

> I said first that, of course, I was maintaining my argument, my opposition to the politics of the occupied territories. On the other hand, as I was saying this in the name of the interest and the honour of Israel, and the security of Israel, because when I am critical of the government, at the government, at the political agenda of the Israeli government, it's not because I'm against Israel, it's because it is a suicidal behaviour. Because it's unjust, first of all, unfair with the Palestinians, first of all, and then it is suicidal. It is what I call 'auto- immunity', self-immunity, when a body destroys its own protections. And in the long-hand, I think that is the main argument I would have with the politics of almost all the governments of Israel, except Rabin's. When I was given, a few months ago, an honorary degree at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I ended my speech, in which I said things like the words I have just said, I dedicated my doctorate to the memory of Yitzhak Rabin (Rose 2004).

This response betrays numerous things. Firstly, that Derrida's 'risk' in speaking out about the occupation is unaware of its limited form of solidarity with Palestinians, and, makes no presences in the published text, which only offers support for those against violence. There is again no space or room for the reality of the colonised resisting the coloniser in this formulation. Secondly, Derrida emphasises that he is against the policies of Israel in the interest and honour of Israel, rather than because of the terrible oppression the State of Israel is causing the Palestinians. Although he writes that the occupation is 'unjust, first of all, unfair with the Palestinians' what he continues to

emphasise, not only here but in the other texts, is how it is suicidal for Israel to continue as it is. This again betrays the desire to want an end to the conflict, (albeit in this instance the occupation alone) because it would be good for Israel: it chooses the coloniser over the colonised. Barghouti calls this type of attitude 'Israel-centric' and rejects it as the principle reason why Israel should end their institutionalised discriminatory behaviour (Barghouti 2011, 220).

A final indication of the implicit assumptions in Derrida's attitude towards the Palestinians is his choice to dedicate his doctorate to Yitzhak Rabin. This is clear evidence of a liberal Zionist attitude. Derrida's comments about criticising the Israeli government without hesitation or the accusation of anti-Semitism must be henceforth read through his support for Rabin who, in liberal discourse, is a substitute for the peace process ideology. Alex Kane writes that this view is 'based on a total erasure of his sordid role in the Israeli military establishment as well as a fundamental misreading of what the Oslo accords were intended to do.' (Kane 2010). Ilan Pappé writes also that Rabin's death

> came too soon for anyone to assess how much he had really changed from his 1948 days: as recently as 1987, as minister of defence, he had ordered his troops to break the bones of Palestinians who confronted his tanks with stones in the first Intifada; he had deported hundreds of Palestinians as prime minister prior to the Oslo Agreement, and he had pushed for the 1994 Oslo B agreement that effectively caged the Palestinians in the West Bank into several Bantustans (Kane, 2010).

This assumption of Rabin as a broker for peace, which lead Derrida to dedicate his honorary doctorate to him, also pays no attention to what Palestinians thought/think of him, including those such as Edward Said and Rashid Khalidi and Joseph Massad, whose voices demonstrated very early on that the peace process was indeed a sham, never intended to grant justice and peace to the Palestinians. If Rabin's government was the only one Derrida could have supported, this effectively means that he did not disagree with the awful policies outlined above. It appears then that this betrays Derrida's ignorance, or unwillingness to move beyond a liberal Zionism, one which espouses peace in the Middle East but takes into consideration no reality of how to get there, or what that might mean for Palestinians. This type of support (or lack of) for peace and for the right for Israel to exist over and above any consideration of what justice might mean for the Palestinians, beyond ending the occupation, can read as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. It might be suggested that to betray a cause one has

to have pledged some form of commitment to it. However, it is clear from the comments that Derrida said while alive, and the impulse of his writing, was one that fought oppression and respected life. He did comment specifically on the Palestinian cause and yet the undeconstructed assumptions within his comments can be read as a form of betrayal.

Caroline Rooney refers to another late comment by Derrida about Israel/Palestine, from an article celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of *Le Monde Diplomatique*. In this comment Derrida speaks of a Europe he hopes for, writing

> In this Europe it would be possible to criticise Israeli policy, especially that pursued by Ariel Sharon and backed by George Bush, without being accused of anti-Semitism. In this Europe, supporting the Palestinians in their legitimate struggle for rights, land and a state would not mean supporting suicide bombing or agreeing with the anti-Semitic propaganda...That is my dream' (Rooney 2009, 45).

Rooney goes on to write, 'what is puzzling in the above is why Derrida finds it not really possible to criticise Israeli politics and support the Palestinian cause at the same time' (45). My reading would not be as concerned with the inability to do both these things at the same time, as Derrida is rather speaking of a future he hopes for, where his fear or dislike of criticism for doing both of the things above, would not be attacked. My concern is rather with the type of support Derrida offers the Palestinians in their struggle for rights, land and a state. My view is not that Derrida feels he cannot do these things, but rather that when he does, he wants to live in a world where he will not be criticised for doing showing support to both Israelis and Palestinians. However, as seen above, he does, as far back as 1988, support the things he espouses in this late comment for *Le Monde Diplomatique*. The question is rather, does it really offer solidarity and validation to the Palestinians? The type of support Derrida offers, it must sadly be stated, is one of liberal or soft Zionist solidarity, which hopes for peace without challenging the settler colonial and apartheid nature of Israel, therefore forfeiting justice.

The question I will now go on to explore further in the next chapter is whether this attitude can be seen to amount to a betrayal of the Palestinians, and if so, what emphasis might be needed within Derrida's attitude and within deconstruction, for there to be hospitality to the Palestinian experience/existence?

Chapter Three

A question of betrayal? The relational-real and the emphasis of the undeniable.

Did Derrida betray the Palestinians? Or does deconstruction betray the Palestinians?

The answer will have to be, as in the previous chapter, both yes and no.

One of the ways in which critics have written about Derrida and Palestine is through his writing on, and friendship with, Jean Genet[55], and I think what I would like to say of Derrida, as he did himself of Jean Genet in the context of Genet's *Prisoner of Love* (2003), on the Palestinian revolution, is that when it comes to the Palestinians, Derrida was both 'right and wrong, today more than ever.' In a text of Derrida's devoted to Genet called 'Countersignatures' (Derrida 2004c)[56], the theme of betrayal takes centre stage, and in what follows, I will read Derrida's text on Genet as a way of thinking about what it means to betray, so as to explore the relationship between Derrida and the Palestinians, and ask whether Derrida's support can be considered a betrayal. This Chapter will also open out onto deconstruction's relationship to the Palestinian cause by an exploration of how 'reality' is figured in relation to the performative nature of writing and difference so central to Derrida's thought.

So what would it mean to betray? And would it even be possible? Betrayal would seemingly only be possible after one has pledged allegiance or commitment to someone or something. I have argued above that Derrida's attempt to show solidarity to both Israelis and Palestinians implicitly favours a structure of 'peace' which normalises a settler colonial state, rendering this ecumenical solidarity void. Therefore, it is through this 'equal' commitment to both sides that I read the possibility of betrayal towards the Palestinians.

[55] Andrew Ryder (2012) writes that 'Genet's most marked effect on Derrida may have been his revaluation of the Palestinian struggle.' Also see Naas (2013); Rooney (2009); Peeters (2012).

[56] Delivered in 2000 at Cerisy-la-salle at a conference entitled 'Poetiques de Jean Genet: La Traversée des Genres'

On the surface, a betrayal would signify a breaking of trust; violating a contract; enacting disloyalty or unfaithfulness to someone or something. In Derrida's 'Countersignatures', the theme of betrayal is taken up in a discussion that, in many ways, continues on from *Glas*. Derrida's text is, as the title indicates, a meditation on the countersignature; but of what or whom? The answer would appear to be twofold. Derrida writes that he desires to 'bear witness and counterwitness to a certain friendship between Genet and [himself]' (16), and also to '[Countersign] without countersigning' (7) Genet's last book, *Prisoner of Love.* Already, the (im)possibility of the countersignature is raised, along with the (im)possibility of bearing witness. How will it be possible to bear witness and remain faithful to that 'certain' friendship? Is it possible to countersign certain aspects of a text and not others? And what does it mean to countersign without countersigning? Is this in fact the logic of every countersignature?

Prisoner of Love, Derrida writes, 'can be read, especially in its final pages, as the last signature of Jean Genet that countersigns all the others' (7). It would appear then that Derrida chooses this text due to its 'faithfulness' to Genet's signature, as representative of Genet's name. The countersignature that Derrida bears to this text can, therefore, also be interpreted as that of his friendship with Genet, and vice versa.

Derrida begins with a long epigraph on *Prisoner of Love* by discussing what he calls 'the betrayal of truth', which he says 'is terrifying, oscillating between at least three distinct possibilities' (7). Betrayal therefore will not be a simple, singular thing. He goes on to describe these possibilities. The first description of 'the betrayal of truth' is said to mean that, 'if the truth is betrayed, this can only be a lie, falsification....a countersignature that, instead of authenticating a first signature, sets about imitating it, that is counterfeiting it' (7). Here, truth takes on a stable and objective form which is the standard by which one makes a judgment of that which is true, so that any betrayal would be judged against this standard. In terms of the countersignature the betrayal would seek to counterfeit and get away without being recognised as other than the 'original'. We might already note that Derrida's countersignature of Genet and *Prisoner of Love* in this text does not take on this form. It does not appear that Derrida in any way attempts to be 'taken for' Genet, or to replicate the text of *Prisoner of Love* in his countersignature here, or in other texts. It might even be proffered that 'Countersignature' is in fact too far away from the signature of *Prisoner of Love*, which bears witness to the Palestinian revolution in a way quite unlike that seen in Derrida's

text, or elsewhere in his oeuvre. This difference of signature, however, might be taken to mean that Genet's signature is in fact respected, by way of 'not imitating it, by not counterfeiting it, for example by signing very differently' (8). It is true that Derrida signs very differently to Genet regarding the Palestinians, but can this be taken as a wholly respectful countersignature? The question might come down to what is chosen to be emphasised. In his essay, Derrida hardly mentions the Palestinians, whereas Genet's text cannot be misconstrued as having the Palestinian revolution as that around which the text circulates, thus the question of emphasis is significant.

The second description of betrayal is that 'truth, without itself being betrayed, is what betrays, lies, deceives, perjures, is unfaithful. Truth then is a lie' (8). Derrida asks in this instance 'But to whom, to what, does the truth lie?' (7). This signals again that betrayal is relational, and must happen to someone/something and be committed by someone/something. It also recalls the notions of responsibility that assume a subject position which is stable and that can be held accountable. But who would be able to judge and declare what truth was and who is the receiver of the truth when it is betrayed? Here, Derrida asserts that betrayal is not without truth, and thus, any accusation of betrayal, in this definition, would fall into being the/ an accusation of truth. Therefore, if Derrida's text betrays Genet, or the Palestinians, then under this description, it does so as the truth.

Thirdly, Derrida suggests that 'truth is betrayed, it can only be betrayed in the sense that one says in French that truth is 'revealed', that is unmasked....truth can be betrayed but this time, in a logic of the symptom...In French, a symptom is said to betray the truth' (7-8). This third definition is perhaps the most interesting, as in this sense what is true occurs by way of a movement of other things, by the logic of a symptom, which is outside any mastery of sovereignty of the subject. On top of this, in this description truth can thus be revealed without any definition of what that truth is. There is no naming of the truth as in the two previous definitions, but rather it is the movement of the context, the drapes which hide truth, moving in order to show, unveil something which is not itself in need of a name. Would there then be a symptom, within Derrida's text, which betrays the truth of his writing? Would there be a symptom which betrays the truth of his relationship with Genet, or the Palestinians, in this mode? It is perhaps in this sense which Derrida's bias, as explored above, can be read.

What these definitions show, above all, is that betrayal is caught in indeterminacy, due to its relational nature, but also because of the structure of différance. Derrida doesn't mention it specifically, but it is clear that betrayal is indeterminate because it is caught in the law of the supplement, which would imply that no betrayal, in its simplest sense, could occur without a remaining faithful, just as no faithfulness could occur without some form of betrayal. This becomes more explicit when Derrida relates betrayal to the countersignature. He writes that 'betrayal is lodged at the heart of signature', relating betrayal to the logic of the trace. The supplementarity of the origin produces the indeterminacy that risks being read as a betrayal of truth. What might be a better suggestion then, rather than saying that it is impossible to betray, is that a betrayal would be impossible to locate or figure, due to its indeterminate nature, and thus through the logic of inheritance as depicted by Derrida, a betrayal would never be so in the first sense of Derrida's discussion of Genet. It would be impossible because of the logic of différance.

Writing as betrayal.

As previously noted, 'Countersignatures' is a text which desires to bear witness to Genet, and to countersign without countersigning *Prisoner of Love*, which itself is a text which bears witness to the Palestinians' revolution. Derrida's reading of Genet at the opening of his text focuses on a passage from *Prisoner of Love* in which Genet is describing some foreign journalists photographing a group of Palestinian *Fedayeen*. They are asked to pose holding guns above their heads, the implication from Genet being that the photographers are betraying the revolution, in the first sense of the word discussed by Derrida. There is a lot of citation of Genet from Derrida, as, in relaying this incident, Derrida doesn't want to 'overly betray this masterpiece of the staging of writing' (11). Thus, the incident is mainly described in Genet's words, quoted by Derrida, which I now quote from Derrida's text:

> A photographer is seldom photographed, a *Fedayeen* often, but if he has to pose he'll die of boredom before he dies of fatigue. Some artists think they see a halo of solitary grandeur around a man in a photograph, but it's only the weariness and depression caused by the antics of the photographer. One Swiss made the handsomest of the *Fedayeen* stand on an upturned tub so that he could take him silhouetted against the sunset. (11)

'Not wanting to overly betray' indicates another aspect of betrayal, which is that it can occur at different levels or intensities. By citing Genet, Derrida implies he will be betraying less; using the signer's own words. This incident is then followed in Genet's text by a discussion of his own betrayal of the revolution, which Derrida turns to in order to discuss Genet as 'would-be witness to truth' (11). Genet writes,

> But what if it were true that writing is a lie? What if it merely enabled us to conceal what was, testimony being only a trompe-l'oeil? Without actually saying the opposite of what was, writing presents only its visible, acceptable and, so to speak, silent face, because it is incapable of really showing the other one.

Derrida suggests, following Genet to some degree, that writing itself is betrayal. After another quote from an interview with Genet, Derrida summarises some definitions of writing: 'First definition: writing is 'the last recourse one has when one has betrayed.' And last definition: it is 'what remains when you are driven from the domain of the given word'. Thus betrayal, perjury, writing = betrayal, perjury, etc. What remains' (14). Derrida sees Genet's conception of betrayal as similar to his concept of writing, which follows the law of the supplement. And there is indeed much crossover. We see this when Genet writes 'the traitor is not external but inside everyone' (15). The traitor looks synonymous with Derrida's supplement at the origin, and his discussion of hospitality which is always encroached upon by the figure of hostility. The implication is that there are no pure concepts, not even of betrayal.

Derrida is interested, as is Genet, explicitly, in Genet's ability to bear witness to the Palestinian revolution. If writing is a lie, is it possible to bear witness? Genet writes, 'My own voice is faked. You may know that I betray, but as you do not know how, it is as though you knew nothing' (11). Being unable to locate the betrayal in this instance, Genet says that it is as though we knew nothing, betrayal's indeterminacy holding rule. This conception of betrayal is then related to the countersignature.

Writing as countersignature

From the discussion of betrayal and its different meanings, to the suggestion that writing is a betrayal of truth, Derrida moves on to discuss the countersignature in more depth, proffering the idea that, following the logic of the supplement, every signature is

always already a countersignature. As Derrida writes 'In principle, the signature precedes the countersignature' (17). But as we already know, this understanding of temporality is dislocated by deconstruction so that the notion of before and after are destabilised so as to throw temporal recognition into disarray. Derrida then goes on to speak about the '*contre*' of countersignature, which can mean both 'opposition, contrariety, contradiction and proximity, near-contact...The word '*contre*' possesses these two inseparable meanings of proximity and vis-à-vis on the one hand, and opposition on the other' (17). This opposition and proximity is interesting in relation to the type of friendship with Genet that Derrida has already evoked, which had, apparently, 'no contrariety.' But, straight away, any attempt to countersign such a friendship without opposition, immediately falls prey to the 'betrayal of truth' which writing articulates. 'All future countersignatures come to countersign what was originally a countersignature, an archi-countersignature' (18). Derrida's question is then how to respect the 'absolute, absolutely irreducible, untranslatable idiom of the other, of what [Genet] did and was only done once, and inscribe in my own 'yes', at the moment I recognize the other's singularity, the work of the other' (29). How can this be done? Derrida responds with the admission, 'I ask the question but I have no answers. Not only no answers, but I hold that there must not be an answer in the form of a general norm' (30). If writing is a betrayal of truth, and yet it is still necessary to bear witness, or to countersign the other's signature, the question then becomes, not if it is possible or impossible, but what these countersignatures look like, what they emphasise of the other's singularity, even in their betrayal. Because, even if 'it is impossible that the "counter" of the vis-à-vis, proximity, interability or affirmation should not be encroached on by the "counter" of the destructive opposition' (30), then it is perhaps necessary to look at the countersignature as a question of emphasis, if betrayal is inevitable.

Bearing witness beyond writing

The issue of betrayal in Genet's work is taken up by other commentators to suggest a divergence from the path Derrida assumes. The first instance of this that I will look at is that of Simon Critchley's argument in his essay 'Writing the Revolution: The Politics of Truth in Genet's *Prisoner of Love*' (Critchley 1999). In relation to the discussion above, following Derrida's concern with the 'truth of writing,' Critchley asks, 'how does

Genet's narrative technique in *Prisoner of Love* recall the truth about the Palestinian revolution' (36) if writing is seen as a failure of communicating past events? Focusing on the idea of betrayal, Critchley suggests that this concept has undergone a 'complex shift between Genet's earlier and later work...the use of this concept is complicated in *Prisoner of Love*' (37). Critchley goes onto quote a couple of passages, also cited by Derrida, which he says are reminiscent of earlier texts. Two of these are; 'Anyone who hasn't experienced the ecstasy of betrayal knows nothing about ecstasy itself' and 'Anyone who's never experienced the pleasure of betrayal doesn't know what pleasure is' (37). Critchley acknowledges, along with Derrida, that betrayal as a sensual and ecstatic pleasure is present, but he goes on to argue that it is not this sense of the word betrayal which is pervasive in *Prisoner of Love*. He cites other passages where the standard use (i.e. Derrida's first definition) of the word betrayal is used, to suggest that betrayal is not at the heart of Genet's message in the same way it has been in his earlier erotic texts:

'Genet condemns the betrayal committed by the Israelis (PL 112-13), the Circassians (169) and there is a debate throughout the book about the betrayal of the *Fedayeen* for Genet by elements of their leadership. Indeed, what distinguishes the *Fedayeen* for Genet is precisely their resistance to the temptation of betraying the revolution: '[the *Fedayeen*] were beset by the temptation to betray, though I think it was almost always resisted' (PL 273). Furthermore, if Genet writes *Prisoner of Love* in order to tell the truth about the Palestinian revolution, then it is precisely this truth that he does not want to betray' (38).

Critchley argues that Genet writes in this instance in order to 'tell the truth' (38), and even though he recognises that his writing betrays the revolution and the Palestinians on some level because writing is an economy of betrayal, rather than let this paralyze him, Critchley argues that Genet is 'committed to telling the truth even when he knows that the truth cannot be told' (41). This is achieved, Critchley argues, by attesting to the reality of the revolutionary event, which lies outside of, or beyond, language. 'Genet repeatedly and almost obsessively insists....the events that writing cannot truthfully describe and narrate *really happened'* (41). This means that 'if writing cannot truthfully describe factual events and yet those events occurred and are the ones to be described, then writing necessarily exists in an economy of betrayal' (41). There is then, for Critchley, something outside of writing and language to which writing and language cannot give form, and it may be called 'the event'. But could it also potentially be called

Being?[57] Later he goes onto say 'Writing the truth of the revolution is a writing of the truth of what lies outside of writing: redemption, reconciliation' (47). It is also named 'revolutionary love.' Thus, contre Derrida, there would be a way to countersign with a different intensity of betrayal: acknowledging betrayal occurs in language, but also that 'true' testimony is impossible. So how would one acknowledge or recognise the difference, if it is through writing that both types of bearing witness occur? Perhaps it would be a feeling rather than a knowing. Or perhaps it would have to be based on a trust?

That revolutionary love is that which enables the testimony and bearing witness to go beyond the betrayal of writing is echoed by Caroline Rooney. In her essay on Edward Said and Derrida, she discusses the 'unremitting sense of authenticity on Genet's part' in *Prisoner of Love*' which she says emerges in his writing because 'he is so sensitive to the question of betrayal,' and goes on to comment that 'the authenticity in question may be spoken of in terms of love' (Rooney 2009, 44). This love, Rooney suggests, is the avowal of 'a sustaining presence that is indeed outside of the text' (44), and is framed as that which is outside of the performative. However, presence is seen to be a problematic term to use, as 'it is not a case of what can be presented: it is rather a case of understanding being as no thingness, unthingly' (Rooney 2009, 44). Therefore, along with Critchley, Rooney recognises Genet's acceptance that writing surely betrays the truth, but suggests nonetheless, that there is something of Genet's text which does bear witness, through a type of love and solidarity, that goes beyond the betrayal that writing commits. Derrida, however, seems *overly* concerned with this play of betrayal in his reading of Genet's text, at the expense of a commitment to, and solidarity with, the Palestinians.

These two accounts are particularly interesting, as they directly challenge the notion of indeterminacy and undecidability that Derrida's conception of writing brings with it. What I would like to go onto discuss is how these conceptions might prove Derrida 'both right and wrong, today more than ever', in the same sense that Derrida discusses Genet. My countersignature would then seek to follow in Derrida's example.

Bearing witness to the undeniable

[57] It is my sense that this might be the ontological foundation that Rooney posits as that which is beyond the performative.

Would we be able to say that the undecidable and the undeniable co-exist?[58] Derrida's countersignature to Genet, where he opposes and stands alongside, must be said to be indeterminate, or undecidable; but, as Derrida writes, 'the undecidable, isn't it the undeniable?' (Derrida 1986, 225). Yet if the undecidable can be undeniable, then there exists a pole of undeniability that has perhaps been missing from deconstruction, or has been less emphasised in deconstruction than is helpful. Genet's solidarity and love for the Palestinians could be such an undeniable. But would this necessarily negate the structure Derrida affirms in the ineluctable origin of the undecidable as the condition of decision? Or is there a way that this relationship between the undecidable and the undeniable might come to be productive for this desire to bear witness beyond the betrayal of language? What may be important here is a choice of emphasis, a choice of inheritance when it comes to the undecidable and the undeniable.

As written in many places, the undecidable does not limit or hinder our ability to make a decision, but instead conditions it. Where Derrida spent much time and energy emphasising the undecidable, instead of proceeding in 'good faith' - it is perhaps in certain situations that this emphasis, while not being inaccurate, demands the decision of solidarity to be chosen above/emphasised in writing - so that a different type of bearing witness may occur; one which would avow the co-existing reality of the undeniable. Are these things necessarily opposed? Does not a countersignature bear the mark of both? And if so, cannot one be emphasised over another? Therefore, to reiterate the comment above, Derrida's emphasis on the undeniable undecidable is right, today more than ever, but, his lack of emphasis on the undeniable as other than the undecidable remains to be seen, at least in terms of solidarity with the Palestinians. In *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony* Derrida writes that 'One thus finds oneself in a fatal and double impossibility: the impossibility of deciding, but the impossibility of remaining [*demeurer*] in the undecidable' (Derrida 2000, 16). But perhaps Derrida is more inclined to remain in the undecidable than he is aware. In this context, being blind to the pole of undeniability of Israel's settler colonial rule over the Palestinians

Rooney's discussion questions the different types of prisoner that Derrida and Genet are said to be. While I would argue that it is not quite right to follow the description of Derrida as a prisoner of language, it is worth highlighting his confession in 'Countersignature' that 'the story of love that hold(s) [him] 'prisoner' is the

[58] This proposal of co-existence takes its lead from Caroline Rooney's suggestion of the complementarity of the undeniable to the undecidable, see Rooney (2007) and (2000).

relationship between the word countersignature and himself. This goes some way to signal the different approaches and trajectories that Derrida has in comparison to Genet. Derrida is more concerned in this essay to speak about the logic of betrayal and the countersignature than he is to offer any simple solidarity or love for Genet and the Palestinians. But nothing less would be expected surely? What is, perhaps, disappointing is that the ambiguity over what exactly Derrida would be opposed to in Genet, and what type of wound the *Prisoner of Love* leaves in his divided self. His concern is to bear witness to a certain friendship rather than any other factor. *Prisoner of love* then comes to feel like just another of Genet's texts, such as those discussed in *Glas*, which helps to further Derrida's insistence of writing as betrayal.

Derrida bearing witness to the Palestinians?

As Derrida does in 'Countersignature', I will make an allusion to *Glas* which may help shed light on this topic. Derrida writes, 'Yesterday he [Genet, presumably[59]] let me know he was in Beirut, among the Palestinians at war, encircled outcasts. I know that what interests me always takes (its/his) place over there, but how to show that?' (Derrida 1986, 36). The question of 'how to show', how to bear witness to the Palestinians, is the specific issue for Derrida in this passage from *Glas*. But is it Genet's place, or the Palestinians' place, which always interests Derrida over there? Again indeterminacy prevails. In order to be able to 'show this' interest, the specificity of Genet's or the Palestinians' position would need to be able to be portrayed, and in reading Genet, there is not a 'political agenda' he takes, and the Palestinians are similarly not united in a position which could be taken. Genet's position would be an undeniable solidarity with the Palestinians: a love for them. Derrida's question of how to show it is surely answered in Genet's text on the Palestinians. His writing takes the risk of trying to show that what interests him is the Palestinian cause. Genet risks showing it. Derrida, we might say, does not. The risk Derrida takes is that of being associated with Genet. Peeters writes that taking this risk gave Derrida a bad reputation amongst some of the Jewish community in Paris because of Genet's support for the Palestinians. Yet on numerous occasions, Derrida refused, or decided not to speak about the specificity of the Palestinians' situation. Thus, it is relevant to ask,

[59] The ambiguity is over Said's comments that it was him who brought Derrida news of Genet.

what would be *contre*, against, and what would be *contre*, next to, in Derrida's friendship with Genet and his solidarity with the Palestinians? For while everything takes its/his place out there, at the beginning of 'Countersignature', Derrida makes some mention of a break, the break of a wound, with Genet, while reading *Prisoner of Love*. Where or what is Genet wrong about? Could this also be said of Derrida, that he was both wrong and right today, more than ever, regarding his acknowledgement of the impossibly to bear witness emphasised over a form of solidarity that moves beyond silence? Solidarity as silence would indeed be a strange type of love.

Later in 'Countersignature', Derrida writes that his friendship with Genet is 'without apparent contrarieties, upsetting nothing to my knowledge. Nothing even political' (Derrida 2004c, 31). However, with the distance and separation of a countersignature, and with numerous occasions of missed opportunity, or unwillingness, to 'show' a form of solidarity with the Palestinians, we must ask whether Derrida's countersignature betrays Genet's focus on solidarity by choosing betrayal to focus on instead? This reversal would of course be too simplistic for such a discussion, as we have already seen the complexity of the logic of betrayal - the undecidable nature of such a word. Betrayal then, of all these kinds, would include a form of solidarity, it would not be able to escape, or collapse, back into countersigning this solidarity, albeit in ways which may not appear at first strong or relevant. Derrida writes that 'to be faithful, it must be possible to betray' (29).

Beyond the performative?

In order to take this discussion forward, I will now return to Caroline Rooney's essay which speaks of the solidarity (also spoken of as love, commitment, loyalty, and *sumud* in the specific instance of Palestinian solidarity and sustaining presence) to further explore the questions raised by the idea of there being something outside of language, outside of the play of signifiers, what I have referred to as the undeniable.

At the end of Rooney's essay, 'Derrida and Said: Ships That Pass in the Night', a meditation on the intellectual and political trajectories of Derrida and Said, (via Jean Genet), what exactly is she hinting at when she writes that 'The Palestinians *are* where deconstruction could be in the future' (Rooney 2009, 49)? There is an emphasis on the word 'are', implying a challenge to the critique of presence that Derrida so relentlessly pursues throughout his oeuvre. The italicised *are* seems to gesture towards the 'the

real' or the ostensible as opposed to the performative, and challenges the structuring of being around the presence/absence binary. This is a gesture which is thought through in detail in Rooney's book *Decolonising Gender* (2007). She writes, 'The ostensive gesture concerns a use of language that attends to an awareness of a reality beyond the linguistic utterance. In this, it exceeds the performative' (Rooney 2007, 3). This critique of the performative maintains that there is something beyond or outside of the text, which cannot be reduced to the product or effect of the performative utterance. Rooney signals that her main concern in this critique of deconstruction is specifically directed at the pervasiveness of the role the performative plays in Derrida's work, asking

> 'might the promotion of a universalisation of the performative serve as a means of determining the sayable so that its assumed fictiveness may actually be a means of tacit authorisation and legitimation? And if authority is rendered fictive, does this then serve to silence those who would appeal to realities and questions of reality?' (93).

The line of critique asks how those without power or recourse to public discourse are situated when reality is seen to be entirely caught in the performative, or a product of such. In relation to the Palestinians *being* where deconstruction could be in the future, it could be suggested that there is a question of emphasis on *the undeniable reality* of the powerless, here specifically the Palestinians' situation, (in terms of the denial of their existence, history, and struggle against settler colonialism), which has something to offer deconstruction. The question could be reposed by asking, can deconstruction's commitment to the law of performativity be hospitable to the undeniable existence and struggle of the Palestinians? And if not, is there a way by which exposure to this undeniable struggle[60] can enable deconstruction to mutate so that it can become hospitable?

Interestingly, Rooney's concerns over the performative are echoed by Derrida later on in his life. For example, in a response to Simon Critchley in 2000, Derrida writes that 'I would say, more and more now, in a way that is rather new for me, I am more and more suspicious, whatever its fecundity, its necessity may be, of the theory of performativity' (Derrida 2000a, 466). Here, in a similar way to Rooney, Derrida

[60] I am using the Palestinian struggle as synonymous with the presence and existence of Palestinians, both in the Middle East and in the diaspora, as the struggle inevitably relies upon the 'reality' of Palestinians people, which is here argued to be undeniable.

acknowledges the 'fecundity' and 'necessity' of the performative, but not at the expense of signalling a new suspicion in its theory. This is interesting in that it becomes apparent that one can both affirm and distance oneself from a concept/theory, yet despite the often referred to autoimmunity within deconstruction of the 'always-already', Derrida here signals a change in his thought, something that is 'rather new' for him. Rooney picks up on this elsewhere in Derrida's work, and acknowledges the importance for this change for what we have begun to refer to as 'reality', or that beyond/outside the performative. She writes,

> In *Rogues*, written towards the end of his career, Derrida offers a brief and unexplained retraction of his previous widespread insistence on the performative event. He states: 'Now, just like the constative, it seems to me, the performative cannot avoid neutralizing, indeed annulling the eventfulness of the event it is supposed to produce.' This volte face, if so, is said to be due to the performative as involving 'a calculable mastery': intentionality, therefore? [...] However, could Derrida adequately account for the difference between his tacitly revised view of the performative and the event without actually admitting to what deconstruction seems often to bracket off: not least, the real.....?' (Rooney 2007, 124).

The question of what deconstruction has bracketed off, i.e. the real, can also be rephrased as the limit of deconstruction, or a limit within deconstruction. However, it is argued, on the contrary, that it is deconstruction which has been concerned with drawing attention to every limit of philosophy[61], David Wood contending that 'Deconstruction was born from and sustains itself in a meditation on the limits of philosophy' such that 'there is no royal road through or round Derrida or deconstruction, and that a serious confrontation with it makes the value of going 'beyond' it problematic' (Wood 1987, 175). If deconstruction brackets something off, does this necessitate a going beyond deconstruction, or rather a facilitation of exposing deconstruction to that which it brackets off? This exposure might enable the mutation mentioned earlier.

Rooney's reading of Derrida's attitude as a 'volte face' to the underlying impetus and work of deconstruction, has chimes with a recent polemic by Tom Cohen surrounding the theme of the Anthropocence. Cohen's essay refers to Derrida's last interview in which Derrida says 'one has not yet begun to read me' and confesses that he is 'at war with himself' (Cohen 2013, 247-8). Cohen reads this as a splitting of self,

[61] Drucilla Cornwell also coins the phrase that 'Deconstruction is the philosophy of the limit', see Cornell (1992).

akin to Rooney's observation over Derrida's attitude towards the performative as a 'volte face'. Cohen writes that 'this other reading to come is at war with the first, the auto-immune capsule of the 'late Derrida,' presented as warm milk to the kids' (247). It is a rather brutal attack, not on the *bad readers* of Derrida, but on the *bad* readers, what Cohen calls Derrida's 'maintenance crew' (242), and he scoffs at the idea of someone being a 'Derridean'. Cohen continues the polemic, suggesting that:

> 'The unbridgeable rift between the two Derridas ('I' at war contre 'myself') accords with a rift today within the fading meme of 'deconstruction' as a franchise. On the one hand, there would be a 'deconstruction' busy tending to the proper name, obsessively, dutifully, yielding a soft *Derrideanism without deconstruction*. *Deconstruction™*. And on the other hand, there is what might be called a *deconstruction without deconstruction'* (250).

The scene of reading may be quite different, and the 'mutation' Cohen suggests is in relation to the Anthropocene[62], but this interpretation of Derrida and the assessment of the current field of deconstruction opens up onto Rooney's desire to 'deconstruct the performative' (Rooney 2007, 93). The attention paid to Derrida's 'war with himself' can be translated into this discussion surrounding the future of deconstruction in relation to a critique of the performative, and a change of emphasis from the undecidable to the undeniable.

What is interesting for me in this discussion is that the future of deconstruction is obviously multiple. Surely the war Derrida has with himself is also not just between two selves, or ways of reading him, but is multiple, as his fractured identity was explored in Chapter 1. Because 'there is no one deconstruction' there can thus be *no one future* of deconstruction. So, when placing an understanding of the Palestinian struggle alongside deconstruction and finding both an unwillingness to account for the settler colonial nature of the conflict, and that deconstruction may fall short when it comes to solidarity and the commitment to undeniable realities, we may be inclined to think about a need to go 'beyond' deconstruction, or 'deconstruct deconstruction' in order to be hospitable to these realities (indeed an understanding of reality I am coming on to explore further). Or, we might begin by way of the above discussion to think that the legacy of deconstruction is not fixed, and its future not secured.

[62] Later on in this discussion the relevance of the Anthropocene may be said to reappear in Karen Barad's radical dissolution of the boundaries between the human and the non-human, through her agential realist approach to 'Nature'.

Deconstruction has 'always-already' opened itself up to these types of mutation, and these are even precipitated by the Derrida at war with himself, who suggests his new suspicion of the theory of the performative.

Returning to Rooney's aphorism, what is it about where the Palestinians are that deconstruction is not? And why is this significant for a) the Palestinians, and b) deconstruction? The very idea of locatability in either of these cases will be scrutinised under a deconstructive eye, to suggest that the presence is inherently divided, complicit with non-presence, and therefore not an apt discourse by which to evaluate 'a lack' in deconstruction which the Palestinians might be able to, aphoristically, draw our attention to.

However, Rooney points out Derrida's own awareness of deconstruction's own incompleteness, when he writes that there is 'an incompletion that is not the negativity of a lack' which necessitates 'some supplementary afterword each time it runs the risk of stabilizing into a formalized discourse' (Rooney, 2009, 37). Might the Palestinian struggle then be seen as a type of afterword, supplementing deconstruction in order for it not to stabilise into the Deconstruction™ warned of by Cohen? Rooney alerts us to Edward Said's resistance to post-structuralism, writing specifically that his work 'maintains a distance from deconstruction in his preoccupations with both reality and questions of agency' (30). Rather, Said critiques the theory of the performative so as to show that 'when powerful interests are at stake this is not merely a strikingly uncanny phenomenon but often to the detriment of the disempowered, particularly when their existences are not recognised as real existences' (40). There is then, something that Rooney is drawing our attention to in regards to the limit of the performative and of deconstruction as it relates to the affirmation of the existence of the disempowered, specifically in this context, the Palestinians. We might call it the undeniability of human existence[63]. It is clear then that this is in some ways a challenge to deconstruction, a challenge to 'break with performativity as law' (40). But would this be possible?

What would a break with the performative look like? Or what would a re-emphasis on the undeniability of existence entail? Could this 'reality' be seen in deconstruction as something other than a betrayal to the undeniably undecidable structure of signification?

[63] I maintain that this undeniability is different from and not reducible to essentialism. See the discussion below surrounding agential realism and relational ontology.

Reclaiming the 'Real'

The need to bear witness to the existence of the Palestinians is a constant and pressing reality. The attempt to reclaim the 'real' can be seen as impossible, potentially 'beyond' reach, while also undeniable. But does the inability to capture the undeniable in language negate its reality? And is the undeniable a 'fixed' thing, which harkens back to notions of essentialism and crude materialism, or is there another way to understand it? It may come down to something more bodily than mental, an intuition or sensation of what is real. But, as we all know full well, the body/material cannot be trusted as a proof of reality, or can it?

One way by which it might be possible to proceed, through the difficult terrain of attempting to somehow reclaim the 'real' as Rooney's work seeks to do in relation to deconstruction, is via the work of other feminist scholars such as Donna Haraway, Karen Barad and Vicky Kirby, all of whom have contributed to the discourse which challenges the removal and separation of the body, matter, and the material from discourse, and have deconstructed the opposition between nature/culture, body/mind, etc., in an attempt to reclaim matter, nature and 'reality' - not from a naive materialist understanding, but informed by social-constructivist, post-structuralist, and feminist challenges to the transcendental totalising gestures of male Western metaphysics. In the context of the Palestinian struggle and the need to affirm the possibility for solidarity, this connection can be seen in Rooney's assertion that 'Liberation theory cannot be reduced to the deconstruction of binary oppositions with Western discourse inasmuch as it concerns the presence of solidarities and loyalties not based on the logo, the brand name, the centrality of genre and identity' (Rooney 2013, 49). This chimes with Barad's question in relation to her theory of agential realism[64]: 'What if we were to recognise that differentiating is a material act that is not about radical separation, but on the contrary, about making connections and commitments?' (Barad 2010, 266) The connection is indeed connection: solidarities, loyalties, commitments.

I will begin in this section with a cacophony of voices from these Material-Feminist scholars, before focusing in on aspects of each[65]. In Donna Haraway's essay 'Situated knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective' (Haraway 1988) there is a direct address to my concern of the potential

[64] Agential realism is explored below.

[65] While this approach may be seen as 'cherry picking', I instead see this methodology as way of enacting the content of co-constituting, collaboration and the entanglement of reality: a diffractive approach, if you will.

naivety that could be perceived in the desire to talk about 'reality' (Haraway often uses objectivity as a synonym) in an age of social-construction and deconstruction. Haraway writes that 'feminists have both selectively and flexibly been trapped by two poles of a tempting dichotomy on the question of objectivity' and senses that there has been a 'collective discourse on these matters' (Haraway 1988, 576). Rooney confirms this when she writes that 'Recent feminist theory has been much concerned with the Scylla of constructivism and the Charybdis of essentialism' (Rooney 2007, 1). Furthermore, Rooney's scepticism of the performative is affirmed by Haraway's suspicion, when she writes, 'the further I get in describing the radical social-constructionist program and a particular version of postmodernism, coupled with the acid tools of critical discourse in the human sciences, the more nervous I get' (Haraway 1988, 577). This nervousness is re-articulated in more direct terms by Karen Barad when she says 'language has been granted too much power...how did language come to be more trustworthy than matter?' (Barard 2003, 801). And finally, to end this chorus-esque introduction to the 'real', it might be helpful to include a question raised by Vicky Kirby related to the notion of that which is 'outside' the play of language, articulated here as that which makes up the body and matter; she writes 'Given the assault of deconstruction upon foundationalist notions such as [origin, essence, ground], it isn't much of a stretch to include the notions "body" and "matter" within the orbit of these interrogations. But does this assault involve corporeal substance?' (Kirby 1997, 125). This question is significant as it raises others of deconstruction and the performative more generally, such as, does deconstruction affirm a world outside of the play of signification? And if so, is it merely inaccessible and separate to us, such that in saying we have no recourse to that 'outside' is the equivalent of saying it doesn't exist? And, how does Derrida understand materiality in relation to ideality, and what attitude does he have towards the 'stuff' which makes up the body and the world? For Elizabeth Grosz, another feminist scholar with close associations with those already mentioned, this is a question of 'how and in what terms to think that writing which is prediscursive, that writing or trace which *produces the page to be inscribed?*' (Grosz 1994, 119 *my emphasis*). Again, for Caroline Rooney, this substance is sometimes referred to as the sea or ink of being, the latter description here signalling a direct challenge to the substance's differentiation from the 'textual' as it is that which allows for the textual to emerge[66].

[66] Rooney writes, 'In literary terms, it is possible to draw a distinction between a writing that begins as writing

What we have above are various articulations of what is not 'only' language, or 'potentially' something that might not be able to be reduced to the effects of a chain of signifiers; these being 'the real', 'feminist objectivity', 'matter', and 'corporeal substance' 'prediscursive writing' - all concepts which have become red rags to the bulls of critical theory from the 60s onwards.

However, these feminist theorists are not scared of the potential backlash against such a desire, because they also appreciate the difficulty and seeming contradiction between affirming performativity and claiming the 'real'. As one example, Haraway writes that the social-constructivist arguments are not adequate for moving forward in our understandings of the world: 'Feminists have to insist on a better account of the world; it is not enough to show radical historical contingency and modes of construction for everything' (Haraway 1988, 579). This would be because there is a tendency in these approaches, while important, to reduce the material world/the real to language/the effects of language. She goes onto write that,

> I think my problem, and "our problem", is how to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own "semiotic technologies" for making meanings *and* a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a "real" world' (579).

This desire is an expression of my earlier articulation of the need for both the undecidable and the undeniable. How then does Haraway avoid this desire's potential pitfall, or criticism, that it is just the desire to return to full presence, a nostalgia for the transcendental? It would appear again that she does so through an affirmation of connections and relationality. Haraway explains that feminist objectivity is not the desire to claim an all seeing eye, which is simultaneously everywhere, but rather about affirming limited, partial, and specifically located knowledges. Feminist objectivity, she writes, 'turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility' (582/3). Through this affirmation of the partial knowledges, Haraway also speaks of the

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(with a consciousness of writing as writing), and a writing that begins with a consciousness of a living potentiality that is not yet writing, not yet articulate, but that which may be experienced as a musical sense of affect, mood, tone. It is the latter writing that I am calling 'poetic realism' (Rooney 2007, 110). She also refers to Irigary who speaks of the tangible: 'the tangible is said to be what we are immersed in like a bath or sea, and Irigaray likens this to an intra-uterine state: a sightless embrace within the womb' (96). For a fuller exploration of substance's differentiation from the textual see Rooney (2007), in particular Chapter 2.

renewed potential that the coming together and connections of these partial knowledges can provide: they '[sustain] the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology' (584). Rather than emphasising a separation and a distance which is uncrossable, i.e. an aporia, Haraway, like Barad, sees situated knowledges as an opportunity for co-understandings, coming alongside and connections: what Rooney terms collectivity. In fact, this structural limit in knowledge and understanding conditions the necessity for our relationship with others. Speaking of the impact of the loss of the fiction of transcendental knowledge and the dissolution of the subject, Haraway writes that 'The boys in the human sciences have called this doubt about self-presence the "death of the subject" defined as a single ordering point of will and consciousness. That judgement seems bizarre to me. I prefer to call this doubt the opening of nonisomorphic subjects, agents, and territories of stories unimaginable from the vantage point of the cyclopean, self-satisfied eye of the master subject' (585/6). The emphasis on openings and potentialities that the fractured self-same identities facilitates by connecting situated knowledges to others is particularly helpful in our discussion for the types of solidarity, connections and loyalties that Rooney proffers is needed for the Palestinian cause, and which deconstruction might often be seen to have trouble offering. This type of knowing is 'partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed, stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, *to see together* without claiming to be another' (586 *my italics*). This potential to see together is particularly helpful and useful, and I might rephrase the relationship or effect that the Palestinian struggle can have on deconstruction through this idea of a 'seeing together', while also bolstering the affirmation of co-existences.

What is also coming to the fore in this exploration of the real is how, for these feminist scholars, the real is emerging as that which is inherently, or structurally, relational. Rooney asks, 'Perhaps the significance of the real consists in our being conscious and solicitous of the being of the other?' (Rooney 2007, 72). There is something about reality which is co-constituting. The dissolution of phallogocentric identity and the self/other relationship is taken further by feminist scholars in recent years, particularly by Karen Barad, who explores 'how matter comes to matter' and its relationality with the discursive. I will now move on from Haraway to explore Barad's understanding of agential realism, which will offer helpful analytic tools for this

attempt to reclaim the real, the undeniable, while not abandoning the undecidable. Indeed, Barad may push us further/draw us in closer than expected.

Karen Barad's agential realism

Where, then, to begin when wanting to bring in a feminist quantum physicist's theory of realism into a discussion on the Palestinian struggle and the (potential) limits of deconstruction? It sounds like a rather crazy addition. However, what is at stake *here*[67] in bringing the work of Karen Barad into this discussion is an understanding of reality which will enable us to appreciate both the undecidable and the undeniable, which in turn will allow for an affirmation of Palestinian existence and a commitment of solidarity with their cause. In what I outline below I will argue that I believe Barad's theory of agential realism allows us to think about the real in relational terms, and thus the undeniable I speak of comes to be understood a relationally real: that which avows the complementarity of the undecidable and the undeniable at the same time, yet acknowledges that different emphases are needed in different contexts.

Similarly to Haraway, one of Barad's main concerns is to find another way through the terrain of the contentious discussions around 'realism' which can't be reduced to either social-constructivism (i.e. performativity) or essentialism (i.e. simple materialism); she aptly articulates this desire in a subtitle of an earlier essay with the same title as her book, 'Meeting the Universe Halfway: Realism and Social-construction without contradiction' (Barad 1996). Part of this concern over reconfiguring an understanding of realism is that, as quoted above, 'language has been granted too much power,' and the material real has been lost:

> The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every "thing" - even materiality - is turned into matter of language or some other form of cultural representation...Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter (Barad 2003: 801)

Barad is on board with the others quoted above in a desire to get back to matter and to affirm 'the real'. She asks in her book *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 'Is reality an

[67] I emphasise here, that is to say in this thesis, as I am aware that there are numerous other ways and affirmations of Palestinian existence which require neither the reading of deconstruction or the understanding of quantum physics. My attempt in going through this route is to open deconstruction to Palestinian existence, not to say that we need deconstruction to affirm Palestinian existence.

amorphous blob that is structured by human discourses and interactions?' (Barad 2007: 42) as a way of provoking us to think about whether there is an outside, a beyond language, and if so what sort of access do we have to it? And yet, the term beyond might not be the right word to use, as Barad fundamentally rejects the construction of inside and outside, instead affirming the *entanglement* of matter, language and being; epistemology, ontology and ethics. Her theory of agential realism 'cuts across the traditional divide between realism and social-constructivism; that is, it challenges the very terms of the debate' (Barad 2007: 408). Barad's contention is that nature and culture are not distinct entities. In fact, Barad deconstructs, or rather rejects, the traditional notion of separation between words, things and individuals. The claim that language offers *representations* of *things* in the world to *individuals* (representationalism) would generally be assumed to have been analysed and discredited by post-structuralists, social-constructivists and those associated with deconstruction a-like. However, Barad suggests that not only is it traditional forms of realism which function on this system, but social-constructivism is also still propped up by this triadic structure (Barad 2007, 408). Her argument is that, although those such as Butler and Foucault have offered interesting critiques of foundationalism, their understandings of the relationship between subject and object, nature and culture etc., is still dependent on an understanding of matter which reproduces the type of binarism they attempt to contend. I would like to follow this critique and ask whether it can also be applied to Derrida's understanding of the individual.

The way into this question is through Barad's understanding of 'the nature of nature', which is informed by the work of quantum physicist Niels Bohr[68]. Skating over the critique of identity and representation, which is implicit in deconstruction, Barad posits that not only is there a relation between subject and object, self and other, and that this relationship affects each party in their constitution, but rather that *the nature of the relationship* between these things is crucially important to moving away from the metaphysical understanding of the individual which plagues post-structuralist and social-constructivist theories of selfhood and identity. Barad's understanding is that there is no inherent distinction between nature and culture because, following Bohr's

[68] Again, on the inclusion of quantum physics into this discussion, I will admit to my limited and unqualified knowledge around the subject. Hence, this section borrows from her work in a way which, to some, may feel like cherry picking. However, I see it more as an affinity with her fundamental ideas around the 'nature of nature' which I feel to be particularly helpful and fruitful for this discussion. For fuller understandings and explanations around the relevance of quantum physics to this discussion see Barad (2010) (2007), (2003), Kirby (2011) (2010) (2007), Rooney (2007).

account of the indeterminacy in scientific experiments between the observer and the apparatus, 'the key point is "quantum wholeness", or the lack of an inherent/Cartesian distinction between the "object" and the "agencies of observation" (Barad 2007, 118). If this is the case for scientific experiments, is also holds true for the relationship between self and other. This form of wholeness is akin to what Rooney affirms when she writes 'the real is ultimately an undivided totality' (Rooney 2007: 1). This undivided totality is, for Rooney, a non-dualism as opposed to singularity. She writes, 'Non-duality pertains not to oneness as singular but rather to *what is not yet separate* and thus entails a potential for duality, plurality and difference. This is what I mean by a holism (rather than monism) underlying the advent of difference' (Rooney 2007: 11-12 *my emphasis*)[69]. This description of non-dualism, which appears to have been arrived at via another quantum physicist David Bohm (amongst many other trajectories), is very similar to Barad's articulation of reality, when she writes, 'Because phenomena constitute a non-dualistic whole, it makes no sense to talk about independently existing things' (Barad 2007: 205). In both descriptions, we get a sense of something undivided and whole, and yet not impervious to difference, potential and change: this is no death-like wholeness or totality. The understanding that things are not separate from each other ultimately comes from the view that specificity emerges out of this wholeness (phenomena/non-dual totality) and that there are no 'things' before this, therefore there are no independent entities. We, as humans, are included in this, as Barad stresses time and again, we are not *in* nature, but *of* nature. In other words, we are not *in* the world as a separate entity but *of* the world as a participant: we are *of* the matter and substance that makes up the world. In this sense, the phrase 'there is nothing outside of the world' (reminiscent of there is nothing outside of the text) comes to signify that there is nothing outside of matter. For Barad, via Bohr, the 'primary epistemological unit is not independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties but rather phenomena' (Barad 2003, 815). Phenomena in this context refers not to the phenomenological understanding of phenomena as 'things in themselves' but, in a way, the exact opposite: phenomena are not singular or independent 'things', but non-dual 'ontologically primitive relations - relations without pre-existing relata[70]'

[69] Importantly, Rooney specifies that this understanding is more akin to Spinoza than to Leibniz, as will become relevant later on in relation to Derrida's affinity with Leibniz.

[70] Barad describes relata as 'would-be antecedent components of relations. According to metaphysical atomism, individual relata always pre-exist any relations that may hold between them' (2003, 812). For

(815). That is to say the ontological unit which Barad posits as being primary is one which is relational and ontologically-dependent. Therefore, when she writes that 'relata do not preexist relations: rather, relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions' - we come to understand the nature of intra-action as opposed to inter-action being that, because there are no independent 'things' which are stable before their proposed inter-action, the neologism intra-action does not presume the prior reality of independent things/relata, and instead acknowledges the prior ontological relationality and dependence of phenomena. And yet, within this ontological dependence and relationality, reality is not just one amorphous blob of sameness. In agential realism we see differentiation and separation occur, not because of the pre-existing distinction between things but out of the non-dual whole: out of already existing connection and relationality[71]. Thus, intra-actions within phenomena enact 'agential cuts(s) affecting a separation between "subject" and "object", therefore accounting for the difference between things as a specific 'local resolution within the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy' (815). This type of separation is referred to as 'agential separation' or 'an agential cut', where agential is used as an adjective to signify the participation of what it is describing in the process of meaning/materialisation etc. Thus, agential realism, Barad's overarching neologism for her theory of realism, can be paraphrased as a realism which doesn't fall prey to the metaphysical individualism founded on binarism, but rather, understands matter, boundaries and phenomena (reality/the non-dual wholeness) not to be a stable 'things' which can be grasped, but a lively sea of potential, open to agential separation, cuts and intra-actions. Again, Barad writes, 'matter is not mere stuff, an inanimate given-ness. Rather, matter is substance in its iterative intra-active becoming—not a thing, but a doing, a congealing of agency.' (Barad 2012, 34). Thus, rather than matter/substance being passive and in need of forming and inscribing, agential realism does away with the binaries of subject/object, self/other, passive/active, and radically re-conceives of agency. Agency, for Barad, 'is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. It cannot be designated as an attribute of subjects or objects (as they do not pre-exist as such). It is not an attribute whatsoever. Agency is "doing" or "being" in its intra-activity' (Barad 2007, 178). This is quite a stretch for

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Barad, 'relata only exist within phenomena as a result of specific intra-actions (i.e., there are no independent relata, only relata-within-relations).' (2003, 815)

[71] This is close to Derrida's notion of différance at the origin.

traditional notions of agency, which are completely and securely situated with individuals. But it follows, that if individuals do not have inherent properties or attributes, but rather come into being through relational processes of intra-acting, then agency is also a doing, or a being, not a 'thing' that someone possesses. Indeed, Barad takes her theory of agential realism further to propose a post humanist theory of performativity which deconstructs the opposition between the human and the non-human, between the material and discursive, such that the givenness of the status of the human as the possessor of agency is challenged, so that 'the dynamics of intra-activity entails matter as an active "agent" in its ongoing materialization' (Barad 2003, 822).

This is perhaps where we can see a divergence between Barad and Rooney's theories of 'the real'. For Barad, there is an inherent collapse of the boundaries between epistemology and ontology, as there is for the material and the discursive. Barad writes, 'the agential realist ontology that I propose does not take separateness to be an inherent feature of how the world is' (Barad 2007, 137). This sounds quite like Rooney. However, Rooney is hesitant to collapse this distinction between ontology and epistemology, writing, 'I still think we have to maintain the gap between epistemological categories (as indeed constructions) and the ontological' (11). The retaining of this gap would indicate that, while epistemology is indeed constructed, ontology is a given, before epistemology gets its hands on it (or at least tries to), for Rooney[72]. Barad diverges here with this approach, despite the similarities on the understanding of reality as a non-dual wholeness. And indeed it is upon this non-duality that Barad maintains the entanglement of epistemology and ontology, rather than rejects it. In fact, following Barad, it can be argued that sustaining this gap actually reproduces a metaphysical binarism which should be collapsed; 'The separation of epistemology from ontology is a reverberation of a metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse' (Barad 2003, 829). What is at stake in this lack of separation between ontology and epistemology is the type of relationship between matter and language that has been questioned above by Rooney in deconstruction. Barad goes onto describe how matter and discourse are indeed not opposing 'things' but rather

[72] However, in a reading of a section of Mahmoud Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness* Rooney writes that in the process of reading Darwish's text, 'being and poetry are one' (Rooney 2007, 103). This would suggest at least a partial collapsing of the epistemological and the ontological as categories.

entangled and implicated practices of 'mattering', proposing the term material-discursive practices for this entanglement. In fact, she offers a post humanist understanding of performativity which again chimes with Rooney's critique of the pervasiveness of the performative in deconstruction:

> Performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real. Hence, in an ironic contrast to the misconception that would equate performativity with a form of linguistic monism that takes language to be the stuff of reality, performativity is actually a contestation of the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve (Barad 2003, 802).

This type of performativity then is one which entangles matter and discursive practices. For if there is nothing outside of the world, then discourse must emerge from phenomena, and in some sense be a material phenomenon. Language, for Barad, is not a mediating function between individuals which attempts to describe 'things', but 'rather blasphemously, agential realism denies the suggestion that our access to the world is mediated, whether by consciousness, experience, language, or any other alleged medium' (Barad 2007, 409). This rejection of language as mediation of the world is founded on the understanding that individuals are 'of' the world rather than 'in' it, and individuals are not monads, cut off from the world around them, but complicity entangled in/of the material reality of the world of which they are a part. Therefore, 'Meaning is not ideational but rather specific material (re)configurations of the world, and semantic indeterminacy, like ontological indeterminacy, is only locally resolvable through specific intra-actions' (818-9). This insistence on 'the materiality of meaning making' (819) is not to say that matter and discourse are the same thing, but that they are mutually co-constituting through intra-action, because there is 'no outside': 'Discursive practices and material phenomena do not stand in a relationship of externality of one another; rather, the material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity. But nor are they reducible to one another...neither has a privileged status in determining the other' (822). This irreducibility would pertain to a singularity, rather than a non-duality, and thus, it is through intra-action and agential separation that the differentiation between matter and discourse has come to exist. In this sense, Rooney's separation of the ontological

from the epistemological does privilege the ontological as pre-given, and thus can be seen to maintain the binarism she attempts to deconstruct through non-duality[73].

Kirby reading Derrida: there is nothing outside of...

To further explore the notion that there is no outside or, rather, 'exteriority-within' (Barad 2007 825), in specific relation to Derrida and deconstruction, I would like now to take this discussion on to the work of Vicky Kirby, who offers an interesting material feminist reading of Derrida which is productively entangled with Barad and Rooney's explorations, to see if this conversation around reality, matter and the performative can be brought to some partial, and local, conclusion, here in this thesis, for the time being.

Kirby's reading suggests that Derrida's famous phrase 'there is nothing outside of the text', or 'there is nothing outside of text', can be read, through a similar working of nature and matter displayed above by Barad, to mean 'there is nothing outside of nature' (Kirby 2010, 201). Kirby helpfully connected Derrida's notion of the text to the quantum explorations of Barad, writing,

> if the question of the referent and its systemic entanglements arise just as powerfully through the grammatological 'textile' as the quantum mechanical problematic such that the difference between the workings of form/ideation and the intricacies of substance/matter appear compromised, 'both' already present in/as the other, then we cannot assume that modes of being are somehow separate from modes of knowing (Kirby 2010, 205).

The association given here is that Derrida's conceptualisation of the text, which goes beyond a simple understanding of language or words, has resonances with the quantum understanding of the world, where the locatability of presence is troubled through indeterminacy of being; the blurring of boundaries between self and other; and the contamination and inseparability of one from the other. Kirby reads textuality 'as systemic self-reference [which] could be recast as the Nature of Nature, the ontological complexity of Life as it unfolds – both subject and object (at the same time) of its own enduring curiosity and self-reflection, now a form of self-diffraction.' (218). In this way then, Kirby sees the supplementarity of deconstruction to have an affinity with the revelations of quantum physics, such that one can interpret deconstruction as

[73] The difference between Rooney and Barad, not able to be explored fully here, is perhaps between a materialist and a mystical approach to the real. For more on the mystical and the real see Rooney (2007a).

'an acknowledgement of the self-involvements of a meta-*physis* whose *internal* torsions have quantum implications' (Kirby 2011, x). This understanding affirms Barad's lack of separation between ontology and epistemology in the same way that the radical separation between matter and discourse is problematised. Kirby writes recently, seemingly a little frustrated, at the continuation of the binary division replicated in the work of theorists who claim to counter such views:

> What is the point, *really*, in championing the difficult convolutions of deconstructive thought as well as feminist and other political interventions that question the disjunction of the human from the nonhuman, or mind (culture) from body (nature), if this same disjunction remains the true and inescapable ground of our arguments? (ix).

While I am very sympathetic to the reading Kirby gives of Derrida and deconstruction, and think it is a useful understanding in the context of this discussion, what Kirby does, unwittingly, is to immunise Derrida and deconstruction from any critique of the sort she launched at others; critique such as Rooney's of the pervasiveness of performativity. Additionally, Kirby's belief that Derrida is concerned with the substance/matter of the world in its corporeality appears to be *an inference of deconstruction's logic of supplementarity read through its quantum affinities*, rather than based on explicit examination of Derrida's work. Indeed, as shown above, Rooney is not convinced that this is the case, to the degree that she perceives the logic of the performative and supplementarity to be complicit with the auto-generativity of capitalism (Rooney 2007). It is not a given that because deconstruction can be read through a materialist feminist lens, that textuality is presented by Derrida as the 'Nature of Nature'. I will go on now to suggest one way in which Kirby's reading appears problematic.

One such problem can be seen in a remainder of Derrida's own metaphysical complicity with representationalism when it comes to his understanding of the individual. Whereas the quantum and feminist approaches above signal the dissolution of a boundary between self and other, not only in a psychic way, but in the very materiality of bodies, Derrida can be seen to continue to affirm radical separation in place of this co-constituting intra-acting reality. This radical separation can be seen in the emphasis on the undecidable and the aporia in deconstruction. Aporia meaning an impasse, or more literally, 'without passage.' This aporia, which 'structures' Derrida's thought, resulting in the undeniability of the undecidable, can be seen to retain the

implicit metaphysical assumption of the binary opposition between self and other. (However, his drive and call to 'do the impossible' alongside his stated insistence that one should not remain in the undecidable may be taken as his way of challenging this. But the foregrounding of this separation at the expense of connection is the focus of my concern here). This is seen when Derrida describes the individual as a Leibnizian monad in conversation with Maurizio Ferraris. It will be quite evident, following the preceding discussion, how out of sync Derrida's understanding of communicability is with these feminists and their interest in 'the real'. Speaking about relationality, he says,

> What I see at this moment has no relations to what you see, and we understand each other: you understand what I'm saying to you, and for that to happen it is necessary, really necessary, that what you have facing you should have no relation, no commensurability, with what I myself see facing you. And it is this infinite difference that makes us always ingenuous, always absolutely new (Derrida, 2001 70).

The proposal of having 'no relation' between speaker and listener flies in the face of Barad, Kirby and Rooney's assertions explored above. Indeed, through an intra-active agential realism, ontology is relational and thus lack of relation is not commensurate with the exploration above. Derrida goes on in this conversation to explain this lack of relationality by describing how he perceives individuals to be entrapped in themselves, completely separate from others:

> Call it monadology - the fact that between my monad - the world as it appears to me - and yours, no relation is possible: hence the hypothesis of God [for Leibniz], who thinks of compossibility, pre-established harmony, etc. But from monad to monad, and even when monads speak to one another, there is no relation, no passage. The translation totally changed the text. From this point of view, it is a question for me of a Leibnizianism without God, so to speak: which means that, nevertheless, in these monads, in this hypersolipsism, the appeal of God finds place (71).

What is significant about this passage is that Derrida both affirms the idea that the individual is a windowless monad whose communication with others is impossible due to a lack of relationality, and yet, he claims that his interlocutor understands what he says. Are we to presume that Derrida believes there is an understanding which comes into being between two interlocutors despite their infinite separation, when talking? Or is this term 'understanding' still riddled with epistemological indeterminacy, such that we can never really know what one another means? Could this understanding be

read as the necessity to move out of the undecidability Derrida mentions, and could it be termed a specific local situated knowledge which is, in that moment, undeniable? Or, in the words of Barad, we might understand the possibility of understanding through the specific agential cuts in material-discrusive practices which congeal to determine signification in a local, not universal, sense: 'meaning is not ideational but rather specific material (re)configurations of the world, and semantic indeterminacy, like ontological indeterminacy, is only locally resolvable through specific intra-actions' (Barad 2003, 819). Derrida is not completely opposed to this idea, agreeing that context is crucial, and that meaning is not some relative notion where anything goes, but is importantly conditioned by context. Barad's agential realism also refuses relativism at the same time as essentialism, but does so through a relational ontology that Derrida's comments above on the monad seem to foreclose. For Barad, 'individuation is not a given but the result of specific cuts' (Barad 2007, 174). In terms of communication, reading again through Niels Bohr, Barad posits that 'instantaneous communication between spatially separated systems is explained by the fact that these allegedly separated states are not really separate at all, but rather "parts" of one phenomenon' (174), thus rendering the idea of agential separation, separation within or from relationality, the condition for the possibility of objectivity in a situated sense. However, it is clear that for Derrida, despite the deconstruction of boundaries between concept, even of self/other, the non-relation between monads signals an inherent clinging to the metaphysical binary distinctions between nature and culture, and therefore self and other. To highlight the contrast for Barad in relation to the 'non-passage' Derrida speaks of above, she writes '"others" are never very far from "us"; "they" and "we" are co-constituted and entangled through the very cuts "we" help to enact. Cuts cut "things" together and apart' (Barad 2007, 179). While Derrida might also by sympathetic to the notion that 'others are never very far away from us', to the degree where '*Je est un autre'*, there is a fundamental difference which these feminist theorists are positing: it is a direct challenge to the notion of the monad, the self-enclosed, bounded body with a mind. In fact, it has been asked before where Derrida's emphasis on the deconstruction of the body/mind dualism is, as it appears to be lacking (Reynolds 2004, 26). Derrida's alignment with the monad highlights this. Therefore, despite Kirby's launching of supplementarity as a quantum phenomenon, which is rich and interesting, there must be room for a hesitation over some of the

problems with the emphasis already at work in Derrida's writing: here that radical separation is foundational.

Thus, when coming back full circle to the beginning of this long theoretical divergence which attempts to 'reclaim the real' via an emphasis on the undeniable over the undecidable, I believe that it is now possible to articulate this theoretically, while maintaining the seemingly paradoxical assertion that the undeniable and the undecidable can exist in complementarity.

So, if I return to the Rooney's initial aphorism which began this discussion of deconstruction and Palestinian existence, which asserted that 'The Palestinians *are* where deconstruction could be in the future', is there a way to see that agential realism is more hospitable to the Palestinian struggle than deconstruction, or can deconstruction be read through agential realism to make it hospitable to the undeniable reality of Palestinian existence? Rooney's emphasis on the *are* of Palestinians highlights not only their existence as an undeniable reality, but also the collective nature of their struggle, articulated through *sumud*, and a universality (pertaining to collectivity) to which their situation pertains, i.e. Palestine as 'byword for emancipation and enlightenment' (Rooney 2009, 49). For Rooney, this universality is possible not because the Palestinians are 'special' in anyway, but because their situation pertains to something larger. This larger question regards the oppression of the living, those who embody the nature of a non-dual ontology, which exists before and outside of language. Therefore, in the local and specific context of the Palestinian struggle, there manifests a call to a collective-spirit of solidarity against the Israeli settler colonial regime (which is seen to be a slow genocide) and with the 'reality' of this ontology. This ontology, for Rooney, escapes the law of the performative and must be kept separate from epistemology. Her theory is closely related to the work of quantum physicist and philosopher David Bohm, who on this issue of ontology and epistemology's relationship states simply, 'reality exists before knowledge, and is not dependent on thought for its existence.' Does Derrida's suspicion of the performative open up onto a similar undeniable reality? It is difficult to speculate. What he does refer to, however, is a suspension of the undecidable in the context of human cloning in relation to the undeniable non-programmable nature of humanity: 'one objects to cloning in the name of that incalculable element that must be left to birth, to the coming to light or into the world of a unique, irreplaceable, free and thus nonprogrammable human being' (Rooney 2007, 232). Could there be a similar

affirmation within deconstruction of the undeniablity of human bodies, solidarity with liberation struggles, and a collectivity of spirit? Can the Palestinian struggle speak to deconstruction's limit, and help it mutate for a future of deconstruction which is more hospitable to these things?

If there is, it might be through Barad's theory of post humanist performativity, which is an attempt to reclaim the real which has affinities with both Rooney's approach and deconstruction, and yet is distinct from both. Contra Rooney, Barad sees the maintaining of an ontology which is separate from epistemology to reproduce essentialism. Thus, the idea that there is an 'outside of language' is inaccurate, because Barad refuses the binaries of inside and outside, instead affirming exteriority within, based on the belief in a non-dual wholeness out of which arises material-discursive practices and the reality we are a part of. Yet, I read Derrida's theory of performativity as explicitly different to Barad's insistence on matter as well as discourse and her concern to bring 'reality' back into debates of performativity and deconstruction. But would Barad's post humanist performativity be subject to the same critique as Derrida's from Rooney? Barad's ontoepistemology highlights another divergence, one which would appear to deny a reality before epistemology, collapsing another binary between being and knowing. But the 'law' of the performative that Rooney might critique in Barad's work cannot be that of language's performativity, as this is also the target of Barad's critique. Rather, Rooney may posit that the conflation of the boundary between ontology and epistemology makes ontology's inability to be captured by language/discourse, an effect of discourse. However, Barad wants to say that matter is not a passive substance that human agency comes to inscribe meaning onto, but rather matter can be an 'agent' of agency in the process of material-discursive practices. Thus, it appears to me that Barad's ontoepistemology also rejects that epistemology is a purely human phenomenon, such that the intra-action between, say, a rock and another rock, produces a type of epistemology. And in the un-dual wholeness of reality, a separation between ontology and epistemology is a humanistic creation which post humanist performativity and agential realism would refuse.

Therefore, firstly in relation to Palestinian existence, Barad's agential realism and understanding of performativity both reclaims the real, in a non-essentialist sense, granting the matter of the body to become part of the debate once again, albeit in its malleable and indeterminate state, while not rejecting the indeterminacy of language and its performative nature. However, where I believe Barad escapes the 'law' of the

performative, is in her concession that, through agential cuts and agential separation, both epistemological and ontological indeterminacies are 'locally resolvable through specific intra-actions' (Barad 2003, 819); 'the condition of possibility for objectivity is therefore not absolute exteriority but agential separability - exteriority within phenomena' (Barad 2007, 184). Furthermore, 'In its causal intra-activity, part of the world becomes determinately bounded and propertied in its emergent intelligibility to another part of the world, while lively matterings, possibilities and impossibilities are reconfigured (Barad 2007, 149). That is to say, in the understanding of Haraway, there are situated-embodied-knowledges which are differentially produced through material-discursive practices, such that the indeterminacy of meaning and ontology (not relativity) come to be *contextually fixed* in a non-essentialist way: a feminist objectivity (Haraway 1988, 578). This escapes relativism and metaphysical transcendence:

'The "equality" of positioning is a denial of responsibility and critical inquiry. Relativism is the perfect mirror twin of totalization in the ideologies of objectivity; both deny the stakes in location, embodiment, and partial perspective; both make it impossible to see well. Relativism and totalization are both 'god tricks' promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully...But it is precisely in the politics and epistemology of partial perspectives that the possibility of sustained, rational, objectivity inquiry rests' (584).

Further to this, in a step which will take us back, again, to the Palestinians, Haraway writes 'Positioning implies responsibility for our enabling practices. It follows that politics and ethics ground struggles for and contests over what may count as rational knowledge' (584). Therefore, knowledge of what it means to be human is neither essentialist or relative, but is dependent on the material-embodiment of situated and locally determinate knowledges (material-discursive practices). Which, for Barad and Haraway, means that humanity is not about reifying the human body and fixing the meaning of 'being' outside or beyond language and discourse's contamination. 'The differential constitution of the "human" ("non-human") is always accompanied by particular exclusions and always open to contestation' (Barad 2003, 824). Thus, the mattering of embodied knowledges is the taking up of a contingent and situated responsibility for what it means to protect and have solidarity with the living, 'to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life' (Haraway 580). And because 'situated knowledges are about communities and not about isolated individuals' (590), this

relationality between knowledges, and between people, and ultimately, à la Barad, the intra-activity between the basic ontological unit, phenomena, from the 'ground' (or rather sea) upwards, relationality precedes any specificity that emerges in the universe. Thus, the desire to reclaim the real might be said to be the understanding of a real which is relational, where matter comes to matter in its implicit and unavoidable relationship with discourse, which does not suggest a primacy of one or the other: 'Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither has a privileged status in determining the other' (Barad 2003, 822). This, again, is ultimately a question of the possibility of exteriority: is there any outside (or the text, of matter, of the whole?).

Again, bringing it back to the Palestinians, what is at stake for this approach to the discussion of Palestinian existence and deconstruction? In terms of Palestinian existence, through an agential realist understanding of reality, it would be possible to argue for the specifically and locally determined nature of what it means to be human in a settler colonial context and oppose the slow ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from historic Palestine on the grounds of mutually co-constituted knowledges around the important and precious nature of humanity and the right to self-determination and resistance against colonising forces. This would not be based on any essential nature of what it means to be Palestinian, but rather it becomes possible to be hospitable to the specific form of identity politics of the Palestinian cause, on the basis that identity in this construction is seen not to be a given/fixed and essential thing, but is an on-going reworking of situated embodiment. The ontological and epistemological indeterminacy of Palestinian identity is locally resolved through its context and the web of partial knowledges which *come together* in order to establish forms of solidarity and resistance against oppression in the name of liberation and, potentially, the political of collectivity, i.e. 'the relationally real.'

What about deconstruction? What is at stake for deconstruction from the conclusion above? There is something undeniable and collective that deconstruction needs to re-emphasise, which may be possible through reading deconstruction through agential realism and its quantum possibilities. This might not exactly correspond with Rooney's trajectory of the future she imagines, but it is offered here as a further step forward in the cause for Palestinian recognition and solidarity in the field of critical theory (which of course is never securely separate from the field of practice and

activism) and as a possible provocation to what might remain of the binarism within the separation of the ontological and the epistemological, when what is at stake is the resistance of totalitarianism and the liberation of those under its oppressive regime.

To demonstrate the theoretical understanding articulated here in a specific instance I will end with a brief reading of a passage from Mahmoud Darwish's *Absent Presence* (2010), before opening up other Palestinians texts to this understanding of the undeniable relational-real I argue for here, to explore further the web of knowledges which enables these forms of solidarity. Caroline Rooney comments that because Darwish's works are 'written in or address conditions of siege, and in the face of possible extinction they exhibit a heightened sense of what it is to be alive' (Rooney 2007, 102). This heightened sense of aliveness may also be called the undeniable relational-real. For example, in *Absent Presence,* Darwish's third 'autobiographical' prose text, we are given examples in poetic prose of the this type of undeniable, which manifests for Darwish in terms of that which does not require proof, while also speaking to the locally resolvable nature of material-discourse. He writes, 'You must defend the disconnected letters of your name as a cat defends her kittens' (Darwish 2010, 5), which highlights to me the importance of rejecting the relativism of language and the complete social-construction that is ascribed to naming. For example, if we take the name as the name of the Palestinians, an identity politics accompanies the defending of such a name and naming. And yet Darwish is unwilling to forsake this naming, and says it must be defended, even if his conceptions of identity are in no way fixed or essentialist. For example, in a beautifully constructed idea of the limitations of identity and categorisation, Darwish gives us these words: 'You ask yourself, 'Who am I?' And you do not know how to identify yourself. You are still too young to answer a question which baffles the philosophers. The grave question of identity would prevent the butterfly from flying' (24). It is clear then (or rather it is poetically clear) that Darwish sees the need for fixed identity as a burden, one which, in the necessity to be answered is restricting to the degree of preventing one from doing that which is instinctual and 'natural', as in the metaphor of the butterfly. Identity baffles the philosophers, and yet, there is also something which requires a certain type of identity politics to be continued and not done away with either. The undecidable nature of identity, which baffles the philosophers, is complemented in Darwish's work by something undeniable. And, along with the feminist scholars above, Darwish is not scared by those who would launch the charge that the real is but an illusion. In terms of

those disconnected letters that must be defended, Darwish says, 'do not mock yourself if you are unable to prove it: the air is the air and does not need a blood certificate' (5). The burden of proof is not to produce documentation/evidence for that which is undeniable. The burden of proof is on those who would deny the undeniable. Sadly, this is often done violently, and does not amount to any kind of proof. The undeniable speaks for itself, beyond language. For Darwish, there is something about intuition which speaks beyond this need for proof; 'It is time you confirm intuition with proof; proof longs to rob intuition, as a corsair longs for a stray ship. Intuition is as defenceless as a gazelle struck with impurity' (6). The need to defend the disconnected letters of the name is linked here to intuition, suggesting there is something intuitive within naming, or that naming signals towards. Moving on to a poetic scene which evokes the disempowered situation of the Palestinians in relation to Israelis, Darwish writes,

> You are not but yourself, in this field open to armed archaeologists who never stopped interrogating you:
>
> 'Who are you?'
> And you felt all your limbs and said, 'I am I.'
> And they said, 'What proof is there?'
> And you said, 'I am the proof.'
> And they said, 'That is not enough, we need a nothing.'
> And you said, 'I am complete and nothing.'
> And they said, 'Say you are a stone so that we may finish excavation.'
> And you said to them, 'If only a young man were a stone.'
> And they did not understand you.
> They took you from the field. But your shadow did not follow you' (6).

The first line here displays the undeniable complementary nature of selfhood to the undecidable '*Je suis un autre*' of the undecidable. This paradox is not beyond the relational-real of agential realism. One is both nothing other than oneself in the agential separation that has arisen, and one is the others and otherness which have intra-acted with us. When asked who they are in this instance, unlike the example above of the butterfly's burden, Darwish's answer is the undeniable reality of the body, his limbs which speak for him, saying 'I am I'. The material relational-real speaks for the I which is all the 'proof' needed to claim existence. But this is not enough for the armed archaeologist; they 'need a nothing.' This need for a nothing speaks to the ethnic

cleansing that settler colonialism engages in. For early Zionist settlers, they needed a land empty of inhabitants, as proclaimed in the slogan 'A land without people for a people without land', and as is continued today in the dispossession of Palestinians via illegal settlement, house demolitions, forced evacuation, crushing limitations on movement, collective punishment etc. All of which enact a reality which treats the Palestinians as a nothing in the desire to erase the presence of the Palestinians from the land[74]. Darwish responds to the Israeli desire and need for him to be a nothing with the paradox of the undecidable and the undeniable, 'I am complete and nothing', knowingly acknowledging the limits of identity and that in the larger picture of the universe he is insignificant, but at the same time, complementary to this, he is complete, he exists undeniably, and therefore cannot be treated as a nothing. The armed archaeologists want to erase this undeniability by reporting that Darwish is an object in a field of study, a stone. But human existence cannot be reduced to objectification, cannot be reduced to the status of a stone, not even if one holds that the line between the human and the non-human is blurred. The armed archaeologists remove him from the land, force him into exile, dispossess him of his land and home, and yet Darwish tells us that his shadow did not follow. The spectral haunting of presence perhaps, or, as well as this, the inability to erase the physical presence and historical material reality of other Palestinians who remain as an undeniable existence in the land of Israel/Palestine.

I will now go onto explore these ideas further in readings of other Palestinian literature and film.

[74] For further reading and arguments for understanding Israel and ethnic cleansing see Pappé, (2007)

Chapter Four

‘That they are there’: exploring and avowing the undeniable through Palestinian Literature and Film.

This chapter will synthesise what has been, up until now, a very theoretical thesis and relate this theory to Palestinian literature and film, via Mourid Barghouti and Elia Suleiman. In contrast to what has come before, the concern of this chapter is to highlight the ability of Palestinian cultural production to avow the undeniable reality of Palestinian lives. The two examples explored below emerge out of the specific conditions and contextual reality of the Palestinian struggle and bear witness to it in their own specific way. This contrasts to the type relationship that Derrida’s writing bears with his place of birth and North African origins as explored in Chapter 1, and to the Palestinians in Chapter 2 and 3.

I want to move on to explore how deconstruction’s undecidable aporias of identity, origins and responsibility in Chapter 1, can be situated in the context of the Palestinian struggle. This will facilitate a further exposure of deconstruction to Palestinian existence via coupling each of the aporias from Chapter 1, spoken of there specifically in relation to Postcolonial Studies, with an aspect of Palestinian existence, which I am arguing is a specifically settler colonial situation. If, as Samir Haddad states, ‘Deconstruction....names an approach to inheriting from the work of others’ (Haddad 2013, 1) it might also be understood as an approach which inherits from the lives and situations of others, through which come epistemologies and knowledges. This chapter seeks to situate deconstruction alongside the Palestinian struggle to see what types of inheriting deconstruction might gain from this position[75].

The three following aspects of Palestinian existence are just that, *aspects,* which I believe can begin to help expose deconstruction to the undeniable in helpful ways.

[75] The next two chapters will be more concerned with the other flow of this direction, i.e. what deconstruction might have to offer the Palestinian struggle, or, perhaps presumptuously, what inheriting Palestinians might do from deconstruction.

They are not intended to define Palestinians or reduce their multifarious experiences and ways of being into one homogenous group. However, there are also aspects of Palestinian existence which do speak to a type of collective experience and common understanding of Palestinian identity. In particular, the following serve to inflect such a notion: 1) the Nakba (or the catastrophe), 2) Palestinian presence/existence and its denial, 3) resistance, and the responsibility to bear witness and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. In engaging with these topics there will also be an inevitable exposure of deconstruction to 1) Settler Colonialism, which will build on the exploration of Derrida's own understanding and attitude towards Israel/Palestine explored in Chapter 2; 2) Palestinian experiences of the oppressive conditions under which many are forced to live in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and within the State of Israel, and aspects of the impact of the State of Israel on Palestinians outside of these areas, the diaspora or exiled Palestinians; and 3) an understanding of the relational-real by way of exploring the aspects above and how deconstruction might mutate when it is exposed to this type of undeniable reality of the Palestinian struggle. This third point is what helps resist the idea that exposing deconstruction to the undeniable is to put it into relationship with something solid or stable. The relational-real, through Barad's understanding of agential realism, resists crude notions of objectivity and realism, as discussed in Chapter 3, and this exploration of the undeniable relational-real existence of Palestinians through literature and film affirms this theoretical trajectory. Using artistic production also helps defend against the notions that this undeniability is trying to mimic a transcendental truth or to say that history is that which can be revealed and studied objectively. Rather it affirms that there is play within a system of signification and matter, and that the material-discursive is an important way to find locally resolvable determinacy with the knowledge that this is subject to chance, and contextually confined. As a way to think about why literature might be an important aspect of highlighting the undeniable, I will turn to my first Palestinian text, Mourid Barghouti's second autobiographical work *I Was Born There I Was Born Here* (2012). The reading will be creative and experimental in an attempt to think about how poetry and literature break out of the mundane and help highlight and draw attention to the undeniable reality of existence.

Exclaiming the mark(!) in Mourid Barghouti's *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here*

It's difficult to get the news from poems, yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there (Williams, 2000, 318).

Mourid Barghouti's text is a form of the news. It is arguable that men die miserably every day for lack of what is found in such a text as his, not because it is a literary work of genius, but because of what it bears witness to. This reading will be about 'the news', the news of the undeniable. Call it love, perhaps. And there will be breaking news throughout, marking this section. Maybe I'm just a news boy, a child on a street corner, passing out rolled up newspapers and crying out Headlines: Headlines breaking through, breaking out. Heads breaking. And this is not just metaphor. Barghouti writes, 'It's fine to die with a white pillow, not the pavement, under our cheeks' (Barghouti, M, 2011, xii). This sentence contrasts the type of death that Palestinians long for as opposed to the brutal, indiscriminate killings which occur across the Occupied Territories and within Israel on a regular basis.

People die. But in the quote above from William Carlos Williams, it is to the *miserable* deaths we are alerted. Many people are dying miserable deaths. Barghouti's memoirs speak to this disparity between death and miserable death, wishing Palestinians could die as others do, with a white pillow under their cheeks. But do people need poetry to save them and bring rescue in the face of life threatening situations and circumstances? And where are we to find this 'there' which the miserable dying supposedly lack? And equally, what will be found there? There, their, they're, they are. The *there* of poetry, of poems. Where, then, is poetry? Where is the poem? Is there pine wood flooring, or marshy swamp land beneath foot? Are we in a nicely dusty, over-shelved library? Or Inside a book? Between two sheets of paper...

The poem is complex and the place made in our lives for the poem (Williams 2002, 316).

Or is it written in the mind, on the heart? More ungraspable. Ineluctable. Williams's quotes here speak to the power of poetry to awaken and enliven life, while also highlighting the difficulty of grasping where or how the literary is able to do this.

A text is not a text unless it hides from the first comma (Derrida 2011, 69).

Maybe a rescue will be found. But from and into what? It might be proposed that the there of poetry that William's suggests, and that I propose we might 'find' in Barghouti's text is related to the undeniable. This is related to Rooney's comment on Darwish's poems, which, because written 'in the face of possible extinction they exhibit a heightened sense of what it is to be alive' (Rooney 2007, 102). Similarly, Barghouti's circumstances as narrated in this book, and his first memoir *I saw Ramallah* (2005), also suggest that dispossession holds a quality which helps or enables one's attention towards the undeniable reality of life. Stephen Morton also uses the phrase 'the tradition of the oppressed' (Morton, 2013 173), in lineage with Benjamin, when discussing the work of Ghassan Kanafani and Elias Khoury, to describe a vantage point for discourses which contest and resist state violence. Furthermore, Anna Ball argues that 'the very act of creative expression can be read as politically potent when viewed against the backdrop of narrative silencing and erasure that has traditionally thwarted Palestinian self-representation' (Ball 2012, 2). Palestinian cultural production is not only a release of creativity under the oppression that comes with being Palestinian, but a commanding act of resistance against this oppression, cultivating an augmented awareness of the undeniable relationally real nature of existence. But does this heightened sense of being alive save or rescue?

I would like to turn to a rescue in the pages of *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here;* not a poem, but poetic nonetheless; a book that, as John Berger in the introduction says, 'begs for an answer to the question: why write poetry?' and in which, 'poetry is so interleaved with the problems and shit (such as identity cards) of daily life' (Barghouti, M, 2011, xi). The scene I am referring to occurs in the first chapter entitled 'The Driver Mahmoud', and takes place in the Occupied Territories, Palestine, if such a 'there' can be avowed, said to exist, and out of which a rescue could manifest itself. This 'there' of land is tricky. Space. There is a desire to be both nationalist and internationalist. How does the *there* of Palestine relate to the there-ness of poetry? I do not think they are the same thing. But I think they pertain to similar concerns. The poem is seemingly present and absent. We know it is something, but we cannot put out our hands around it, we cannot possess it. It is in some ways a non-place, just as Palestine is 'officially' unrecognised and is also referred to in this way by some. Palestine is unrecognised enough to make miserable many deaths. Palestinians, within Israel, are officially called 'present-absentees'. How does one speak of existence? To

bring forth the already 'there'? When it comes to land and a people, we might stretch this to 'reality', how can we say that *they are* - that 'it is' - especially after Derrida? 'We are dispossessed of the longed-for presence in the gesture of language by which we attempt to seize it. The specular dispossession which at the same time institutes and deconstitutes me is also a law of language' (Derrida, 1998, 141).

And yet, 'there are things we live among and to see them is to know ourselves' (Oppen, 99). These concerns speak to the discussion around going beyond the law of the performative via the 'the real' and feminist objectivity in Chapter 3. What the following reading will go onto do then is engage in what Edward Said wrote was the 'greatest battle Palestinians have waged as a people' which has been 'over the right to a remembered presence and, with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality' (Morton 2013, 176). In terms of a relational-real and through Barad's agential realism, I go onto explore how Barghouti claims the right for Palestinian presence in his text.

On route from Ramallah to Jericho, Mourid Barghouti is traveling through his homeland, in a taxi with five others, so that they can cross into Jordan. Compared to the West Bank, Jordan seems like a truly blessed place - there are no IDF tanks, Zionist settlers building illegally on Palestinian land, or arbitrary checkpoints there. Crossing the hills and valleys of Palestine is no easy feat and is made infinitely more difficult by the IDF, who patrol the man-made borders with tanks and checkpoints. But these checkpoints also spring up unannounced, impromptu check-points and road blocks, which can result in hours of questioning, threats to life, and unreasoned detentions if you are in the wrong place at the wrong time[76]. Palestinians wishing to travel have to apply for the right documentation, sometimes months in advance, with no guarantee that permission will be granted by the State of Israeli. And even then it can be revoked because...well...because.

For Barghouti's route, the journey is particularly difficult today, as Mahmoud, the taxi driver, announces that Israel has told the foreign diplomats in Ramallah that it will invade tomorrow. We are situated on the day before the 2002 re-occupation of Ramallah. The IDF will invade the daily details of the inhabitants' lives even more than it has already. It will occupy, bomb, destroy, enforce, wound and kill. Wanting to escape

[76] See Saree Makdisi's *Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation* (2010) for an in depth study of the daily conditions of life under Occupation. For a personal and humorous memoir, see Suad Amiry's *Sharon and my Mother in Law* (2005).

is made even more necessary and even more difficult in this light. 'There', Palestine, referred to as where Barghouti was born in his title, becomes 'here' as we read of Barghouti's journey through this difficult space;

I think to myself, a person could cross this valley on foot; horses or mules could find their way through these rocky twists and turns; but how can an old taxi carrying seven passengers and their luggage do so, with the fog and the rain closing in and the Israeli 'Defense' Force in its hideouts behind trees? I think: [Mahmoud] is trying to perform a small miracle without realizing it. (Barghouti, M 2011,14).

Mourid, Mahmoud, and four others. Together. They are here, there. There is here. Taken off a shelf, inside the book, between the pages, in our handsandminds,

that they are there! [exclamation mark.] (Oppen, 99)

Mark the exclamation, and exclaim the mark. Writing exclaims yes, and reading responds yes, in its own exclamation. Through the vivid and intimate depiction the process of reading transports us to live the moment being depicted by Barghouti.

And yet, the mark is an impasse which I keep reaching. The mark is an aporia, it is the undecidable; 'One finds oneself in a fatal and double impossibility: the impossibility of deciding, but the impossibility of remaining in the undecidable' (Derrida 2000, 16). *The mark is* an abyss, *mise en abyme*, a void. That we and you and they are *here, there*, and yet radically separated from you and we and they. Present-absentees together? Spectral beings? Language brings us to an impasse. Or maybe just a ditch, that could be flown over? Barghouti's journey takes us further in exploring how the undecidable might be acknowledged while still emphasising the undeniable and the relational-real via connection and co-presence.

Barghouti's driver, Mahmoud, gets a call concerning a flying checkpoint up ahead, an unannounced pop up road control, an unreasoned reason to further frustrate the difficulties of Palestinians attempting to move freely. So Mahmoud takes them on a different route. They go through fields, alongside massacred olive trees, off-road, and indeed down non-roads. We might read this as Mahmoud taking his passengers through the terrain of an aporia, the terrain 'without passage'; 'the car is now traveling over open country and there's no sign of paved roads' (Barghouti, M 2001, 10). In a sense, they are attempting the impossible. However the difficulty does not stop at the lack of roads. They get stuck in mud and all the passengers have to get out to push.

Afterwards, Mahmoud gives them water to wash themselves down, offers them a cloth, a tissue to dry themselves. He is taking care of them, his passengers, companions, as though, as Barghouti says, they are 'his nation'. Mahmoud is being-with his travellers. There is a co-presence which is sustaining the passengers on this difficult journey through the aporetic landscape.

But then, after the mud, further on through the landscape, they are stopped again, as they reach a physical impasse.

> Now we're facing a real chasm. We get out. And we see. We are on the edge of a cutting across a road that the rains have transformed into a huge, impromptu, mud-filled trench that the car will not be able to cross unless a Greek god from the heavens of myth, capable of changing fates, appears and gets us out of this earthly fix. (15)

> It is this car and no other that has to take us to Jericho: there is no alternative in this remote stretch of country. There is no way back and there are no taxis waiting on the other side of this fissure in the earth. (18)

Reaching the other side opens onto a matter of life and death. It is not just about crossing the border, catching flights and meeting appointments. Nobody knows what will happen if the IDF find them here. The potential of a 'miserable death' comes closer, and in the face of such a risk, a rescue is needed. Can poetry/writing fill the lack that is created by this impasse?

Barghouti begins to compare himself, as a writer, to Mahmoud, in whom he senses a certain sort of belief that the impasse separating them on their onward journey is not impassable. 'What would I do if I were in his place' asks Barghouti, 'Would I be capable of leading this trip?' (14). The doubt is centred around the passivity he feels there is in being a writer at a time like this, when 'action' is required. And yet, here we are reading what the writer has written. And there is a sense that while Barghouti is trying to describe the situation as is, without hype or being overly dramatic: he has a trust or faith in his driver. What happens next is, perhaps, a small relational-real miracle:

> Mahmoud doesn't look worried. In fact, he looks as confident and calm as if the Greek gods were his first cousins. In just a few minutes, a giant yellow crane appears from among the trees on the other side of the trench, glistening under the drizzle. In it are two thin, poorly dressed youths...[...]...Mahmoud issues his instructions "fasten your seat belts. Don't panic. We're going for a ride on the swings!" He laughs, to

encourage us and himself...[...]...A moment of total silence envelops us all. A moment as silent as a candle burning. A moment as silent as a letter being passed under a door.

Then the rumbling begins.

Dumbstruck I watch what's happening.

The huge long arm of the crane rises gradually into space until it reaches what its drivers judge to be the correct height. Its metal joints rub and chitter against one another and from time to time it groans as they lower the arm slowly towards us, tilting it a little to the left, then a little to the right, and finally, with extreme care, bringing it down till it almost touching the car. Next, it takes the car in the grip of its terrible iron fingers, which wrap themselves around its body like the fingers of a hand around a pomegranate, and with careful slowness lifts it and us into the air. We are now between earth and sky. (14).

Between earth and sky; between two pages of a book; in a space of neither here nor there; in the space of a poem. And yet, both here and there. This space is something of a threshold, something of the aporetic space that is said to be impassable and yet is being passed. The traveling companions are moving through a threshold sitting in a taxi, being lifted by a yellow mechanical crane through the air and across the ditch. Progress is being made, movement is happening. Poetry is a threshold experience.

And yet, the liminal is also the Palestinian's nightmare, a miserable deathly dream-reality: the space and time of dispossession; 'the suspended bubble of air in which we seven are swinging is now our place of exile from this earth...The Occupation is these moments of loneliness between man's earth and the sky' (19).

The space of the poem could be said to be one of deterritorialisation: it takes us away from self towards the other. Let's go, does not hold on to. It is an act of empathy, of hospitality towards the other. And yet, as Barghouti helps us to see, we cannot live - and should not be forced to live – in its perpetual state. In the impossible non-place of the undecidable. A constant moving or being in the threshold is described as the unyielding occupation, suspended in mid-air in a taxi. It becomes as static as death, a miserable death. There has to be a coming back to a sense of territory, whether of self, land, or home, which - as the passengers come to experience, moves them onward. It transforms in some way. Rescues, perhaps.

But this rescue, transformation, the poetic, does not just occur.

Barghouti's crisis over the relevance and worth of being a poet in moments of physical danger is part of what compels him to then write about his experiences. His writing bears witness to the undeniable existence of Mahmoud, who like a Greek God leads his nation through the aporetic landscape.

Barghouti writes so as to bear witness and to remember. Over and above all that went on that day, Barghouti thinks most of Mahmoud. Barghouti agonizes over how to thank him for the gift of his protection, his effort, his help. Mahmoud had cared for these people and they have put their trust in him. There is a faith between people here. Barghouti sees himself, the writer, as being weak and pathetic next to the heroism of his taxi saviour, the practical help and courage taken that day.

But then poetry's salvation comes in other forms. Writing marks exclamation. 'I'll write him. I'll write the driver Mahmoud. And I'll put down exactly what he did and how he did it. I'll write him. It's my duty. I'm a writer and that's my job. He did his job and one day I'll do mine too. And here I am doing it' (26). Barghouti presents Mahmoud. He affirms in the yes of his writing the undeniable existence of a Palestinian taxi driver who put himself in danger and took his passengers through an unknown and unpaved landscape. But Barghouti also bears witness to the two thin and poorly dressed youths, the crane drivers, the Greek Gods. We must remember the two thin, poorly dressed youths.

He writes *that they are there*. He mentions the crucial mark their presence made on the outcome of their journey. The rescue was not transcendental; it was embodied in two youths of a Palestinian village who *connected* with a taxi driver. This is not to say that writing is needed in order for these Palestinian men to exist. But rather that Barghouti's writing points towards and highlights their undeniable existence and the agential realism of what happened that day.

Maybe I want to say that men die miserably every day for lack of us, a lack of faith in one another, the unwillingness to recognise people, or the real: that we are the only salvation we will ever find. The salvation depicted above is relational. It occurs because of community, because of connection, and because of solidarity. And what Barghouti's writing does is to emphasise this in the telling of this story, which could be seen as a story of the undecidable, the liminal or the impasse. In fact, the emphasis comes from the ways of being of the Palestinians in this story: Mahmoud and the two youths. Their resilience and ingenuity, Mahmoud's persistence in face of difficulty and obstacles, their trust in the operation they have created for conquering this impasse. Barghouti writes to give the opportunity to recognise, to see and feel the weight of the undeniable. Barghouti's type of story never makes the BBC. Not even Al Jazeera. But this is a story of the 'it is', of the 'they are': the relational-real. Where separation and distance usually prevail, Barghouti brings faith and trust. He says yes; affirms and

shows the connections. He attempts to make the otherwise indiscernible apparent, but with caution not to repossess the dispossessed. This is the last thing they need. This is a danger in saying that people are poetry. It cannot be so humanistically confined. Barghouti escapes such reductions and does so without confining or over defining the youths, but they are undeniably present. They are there, named without names as 'youths', and brought into a geography of the mind and kept in mind in the geography of Palestine.

> *That they are there! (Oppen, 99).*

The 'they are' and the 'there' come together with the mark of exclamation, or the exclamation of the mark , in writing, in a non-definitive locale nor a prescriptive form of being (they, are deer, after all)[77]. And Barghouti's deer are Mahmoud and two poorly dressed Palestinian youths.

This rendering of Palestinian existence, of the undeniable over the undecidable, pertains to the solidarity Rooney and others speak of as was discussed in Chapter 3. Returning to Rooney and Critchley's reading of Genet's witness to the Palestinians in *Prisoner of Love*, it is a type of love, revolutionary or sustaining, which is said to be 'outside' of the text, or which escapes the law of the performative. Through a post humanist performativity, we might suggest that this love is a recognition of the lives of material-discursive beings, through a material-discursive medium of writing, where the co-implication of matter and meaning coalesce in locally resolvable situations to form knowledges and ontologies. The corporeality of Palestinian existence then, as documented by Barghouti, is heightened and drawn attention to, not created, in the literary account, and yet the body does not signify something in and of itself, but rather, through a historicity of agential realism and material-discursive practices, has come to mean something undeniable, such that to deny it is the worst form of violence. That the Israeli State denies Palestinian existence and seeks to erase its material-discursive corporeality is tantamount to a crime against humanity.

Barghouti enables readers to 'see together' through the narrative of his experience and to see Palestinians and the conditions under which the State of Israel forces many to live. In terms of the aporia of identity, this claim of the undeniable

[77] This line of Oppen's is from his poem 'Psalm', which begins, 'In the small beauty of the forest / The wild deer bedding down— / That they are there!' (Oppen 2003, 99)

relational-real of Palestinian existence does not seek to erase or claim that identity is not an undecidable phenomenon. Nor is it to say that existence means 'one' thing, or that bodies mean 'one' thing. But it is to say that it is impossible to deny the presence and existence of Palestinians on corporeal or discursive grounds, and therefore it is thus an undeniable reality.

The rescue narrated by Barghouti, which is facilitated by Mahmoud and the two youths, points to a unique event, while also signalling something more general about the relationships between people, the intra-actions which allowed for the impasse to be overcome. That is to say that the relational-ontology offered by Barad in the previous chapter comes to take on a manifestation in human relationships; Barghouti is dependent on Mahmoud, who is dependent on his crane driving youths, who in turn are dependent on Mahmoud, who presumably paid him, and again Mahmoud on Barghouti who also paid him. The relational-real manifests in social relationships, because, as we have already seen, the distinction between the ontological and the epistemological or social is not an inherent one, but the product of agential separation. Barghouti's text and acknowledgement or debt to the taxi driver Mahmoud is in a way another way of recognising this relationality. That is to say, that if reading Kirby to the letter, there is nothing outside of nature, then ontological relationality in Barad means that connection in the social outweighs our separation. Barghouti highlights this. It is an act of love to recognise and acknowledge the real in this way as that which is beyond the purely performative. Love and solidarity emerge when the undeniable is avowed. Avowing the undeniable is not only an act of love and solidarity, but causes other such acts of love and solidarity to emerge. Barghouti's writing enables an awareness of the undeniable to be felt in its avowal of Palestinian lives and the interconnections and entanglements that exist between lives. The avowal of this undeniability of the relational-real can cause an effect on the reader, like a moment of clarity. Such an awareness of the undeniable is not 'specific' in terms of being written down and captured, but rather emerges out of the literary, the poetic. The reality of the other becomes undeniable to us, and such an awareness of this reality is a form of love for the other[78].

To finish this section with Williams as it began, I will quote a final section of his poem from which the line was taken above, which speaks to this love, and the post

[78] Rooney calls such moments of awareness 'angelic visitation[s]', 'experience[s] of radiance', and 'mini-enlightenment[s]' (Rooney 2007, 94).

humanist love and solidarity which, in terms of Palestinian land and not only existence, as we will go onto see, is also crucially important for this politics of the relational-real.

I*t was the love of love, the love that swallows up all else, a grateful love, a love of nature, of people, animals, a love of engendering gentleness and goodness that moves me and that I saw in you (Williams 2002, 317).*

Avowing the undeniable: bearing 'modest' witness in Elia Suleiman's *The Time That Remains.*

In this next section I want to move on to think about how the undeniable speaks and must be spoken of, even in its unmentionable nature. This pertains to the aporia of responsibility and the responsibility to bear witness, which must encounter a risk and speak anyway, as the risk of not bearing witness is much greater. To explore these issues I would like to use the work of a Palestinian film maker Elia Suleiman, who uses silence in interesting ways, which will enable a particularly helpful understanding of this relationship between the undeniable speaking even in its unmentionable nature.

There is a question, within this attempt, which relates to the necessity to avow the disavowed, which may be the same thing as avowing the undeniable. To speak what is being made silent. But, this necessity of highlighting the undeniable is not to say that the undeniable is solid, but rather it is the relational-real, read through Barad's agential realism. To avow does not mean to claim transcendental objectivity, but rather that ontoepistemological indeterminacy comes to be resolved in local situations. Interestingly, Derrida claims that the undeniable is that which *can only* be disavowed. The first place I came across the word in Derrida's work was in 'Type-Writer Ribbon' , when I was attempting to follow Rooney's argument in chapter four of *Decolonising Gender,* entitled 'The Other of the Confession: The Philosophical Type'. In 'Type-Writer Ribbon', Derrida is speaking of Paul de Man's relation to confession, or lack of written confession, regarding the articles he wrote during the second world war. Derrida writes that

'The confession, in a word, on both sides, is never innocent. This is a first machine, the implacable and repetitive law of an undeniable program; this is the economy of a calculation inscribed in advance. The undeniable, here as always, is what one can only disavow' (Derrida 2002a, 104).

Two things become apparent from this passage. Firstly, that Derrida sees the structural reality of inscription from the origin as an *undeniable* program. This is not really a surprise as this idea is the sustaining thought throughout Derrida's work. However, it might signal an answer to the question posed by Grosz, mentioned above, about the substance or matter upon which inscription is inscribed: 'how and in what terms to think that writing which is pre-discursive, that writing or trace which *produces the page to be inscribed?*' (Grosz 1994, 119). Rooney concedes, following Derrida on différance and the law of the performative, that 'it may just be a contravention of reality that we would have to accept' (Rooney 2005, 114). But ultimately Rooney questions the nature of the real and opposes the idea that that différance is the nature of nature. This brings us back to Rooney's distinction from Barad in respect of the onto-epistemological. Rooney argues against the idea that the 'groundless ground' of reality is différance, but instead that she 'would not see différance in terms of, say, a single substance differing from itself but in terms of the rendering explicate of an implicate potential' (Rooney 2007, 10). Using a comment from Bohm to his colleague Biderman, she offers a corrective to différance being a contravention of reality that we have to accept, from a quantum perspective:

> 'You insist (quite rightly in my opinion) that opposites are never separated, always interwoven from the very beginning, and that they are only introduced to help us analyse nature (not actually existing in nature). However, I maintained that there is something in nature that these opposites are reflecting, and you seem to be denying this.' (Rooney 2007, 115).

This would presumably be the 'real', the ontological, or a potentiality which is separate from and pre-exists epistemology. 'In other words, the non-duality (not singularity) of the real is what both allows for and erases a dualistic thinking which is not just a textual deconstruction' (115). Therefore, the undeniable for Rooney is potentiality which is not caught in différance but makes it possible, and thus what is undeniable for Derrida is disputed by Rooney; but not disavowed, for its presence is still accounted for, but within 'a holism (rather than monism) underlying the advent of difference: I see the term différance as pertaining not only to an economy of traces but to the flickering, fluid underlying connections between what is spaced apart' (Rooney 2007, 10).

And yet, if we follow the logic of Derrida on the nature of the undeniable, the second thing we are presented with is that the undeniable can *always* and *only* be

disavowed. What is interesting here is that Derrida 'avows' originary différance (that which he sees as undeniable) and immediately says that the undeniable can always and only be disavowed. How then do we interpret this paradox? Does Derrida disavow the supplement, différance the originary trace in his writing, and would his suspicion of the performative take on a similar critique of the undeniability of différance, which he says must be disavowed? Unfortunately, I do not think that this is the case. It would be too neat a rendering to subsume Derrida and Rooney's complicated discourses and argue that they are in the end 'saying the same thing'. This would indeed erase difference. But there is closeness, and a similarity, between these two positions, albeit with this rift surrounding the nature of reality.

The psychoanalytic term disavowal [Verleugnung] appears in Freud's early work from 1924 while discussing the infantile trauma of genital difference and he later goes onto identify it with the fetish. In these two places Freud shows that there is an awareness of reality, firstly of the woman without a penis and secondly the fetishistic object which is not a penis, yet there is a denial of the reality. Laplanche explains the relationship with reference to a splitting of the ego, 'The two attitudes of fetishists - their disavowal of the perception of the woman's lack of a penis and their recognition of this absence and grasp of its consequences (anxiety) - 'persist side by side throughout their lives without influencing each other. Here is what may rightly be called a splitting of the ego'. There is then a knowing and a not knowing when it comes to disavowal; '*je sais bien, mais quand même'* (I know very well, but nevertheless) was Octave Mannoni's way of phrasing it. Disavowal is thus always a denial of a reality which at some level we know and acknowledge. For how could we disavow something we were not aware of? Yet, does the logic necessarily follow that if every disavowal is connected to a reality, then that which is considered reality (the undeniable) has to be disavowed?

Différance as undeniable is based upon the assumption that we are structurally monads who are radically separated from one another. As argued above, in Chapter 3, there are other ways of understanding our separation via agential separation and intra-action. This type of relational-real would be more in line with Rooney's assertions about the non-dual real, but would still perhaps not be exactly the same thing. What is at stake here in this repetition is the type of relationality we have with others and the world around us, and what this means for the type of reality we posit as 'real' or

undeniable. There is a politics of disavowal in either case. And perhaps it is a choice, as to which route to follow.

In *Rogues* (2005) Derrida highlights the undeniable alterity of the other to suggest a necessary deniability as protection from this otherness:

> ...différance as reference or referral [*renvoi*] to the other, that is, as the undeniable, and I underscore *undeniable*, experience of the alterity of the other, of heterogeneity, of the singular, the not-same, the different, the dissymmetric, the heteronomous. I underscore *undeniable* to suggest *only deniable*, the only protective recourse being that of a send-off [*renvoi*] through denial (Derrida 2005, 38).

Whereas, Rooney would like to highlight this undeniable reality of otherness as that which impacts upon us, not so as to cause a denial of the undeniable, but rather to affirm the existence of others and the undeniable reality of others and to embrace this effect as one which is life affirming, rather than defensive and protective:

> there is the fact of a real being, undeniably so, and the registering of this fact may be said to be like an angelic visitation or an experience of radiance in which time and space are annulled...[...]...This could be said to be a mini-enlightenment: the other arrives to touch me and I feel not their absence but suddenly their presence (Rooney 2007, 94).

Is it a question of emphasis, or a choice of how we experience otherness? And if this otherness is undeniable, how then do we respond to it?

Returning to the reading of the film I proposed at the start of this section, a short discussion of the reasons that I am using Elia Suleiman will prove helpful for answering the question above in relation to responding to the undeniable nature of the other. I have chosen this scene from Suleiman because of the self-confessed poetic nature of his films. Speaking of his awakening to film, Suleiman says 'I had sensed that there was a kind of falsity in the way so many films constructed themselves, but I didn't know there was an alternative and had no notion of *the potentiality of the poetic* side of the image' (Bulter, L 2003, 66 *my italics*). Sueliman's films are series of non-linear images which hold no centred narrative or meaning. Talking about the process of creating a film, he comments, 'at a certain moment, I have all these scenes, like the cards you saw in the film, and I start to do a kind of poetic montage' (72). This opens up the 'meaning' of Suleiman's films as a very conscious choice from the director. Each scene has multi-layered meanings and through the various techniques of montage, non-linearity and silence, Suleiman attempts to de-centre a director's imposition of

meaning in the film, and invites the audience to partake in the creation of the film's meaning. Interestingly, it is through the unresolvable, we might say undecidable, nature of interpretation that Suleiman's films come to challenge dogma and totalising readings of what it means to be Palestinian. And silence is key to this process, as 'Silence allows space for the spectator' (69). But silence facilitates or provokes the engendering of meaning by its drawing attention to the undeniable: the undecidable and the undeniable here come to help manifest one another, as I will go on to show. Suleiman's use of silence doesn't seek to leave the undecidable of interpretation open, but invites the reader to come and create a partial situated reading with their imagination: 'I try to keep that little gap that the spectator can fill in with their own imagination of that text. I think that by just creating an aesthetic territory in a poetic site, you envisage a potentiality for the spectator to participate, to co-produce the image, in a way' (69). The notion of potentiality and co-production speaks to the co-presence and ontological-dependence in agential realism and Rooney's ideas of poetic-realism as ways of emphasising relationality over separation.

Suleiman recognises that his approach to film making and his attitude towards 'Palestinian identity' or 'Palestine' is problematic for many Palestinians who watch his films; 'My approach is considered too critical for a time of national construction that is said to call for unity and even uniformity. They think that Palestinians should all speak with one voice. What we find here is a fear of 'destabilization linked to place, Palestine, where unity is considered essential' (Bourland 2000, 100). But Suleiman's approach actually points to a different type of reality, a relational-real, where homogeneity and conformity are not necessary for unity, connection and solidarity, but where openness, potential and creativity open up isomorphic identities to the reality that we are all intra-connected. My reading below, then, seeks to enable the undeniable to speak through Suleiman's silence through my co-production and intra-action with the film.

As briefly mentioned above, there are many aesthetic and cinematic forms of resistance within the work of Elia Suleiman which refuse to comply with what might be termed the normative tropes of much Palestinian cinema. These include dark comic humour, surrealism, fantasy, and anti-narrative, to name a few. In an essay on Suleiman, Rasha Salti explains a little of the difficulty for Palestinian artistic expression and resistance saying that 'it has always had to shoulder the additional burden of legitimising its place in the world, to defend the humanity of the lived experience it represented or narrated,' (Salti 2010, 51), therefore sometimes falling into a trap of

appearing to be overtly political and sometimes un-artistic by way of this necessity. Salti observes that even the famous Palestinian poet Mamhoud Darwish saw this difficulty within poetic expression: 'The problem of Palestinian poetry is that it set afoot without forces to support it, without historians, without geographers, without anthropologists; thus has it had to equip itself on its own with all the necessities to defend its right to existence' (51).

However, it seems to me that Suleiman's expression of Palestine refuses to play into this pitfall. Suleiman doesn't create films which depict the epic form of the Palestinian narrative, but rather puts together vignettes of everyday life, interspersed with the fantastical and surreal, often forming no clear narrative; there is a certain influence of Godard to be sure. His aesthetic form of resistance moves away from easy political ideologies, at once contesting a certain consumer mentality, and resisting a culture which can be seen as State approved.

It will be necessary to say that Suleiman sees his work as aesthetic, not political (non-partisan). There is no doubt that this is also a political act, indeed he says in an interview 'there is nothing that is not political'- yet the form of resistance is at base aesthetic. It is not partisan, but opens up a place of poetic desire for the viewer to experience. There is a need to open a space of multiple meanings which allow for a democratic reading in which the viewer participates. These traits seem very close to a kind of post-structural reading we might hear spoken of in terms of the undecidable. And Suleiman says, "Of course this also carries the risk that it might be misread, misjudged, but this is what democracy always has, this risk." (Bulter, L 2003, 65). However, whereas there is a risk involved, that might be called the undecidable within deconstruction, Suleiman by no means eliminates the complementary attributes. That which needs to be voiced exists alongside that which is still open and potentially undecidable. Suleiman does this by opening an aesthetic space into which he invites the viewer to engage. He provokes a responsibility to speak, which is shared by those who watch.

This space is opened in a number of ways; the one I would like to highlight is the use of silence. It may appear to be a strange choice after advocating a need for the sayable and undeniable, however there seems to be an interesting relationship between silence and bearing witness which Suleiman utilizes.

In this reading I would like to take the first scene of the film *The Time That Remains (2009)* which engender a form of resistance through silence. I will argue that

this scene holds a key in how to approach the interpretive co-production that Suleiman welcomes his audience to engage in.

The first scene depicts an Israeli taxi driver picking up a passenger (acted by Suleiman) from an airport. The passenger sits in the back of the taxi surrounded by darkness, such that we are only able see a small slice of his face illuminated by the street lights through the taxi window. The rest of his face and body merges with the darkened back seats of the taxi, indicating a dismissal (or attempted denial) of the passenger's presence visually from the beginning of the scene. If the taxi is taken to be a metaphor for the State of Israel, then the small slice of the passenger's face is symbolic of the reality of the Palestinians within a regime which attempt to remove and disavow their reality.

The majority of the scene is shot from the front passenger's seat so that we see the driver from the side, or from the windscreen, so that we can see the driver clearly behind the wheel while his passenger is in the back, as described above. The visual difference between the ability to see the Israeli driver and the Palestinian passenger is striking. This contrast is augmented by the fact that, throughout this scene, it is only the Israeli taxi driver who speaks, (apart from one response from a voice on the taxi-radio, presumably another Israeli). He speaks, sometimes over the radio and sometimes to his passenger, but most of the time we hear what could be interpreted as an internal, self-concerned monologue spoken aloud. Although, as I will try to show, there is much more being said beyond the literal speech we hear, beyond an existential reflection of who we are, which emanates from the silence to affirm an undeniable existence, in this case, of the Palestinians, but also potentially of something more universal.

It is easy to see this scene in terms of power relations. The Palestinian who is silent, the Israeli who speaks: ideas of Orientalism and the subaltern come rushing forward. And this is certainly one layer of meaning within the scene - however, it seems that the choice of silence in this case is in some way an active one. There are numerous places where the passenger could speak, unlike some other scenes later on in the film which imply a more metaphorical silencing and strangling of speech. Therefore, I would interpret this choice of silence as an aesthetic device and as a form of poetic resistance which speaks a 'different language' than that of the driver's chatter. 'Silence' says Suleiman, 'is very political...[it] is a place where the poetic can reign' (Suleiman 2003, 66). The poetic is presented by Suleiman as a space in which both

bearing witness and open interpretation can exist, without negating one another. In the invitation to experience and enter this poetic space, something sayable presents itself as undeniable, and it becomes necessary to bear witness to, even while being part of, a destabilised and open space of interpretation. Suleiman's silence speaks a counter-narrative of the undeniable. The silence doesn't remain silent in an audience's intra-action with it, or as the case may be, in my intra-action with it. The silence calls forth a response, which occurs, I want to argue, because what it makes apparent is the undeniable existence of the Palestinians. This meeting, or silence and speech, engenders a response. Somehow the undeniable existence of the other generates a compulsive avowal of what is being disavowed in the spoken. Context is particularly important. Let me demonstrate.

In the context of the colonisation of Palestine, its occupation and the numerous wars over the last 6 decades (at least) against the Palestinian people, I am going to go through some of the things the taxi driver says, and attempt my own response of bearing witness to the counter narrative I hear in the intra-action of the passenger's silence with what is being said.

The first line I'd like to think about is: *"I really don't need a storm...Enough Enough...That's all we needed! Oh stop it."* The immediate context of this line in the film is that they are on their way to Nazareth, something already a little out of the ordinary for an Israeli taxi driver, as many would consider it too dangerous to enter into the a Palestinian town for fear of being attacked. Secondly it is a long journey, and finally, the new road systems make it increasingly difficult to find the way: therefore the storm is the last thing the driver needs.

But, in the space of poetic silence which Suleiman leaves for the audience's imagination to move into, it appears quite clear to me, that taking into consideration the conditions under which Palestinians are forced to live, for the Palestinians the storm is the least of their worries. It would be difficult to say exactly what the 'last thing' Palestinians needed was, but the driver's anxiety is pierced of its dramatic tension and made to look pathetic alongside the knowledge of the continued settlements construction, the separation wall, the annexation of land, the confiscation of water supplies, the imposed economic depravity, the restriction of movement for most of the population, and the indiscriminate killings by IDF soldiers and settlers. One potential reading of the last thing Palestinians need is given by the sound scape. We see large forks of lightening, which become sheet lightening, illuminating the night sky.

These are choreographed with the soundscape of thunder and lightning, which begins to sound distinctly like gun shots, artillery fire, the shelling of buildings, explosions. More recently the 2008/2009 War on Gaza is conjured. Saree Makdisi describes:

> The bombardment of Gaza was without precedent in the decades of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. It was akin to a full-scale war, albeit with a major caveat: wars normally involve two states, two armed forces, but Gaza is not a state…[…]…Israel killed some 1,400 Palestinians during the twenty-two days of bombardment…it injured 5,000 people, many permanently…300 children were killed; almost 2,000 children were injured; hundreds of thousands of children were traumatized. The Israelis used massively disproportionate force and paid no need to the legal requirement to distinguish between civilian and military targets. "If anything looks suspicious to you," said one Israeli soldier, "you open fire." "If you're not sure, kill."' (Makdisi 2010, 301).

In parallel to the taxi driver's words we might hear *"I really don't need another war, an unequal and indiscriminate attack on my life...Enough Enough...Oh stop it."*

The next thing that the driver begins to say, due to getting lost, relates to the road system. *'I haven't taken this road in ages: they've built roads and interchanges, they've driven me crazy'*. When he says 'they', he means the Israelis, or the settlers, who have emigrated from outside of Israel to live here. This would make some sense of why 'they' are driving him crazy as opposed to using 'we' to describe who has built the interchanges, highlighting the hierarchy of status for Jews. But the changes to the road systems have been continuing for decades. Many roads are built in the West Bank as bypasses for Israeli settlers who live in Israel and the West Bank, but are for the exclusive use of Israelis and not for Palestinians. It is an apartheid road system[79]. Supposed to offer 'security and safety' for Israeli drivers, we see even for those using them that they are a nuisance: they confuse the driver and cause him to get lost, and make him spend more time than necessary in the proximity of Palestinian neighbourhoods. How can a taxi driver be expected to keep up with all the unexpected changes? What is meant to help and protect him drives him crazy. But this craziness is limited. He is at least the Israeli and is allowed to move freely and use the roads.

The passenger's silence again speaks in this situation. When asked if he knows where they are, he refuses even to say that he does not. The roads built are often at the expense of Palestinian villages, roads, farms and orchards. Makdisi says that 'The West

[79] For further information on the architecture of separation, see Eyal Weizman's *Hollow Land: Israeli's Architecture of Occupation* (2007); Saree Makdisi *Palestine Inside Out (2010)*; and Adi Ophir's (ed) *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion* (2009).

Bank road network is one of the Israeli army's most effective closure mechanisms. For Palestinians, roads have come to represent and embody paralysis rather than movement. Roads, like the wall itself, have come to mark one of the limits of their existence' (Makdisi, 2010, 32). And Israeli journalist Amira Hass writes that along with

'the curtailment of Palestinian movement... Not only did the settlements continue to grow, but a huge and ever-expanding network of high-quality bypass roads was built in the OPT linking Israeli settlements to each other and to Israel proper, while circumventing Palestinian communities and cutting Palestinian villages off from each other, from the larger towns, and even from their own fields and orchards.'[80]

The only way that a Palestinian passenger can get to Nazareth is by taking an Israeli taxi from the airport which will have all the necessary permits to cross and travel without hassle. It is made impossible to travel without a permit, as a Palestinian in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The procedure to get a permit is costly, time draining and an endless emotional battle, and ultimately does not guarantee movement. They can be revoked, torn up, or simply worthless if Israeli soldiers have orders to close a checkpoint. Palestinians are cut off from their farms, their land, their family, their friends, health services, markets, schools and more, at the expense of the new roads and interchanges that drive our Israeli taxi driver crazy. People get sent home, are humiliated, wait for hours in the blazing heat, give birth, see loved ones die, waiting to cross checkpoints, to access the road system which will take them to land which they own. I will leave my own silence here.

The driver takes out a cigarette and says 'You're not meant to smoke, but you can if you want.' The camera switches shot and we see both the driver and the passenger, his face almost completely in darkness. Again he does not respond. We see a relationship of power exercise itself here: the master and slave, coloniser and colonised, citizen and displaced. The seemingly gracious offer to break the rules regarding smoking in his taxi echo the way Israel treats the law at its own discretion: breaking International Law in the continued building of the separation barrier and settlements on Palestinian land, imposing boundaries of movement one way only, demanding security and safety while disregarding the livelihoods of millions of Palestinians. Suleiman's silence here strikes me as an act of resistance in itself, a refusal to even enter into the seemingly friendly gesture of a little luxury while lost. This is not

[80] Article available at http://www.miftah.org/Doc/Articles/2002/nov07e2k2.html (Accessed 28/06/14).

a decision to refuse all relationships with Israelis, but a refusal to engage in the hidden and subtle rules of dominance that remain within the settler colonial structure of the power. Why should the Palestinians take their orders from Israelis, why is it always the Israelis who impose and dictate the laws? The passenger's silence takes back a form of power, a dignity, and humanity which refuses the dehumanising efforts of the occupation.

Next, looking for some sort of reference point in the landscape to get his bearings, the driver asks *'Where are the kibbutzes, the collective farms? They were everywhere. Did the earth swallow them up?'* It's at once practical and inquisitive. Where are the kibbutzes that were so famously advancing a new possibility of community in Israel? This shows the driver's ignorance of the slowly changing landscape of Israel, as well as the ignorance of what his Palestinian neighbours are forced to live through. This is perhaps not so much a form of individual disavowal, but cultural repression which leads to many not knowing what is, and has been, perpetrated against the Palestinian and Arab population of Israel and the Occupied Territories.

The obvious parallel is the history of hundreds of Palestinian villages destroyed and eradicated from the memory of the landscape by early Zionist settlers, the declaration of the State of Israel, and continuing war and occupation and the annexation of land in the name of a modern 'secular' Israel. What happened to the villages that were here before the kibbutzes and collective farms? This is a question that must be raised again and again, with the undeniable existence of Palestinians living on the land before the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948. Edward Said quotes Moshe Dayan, an Israeli military leader, to describe the reality of these villages:

> We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish state here. In considerable areas of the country [the total area was about 6 percent] we bought the lands from Arabs. Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you, because the geography books no longer exist; not only do the books no longer exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal [Dayan's own village] arose in the place of Mahalul, Gevat – in the place of Jibat [Kibbutz] Sarid – in the place of Haneifs and Kefar Yehoshua – in the place of Tell Shaman. There is not one place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population. (Said 1980, 14).

What is interesting in this quote is that it is a Zionist who speaks of the undeniable, yet without compassion. The earth did not just swallow up the Arab villages; they were

destroyed by political and religious ideologies which were put to work by men and women in practical and brutal ways with worldly, and often bloody, consequences. Where are the 780,000 people who used to live in the 400 villages no longer present on the landscape? They are dispersed across the globe, living in refugee camps in surrounding Arabs nations, deceased from old age or imposed poverty, murdered by massacre and war, or perhaps holding on to land in The West bank, Gaza or inside Israeli borders, fighting for their right to live. The dispossession of Palestinians and the Nakba are undeniable. Despite revisionist history and Zionist propaganda, there is clear evidence for the violence committed against Palestinians in 1948, not to mention the presence of Palestinians across the world as a result of their expulsion.

The final section of speech I'd like to discuss is at the end of the scene, when the driver asks where his colleague, speaking over the radio, is, which turns into a self-questioning: *'Elie? Elie do you hear me? Menashe here. Do you hear me? What's going on here? What is this place? Elie, talk to me, we lost our way. What am I going to do now? What am I going to do now? How do I get home? Elie, Elie where are you? Elie, where are you? Where? Where am I? Where am I?'*

Sitting in this taxi, we might read beyond the idea that because it is the Israeli's taxi this is a metaphor for Israel, and see the space of the taxi as the double geographic space: at once Palestine and Israel. As the lightning flashes and the thunder roars, they are surrounded by the sound of rain, unable to see in front of themselves, and we are given an image of both a political and personal situation of Israelis and Palestinians. In the space of four minutes, Suleiman has brought an Israeli to the point where he asks himself 'What is this place? Where am I?' No longer does he know the comfort of Israel, with its borders and security, its right to return for Jews all around the world, and racial laws which protect him, but he is lost somewhere when he feels he should be at home. And the question of Palestine is presented, in its silence. Not by historic narrative or moralistic argument, but by opening a poetic space, which destabilises political and ideological narratives, and asks us, as viewers and as the international community, to avow the disavowed reality of Palestinian existence and rights. It is almost impossible to watch this scene without wanting to shout out at the incomparable experiences of Israelis and Palestinians in this apartheid land. And my assertion would be that if one cannot hear, or chooses not to hear, the avowal of Palestinians in this silence, then one is not being concerned with reality.

What also strikes me about the above passage of speech is the selfish concern of the driver when he cannot contact his colleague. He asks what he is going to do, how he will get home, and where he is. These questions completely ignore the fact that he is co-traveling with another person, taking no responsibility for how they will get home, what they are going to do! It is as though he would just abandon his passenger, emphasising again the larger disavowal of Palestinian existence and experience.

Unlike the previous section which discusses the Palestinian taxi driver Mahmoud, Suleiman's depiction of the Israeli taxi driver highlights the division between Israelis and Palestinians, the apartheid nature of the State of Israel, the Zionist disavowal of Palestinian existence. The sliver of the Palestinian passenger's face, as well as the persistent silence of the driver open up the poetic space of interpretation and call forth an avowal of the undeniable: the relational-real of Palestinian existence. The contrast between the taxi scenes highlights the radical separation that occurs when rigid identity, racial and national boundaries are put in place. Solidarity and support are lacking from the driver to the passenger as the driver goes through an existential crisis. But what does the driver's self-concern denote about the relational-real and intra-action of these two characters? The driver behaves as though independent, asking questions about his own future and predicament. However, we know that identity construction is always relational, and what appears an independent existential crisis is in fact a choice to disavow the presence of his traveling companion and the potential that exists in relationality with another. Not only is the inter-action denied, but the intra-action is disavowed, as an intra-action occurs regardless of one's intention to act independently. The choice to distance and separate one's self and identity from another is just that, a choice. As Said writes in *Orientalism,* 'the construction of identity – for indeed identity, whether of Orient or Occident, is finally a construction – involves establishing opposites and others whose actualities are always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from us' (Said 1995: 332). This understanding of identity is similar to Derrida's, yet reading it through Barad's agential realism and intra-action, we come to an understanding of identity formation where the boundaries are not just conceptually indeterminate, but also ontologically and materially indeterminate. The driver looks with slightly strained eyes in his rear view mirror with suspicion at his Palestinian passenger. He looks slightly over his shoulder, as if to check that he is not in danger. And in this last passage, there is no concern for not getting his passenger to his destination, only that

this situation is a problem for him. After intra-acting a little with his passenger, offhandedly, it is as though the driver forgets he is not alone, forgets that he has someone in the back seat: he goes into his own world. In the final shot of the scene when the driver asks 'Where I am?', the passenger's gaze has moved from looking out of the window to looking at the Israeli, as though hoping for acknowledgement of his presence, making the only contact possible for a darkened figure with a tear of light on his face. But when there is no attempt at direct communication or acknowledgment, we notice the passenger's face look down, as though hopeless. The implicit disavowal here of the Palestinians also speaks to the disavowal of the entangled and co-implicated nature of their identities. Edward Said sees the difficulty in this entanglement, but affirms it nonetheless as he perceives it to be an unavoidable reality: 'I'm one of the few people who says that our history as Palestinians today is so inextricably bound up with that of Jews that the whole idea of separation, which is what the peace process is all about - to have a separate Palestinian thing and a separate Jewish thing - is doomed. It can't possibly work' (Said 424). Whether or not we agree with Said in his dismissal of a two state solution is not the point here. Rather, the acknowledgment of the 'inextricably bound' up situation and nature of Palestinians and Israelis is undeniable for Said.

The metaphor of this final shot is one that can be read as a questioning of where both Israelis and Palestinians are. But this is an accentuation within a scene which highlights the dominance of the concerns of the State of Israel over those of the Palestinians, through the taxi driver's self-concern. However, it can also be read as if arriving at a place where the surety of the taxi driver is challenged, without answering the question 'where am I?' is enough for Suleiman; or at least it opens up more space for the undeniable implication of co-existence to be heard. Perhaps, to displace the confidence of the Zionist State, where racial superiority is law, in order to get them to question where they are and perhaps who they are, is a victory in itself, as it at least opens a door to communication and the potential to an understanding of the relationality that exists between the two people on the land.

I'd like to finish this section with a short meditation on how this scene, and my co-production of its interpretation through Suleiman's opening of poetic space, relates to the responsibility to bear witness. I have argued that through the use of silence contrasted with the driver's speech, the undeniable reality of Palestinian existence and the necessary co-existence of Palestinians and Israelis are highlighted. Yet it is

necessary in this situation to avow the disavowed and bear witness to this undeniable reality as it is silent, and therefore not remain silent. Responsibility, as explored in the first chapter from deconstruction's vantage point, is an aporetic concept which Derrida writes 'can only exceed (and must exceed) the order of theoretical determination, of knowledge, certainty, judgement, and of statements in the form of 'this is that'' (Derrida 1993, 20). As we saw in Chapter 1, this approach to responsibility aims to draw attention to the concept's inherent fallibility and the illusion of mastery and morality that 'being responsible' carries with it: the illusion of 'good faith' when making responsible choices. Yet, in relation to the question of emphasis of the complementary ideas of the undeniable and the undecidable, it is possible to suggest that a re-emphasis of the undeniable over the undecidable is a different form of responsibility which can be more closely associated with solidarity while escaping the rouse of mastery of good faith.

If we think about Haraway's conception of situated knowledges and relate it to responsibility, we can offer an idea of situated responsibilities which would enable the practice of bearing witness to the undeniable without claiming any 'objective' and transcendental understanding or presentation, but rather claiming the material-discursive limits in locally resolvable contexts. The mattering of embodied knowledges is the taking up of a *contingent and situated responsibility* for what it means to protect and have solidarity with the living, 'to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life' (Haraway, 1986 580). 'The point is to make a difference in the world,' Haraway claims, and not to allow what goes on in the world to happen with the idea that we are uninvolved as independent bystanders. Because we are *of the world*, entangled in a web of relationality, we must 'cast out lot for some ways of life and not others. To do that, one must be in the action, be finite and dirty, not transcendent and clean' (Haraway 1997, 36). Thus, what is at stake here is playing a part in the production and safeguarding of what it means to be living. Choosing to emphasise the undeniable over the undecidable in such contexts is politically and ethically important. Just as the emphasis of the undecidable is in other contexts. Haraway has coined another neologism which is particularly useful in this context, that of the 'modest witness,' which she described as 'a figure…telling the truth, giving reliable testimony, guaranteeing important things, providing good enough groundings - while eschewing the addictive narcotic of transcendental foundations - to enable compelling belief and collective action' (22). Modest witnesses engage in communities of knowledge, webs of

understanding and the practice of witnessing is one of 'seeing; attesting; standing publicly accountable for, and psychically vulnerable to, one's visions and representations. Witnessing is a collective, limited practice that depends on the constructed and never finished credibility of those who do it, all of whom are mortal, fallible, and fraught with consequences of unconscious and disowned desires and fears' (Haraway 1997, 267). Thus, Haraway offers us a way to affirm the aporia of responsibility and move beyond deconstruction's law of performativity in witnessing that does not claim any objectivity in good faith, but also accepts the partial and limited act of witnessing as a crucial and responsible part of what it means to be in a community of knowledge.

If this possibility of modest witnessing is threaded through agential realism, then it is possible to avow and bear witness to the undeniable reality of Palestinian existence and oppression. 'Agential realism' says Barad 'is not a manifesto, it does not take for granted that all is or will or can be made manifest. On the contrary, it is a call, a plea, a provocation, a cry, a passionate yearning for an appreciation of, attention to, the tissue of ethicality that runs through the world' (Barad, 2012a). Thus, for the sake of life, in the located situation of Palestinians across the world, in their various worldings, we must respond to the call of responsibility that we cannot escape by virtue of being of the world and bear 'modest' witness to the silencing, disavowal, pain and oppression, dehistoricising and writing out of history that Palestinians are subject to. We must take responsibility for a world we want to see, where people are treated equally and as valid citizens of the world.

Suleiman's film and the poetic space he opens up offers his audience the chance to partake in this responsibility in the co-production of interpretation that emerges out of the silence he engenders, which reveals the reality of the undeniable existence of Palestinians. To exist then, is to resist - and we are called upon by our own existence to join the Palestinians in solidarity to confess the undeniable.

Chapter Five

Deconstruction and Zionism.

Political Zionism and the Bible

The 29th of April 2014 was the American deadline for the latest round of peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians. It is perhaps not a surprise to many that they failed. But even before they began, Israel was behaving in a way which demonstrated its commitment to settler colonialism and political Zionism[81] rather than peace. Just before the negotiations started, Israel approved 1,400 settlements homes, causing the Palestinian delegation to accuse Israel of trying to cease talks before they had even begun. Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said he did not believe the settlements were a breach of the agreement. But the talks continued, despite Israel's granting of more land and the right to build settlements throughout the talks. The Palestinian negotiating team then resigned in November, blaming the continued and escalated settlement building[82]. Despite the already unsymmetrical positions at the negotiating table, over the 9 month period the amount of settlements houses approved in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem was 'unprecedented' according to The Peace Now group's report, which states that permission had been granted for the building of 14,000 settler homes, which works out at '50 new homes a day, or about 1,500 a month'. Compare this to the '1,385 settler homes approved during Netanyahu's first government' and the 'average of 1,389 a year approved under the government of Ehud

[81] Throughout this thesis I refer to political-Zionism as distinct from other forms of Zionism, in the acknowledgment of the different forms Zionism can take - see Jacqueline Rose, *The Question of Zion* (2005). However, I also acknowledge, following Judith Butler and others, that in the current discourse climate, it is almost impossible to call oneself a Zionist of any persuasion considering the trajectory on which political-Zionism has taken the term's meaning.

[82] Available at http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/palestinian-negotiators-quit-protest201311148159235852.html (Accessed on 28/06/14).

Olmert' [83], and it is clear that the Palestinian negotiating team's resignation was justified on the grounds of escalating settlement building on an unprecedented scale. The continued settlements are illegal under international law and demonstrate Israel's intention to appropriate land and increase the Jewish demographic not only at the expense of Palestinian life, land and rights, but also in direct rejection of International standards of justice and democracy. This structure of land appropriation is part of what Illan Pappé has called 'ethnic cleansing' as defined by the Geneva Convention (Pappé 2008). Ben White writes that 'the exclusion of [the] indigenous population from their homeland is motivated by the desire to protect an artificial majority created by force' (White 2014). The issue of majority in terms of demographics is key, and it significantly helps identify political Zionism across the spectrum. For example, even those who may be termed liberal-Zionists, or the Zionist-left, still believe it is Israel's right to protect its demographic majority, and create this majority at any cost. David Grossman is an example of this type of Zionism[84], which at its heart, although presented more subtly, has the same foundations as those on the political right: that Israel needs as much land as possible, and as many Jews on the land as possible, to maintain its political surety and future.

This has been the impetus of political Zionism from its inception as a national project, demonstrated by the writings of the early Zionist founding fathers. Gabriel Piterberg argues that 'there are varieties of Zionism whose differences should not be ignored.' However, he continues, 'the goal of founding an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine by European Jews is a more or less continuous concept and praxis from Herzl's foundational Zionism, through the settlement movement in the Occupied Territories, through to Sharon's wall, regardless of the varieties' (Piterberg 2008, 30)[85]. What this argument conveys is that the founding of the State of Israel was a settler-colonial project, and that its maintenance depends on a settler-colonial logic, affirming Wolf's suggestion that 'settler colonialism is not an event but a structure' (Wolf, 1).

[83] http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/04/israel-set-settler-record-amid-peace-talks-201442972319706947.html (Accessed on 28/06/14).
See also Peace Now's report '9 months of talks, 9 months of settlements' http://peacenow.org.il/eng/9Months (Accessed on 28/06/14).

[84] I will go onto explore this attitude of Liberal Zionism in Grossman's novel *The Smile of the Lamb* (1992) in Chapter 6.

[85] Piterberg also states his agreement with Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin that 'Israeli Zionism is a theological-colonial nationalism regardless of whether a certain shade or variety within it is outwardly religious or secular' (Piterberg 2008, 30).

This foundational myth of Zionism, Piterberg writes, contains three elements, which are 'the negation of exile, the return to the land of Israel, and the return to history' (Piterberg 2008, xiii). These three concepts relate to the three elements touched upon in Chapter 2, namely that settler colonialism is distinct from colonialism in respect of 1) the settler's relationship to the land the desire to create communities on 'virgin' territory with religious or ethnic ties to the land 2) the relationship between coloniser and colonised, which is radically different - as the settler society hopes to expel the land of its indigenous population rather than to exploit the colonised for labour, and 3) the legacy and possibility for decolonisation which is problematised, because whereas colonialists in their various forms generally return to their metropole, particularly in the process of decolonisation, settlers stay and remain, as they are perceived to have already 'returned' to their homeland.[86]

The reason for drawing our attention back to the fundamental tenants of settler-colonialism is to highlight its inseparability from Zionism. Two of Zionism's main impetuses then are land-appropriation and the removal of Palestinians from the land. Illan Pappé writes that

> The early Zionist settlers directed most of their energy and resources towards buying up plots of land....The geographical space it coveted may have changed with time and according to circumstances and opportunities, but the principal objective remained the same. The Zionist project could only be realised through the creation in Palestine of a purely Jewish state, both as a safe haven for Jews from persecution and a cradle for a new Jewish nationalism. And such a state had to be exclusively Jewish not only in its socio-political structure but also in its ethnic composition.' (Pappé 2008, 13).

Again, the issues of land appropriation and ethnic cleansing are argued to be inextricable, for the goal of political Zionism, not only since the Occupation of the Palestinian Territories in 1967, but from the inception of Israel's foundation in 1948, and before this to the beginning of the idea that the Zionist movement would create a State in the historic land of Palestine.

To return then to Netanyahu's attitude, which symbolises the Israeli State's complicity with the settlement continuation on Palestinian land, it is clear that, rather than being an event, the Zionist settler-colonisation of Palestine is an on-going structure which is a central tenant of contemporary Israeli politics which aims to create and protect a Jewish majority at the expense of Palestinian land, life and rights.

[86] These three points are informed by Elkins and Pedersen (2005), Veracini (2010) and Wolfe (1999)

In the following exploration of deconstruction and Zionism I will be concerned with the different conceptions of writing that Derrida explores in his essay 'Edmund Jabès and the Question of the Book' (Derrida 2010). The importance for this for the exploration of Zionist settler-coloniaism revolves around the way in which religious texts are used in a certain interpretation of writing to support and create the foundational myth of Zionism; i.e. that the creation of the State of Israel is fulfilling a biblical prophesy in which Jews are expected to return to their 'homeland', promised and given to the Jewish people by God. The Bible, or Torah, underpins the founding myth of Zionism regarding the Jew's ordained right to the land. Nur Masalha confirms this, writing 'The conviction held by Westerners and Zionists (both secular and religious) that God and the Bible have given the 'Jews' Palestine (the 'promised land') in perpetuity is one of the underpinnings of modern political Zionism and Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine' (Masalha 2007, 15). And this attitude is not only a modern phenomenon associated with evangelical Christians, but has been used from the beginning of Zionism's desire to colonise Palestine. Again, Masalha writes 'Although many early Jewish Zionists were secular, socialists and atheists, they were quick to put the "'promised land-chosen people'" ideology to use for its political value, both as a means of attracting believing Jews to their cause and as a way of justifying their colonial project in European Christian eyes' (Masalha 2007, 31)[87]. This is seen even more evidently by the answer from Israel's first Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to the question of what justifies the Jewish claim to the land: 'The Bible is our Mandate' he replied. The invoking of the bible has been a constant trope and source of authority for the political-Zionist movement, and is used in contemporary discourses surrounding Israel's right to exist and the justification for its action. In what follows, I will intersperse sections from two speeches between my reading of Derrida's essay on Jabès. The two speeches are related by their complicity in the manipulation of the bible to justify Zionist settler colonialism. The first is by Israel's current Prime Minister, Binjamin Netanyahu, to the Christians United for Israel Conference (CUFI) in 2012[88]. The second is by the Director of CUFI to AIPAC (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee) in 2007[89]. By

[87]For more on the thesis of ethnic cleansing from the conception of the Zionist movement regarding those already on the land see Masalah (1992).

[88]I can find no transcript for this speech, but it can be watched here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqgDKbGUdT0 (accessed 05/05/14). All references to this speech in the text will be referenced as (Netanyahu 2012).

[89] A transcript of this speech is available here: www.stopaipac.org/documents/Hagee-PC-2007.pdf. All quotes in the text will be referenced as (Hagee 2007).

including sections of these speeches my aim is not to analyse them in their entirety, but to highlight how prevalent the use of the Bible is in political Zionist discourse to justify the dispossession of the Palestinians. I hope this will reflect the importance of the discussion running alongside it regarding Derrida's approach to writing and its separation from the type of interpretation that is at work in these two speeches.

Deconstruction and loss of locatable origins

When origins are identifiable and locatable, politics issue forth. This can be seen in Israel's nostalgic desire to return to the 'ancient homeland' of the Jewish people and the politics, briefly explored above, which accompany this type of vision. In a speech to the UN General Assembly in 2012, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu addresses his audience thus;

> Three thousand years ago, King David reigned over the Jewish state in our eternal capital, Jerusalem. I say that to all those who proclaim that the Jewish state has no roots in our region and that it will soon disappear[...]The Jewish people have lived in the land of Israel for thousands of years. Even after most of our people were exiled from it, Jews continued to live in the land of Israel throughout the ages. The masses of our people never gave up the dream of returning to our ancient homeland[...]The Jewish people have come home. We will never be uprooted again (Netanyahu 2012).

As I will go onto show, the desire to return to a lost origin, an origin promised by a divine power, is a motivating force of Israeli settler colonialism.

But what happens to politics when origins are unable to be identified or located, and the desire for a lost origin punctured? As explored in Chapter 1, this unlocatable origin issues forth from Derrida's conception of différance. From this origin where différance is originary, Derrida's conception of writing then is open to an otherness which cannot be reduced to a thing or a person, i.e. the other, and it is thus always indeterminable, and unidentifiable. In fact, for Derrida, the other is always to-come, *l'arrivant*. It has been argued in Chapter 1 that this understanding (or lack of understanding) of the other enables Derrida to resist the totalising movement of dialectics in both identity and responsibility, without simply rejecting these concepts altogether, but rather by placing them under erasure. Therefore, the origin is not

disavowed, but avowed to be complex. The consequences of this type of origin is that the relationship between it and its subject takes on a spectral condition.

However, this undecidable indeterminacy has been opened up to what I have called the undeniable of the relational-real, which has sought to expose deconstruction to a particular political situation and the very real existence of the Palestinians and their struggle. This chapter will seek to explore the complementarity between the undecidable and the undeniable in the context of the ongoing settler colonial situation of Palestine by looking at the relationship between deconstruction and Zionism. Richard Beardsworth has suggested that 'the full force of Derrida's thinking of aporia and the indeterminacy of the promise [and, I would add, indeterminacy in general] can be measured' when viewed in relation to the '*political fate* of Levinasian ethics' (Beardsworth 1998, 143). That is to say, the significance of Derrida's thinking on indeterminacy and the aporia is made apparent in the difference between Derrida's and Levinas' views on the ethical relation to the Other, or otherness, and therefore, in regard to Israel/Palestine. I would like to explore this notion while trying to situate the logic of the aporia alongside the undeniable.

I will highlight two significant ways to highlight the importance of deconstruction in relation to Zionism[90]. The first is to extend the critique of essentialism from Chapter 1 to the concept of the nation and nationalism, in the particular case of Jewish nationalism and the settler colonial attachment to the ancient origins of the Jewish people.[91] To do so I will read Derrida's essay 'Edmund Jabès and the Question of the Book' from *Writing and Difference,* which will highlight Derrida's critique of the singular conception of what it means to be Jewish, and how his conception of writing differs from that of the Jewish conception, which has significant consequences for Derrida's relationship to settler colonialism, political Zionism and the aspirations of the State of Israel.

The second way will be to emphasise the difference between Derrida and Levinas' approaches to the other, via some of Derrida's texts on the thought of Emmanuel Levinas. This reading will indicate how the indeterminate identity of the wholly other and its impact on the notion of the self is a beneficial approach to identity,

[90] In order to focus on particular aspects of deconstruction's relationship to Zionism which I believe fit specifically into the trajectory of the argument of this thesis, it is not possible in this chapter to comment on all the ways in which deconstruction and Zionism relate, or all of the material which has been written on these two subjects.

[91] While this chapter focuses on Zionism and the State of Israel, Palestinian nationalism and statehood are not impervious to its critique.

as it avoids the pitfalls of metaphysical violence, which Derrida sees in Levinas' approach. I will then ask how this understanding of otherness can be placed in a complementary position with the undeniable from the previous chapter and how the undeniable is distinguished from Levinas' ontology of otherness.

This will then allow us to transition into seeing how this form of identity beyond identity might enable the Palestinians' right for self-determination to be complementary to the undeniable aspect of existence, rather than be seen as unhelpful or dangerous, as is suggested by Christopher Wise (Wise 2002).

Rereading 'Edmund Jabès and the Question of the Book'

Just as Derrida's 'Edmund Jabès and the Question of the Book' opens with the idea of rereading, changes in emphasis, and potential meaning being 'hidden or absorbed' by a wandering ivy, so this section will propose a rereading of Derrida's early essay so as to provide a counterpoint to some recent commentary which would suggest a complicity between Derrida, deconstruction and Zionism[92]. 'Edmund Jabès and the Question of the Book' has various resonances with the themes explored in Chapter 1, namely the difficult nature of origins and their relation to writing. We see this connection on the first page of the essay, when Derrida comments that Jabès's book of poetry, *Je bâtis ma demeure* 'bent a bit in the wind', because 'it did not yet love its true root' (Derrida 2010, 77). Origins here are named as roots, and occupy a significant place, or perhaps non-place in this essay. But what is Derrida suggesting by prefixing root with the notion of truth? What is the difference between a root and a 'true' root? And would it be possible to ever claim a true understanding or access to one's origins, one's true roots? These questions are related to another which Derrida evokes, the question of 'a certain Judaism as the birth and passion of writing' (77). This essay then is concerned with origins and different conceptions of writing as the origin. Derrida's reading of Jabès's *Le Livre des questions* wants to deconstruct the simple notion of origins, such that 'a powerful and ancient root [can be] exhumed, and on it [to be] laid bare an ageless wound' (77). This 'ancient root to be exhumed' would be that which grounds

[92] Most notably that of Christopher Wise (2009), in which Wise argues that Derrida's work has a Jewish bias.

interpretation in the Torah and allows for a final truth to be found. It would be an origin which can be located, fixed and returned to.

This type of interpretation, or this ancient root that is the Torah, is used as biblical justification for Israel's right to the land, and is preached by Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu in various situations. For example, in a speech in 2012 to Christians United for Israel, an American Evangelical group of Christians who believe in the divine right of the Jewish people to the historic land of Palestine, he speaks of his son who is a 'Bible champion', a tactic which helps gain considerable traction with such an audience; 'My son's name is Avner. He is Israel's national Bible champion. And he came number 2, second deputy in the International Bible Contest, it's a quiz. It's like the spelling-B, to the nth degree, it's very hard, and he at the age of 15 did this' (Netanyahu 2012). Netanyahu moves on to share his family's further commitment to Bible devotion, another winning strategy to charm evangelical Christians; 'I do want to say that I do read the Bible. I read it yesterday. We read it every Saturday actually. Every Shabbat, after lunch, we sit down and we read [asks for Hebrew translation] the portion of the week. We read Exodus now, and then you read the, how do you say that, the addition, from the Bible, this was from Ezekiel' (Netenyahu 2012). Because of the literal reading of the Bible that such evangelical Christians have, there is a Zionist vision within this Christian community, which is demonstrated by this comment from the leader of CUFI, John Hagee, at an AIPAC conference in 2007: 'if you take away the Jewish contribution from Christianity there would be no Christianity. Judaism does not need Christianity to explain its existence but Christianity cannot explain its existence without Judaism' (Netenyahu 2012). Therefore, when Netanyahu interchanges the word Bible for Torah, and proclaims its foundational place in the conception, history and continuing destiny of Israel, it is not difficult to understand why the audience cheers wildly. He goes onto say that 'I draw, like you, enormous, enormous, reservoirs of strength from the Torah, from the Bible. This is the well from which we drink, this is the stone on which we stand [applause and cheering from the audience]' (Netanyahu 2012). It is clear then that the Bible is used in Israeli discourse as an infallible foundation for the justification of the Jewish people's right to the land of historic Palestine. A certain conception of writing grounds this claim to the origin.

Yet, for Derrida, this type of ground is equivalent to the 'ancient root' he wants to exhume - and thus we can assume that for Derrida, it is not the 'true root' he mentioned above. It is on this type of root, that Derrida says is laid 'an ageless wound',

which is another naming of the 'true root'. Derrida goes on to say that 'what Jabès teaches us is that roots speak, that words want to grow, and that poetic discourse takes root in a wound' (Derrida 2010, 77). This wounded root, or root as wound, recalls the ineluctable origin I wrote about in Chapter 1, which was impossible to return to, and it also signals a certain challenge to the notion of time. Just as Algeria could not be figured as the 'origin' of Derrida's writing, but instead has a spectral relationship to his work, we can similarly begin to see something of the placelessness of the wound in this reading. This inaccessibility may be understood as unlocatable, in place or time - which would account for Derrida's description of it as 'ageless'. Ageless would then take on a different signification to 'ancient', as ancient connotes a place in history to which one can return, whereas ageless suggests an inability to be caught in time, and thus not locatable in history. Again, Netanyahu uses the words 'ancient' and 'ancestral' to speak of the Jewish people's right to Israel and Jerusalem: 'We are an ancient people, we date back nearly 4000 years to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We have journeyed through time, we have overcome the greatest of adversities, and we re-established our sovereign state in our ancestral homeland the land of Israel.' Therefore, the term 'ancient' is more associated with the locatablity of origins while ageless signifies something else, an elsewhere of origins.

The difference between these two types of root/origin for Derrida, would be the difference between two types of writing/discourse, between religion and poetry. He writes

> in question is a certain Judaism as the birth and passion of writing. The passion *of* writing, the love of and endurance of the letter itself, whose subject is not decidably the Jew or the Letter itself. Perhaps the common root of a people and of writing (77).

Derrida wants to acknowledge the close connection that is seemingly at the origin of both the Jewish people and writing, but to argue that writing as the origin is always-already before the birth of any people, whether they are a 'race born of the book' or not. Which is not to say that Derrida does not believe there is much to learn from Judaism: the figure of the Jew and the poet in this essay are almost interchangeable. But the passion *of* writing is distinct from the passion *for* writing (Wood 2009, 63). The passion for writing would be the passion for the Torah, or a religious text, as the Word of God. In strong distinction to this approach to truth and writing displayed by the

passion *for* writing, the passion *of* writing would speak to a different understanding of origins. The passion of writing is also phrased as the 'endurance of the letter itself', the subject of which is not the Jew or the Letter (Letter with a capital L signifying the Torah), but the letter, with a small l. The division between the Letter and the letter is hugely important for this discussion as it separates the potential for religious fundamentalism from Derrida's approach to writing, and ultimately democracy.

For Derrida, the history of the Jewish people, which he terms the 'race born of the book', has been grafted onto the 'radical origin of meaning as literality, that is, onto historicity itself' (77-78) but this destiny is incommensurable rather than religiously significant. There is no simple acceptance or rejection of Judaism for Derrida, no easy assimilation or separation, but a significant difference between his conception of writing and that of any Judaic discourse. This difference being that of Derrida's situating différance at the origin[93].

Here we come closer to the wounded root of writing as literality, which, as Sarah Wood reminds us, is not to be taken here as meaning 'the opposite of 'figurative', but refers directly to the letters that are the atoms of language' (Wood 2009, 61).[94] Historicity, that is 'authentic history', is named as literality, as the letter, as the trace[95]. Thus, there would be no authentic history outside of this logic of writing in Derrida's understanding, 'no history without the gravity and labour of literality' (Derrida 2010, 78). This gravity is the law of supplementarity, the law of the letter, which is to say, the wounded root as origin, and opening of meaning, which would open history. But if 'roots speak', they speak in an altogether different way to how we might expect, a way in which pure presence and immanent truth are absent from the equation. They must speak a wounded speech, speech as supplement, where there can no longer be any direct communication of 'the truth'. In its place, writing and interpretation must issue from the 'true root', destined to wander 'an unfindable and unspecifiable pathway' (84). This is clearly quite a different approach to truth than that of the leader of CUIF who proclaims, 'Why do Christians support Israel? Truth is not what I say it is. Truth is

[93] It should be noted here that this is not only Derrida's conception of Judaism, and that there are obviously more than the two understandings of Judaism presented here. Derrida's conception of writing seems very similar to that of exilic Judaism as opposed to that of Zionist Judaism, which returns to the promised land.

[94] This distinction will remain important because literality as the opposite of figurative, rather than 'the letters which are the atoms of writing', can result in that which produces 'the call to war' - which Derrida specifies he does not believe his work to do.

[95] Derrida writes in *Of Grammatology* that 'a meditation upon the trace should undoubtedly teach us that there is no origin, that is to say simple origin; that the questions of origin carry with them a metaphysics of presence' (Derrida 1998, 74).

not what you think it is. Truth is what the Torah says it is; there's the Torah way and the wrong way.'

While this is an extreme understanding, it highlights the subtleties of the placing of one's beliefs in writing as the fixed origin of truth, rather than an understanding of literality as the opening of meaning. Yet before Derrida takes us too far in this distinction between the Jewish conception of writing and his own, we are brought back again to their connection. The trace as supplement, or 'folding', Derrida says, is that which permits history to begin, as 'reflection is its beginning' (78). But this fold is also said to be the Jew. Sarah Wood helps clarify again, informing us that

> 'The Jew, in Jabès's thinking is the fold [*pli*] necessary for history to begin. The Jew who chooses to write is already chosen by writing because of being a Jew, who accepts the divine origin of the Torah...The need for interpretation arises because the Tablets… were broken by Moses, enraged that the people of Israel had turned to idolatry' (Wood 2009, 64).

Thus, again, the paradox arises that the Jew is said to be the fold, but is also the figure tied to the ancient and powerful root - which Derrida wants to exhume. The significant concept here is that of interpretation and how there are different interpretations of interpretation which issue forth from these different roots. As Wood mentions, the breaking of the Tablets of stone resulted in the necessity of interpretation for God's revealed word to the Jewish people, which may appear to be very close to the concept of a broken origin, a wounded root. But this is not the case. The wedge that Derrida is driving between these two figures is in fact a difference in their approaches to 'truth'. Alan Bass writes in an editorial note to this section that

> The "rabbinical" interpretation of interpretation is the one which seeks a final truth, which sees interpretation as an unfortunately necessary road back to an original truth. The "poetical" interpretation of interpretation does not seek truth or origin, but affirms the play of interpretation (Derrida 2010, 395).

Thus, poetic wandering, which affirms play, can look similar to the wandering which takes the 'unfortunately necessary road', but the difference again comes back to the conception of what is at the origin, of where this wandering is leading, or *if* it is leading anywhere. Just a few paragraphs on, Derrida writes that 'Poetry is to prophecy what the idol is to truth' (81). The interpretation that commenced after Moses broke the Tablets because of the Jewish people's idolatry cannot then be conflated with poetic

discourse, which affirms a wandering without destination. The difference, in the "rabbinical view", would be between truth and falsity. But for Derrida, this form of interpretation retains a dialectical understanding of truth and falsehood, which writing as that which springs from the law of the supplement, deconstructs. This complex relationship, taking and distancing itself from Judaism, can be seen in his reading of Jabès. Derrida quotes Jabès, 'the difficulty of being a Jew, which coincides with the difficulty of writing; for Judaism and writing are but the same waiting, the same hope, the same depletion' (Jabès), and yet, Derrida reads 'a kind of silent displacement towards the essential which makes of this book [*Le Livres des questions*] one long metonymy, the situation of the Jew becomes the situation of the poet' (78). Rather than an opposition, there is a displacement, a dislocation as spoken of in the Chapter 1, which allows Derrida to take from Jabès' understanding of the Jew, and to translate it into the Poet: a taking which may indeed look like a wounding. The dislocation of essentialism still allows for a supplementing of essentialism, without repeating the same logic of that essentialism. It necessarily involves a risk, but a risk Derrida takes. This silent displacement of the essential is important, as it enables an avoidance of the pitfalls of founding an ethics on ontology[96]. And this movement allows Jabès' figure of the Jew to be read as a metonym for the poet, implying there is something of the poet in the figure of the Jew, but they are not synonyms. Derrida states explicitly, 'the *shared* necessity of exegesis, the interpretive imperative, is interpreted differently by the rabbi and the poet. The difference between the original text and exegetic writing makes the difference between the rabbi and the poet irreducible' (81). What is at stake here is a resistance to the type of grounding of origins in an interpretation of writing that allows truth to be fixed and locatable.

For the poet then, writing takes on a new significance; different to that for the Jew. This is seen clearly when Derrida writes 'The wisdom of the poet culminates in the passion of translating the obedience of the law of the word into autonomy' (79). Derrida here plays on the metonym, by using what may appear as religious language to speak of the poet's relation to writing; wisdom, obedience, law. But the law followed or adhered to is different from the law of the Letter. It culminates in translating a certain type of obedience to the law of the word into autonomy. This freedom would be autonomous from any absolute or authoritarian doctrine that would be structured or issued forth from the ancient and powerful root; i.e. the Torah as the divine word of

[96] This will be seen more closely in the reading of Levinas below.

God, communicating transcendental truth through language. Instead, the law of the word is the gravity and labour of literality, rooted in the wound, that is to say, the supplementary nature of the literality as origin. This is the new law that the poet must obey, the situation in which poets find themselves, in the wake of the indeterminacy of meaning, where there is no direct access to truth. Translating this into autonomy is seen as remaining faithful to the radical origin of meaning as literality, rather than to the word of God as a divine and 'locatable' origin. As mentioned earlier, remaining faithful to this origin keeps poetry and the law of the letter separate and distinct from the law of the Letter and prophesy. To give an example of the dangerous way in which prophesy in the Torah is used by Zionists for political ends, I will quote again from John Hagee, who says that Christians United For Israel

> pledge to God and to the Jewish people to fulfil the words of the Prophet Isaiah; 'for Zion's sake we will not hold our peace and for Jerusalem's sake we will not rest. You who make mention of the Lord do not keep silent and give the Lord no rest until he makes Jerusalem the praise of all the earth (Hagee 2007).

The written word of the Torah says that until Jerusalem is established as the praise of all the earth, and the homeland of the Jews, the people of Israel will not stop petitioning the Lord and they will not rest physically until it has come to be. Contemporary Evangelical Christians claim these sorts of passages, understood to be prophetic, as the bolstering and justification of their Zionism. The literality of the Law of the Letter completely erases the literality of the law of the letter. But what is most dangerous about this Zionist attitude is that it is coupled with the motivation to lobby American congressmen and is strategised into a political campaign:

> We have organized Christians United for Israel. We have 13 Regional Directors; we have 40 State Directors; we have 80 City Directors and they're growing. We're organizing Congressional District by Congressional District, so that as a body we can stand up and speak up for Israel every year in Washington DC, and Congress will know that the matter of Israel is no longer just a Jewish issue; it is a Christian Jewish issue from this day forward (Hagee 2007).

The power of the ancient root that Derrida deconstructs is commandeered by political-Zionists and grounds the narrative of the Jewish people's right to the land of Palestine not only in the Bible, but in a divine promise located there.

But, just because Derrida is opposing this root, which in the extreme can be seen to lead to the attitudes of John Hagee and Benjamin Netanyahu, it is not to say that Derrida's alternative interpretation of writing as the literality of the letter is free floating and ideational. This autonomy, named here by Derrida also as freedom, 'must belong to the earth, to the root, or it is merely wind' (Derrida 2010, 80). Knowing that this freedom is rooted, by a different root, the question then would be, what type of connection to the earth does this freedom have? And how can it be seen as separate from the type of connection to the land that Zionist settler colonialism claims?

Derrida's reading of Jabès suggests that through his embracing of this 'true root', his writing has had a change of spirit, without giving up its freedom of speech. That is to say, there is nothing forbidden in obeying this law of the word, even if there is a certain restraint that comes with it. 'Freedom' we are told 'allies and exchanges itself with that which restrains it, with everything it receives from a buried origin, with the gravity which situates its centre and its site' (80). Freedom is somehow constrained by the law of the word. But if this root conditions freedom to a degree, and is not the Jewish rooting of meaning that finds its origin or truth in God or the Torah, what or where is this 'true root'? And how does it remain 'free' from an ideological, religious or political bias that comes with being associated with a 'site' such as the land of Israel?

The attempt to 'find' where this site may be will perhaps lead us down another wandering and unspecified path. But Derrida goes on to speak more specifically about the 'site' of this rootedness, and the question arises of the violence associated with territorial claims. He states:

> When a Jew or a poet proclaims the Site, he is not declaring war. For this site, this land, calling to us from beyond memory, is always elsewhere. The site is not the empirical and national Here of a territory. It is immemorial, and thus also a future. Better: it is tradition as adventure. Freedom is granted to the non-pagan Land, only if it is separated from freedom by the Desert of the Promise. That is by the Poem. When it lets itself be articulated by poetic discourse, the Land always keeps itself beyond any proximity (80).

Here we read in many ways that the site, which restrains freedom, is never to be 'found' in space or time[97]: it calls to us from beyond memory and is immemorial; it is always elsewhere, beyond proximity; it is not the empirical and national Here of a

[97] There is a question here pertaining to the ungraspable nature of difference as it relates to the ungraspable aspect of *Being* in Rooney's conception. The two formulations would appear/not appear to be very different and similar. I would like to just mention it here briefly as I will come back to it in the discussion of the way in which the undeniable and the undecidable can co-exist.

territory. This 'true root' then, the radical origin of meaning as literality, is unlocatable for Derrida. And freedom is only granted the 'non-pagan Land' *if* that freedom is separated by the promise, which Derrida says, is the poem.

We are traveling here alongside many different questions and concerns, one of which is an (in)direct commentary on Zionism and the national territory of Israel. The inclusion of this passage, on a site which 'is not necessarily pagan' feels as though Derrida is trying to insist that religious discourse, here Judaism, can still be related to the freedom he is speaking of, if it is separated from the literality of 'site' that political Zionist discourse takes up[98]. This Promised Land, which could as easily be written as 'democracy-to-come', is not a Jewish discourse, but it is also not antithetical to Jewish discourse. What appears clear here is Derrida's distance from, and resistance to, any commandeering of his understanding of writing to support or justify a Zionist settler-colonial discourse which would find the literality of the Promised Land in a specific locatable site, i.e. the place of historic Palestine, now named Israel under international law. Thus, for any non-pagan site to be granted 'freedom' it must follow the discourse rooted in the wound, which is revealed here as the promise, and also as poetry. This site, which grounds freedom in its wounded root, is not a place on earth, but neither is it a transcendental point outside of the world, but rather it 'is', in the way it follows in the structure of the promise, of the to-come: the law of the supplement. It is the unrooted 'true root' of the radical origin of meaning as literality, so that, 'when it lets itself be articulated by poetic discourse, the land always keeps itself beyond any proximity' (80).

This passage cannot but be read as commentary on settler colonial Zionism. As Gil Anidjar says, 'this passage needs to be read carefully as it implies that there are proclamations ("when a Jew or a poet proclaims the Site") that do constitute declarations or war' (Anidjar 2013, 51). Netanyahu and Hagee's proclamations of Israel and Jerusalem as the ancestral homeland of the Jews, founded in the Torah as the truth, are such proclamations of war. How then does 'proclaiming a site' relate specifically to the freedom of the Poet and the distinction between the poet and a certain type of Judaic discourse? The poet's freedom is contingent on obedience to the law of the letter, which is rooted in the radical origin of meaning as literality. This is significantly

[98] In fact many Orthodox Jews within and outside of Israel believe that the establishment of a Jewish State is opposed to the teaching of the Torah. Orthodox groups such as Neturei Karta oppose Zionism and call for a peaceful dismantling of the Jewish State: see this interview with Rabbi Moshe Hirsch for more information; http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/05/29/why-orthodox-jews-oppose-israel/ (Accessed 28/06/14).

different from the rabbi's freedom, which is restricted by God as the 'origin' of truth, where interpretation can stop 'wandering' and reach its homeland. This 'homeland' of truth, in an abstract sense, is, for political-Zionism, made manifest physically via the proclamation of Israel as the Promised Land. For the Jew as homeless citizen of the world, the interpretation of interpretation as seeking a final truth becomes materialised in the prophesy that one day God will bring the race born of the book into the Promised Land. It is here that we reach the connection between God's word as truth and the specific site in the world related to God's promise. This is the danger of literality as the opposite of the figurative: the promise in literality as the *Letter* (the Torah), rather than promise in literality as *letter* (the atoms of language). Thus, Derrida is at pains to make a distinction between poetry and prophecy of a proclaimed Site, i.e. a Promised Land, or a land associated with the promise and with freedom, which would bring an end to the Jew's wandering.

But this is exactly what Israel claims and proclaims on a daily basis:

> We are an ancient people, we date back nearly 4000 years to Abraham Isaac and Jacob. We have journeyed through time. We have overcome the greatest of adversities, and we re-established our sovereign state in our ancestral homeland the land of Israel (Neyanyahu 2012)

declares Netanyahu.

Deconstruction then offers tools to dissect and critique political-Zionism that makes such claims to a simple origin and protects against the aspiration of fundamentalism. But is the term 'site' synonymous with origin? The movement from an origin of meaning to an earthly origin or site must be via the promise, the poem, the prophesy, which issues from the origin. Poetry here is important in defending the proclaimed Site from the dangers associated with discourses which locate this site in a specific place. The stakes are high, but it comes down ultimately to whether there is or is not a transcendental signified, or if the interpretation of interpretation affirms the play of signification.

The site which roots freedom, constrains it, is not that of a people, a community, a religious or political institution, but is always elsewhere, unlocatable, and certainly beyond the language and powers of nationalism or colonialism, which may seek to use such a proclamation of a Site to justify their endeavours, as Israel does. Sarah Wood also makes this point, stating that Derrida capitalises the Site to distinguish it from the

site, which shows that 'neither he nor Jabès is talking about a place in the world: Zion or the state of Israel' (Wood 2009, 65). This is crucially important for our understanding of deconstruction and its relation to writing, whether or not we are to agree that différance is the groundless ground, or that there is something beyond that. But what is perhaps at stake in this groundless ground is a question of ontological determinacy. We can see this in the way Gil Anidjar speaks of the passage quoted above regarding the site. He writes that 'the link between community and territory undergoes a scrupulous investigation' (Anidjar 2013, 50) in Derrida's writing, particularly in this passage about possible declarations of war issuing from certain understandings of interpretation, and goes onto say that, 'to speak of a to-come, of an *avenir*, *is to refrain from providing, or acknowledging an ontic or ontological ground upon which to base a programmatic agenda*.' Rather, he continues, 'much as iterability means the necessary possibility of a mark being torn from context, so the proclamation of a site entails the necessary disjunction, spatial as well as temporal' (52 *my italics*). This refraining of grounding politics in the ontological and the disjunction of time and space such that the site is non-locatable, is exactly the danger that Derrida sees in the thought of Emmanual Levinas, which I am about to go onto discuss.

This passage is key to understanding deconstruction's relationship to Zionism, and demonstrates that the relationship is one of critique rather than complicity. Deconstruction is not rooted in any religious or national discourse, and would not allow for the conclusions projected by Zionist settler colonialism, demonstrating its clear separation from complicity in political-Zionism. We have then hit upon an important distinction which deconstruction brings to light via the logic of the supplement, revealing what is at stake when a certain type of origin is advocated, and its incommensurability with the politics of settler colonialism.

However, what if the gravity which grounds the unlocatable was locatable in a contingent local context? The undeniable?

Derrida, Levinas, and ontological indeterminacy

The inability to ground the origin of difference in any particular place, thus making it impervious to a politics such as political Zionism which attempts to reclaim the perceived lost origin of the land of Israel as the Jewish ancestral homeland, is also emphasised by Derrida in his discussions on Levinas

I will now go on to think about how the indeterminable origin of différance affects the conception of the other and how Derrida's thinking can be seen to guard against an appropriation of the other into the logic of the Same by affirming the non-simple origin: i.e. that there is différance at the origin. This would be affirming otherness (as distinct from the other) as the origin of the world, not as that which is outside of the world as the transcendental, i.e. God.

The aporia of identity and the radical alterity that Derrida puts forward in distinction to Levinas' alterity maintains that the trace of the wholly other otherness of the other is not limited to the human, but needs to remain undecidable in order to safeguard the ontological becoming determined. This is important in the discussion of what deconstruction might have to offer as a critique and safeguarding against the strategies/tactics of political Zionism, which aims to prioritise Jewish and Israeli existence over Palestinian and Arab lives.

Christopher Wise has argued that the only way to secure a future for the Palestinians is to engage in a rights based approach and is critical of what he sees as Derrida's decentring of the 'human' that comes with the aporia of identity and the instability of the subject. He writes that 'no case for Palestinian rights that dispenses with the concept of the human, as established in the 'UN Declaration of Human Rights', can hope to succeed...the Palestinian context, affirmation of the concept of the human serves as an effective strategy in securing Palestinian rights and autonomy' (Wise 2002). This accords with my arguments surrounding the undeniable of Palestinian existence. Derrida, however, never seeks to dispense with the concept of the human, he merely is unwilling to say that we have come to a full understanding of what it means to be human, and therefore following this, his conception of otherness will not be limited by the humanism present in Levinas' approach, as we will see below. While similarly not dispensing with human rights, Palestinian scholar Raef Zreik argues that 'the rhetoric of rights has a homogenizing and totalizing logic that reproduces the logic of capitalism itself' and therefore 'citizens are equal only because they are abstracted from their particularities and differences (i.e. stripped of their singularity)' (Zreik 2013, 106). It is my contention then that without dispensing with the discourse of human rights, yet acknowledging its limits, Derrida's challenge to ontological determinacy resists the totalising gesture of capitalism within human rights discourse. What it perhaps does not do is to emphasise sameness between differences, and therefore connections, overlaps and solidarities. I attempt to re-emphasise the

undeniable aspect of reality, which can be seen to exist complementary to the undecidable. While this may appear contradictory, the complementary nature of the undecidable and the undeniable must co-exist, for what is at stake in this strategy is a rejection of relativism *and* a steering away from essentialism. Thus in this section, following Derrida's logic of the aporia of identity and the indeterminate nature of the subject, I will explore the difference between his understanding of the other from that of Levinas, in order to show the importance of ontological indeterminacy for the sake of the undeniable existence of the Palestinians.

'*Tout autre est tout autre'* writes Derrida in an essay of the same title from *The Gift of Death*. Every other is wholly other is one translation, where the first other is a noun and therefore seen to refer to another person, and the second is an adjective, describing the first other. Thus, what is clarified in this phrase is that the other (as a noun) and otherness (the wholly other) are not commensurable in deconstruction. Sarah Wood writes that the 'experience of the other' for Derrida would be 'a very open kind of experience where we could not know what to expect' (Wood 2009, 77). This unknown aspect of otherness is key for Derrida as it guarantees for him that otherness cannot be presupposed in anyway, because that would reduce its wholly otherness into an economy of the same. It is this indeterminate and undecidable aspect of otherness, the trace of which is part of every other, but not reducible to them, which Derrida remains committed to in his understanding of reality. It is another way of understanding différance as the groundless ground, which is a structural given of experience. Beardsworth calls this the 'fate of inscription' (Beardsworth 1998, 136).

Turning then to Levinas I would like to explore his understanding of the self's relationship to the other in order to try to identify where the disparity with Derrida's conception arises. As I have suggested above, it would appear that it is closely related to a humanism to which Derrida is unwilling to acquiesce. It is also because Derrida sees Levinas' attempt to resist metaphysics as ultimately capitulating to it by positing the infinitely other (what Derrida terms the wholly other) in opposition to the finite. An important question for their difference will then be, how does Derrida's theory of otherness resist metaphysics in a way that Levinas does not manage? As we have seen in the previous section, différance itself is that which is unlocatable, not reducible to space or time. How then is this different to Derrida's critique of Levinas?

As a way into understanding this distinction, it will be beneficial to think about the way in which the self (or the same) is interrupted by the other in the self/other

relationship. Levinas' model of ethics is described by Simon Critchley as 'the putting into question of the ego, the knowing subject, the self-consciousness, or what Levinas, following Plato calls, the Same (*le même; to auto*)' (Critchley 1999a, 4). The self-contained ego, which has mastery over itself, is no longer seen to be the centre of the investigation in the relation between the self and others. Following this notion, in *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* (1999a), Derrida writes, ''[Levinas] completely redefines intentional subjectivity, submitting subjection to the idea of infinity in the finite' (Derrida 1999a, 22). Further to this, Derrida quotes Levinas saying 'It [intentionality, consciousness of...] is attention to speech or welcome of the face, hospitality and not thematization' (22). Here, two important conceptual references emerge that allow for such a questioning: the notion of infinity and the welcome of the face. In fact, it is these two concepts in Levinas' ethics of responsibility to the other which will be, for Derrida, its downfall.

Consciousness, via Levinas, is subjected to a being-in-the-world that is in relation to what he terms 'the face': shorthand for the idea of the infinite in the finite. The face, as Sean Hand writes, is 'the emblem of everything that fundamentally resists categorization, containment or comprehension' (Hand 2008, 42). The face, then, is similar to Derrida's notion of différance. The other is characterised by Levinas through the concept of the face, an irreducible otherness and difference to the self, or, to use Levinas's term, the Same. Throughout Western philosophy, Levinas sees alterity as having been continually appropriated by the Same, so as to understand and control it. Instead of appropriating the other through the lens of the same, i.e the self, and thereby reducing the other's alterity to that of sameness, Levinas attempts to formulate a relationality which allows the other to retain its difference from the self, *and* be in relation to another self. This is the second gesture by which the self is interrupted: namely by relationality with alterity, difference, and otherness.

This relationality can be illuminated by a short explanation of phenomenology and intentionality. Levinas proposes that the self is *always already* constituted by an other and instead of being self-contained, the self has its being only in its relation to another. Phenomenologically speaking, consciousness is seen to be always conscious of something other than itself, and is thus founded on an originary complicity with alterity. This is what is meant by intentionality. This challenges the monadic notion of selfhood retained by Cartesian thought by moving away from an essentialism of personhood founded on individual identity towards a relational formation of selfhood

together with that outside of itself. Identities become interdependent, not by choice, but by the very fact of being in the world. Levinas proposes a new form of responsibility towards the other which emerges from this formulation, before we have a choice to accept. This lack of choice is one chink in the armour of sovereign ipseity, as it removes the self's freedom: 'to welcome the other is to put in question my freedom' (Derrida 1999a, 29). Whereas a Cartesian self is autonomous and distinct from others, Levinas implicates the self in a relationality which is bound by a prior responsibility towards others. Subjectivity goes from being a 'host' to the other, to also being 'hostage' to the other: the implication being that not only must I welcome the other, but I cannot not welcome the other. Derrida writes 'the subject is a hostage insofar as it is less a "question" than a "being-in-question" (56). The inseparability of self and other here is the radical challenge to traditional conceptions of subjectivity. This new implicated nature of subjectivity both displaces and questions the subject, and attempts to redefine subjectivity in light of this new constitutive relationality.

Born into this situation, where others precede us, subjectivity is caught in this relation, or responsibility, to alterity, which we are not to thematise, but are challenged to be hospitable to. Thus, to be hospitable to alterity is always already a response, and a responsibility. Derrida writes, 'the welcoming of the other...will already be a response: the yes to the other will already be responding to the welcoming of the other...to the yes of the other' (23).

However, although Derrida and Levinas have many similarities, and Derrida's essays on Levinas are never simple critiques, but respectful disagreements, Derrida cannot follow Levinas to the nth degree in his theory of the face as the place where the infinite appears in the finite. It is via their difference in what the wholly other or infinitely other is, that stops Derrida agreeing with Levinas here. In 'Violence and Metaphysics', Derrida suggests that the opposition between the infinite and the finite maintains the violence of metaphysics that Levinas seeks to avoid, and ultimately translates the infinitely other which is unpresentable into the equivalent of the Judaic God. Therefore, the trace of God (the infinite) appears in the face (the finite) as man is made in God's image. However, as Morgan Wortham writes, 'deconstruction's discourse of the other cannot be equated merely with an ideal of limitless hospitality in the face of a wholly other figured as the self-reflection of God' (Wortham 2009, 139). Because 'the face' for Derrida 'is presence' (Derrida 1999a, 125), Derrida shows that Levinas presupposes something about otherness in his figuring of the face as the place

of wholly other. It is the break between the infinite and the finite which Levinas uses in order to keep the wholly other other, i.e. infinitely other and therefore God, which Derrida cannot abide. Beardsworh argues on this point that for Derrida, 'the alterity of the other is nowhere else than in being, but it is not reducible to being either, the alterity of the other exceeds forms of temporality but it is not outside these forms - 'existing' somewhere else either, etc.' (Beardsworth 1998, 136). For Levinas, the alterity of the other is outside of being, and therefore, in Derrida's logic, is outside of the text. This then is the difference between Levinas' conception of the face and Derrida's of the trace. The origin of the face is that which is outside of being, the infinitely other, a transcendental signified which maintains the violence of metaphysics. Whereas for Derrida, difference is the origin of the world and its unlocatability is not to suggest that it is outside of the world, in a transcendental position, but rather that it is a part of the structure of the world which opens possibility. However, it is still said to 'exceed' and not be reducible to Being.

In Derrida's exploration of the phrase 'tout autre est tout autre' he writes that there are 'two alarmingly different renditions that are in fact, through their disturbing likeness, incompatible' (Derrida 1998b, 83). We may take the following paragraph as an explanation of his distinction from Levinas' when it comes to the wholly other, and Derrida's unwillingness to theologise or humanise alterity:

> One of them keeps in reserve the possibility of reserving the quality of the wholly other, in other words the infinitely other, for God alone, or in any case for a single other. The other attributes this infinite alterity of the wholly other to every other, in other words, recognizes it in each, each one, for example each man and woman, indeed each living thing, human or not' (83). 'Levinas' says Derrida 'still wants to distinguish between the infinite alterity of God and the 'same' infinite alterity of every human, or of the other in general' (83).

In this way, Levinas presupposes something about otherness, has some knowledge in advance of what the wholly other is, and therefore negates the otherness in doing so, by reducing it into the economy of the same. In helping to understand the ontological dimension of Levinas' argument, Beardsworth writes that 'in his desire to demarcate the other from being, Levinas's opposition to ontology uncannily repeats ontological criteria. For, placed outside being, the other becomes another being, turning back into its other at the moment it distinguishes itself from it' (Beardsworth 1998, 135). Derrida writes that 'the other cannot be what it is, infinitely other, except in finitude

and morality' – that is to say that while being wholly other, and irreducible to the 'same', the wholly other must also, at the same time, remain somehow related to the same in order not to be reduced to the same. It is by emphasising finitude rather than infinity that Derrida attempts to retain the wholly other's otherness within the world, rather than as a transcendental point outside of it, as 'the other cannot be absolutely exterior to the same without ceasing to be other' (Derrida 2010, 158).

How then is this possible? Or, is it, as many assume, impossible? And what is at stake in this distinction between the face and the infinitely other, that Derrida rejects in Levinas, for our understanding of ontology in relation to Palestinian existence? Here is where the significance of différance at the origin, and therefore ontological indeterminacy, comes to the fore. Acknowledging this type of origin would prevent the ability to privilege one way of being over another by presuming to know in advance what Being, or the wholly other, was, which would be a reiteration of the dialectical violence that deconstruction puts into crisis. For Derrida, the only way to escape this functioning of metaphysical violence is to accept the 'economy of violence', i.e. différance, from the beginning, which, from this perspective, is an unavoidable necessity, and go onto choose the lesser violence in the wake of this reality. To the questionability of this structural reality Derrida states, 'the very elocution of nonviolent metaphysics is the first disavowal' indicating that one can never 'escape the economy of war' (189). However one may, following this structural violence, be able to choose the lesser violence within this economy. In this double bind, the opening of the violence is at the same time that which allows relation to the other. If this other was infinitely other, as Levinas would have it, there would be no relation. The relation to the other then, for there to be one, must be accepted to exist in an economy. Wood writes that:

> Derrida explored the ethical force of bringing together as closely as possible the same and the other, the ego and the other, and insists on the experience of the other as an economy…[…]…This economy can never be absolutely peaceful…[…]… This inevitable and 'irreducible' violence is at the same time non-violence since it 'opens the relation to the other. It is an *economy*.' (Wood 2009, 84).

For Karen Barad, this violent non-violence is not the opening of a relation to the other, as that relation has always already occurred due to the relational nature of ontology which emerges out of phenomena. This will be something to keep in mind for the arguments made regarding the relational-real and the undeniable as

complementary to the undecidable, which is what Derrida is emphasising here in the economy of violence which opens relation to the other. Rather than 'the relationship to the other arising from the solitude of my existence' (80), it can be argued, via Barad, that the relationship to the other arises from the entangled relational nature of phenomena. The distinction made here between Derrida's thought and Rooney's is that for Derrida différance would be at the origin, whereas for Rooney, differences would emerge from a non-dual (not singular) wholeness and therefore there would be something outside of the play of difference. Derrida would, I assume, be cautious of this understanding and he would fear the return of the domination of the same in a wholeness out of which difference emerged, rather than placing différance at the origin. But Rooney specifically argues that this non-duality is not singularity, and therefore is not reducible to the violence of the same which Derrida sees at work in Western Metaphysics. In 'Violence and Metaphysics' Derrida explores the question of being which 'seeks to liberate itself from the Greek domination of the Same and the One…as if from oppression itself – an oppression certainly comparable to none other in the world, an ontological or transcendental oppression, but also the origin or alibi of all oppression in the world' (Derrida 2010, 102). Derrida thus affiliates all the oppression in the world in the alibi of the origin as other than différance, i.e. the totality of the Same. Would this be itself a colonising claim to the origin?[99]

But again, what is at stake here is the refusal of an ontological determinacy which privileges some over others. Beardsworth succinctly summarises what is at stake here in specific relation to Levinas, Judaism and the Palestinians. He argues that Levinas' work maintains the 'danger of 'precedence' where some others are valued over others, Jewish alterity over others' alterity, and finally human alterity over other forms of alterity' (Beardsworth 1998, 129). More specifically he writes that ''The risk of justifying the other [*i.e. fixing the ontological*] becomes a reality when Levinas figures the humanity of the other in the form of the Jew, thereby ready to justify ethically both the State of Israel and his own 'sacrifice' to this state' (141). In the same

[99] This is Rooney's argument in *Decolonising Gender*. I am attempting here to weave together the different strands of this argument, and accommodate all the different threads with the weight they deserve. However, I am aware that in my desire to emphasise the complementarity of the undecidable and the undeniable, there is an aspect of Rooney's argument regarding what Derrida's insistence of différance at the origin excludes and forecloses that I have not yet been able to 'place' or 'accommodate' in this discussion so far. I think this is because of my inability to 'decide' or say confidently whether I believe the ontological and the epistemological should be kept separate, as I believe ontological indeterminacy is the crux of the matter regarding this issue of différance at the origin. This question is bound to remain unanswered for me, yet I will try to be as open as possible to all the trajectories I am juggling here.

way that Levinas specifies the place of politics beyond politics as exemplified in the State of Israel, causing Thompson to state that Levinas' politics are 'inextricably tangled with his own Zionism' (Thompson 2005, 134), he also places the Jewish people in an exemplary place when he affirms that the 'authentically human' is the 'being-Jewish' of everyman' (Beardsworth 1998, 141).

Levinas' prioritising of the Jewish people over the Palestinians is famously seen in an interview with Levinas following the massacre of Sabra and Shatila. When asked if the Palestinians were not the other of the Jews, the neighbour that his philosophy demarcates, Levinas responds by saying 'My definition of the other is completely different.' Commentators have aptly noted that the full force of Levinas' reply is scandalous, implying that the Palestinians are nothing to do with the otherness of his philosophy: 'Levinas' 'notion of the other is restricted to the neighbour in such a way as to keep the Palestinian out of the reach of those to whom the "I" is responsible' (quoted in Caro 2005, 674). The severe implication of Levinas' philosophy, as indicated by Derrida early on from 'Violence and metaphysics', to *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, is the importance of ontological indeterminacy and the groundless ground of différance, which makes the wholly other the origin rather than recapitulating the violence of metaphysics by positing the radical absence of the infinitely other as the Judaic God. Derrida categorically avoids this determination, even if the charge is levelled at him, by those such as Christopher Wise, that he dispenses with the category of the human, which is more risky to those in situations of oppression and precarity. Rather, Derrida believes his willingness *not* to champion the fixed determination of the human, of ontology, and to affirm différance at the origin, avoids the violence he is accused of. While this undecidable nature of ontology and of the human is difficult, as it causes uncertainty and an acceptance of the economy of violence as necessary, it is only from this position that Derrida sees that it is possible to move forward so as to choose the lesser violence.

What would be the lesser violence in an economy of violence, when it comes to respecting the otherness of the other? In distinction to Rooney's belief that Derrida's theory of différance excludes otherness from being, Beardsworth argues that it is this movement in Levinas which Derrida opposes, as for Derrida, otherness is nowhere other than in being, but is not reducible to it. This is where the accusation of the quasi-transcendental comes from.

The undecidable nature of ontology then can be seen to be significant in that it prevents the reinscription of ontological violence, or the primacy and one form of being over another. In another way, it affirms the universal dispossession of identity that affects all those who are 'human' – and destabilises the very notion of the human and the non-human. Whilst disturbing for some, this approach is actually presented as a necessary precaution against the violence inherent in humanism.

Therefore, as I go on to do a reading of David Grossman's novel *The Smile of the Lamb*, and highlight how discrimination and racism occur in subtle ways through the demarcation of those who are granted rights and those who are not, and through the subtle dehumanisation of the other in classic (settler)colonial tropes, it will become apparent that racism is founded on the false premise of the ontological superiority of some over others. Rather, the undecidable nature of ontology allows for an equality of being to emerge as undeniable, by avoiding the prescription of one race over another. What is said to be human emerges in local contexts, out of instability. The risk involved here makes surety tremble to its core, but it is only in this way that Derrida sees that good faith can be avoided, and a lesser violence chosen from within an economy of violence. For Derrida, to disavow the originary violence of différance, would be to become complicit in metaphysical violence – which for him is much worse, as it erases the otherness of the other and incorporates it into an economy of the same.

Chapter Six

Deconstructing Liberal Zionism in David Grossman's *The Smile of The Lamb.*

Grossman's novel *The Smile of the Lamb* (1990) explores the experience of crossing national boundaries, and encountering one's other in a story which sees an idealistic Israeli soldier, Uri, attempt to help an older Palestinian man, Khilmi, in an occupied village of the West Bank. *The Smile of the Lamb* was the first Israeli novel to foreground a Palestinian character and use his narrative voice as a main segment of the story (Ramraz-Ra'ukh, 1989). However, this reading will seek to deconstruct the unexamined implications of the novel's narrative of attempting to find peace, a novel which ultimately grants racial, legal and moral superiority to Israelis over the Palestinians. I will argue that peace is foreclosed by this apartheid logic.

In *The Smile of the Lamb,* Uri is a young idealistic Israeli of Iraqi descent whose father 'had gone a little crazy' (Grossman 1990, 13) in prison during the Nakba and subsequently became a racist, composing a book of prayers against the Arabs. The novel begins with Uri's narrative, which he intersperses with the phrase '*yan-ka-ma-kan*' (Arabic for 'once upon a time', or, 'there is and there is not'), from his location at Khilmi's cave, after he has offered himself as a ransom to the old Palestinian outcast in a final act of desperation to make a difference to the lives of those in the Occupied Territories. The cave is outside the village of Andal in the West Bank, where Uri has been invited to be an assistant to the Israeli commander Katzman. Through Katzman's narration we are told that he and Uri have come to know one another while working together as volunteers for the Red Cross in Southern Italy. By sharing stories of their pasts and discussing their thoughts surrounding justice and truth, they have become intimate friends, to the point where they have developed a certain dependency on one another. Uri's wife Shosh, the third narrator, is a psychologist struggling to overcome the suicide of one of her patients. Her narrative consists mainly of her version of events

leading up to his death, spoken into a tape recorder. We discover that, in addition to her relationship with the young boy, she is also struggling with her relationships with her father, Uri, and Katzman, the latter with whom she comes to have a sexual relationship. Khilmi is the final narrator, an old Palestinian man who is affectively an outcast, even within his village. It is Grossman's depiction of Khilmi which is the first indication of a complicity with settler colonial political Zionism.

The representation of 'the other' in *The Smile of the Lamb*

Edward Said has famously made the prejudices and dehumanising of the Orientalist project clear, and his research has gone on to aid discourses of liberation and understanding for many other subjugated groups. Caroline Rooney has advanced her own theory for a similar project of a European African discourse, against a masculine capitalist ideal which disavows the feminine real. Both writers' work pertain to the same desire, one I would like to join, that of avowing the undeniable reality of the living. And it is in Rooney's language, which I feel aids and helps Said's project, to argue that *The Smile of the Lamb* falls prey to this blind spot of Orientalism and the disavowal of Palestinians' 'real being'.

There is a general consensus that *The Smile of the Lamb* is successful in exploring mutual recognition and identification across ethnic borders.[100] Speaking of the identification between Uri and Khilmi, Metres suggests that 'Grossman dramatizes how such identification can lead to powerful cross-national acts of solidarity' (Metres 94), and Nurith Gertz argues that the dichotomy between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews is shattered (Gertz 82). I agree that Grossman explores the possibilities of crossing national and ethnic divides through his writing[101]. However, with this novel, this is outworked within a certain structure and world view such that it cannot be argued that the dichotomy between the two groups, self and enemy, is shattered, nor that there are 'powerful' cross-national acts of solidarity, where 'powerful' signifies amounting to change. I will go onto argue that this can be seen not only in this novel, but more broadly in Grossman's liberal-Zionism.

[100] Nurith Gertz (1993), Brenner (2004), Philip Metres (2010).
[101] Also demonstrated in his non-fiction *Sleeping on a Wire*, *The Yellow Wind*: two collections of conversations with Palestinians.

The first thing to comment upon is the complete lack of the word 'Palestinian' in the novel. 'Arab' is substituted each time a character makes reference to non-Israeli inhabitants of the land. This first act of generalisation and disavowal of the Palestinians as a people has a long history, beginning with the Zionist slogan that the land of Palestine was 'A land without people for a people without land', continuing with Golda Meir's claim that the Palestinian people were an invention, frequently seen today in the claim that 'the Arabs' on the land were born elsewhere and hence not Palestinians.[102] Interestingly, Grossman speaks of this politics of language used by Israeli propaganda in *Writing in the Dark* (2009). Quoting a news report which says 'A local youth was killed during disturbances in the Territories', he goes on to critique it:

> Notice the shrewdness of this sentence: 'disturbances' - as if there were some order of normative state in the Territories that was briefly disturbed; 'in the Territories' - we would never expressly say 'the Occupied Territories'; 'youth' - this youth might have been a three-year-old-boy, and of course he would never have a name; 'local' - so as not to say 'Palestinian,' which would imply someone with a clear national identity: and above all, note the verb 'killed' - no one killed him (Grossman 2009, 24).

Yet, despite this awareness in respect of the press, Grossman's novel falls prey to the same hegemonic tones that stereotype and dehumanise the Palestinians.

Take the character of Khilmi. He is the first Palestinian to be given a narrative voice within an Israeli novel, and the only full characterisation we see of a Palestinian within the novel, and yet what type of character is he? A madman and an outcast. Grossman's choice of this characterisation is surely implicated in the hegemonic Zionism and racism that he claims to oppose. Allow me to detail the characterisation of Khilmi. Born the bastard of a whore, his mother is described as a wolf-woman who was 'driven by lust' (Grossman, 1990, 73) into the arms of many men whose children she bore. We are told that her husband, Khilmi's non-biological father, murders Khilmi's real father, and goes on to hang himself in the young boy's presence, creating the image of a murderous, cowardly and impotent Oriental. Meanwhile we are told that Khilmi spews out the 'ravings of a madman' (6), associates with jinns and fantasy characters (28), smells and is diseased (56), is a hoarder of junk (57), eats rotting food (67) and adds soil to his porridge (113), and has the voice of 'an ancient baby' (54).

[102] Most recently Republican candidate Gingrinch. See Khalidi (2010) for a refutation of this argument.

Then there is his relationship with Yadzi, a young boy he has 'snatched from his mother' (34) and separates from the life and language of his village, Andal, teaching him instead the 'language of plants' so that he remains mute until he is twelve years old. Their communication is beyond words; 'grunting [their] deepest desires to each other and sobbing like human cubs' (28). The dumb, almost speechless, Arab is evoked here, alongside that of an animalistic being, communicating in an uncivilised beastly fashion. The reference here to Khilmi and other 'Arab' characters as animals is not a singular occurrence, as we have already seen with his 'wolf woman' mother. Other references of Khilmi to animals include insects (15) lizards (35), spiders (63) jackals, and turtles (114).

It is difficult not to concede to the interpretation of this blatant Orientalist presentation of the main Palestinian character in Grossman's novel. Metres agrees, writing 'There is something so excessively Orientalist about the brute facts of the character', yet he calls it a 'risk' taken by Grossman to choose this portrayal (Metres 96). I would prefer to call it a political and ideological representation, even if unconscious, where in description alone Grossman acquiesces to, and helps maintain, the stereotype of the backwards Arab. And it is not only Khilmi who is portrayed in this way. Although there are nothing more than passing references to other Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, never seen to be under any threat from the IDF, there is frequently a negative slant on the nameless and faceless Palestinians. For example, Khilmi's granddaughter is also mute, another dumb and voiceless Arab; dozens of women come to Khilmi with bastard children, concretising a notion of promiscuity; three times stone throwing is 'thrown' in to the action - children emerging from a Koranic lesson throw them at one another and towards Khilmi, and twice it is mentioned that villagers in Andal throw stones at Khilmi to get rid of him. This imagery and depiction of violence corresponds to the false Israeli and International image of Palestinians as those who always resort to violence, as a pastime, rather than behaving civilly. This is made clearer by Katzman's decision to leave a donkey to rot in the street because one of his officers had been hit by a thrown stone. Yet the daily suffering and oppression of Palestinians, in its brutality, is absent.

Through Uri we see an attempt to genuinely recognise and avow the humanity of his fellow human beings. But it is around this question of writing and language that the main problem comes into view when questioning whether this novel provides a real sense of mutual recognition. Referring back to the presentation of Khilmi, Metres

believes that, despite the Orientalist depiction, 'Grossman fully imbues Khilmi with a kind of humanity that is undeniable' (Metres 96). To justify this claim Metres inserts a footnote, quoting an interview in which Grossman speaks of wanting to form a private language between himself and his son, to 'save him from the inevitable heartaches so that he wouldn't be able to comprehend the existence of, for instance, war.' This, claims Metres, shows Grossman's desire to imbue Khilmi with an aspect of his own life and thus strengthens the connection between the two sides within the novel. But can Khilmi's separation from society, into a private imaginary world where he and Yazdi communicate in a manner beyond normal language, really be maintained as an aspect of mutual recognition and solidarity? I want to suggest that it cannot and should not be thought of in this way.

Storytelling is deployed as a helpful way to cross cultural and ethnic boundaries - notably through Uri and the stories of Khilmi and Katzman's suffering. But where this differs from the way Khilmi is associated with stories is important. If we turn back to the beginning of the novel, which Uri narrates, there is a paragraph which attempts to universalise Khilmi's manner of storytelling, captured by the phrase 'yan-ka-ma-kan'. Previously Uri has believed that this way of seeing reality could only happen under Khilmi's lemon tree, but then admits 'I guess I was wrong. I guess there must be a Tel Aviv version of *yan-ka-ma-kan'* (Grossman 1990, 4). Dissolving a division between the 'narrated' realities of life on either side of the (movable) Green Line, Grossman attempts to set up the novel as one which will question the relationship between fiction and reality, language and truth, facts and story-telling. In his review of the novel, Jonathan Coe draws attention to the novel's 'fundamental inclination to see all human life as being grounded in fictions' and the blurring of borders between what we might choose to call reality and fiction. Yet the end of the sentence in Coe's comment is telling, as he shows that the fictions are not all equal, but have 'varying degrees of integrity' (Coe 1991).

In Gilah Ramraz-Raukh's book, *The Arab in Israeli Literature* (1989), it is asked 'How political is this novel?' to which her response is 'It is not so much about the Arab-Israeli conflict as about questions of language and reality' (Ramraz-Raukh, 190). I would like to argue that these questions of language and reality are exactly the political reality being denied and dismissed as un-political, leaving Palestinians dismissed and trapped under Occupation. Grossman's depiction of Khilmi is both ideological and political.

Instead of the relationship to story-telling being put into question, as it is with Uri, Katzman and Shosh, Khilmi's life is presented as fiction. Uri states 'Khilmi is no more than '*yan-ka-ma-kan'*, a fictional inventor of fictions' (Grossman 1990, 6). Not only does he create fictions, as the others do in their narratives, but he is himself a fictional being. And, more than this, Uri decides to relegate Khilmi to a position outside of living reality, telling us that he would be 'better off as a figment of [his] imagination' (3). Why is it to the Palestinian that Uri suggests being relegated to the realm of his imagination? It appears that Khilmi, the stereotypical backwards Arab is positioned in a world beyond the boundaries of existence, even within a novel where human life is grounded in fictions. For example, Ramaraz-Raukh says that the character of Khilmi 'living in a cave, is in nature untouched by human hands, entirely outside the village and outside its restrictions of language and reality. As he bathes in his barrel under the fig tree, he is floating outside of time and place' (Ramaraz-Raukh, 190). Grossman is negating the undeniable reality of his character in his very attempt to bring him into the foreground. Yes he has a voice, however it is so heavily laden with the imaginary that nobody believes what he says, or ever chooses to relate to him. Uri comments 'How can I believe that nonsense? Those stories about Darius, his patron and redeemer, or the hunter who drew lions in the sand, or even his dead son, Yadzi. The ravings of a madman' (Grossman, 1990, 6). It is true that both Katzman and Shosh lie to Uri, perhaps more blatantly than Khilmi. And this is one of the themes Grossman is bringing into question: how is the reality we create, through lies and truth, any different to Khilmi's make-believe world of heroes and fantasy? Yet it still appears that Khilmi's relation to 'reality' through fiction is so extreme, whereas for the others there is no question as to whether they and their companions exist. It is truth that the characters fight to discover as Shosh does with her involvement in the young boy's death. Yet Khilmi is presented as a character who knowingly lies to himself in order to deny the pain of his son's death; 'he's telling himself a different version of the story...because Yadzi is not dead, there is no death, there is only a sudden flagging of one fiction out of many' (53). Yet it can be argued that the reality of death is also outside the realm of fiction? Khilmi is shown here to be delusional and willing at any cost to 'create' a story to relativize the actuality of what has happened to his son. This brings us back to Coe's reflection that there are 'varying degrees of integrity' between the fictions told and created by the characters. Khilmi's integrity is constantly brought into question because of his own 'fictitious' nature. I think I can agree that is it true that

the world around us is made up of narratives we tell; but our life, our being, is not a fiction, but an undeniable reality. Rather than acting as a character who helps put into question the nature of fiction and reality, Grossman relegates Khilmi to a realm 'beyond being and time.'[103]

It would seem to concur with Khilmi's mysterious, almost mystical, nature: the crazy old man in a cave, unwilling to speak the language of this world. And Khilmi's private language and chosen muteness are inseparable from the presentation of non-violent resistance. The unspeakable then becomes a form of resistance which opposes violence, physical and rhetorical, by choosing a 'different kind of war. Long and arduous. And for weapons we will use stubborn patience and infinite weakness.' (Grossman 1990, 36). Brenner writes 'To thwart evil, Khilmi withdraws to his cave. There he attempts to overcome the power of hatred through the language of love and tenderness by spinning a "tale within a tale" about fantastic flying creatures, magicians, and the secrets of nature' (Brenner, 115). Khilmi's make believe world and separation from normal society comes to be seen as an aesthetic decision to portray a form of non-violent resistance, reminiscent of the Palestinian concept of *sumud*. However, while there may be traits which overlap, it is completely unfounded to equate Khilmi's resistance with this noble concept. Firstly, this is because Khilmi's approach is separatist, which thinks neither of community or practical application. Secondly, the idea that to resist the Occupation one must enter another world, create imaginary companions and refuse to communicate with those also struggling under the same conditions or even against those who are oppressing you, removes the fight against the Occupation from the common fight and fellow feeling which is so important in liberation movements. Thirdly, it can be argued that rather than resisting the Occupation, this strategy of 'story-telling' and refusal of language is only in fact playing into the hands of the occupier, acquiescing to the silence and passivity that the coloniser desires. For Khilmi neither acts nor speaks out against the Occupation, other than as a shouting madman in his first meeting with Uri, and then by demanding full removal of occupying forces in return for Uri's life, who has given himself up as a ransom. We are never presented with a 'real' form of resistance, only 'hysterical' reactions, or with what would be termed 'terrorism' in the case of Uri's hostage situation. But there is no representation of the daily struggle against the Occupation, the non-violent actions that thousands of Palestinians carry out every day. By only

[103] Rooney might posit this as having an affinity with the space of différance.

presenting this small and biased form of resistance, Grossman falls prey to a prejudiced and tainted view which disables solidarity.

Instead of real resistance and non-violent opposition we are given, in Khilmi, a character with whom we are never quite sure where the line is between reality and fiction, and this leads us to ask what other option is there in such a situation? We take pity on him, perhaps like Uri, and look to the other characters to provide options. Uri himself wants to implement radical change in the village, creating new roads, and hospitals, which will apparently help the culling of unwanted children or deaths due to inexperienced midwives (Grossman 1990, 55): yet another slur on Palestinian civilisation. Yet never is it mentioned why new roads are needed, or why people from the village might be unable to train as midwives. Again, the silence here feeds into the coloniser's narrative, providing no recognition or awareness of the difficulties of life under Occupation or strategies for ending it. However, as already shown, Uri does seem to have a sense of awareness of the Palestinians' suffering and a genuine desire to help change things on the ground. Yet as I have continued re-reading the text it has become clearer that the novel backs itself into a corner and is reductive in its presentation of 'options' for coexistence and solidarity, if in fact any are given at all.

Whether one follows my reading of Uri and Katzman, or if one chooses Brenner's reading of Katzman's death, in both cases the novel ends with an Israeli who 'saves the day'. Indeed, rethinking through my vision of Uri, I am reminded of an article by Rooney entitled 'The crusader's tragedy' (2011). The article outlines an interpretation of Hamlet as a paradigm of a Jihadist extremist, in connection to the Norwegian killer Breivik, the death of Amy Winehouse and the Egyptian Revolution. What is potentially helpful here for my purposes is the notion of the saviour complex. Rooney writes

> in terms of the concerns of our times, it is surprisingly not hard to see Shakespeare's Hamlet as exhibiting the psyche of a Jihadist extremist. In brief, Hamlet is dismayed by the socio-political corruption he finds all around him and in relation to this he develops a saviour complex: he believes that it is his almost divinely appointed task to set the world to rights (Rooney 2011)

This description could be mapped on to Uri, who despairs at the Occupation of Palestine and feels like he has been driven by the force of truth to go up to Khilmi's cave in order to solve the wrongs of the Occupation. Before this he has proclaimed himself, or those 'like me', to be the 'only chance for changing anything around here' (Grossman 1990, 138), placing himself squarely as the sole solution to Khilmi's

problem, which is given as exemplary of the Occupation itself. It can be argued that Uri's involvement with the village of Andal takes away any self-determination from the Palestinians rather than aides any prospect of freedom from oppression.

The novel seems to present us with the dichotomies of power versus passivity, violence verses non-violence, absolute justice versus practical justice, and presents itself as a work which explores the difficulties of what many have often called 'justice versus justice,' the justice sought by Israelis and Palestinians. However, I would like to say that these are not the only options, and the novel fails to explore Palestinian self-determination and the illegitimacy of the Occupation.

We come now to the question of whether the novel offers any form of hope or prospect for co-existence. And I would have to conclude, sadly, that it does not. The problems encountered at the end of the story are all seemingly 'inescapable'. Grossman has presented both a pragmatic and an idealistic character who try to deal with the challenges and the discomforts of the Occupation. But one idea is surely missing, one 'key of reality' outside the relationship between Uri and Katzman's approaches of absolute and practical justice. Allow me to suggest a 'radical' example of solidarity which is missing from the novel: selective refusal. This is a term created by the group *Yesh Gvul*, which is Hebrew for 'There's a limit'. It is the idea that one can refuse to be complicit with the Israeli Occupation of Palestinians. Within the novel, it is potentially glimpsed ever so quickly in the character of Uri's grandfather, who refuses to fight in the Israeli War of Independence, and was subsequently banished from his family as a coward. I have argued that this informs Uri's character, but the idea is never developed, and Uri does not fully inherit his grandfather's pacifism and rejection of Zionist violence, as he both serves in the army before serving in the Occupied Territories, and then choses to serve under Katzman. The idea of non-violence is explored through Khilmi, but where is this idea explored on the Israeli side? Is there the unspoken implication that the Israelis have no option but to serve in the Army, whereas, 'if only the Arabs stopped preaching hatred'[104] then there could be a perceivable end to the conflict? This is a question of huge relevance. The illegitimacy of the Occupation is not present in the novel; rather the question seems to be the differing levels of humanity by which the Occupation can be sustained: supporting a necessary "enlightened" occupation is the 'bread and butter' of the Israeli left.

[104] see Rafeef Ziadah, 'We teach life, sir', available to watch here, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKucPh9xHtM

How does the novel imply the necessity of the Occupation? At one point, Khilmi suggests that he will have to kill Uri because he is stopping 'the lie from growing'. In this instance I understand 'the lie' to signify the necessity of the Occupation justified in terms of security. This is certainly the lie in the contemporary setting. Yet, why does Khilmi say Uri is hindering it from growing. I would be inclined to say that he is helping it grow, putting the innocent smile of the lamb upon the Occupation. But it would appear that Grossman is putting his own ideological spin on 'the lie'. For Grossman, Uri is a character who genuinely wants to help, and as I have shown, has a compassion and understanding of the Other which far outstretches any of the other characters in the novel. Thus, in the unavoidable situation of being on duty in the Occupied Territories the least Uri can do is to try to act humanely in an attempt to help the Palestinians. Stopping the lie from growing then comes to indicate that Uri is hiding the reality, through his kindness and humanity, that the Occupation is in fact brutally violent and oppressive.

The idea that one can refuse to participate in the Israeli Army and the illegitimacy of the Occupation are not entertained or given any credence in the novel. However, there have been voices resisting in this way, as demonstrated by Peretz Kidron's collection of testimonies *Refusenik! Israel's Soldiers of Conscience* (2004), which contains over forty personal accounts of Israeli soldiers who chose selective refusal over serving in the Occupied Territories, some, like the poet Yitzhak Laor, from as early as 1978. This is the alternate reality missing from Grossman's novel. The absence of this choice is based upon the belief that the Occupation is necessary. Yet this apparent necessity is founded upon the Israeli lie of security and defence against the constant threat of the Arab enemy[105].

Grossman might be outspoken against the injustice of the Occupation and be an advocate for dialogue, but this is not the same thing as recognising it as illegitimate and illegal, which if done, would facilitate dialogue in a much greater way. The Israeli film maker, Udi Aloni, takes Grossman to task for his attitudes towards the Israeli army and the collaboration of the Israeli-left with the political propaganda which feeds the war machine. Whilst reading Grossman's book on Samson, *The Lion's Honey*, Aloni becomes angry at the hegemonic attitude he holds of Samson as the noble fighter. But, aware that Grossman lost his son in the 2006 War, Aloni begins by writing 'I kept asking

[105] See Joseph Massad's 'Truths, facts and facts on the ground', for refutation of the notion that Israel must defend itself http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/10/2011102583358314280.html

myself, how could I argue with a father who has lost a child to war?' (Aloni 2011, 31). Grossman's eulogy for his son Uri is moving, as Aloni comments, bringing a lump to the throat. But it also elicits protest as well as sorrow for Aloni. Following a quotation of the eulogy, where Grossman describes his son's attempt to make young Palestinians laugh at checkpoints, Aloni writes 'Surely Grossman knows that a soldier's smile is the nightmare of the Palestinian forced to stop at a checkpoint. "Please don't let him smile at me!" I can hear my friend Leila from Ramallah saying, "Please don't let him think that he is not part of the crime machine!"' (37). The resonances with the character of Uri in the novel are tragically close to the reality of life. The young idealist coloniser who tired to make things 'better' for the occupied, who reaches out, with the smile of innocence. Aloni wants to communicate that 'the smile [of the soldier] is a genuine expression of tenderness' (37) but within this context there is a key of reality missing. As within the novel, making the best of a bad, but obligatory, duty is the attitude expressed by Grossman. It is as though the option for an Israeli to resist cooperating in this brutal endeavour of the Occupation is unheard of, unthinkable, and out of the question. Admittedly, Aloni is not only thinking about service in the Occupied Territories, as the instance he goes onto mention and protest is the 2006 War on Lebanon. However, the peace movement Yesh Guvl was founded as resistance to the first Lebanon war, and it is clear that there are those who see aggressive attacks on neighbouring states as unjustified in terms of defence. Aloni goes on to chastise the Zionist left for their support of the 2006 Lebanon war, showing that there were those in Israel who opposed the war on Lebanon, which Grossman, Oz and Yehoshua all justified:

> Why did they not call out to its children "Do not serve in the forces of Occupation!"? On the first day of the war we gathered in the city square and protested: "Don't send your children out to fight this unnecessary, unjust battle!" Why did they not lie before the tanks as they set off? Why did they not block the doors of their homes and give the command "Refuse orders, son!" Why did they not as least grab their uniforms, begging: "This is not your war, son. You are not Samson. They are not the Philistines." But they, the humanists of the Zionist left, saw themselves as Odysseus and dreaded our cries as though they were the alluring songs of the sirens (37).

At that time, Amos Oz wrote in the Los Angeles Times 'Many Times in the past, the Israeli peace movement has criticized Israeli military operations. Not this time.'[106]

[106]Amos Oz, in the Los Angeles Times, 2006, http://www.pierretristam.com/Bobst/library/wf-281.htm

Security was the issue at hand, but, as many other commentators show, this claim was not warranted. Israel's attack was justified to the nation and the International community on the grounds that Hezbollah had captured two Israeli soldiers, and retaliation was necessary. However, Chomsky writes that this is pure hypocrisy, as '[for] decades Israel has been kidnapping and killing civilians in Lebanon, or on the high seas between Lebanon and Cyprus, holding many for long periods as hostages while unknown numbers of others were sent to secret prison-torture chambers like Facility 1391' (Pappe and Chomsky, 17). Yet the right of the Lebanese or the support from the International community to call for a justified attack on Israel is unheard of. Chomsky adds, 'No one has ever condemned Israel for aggression or called for massive terror attacks in retaliation. As always, the cynicism reeks to the skies, illustrating imperial mentality so deeply rooted as to be imperceptible.' (17). Instead of bowing to the propaganda imbued by Grossman and the other liberal writers, Aloni shows that there is an alternative being fought for among Israelis, against the liberal Zionists, whom he calls the stewards of war, beating the war drums, but only softly, gently, befitting to the humanists they claim to be (38). Grossman did hold a press conference to call for a ceasefire days later, when the aggression continued against Lebanon, reminding the world of the types of brutality the IDF commits. But could he really have believed that Israel would act with appropriate force in self-defence? Is he aware of Israel's historical record? Jonathan Cook claims the disproportionate response was no surprise[107]. Why then was this not clear to Grossman, as it was to Cook and Aloni?

The tragedy for Grossman is that the ceasefire was called for too late, and his son was killed days before it was negotiated. But we are not to forget the unnamed Lebanese sons and daughters, unarmed and unprotected civilians, with no weapons or tanks to defend themselves, who were killed in this aggressive attack. A United Nations report claims that there were 1,191 Lebanese deaths and 4,409 injured, while more than 900,000 people had to flee their homes[108].

Continuing to assail the Israeli left in another essay dedicated to Grossman, Aloni responds to the 'somewhat enthusiastic' welcoming of Benjamin Netanyahu's acceptance of the two state solution in 2009. He calls Grossman's response a collaboration in the softening of Netanyahu's extremism. Can this be right, Grossman

[107] http://www.antiwar.com/cook/?articleid=9390
[108] Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-2 http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/specialsession/A.HRC.3.2.pdf

collaborating with Netanyahu, whom he publicly criticised in the very same article quoted? I am not sure Grossman's article, entitled 'Netanyahu's message is there will be no peace', can be called enthusiastic. However, there is an implicit superiority and arrogance within, which Aloni summarises, writing

> Grossman, in a somewhat pessimistic article that repeats, in other words, the parable of Samson's foxes whose tails were tied together with a burning torch. This parable describes how he sees [Israelis] relation to the Palestinians: All of us living here, members of the two peoples, are jointly setting fire to our very own fields, and this cannot be rectified unless America saves us from ourselves. (Aloni 2011, 122).

Grossman brings symmetry into the problems held between Israel and Palestine, which is clearly a misrepresentation of the facts. One side is a coloniser, the other the oppressed colonised. He also claims America is the only source of hope, which again denies the right of Palestinians to self-determination, to which Aloni writes,

> they seem to be saying, please be seated and keep quiet, sweet Palestinian natives, and let us negotiate your wretched fate among ourselves. Give peace a chance, pleads Grossman, and give peace a chance since, in any case, your life sucks, and for heaven's sake stop bombing and exploding. After all, we are trying to establish a model literary ethnocratic democracy here... (123).

While this last sentence is facetious, it strikes a chord of truth as we look back at Grossman's article and read his patronising remarks towards the Palestinians. He writes 'could they not have grasped even the drooping branch Netanyahu offered them, unwillingly, and challenged him to begin negotiations with them immediately, as he proposed at the beginning of his address.'[109] Grossman wishes the Palestinians to compromise yet again. But this implied olive branch was hardly a concrete reality; more of a overdue statement that the International community has recognised for a long time. Yet many Israelis, such as Aloni, recognise the liberal Zionist position as one complicit in the suffering of the Palestinians.

By constantly stating the need for renewed negotiations and signalling America as the only hope, Grossman offers no solidarity with the Palestinians, but with the endless deferral of their equal rights and self-determination. Joseph Massad comments in 2010 that 'Oslo instituted itself as the language of peace that ipso facto delegitimizes

[109] Grossman, http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/netanyahu-s-message-is-there-will-be-no-peace-1.278217

any attempt to resist it as one that supports war, and dismisses all opponents of its surrender of Palestinian rights as opponents of peace.[110]' The language of peace has been commandeered by the imperial powers, allowing no vocabulary for the opposition of the peace process and negotiations that are is not associated with terrorism. The speed with which Israelis see resistance against a settler colonial power as acts of terrorism is endemic of the blindness towards the Palestinians and their daily reality.

Despite his peace activism and weekly demonstrations in Jerusalem, Grossman's complicity with the IDF, the Occupation, and America shows he is unable to see the power relations of the settler colonial society he lives in, therefore making him blind to the real plight of the Palestinians. Yitzhak Laor makes the connection between Zionism and colonialism writing: 'in the historical moment in which we are living, Zionism has no source of legitimization except the old colonial discourse.' (Laor 2009, 108-109). This discourse is clear in the representation of Khilmi in *The Smile of the Lamb*, and its connection to Zionism can be seen as the symptom of an ideology which believes in the necessity of the Occupation and the IDF to secure Israeli security against the Arab terrorist.

This devaluing of the Palestinians then comes to be seen in a wider context of Grossman's politics, highlighted by Jacqueline Rose. Rose's chapter 'David Grossman's Dilemma' in her book *The Last Resistance* (2011) pin-points for me something which reveals this devaluing of Palestinians. Commenting on Grossman's essay 'Point of No Return' from 2001, she writes 'Palestinian right of return is Grossman's cut-off point' (Rose 2011, 119). The reasoning being that the idea of a resulting Jewish minority in Israel would be a threat to the irrevocably Jewish state. 'We need to achieve a partial justice for both sides' he writes at the end of his essay, to which Rose responds by writing 'We could retranslate: justice is partial. Even if justice is on your side - that is, on the side of the Palestinians, as it so clearly is on this issue under international law - you cannot have it, because it will destroy my dream' (119). Disappointingly Rose leaves her comments there, and goes onto praise Grossman as the closest to a non-Zionist Zionist she has encountered who is just longing for a piece of land 'free from meaning' (120). What Rose fails to point out is that what Grossman is justifying in this

[110] Joseph Massad, 'How surrendering Palestinian rights became the language of "peace"', http://electronicintifada.net/content/how-surrendering-palestinian-rights-became-language-peace/8640 (Accessed 14/07/14)

'free from meaning' quotation she cites is the superiority of rights for one group of people over another: and the State of Israel functions on this basis, instituting laws, architecture, the sharing of resources etc., which is why the claim that Israel is an apartheid State is an accurate one. Jews must be allowed a right of return to a land that was never and has never been their place of birth; whereas Palestinians who were born on that very land are discredited due to the 'dream' of the Jewish State. International law is defied by the Israeli government, in relation to Resolution 194, which states that 'refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so', and, at the same time, non-native Jews can immigrate to the area in order to support the need to keep the Jewish population numerically high. This blatant bias between the rights of one people over another can be called nothing other than racist, one group's rights being denied in order to grant privilege and superiority to another. That Rose does not comment on this and calls it a 'dilemma' is a little worrying.[111] Instead of a non-Zionist Zionist, we could call it a blatant liberal Zionism. Why not take Grossman to task for his unwillingness to accept the Palestinians' right of return? When Rose writes of the 'retranslation' of partial justice, is she conceding that this is a matter of 'justice versus justice'? Knowing her involvement in the struggle for Palestinian self-determination I would have thought not. But the worry for me continues as Rose evaluates Grossman's comments concerning the land of Israel becoming a place 'stripped of meaning'. She writes

> In 1993, as [Grossman] travels across a bare-topped piece of country side where there is neither a Jewish nor Arab village to be seen, [he writes] 'I had a strange urge to peel the land of its names and designations and descriptions and dates, Israel, Palestine, Zion, 1897, 1929, 1936, 1948, 1967, 1987, the Jewish State, the Promised Land, the Holy Land, the Land of Splendour, the Zionist entity, Palestine.' Could there be a little piece of earth that is 'still free of meaning?' What would remain? In this brief, euphoric moment in 1993, Grossman strips the land of its overburdened significance. Like Virginia Woolf, who once famously said 'I hate meaning', he recognises that only dictators control the world of signs...Too much naming, like too much conviction, can kill. (120).

[111] Rose seems to have an inability to criticise Grossman. Her review of *To the End of the Land* in *The Guardian* ends as follows, 'To the End of the Land is without question one of the most powerful and moving novels I have read. But we do the novel, and Grossman, no favours if we turn it into a sacred object, beyond critical scrutiny and outside the reach of the history to which it so complexly and sometimes disturbingly relates.' It is a shame that her review, also not outside of the reach of history, does not choose to mention it, Palestinians' historic struggle against settler colonialism, or criticise Grossman's lack of its representation.

What is the significance of desiring these names and dates to disappear so as to discover a land 'free of meaning'? Is seems to me that a forgetting of history and reality lie here within. Stripping the land of these descriptions would only seem to serve the Israelis, as they are those in power in this land that Grossman wishes to remove from meaning. In idealising the land he removes himself from any political commitment and desire to see the other side and the history of Palestine, which he would have to concede was inhabited by Palestinians for centuries before 1948. It is interesting that the dates and names (except Palestine), are dates and names that refer to Israeli history, with no mention of the names Palestinians give to such events. The history and names he wishes to be removed are given as Israeli. It must be asked then what brings one to the desire to disavow history? Is it that the Israelis have overburdened the land with meaning, force and power, causing the dispossession of a people? Is it the horror of the Nakba and the history brought to light in Israeli society by the New Historians that Grossman really wishes could disappear? Rose is right to suggest that too much meaning can kill, using Virginia Woolf as a literary voice of persuasion, but there is a distinct lack of acknowledgment that too much forgetting is also a deadly genocidal threat. The disavowal of the Nakba and Palestinian existence in equal measure to Israeli existence is the ongoing and structural problem that faces Israelis and Palestinians alike, and therefore to disavow meaning and history is just another ploy within a liberal-Zionism to 'forget' the past. This type of sentiment can all too easily be expressed by those in power, the dictators, as it is easy to talk about 'hating meaning' and 'un-naming' when everything around your position will keep these names, dates and ideologies in place. Yet for the dispossessed, names, dates and events cannot so easily be wished away, and must be fought for to provide a counter narrative to the oppressor's story of victory and liberation.

However, the gap remains between the position of the coloniser and the position of the colonised. Rooney's comments on the difference between the ethics of groups with different power relations will be valuable here. She writes

> A capitalist might say to a labourer, 'let us call your labour not mine as your boss, but ours, ours, in a socialist spirit.' It would obviously be ridiculous. The coloniser might say to the colonised, 'this is our land', but it would be empty performative rhetoric without it being a lived reality. A plagiarist might try to persuade the one plagiarised from, 'you think I appropriated your work, but there's no such thing as an author, it's all ours, our work now.' My general point is the ethics of the owners may significantly differ from the ethics of the dispossessed (Rooney 2007, 126).

This logic can be seen in Grossman's comments regarding the desire for the land to be stripped of meaning. The luxury to do so is only available to those in a position of power. The Palestinians, colonised and Occupied, disavowed, and being slowly removed from history, do not have the option to strip the land of meaning. Their land has already been stripped of meaning, history and existence, time and again, by Israel. Thus, a Zionist desire to arrive at a place of 'no meaning' is complicit with a disavowal of the other in the creation of the Jewish State.

The idea of self-production, such that Israeli identity is independent of the effects on the Palestinians, is important here. Derek Gregory in his book *The Colonial Present* comments on the logic of Western colonial powers, writing 'The stories the West most often tells itself about itself are indeed stories of self-production, a practice that does induce blindness' (Gregory, 4). One instance of this blindness in the Israel/Palestine context would be the history of the Nakba. The inability to see how one's own identity is irreversibly linked to that of the Other, in both personal and national situations, brings us back to a point brought into question in relation to the concept of writing. Writing as self-production, says Rooney, embodies a politics of performativity which also denies the other. To recap I will re-quote Rooney on the difference seen between Derrida's formulation of writing and her own. In the first idea 'writing is idealised as a form of ghostly self- immortalisation in the replica or trace. In the second, inscription is valued as a point of momentary contact between existences' (Rooney 2007, 98). The momentary contact between existences avows the reality and the life of the other, by which the writer is influenced and brings writing into existence. The idea of self-production then becomes politically or ideologically motivated, and complicit with a desire to forget and disavow the other. Thus, Grossman's view of Israel is one of self-production - distanced from the reality of Palestinian history which avows the Nakba, entitles equal rights and thus the right of return - is blind to the other. An Israel which justifies the Occupation is one based upon the self-produced story it tells to itself. The relegation of the Palestinians to a place outside of reality, as seen in the character of Khilmi, coupled with the legitimacy of the Occupation and the rejection of the Palestinian's right of return are complicit with a story of settler colonial self-production, which ultimately claims the right to narrate history whilst disavowing the other. Sadly, Grossman's efforts 'not to shield himself from the legitimacy and the

suffering of [his] enemy, or the tragedy and complexity of [their lives]' (Grossman 2009, 15) have some way to go before avowing the reality of the other can be claimed.

Underlying the act of nation building, as suggested is at work in Grossman's politics, is a performative claim to the origin. Again, Rooney writes 'This longing of a retrospective claim to the origin is very much a colonising, capitalising move, one that serves - in the moment it is made - to disentitle the possible co-originality of others or to thwart a potential sharing of sources' (Rooney 2007, 98). It is this colonising of the origin that Rooney also sees to be at work in Derrida's concept of différance, as the law of the performative. While this may have some traction, I have tried to show above in Chapter 5 that Derrida's notion of the origin can also be read as a critique of colonising and nationalist claims to the origin in the case of political-Zionsim. However, it may be that deconstruction needs to address the logic and pervasiveness of the law of the performative as I have explored in Chapter 3, in a choice of emphasis of the undeniable over the undecidable in certain situations.

Chapter Seven

Palestinian identity and hospitality: Towards an ethics of the undeniable relational-real.

Throughout this thesis, I have been concerned with the question of whether deconstruction can be, or is, hospitable to Palestinian existence and the Palestinian need for self-determination. It has been my contention that deconstruction emphasises the undecidable nature of reality at the expense of the undeniable, locally resolvable aspects of the relational-real, and the relationality of ontology. In this way, it is difficult to be hospitable to particular identity politics, as they are seen to reiterate the violence of metaphysics. In this chapter I would like to explore the Derridean notion of hospitality alongside the question of identity to ask how it is possible to be hospitable to the needs of Palestinian self-determination, and thus, ultimately, Palestinian life and existence. I believe that through the lens of the relational-real, via Karen Barad's agential realism, hospitality must also be reconfigured to take into account the inherent relational and entangled aspect of ontology which allows for meaning and ontology to be determined within contexts. If the undecidable is also present in Derrida's understanding of hospitality, which it most certainly is through the aporia of unconditional and conditional hospitality, how would the complementarity of the undeniable, as pertains to Palestinian existence and presence under settler colonial subjugation of the Israeli State, be revealed in this question of hospitality?

In what follows I would like to read Derrida's understanding of hospitality through Barad's agential realism and an understanding of agential separation, such that it might become clearer how the concepts of connection, relationality, and the undeniable relational-real are always-already within the notion of hospitality. Questions which will arise from this will be, how will this change the notion of hospitality in the context of Israel/Palestine where the identities of host and guest are hugely contentious? How will self-determination be re-conceived in light of the

undeniable relational-real? And in what ways can one be hospitable to identity politics if we understand identity and ontology to be indeterminate?

At stake in this discussion is a certain type of ethics towards the relational-real. Barad offers the notion of an ethico-onto-epistemology, as she finds these things to be intra-related, entangled and inseparable. My argument is that regardless of the indeterminate nature of identity and the aporia of hospitality, one can and must still take responsibility and be accountable for the decisions and politics one choses as one cannot escape the entangled nature of the intra-actions 'we' are a part of. That is to say, ontology's relationality is unconditionally hospitable to otherness, such that our being in the world is preceded by a responsibility to the other which we cannot escape, except violently[112]. Instead of proceeding in 'good faith', where the claims of responsibility are seen to be justified on some ethical 'ground', I propose that reading deconstruction through Barad enables another future of deconstruction to emerge, one that might enable a responsibility to be based on locally resolved situated knowledges that avow the undeniable. Through this reading, it might help take Caroline Rooney's proposal that 'The Palestinians are where deconstruction could be in the future' a little further, at least for the time being.

Being hospitable to identity politics

In what follows, I will explore the notion of identity politics in light of Derrida's deconstruction of the fixed notion of self, identity and collective belonging through Karen Barad's agential realism and the relational-real, suggesting that it is possible to be hospitable to the identity politics of the Palestinian when identity is not understood as an essential part of one's make up. Rather, identity will be shown to be a process of 'becoming', which is locally resolved in order to produce situated knowledges of what certain identities mean. This allows for solidarity with the Palestinians, without claiming transcendental objectivity, but instead by taking an accountable stand based on a community of knowledge regarding what is happening in Israel/Palestine. From the perspective of situated knowledges, ethical relativism is possible only at the denial

[112] Butler writes similarly, 'I cannot disavow my relation to the Other, regardless of what the other does, regardless of what I might will. Indeed, responsibility is not a matter of cultivating a will (as it is for Kantians), but of recognizing an unwilled susceptibility as a resource for becoming responsive to the Other. Whatever the Other has done, the Other is still the one who makes an ethical demand upon me, who has a "face" to which I am obligated to respond, meaning that I am, as it were, precluded from revenge precisely by virtue of that responsive relation to those others I never chose' (Butler 2013a, 43).

of the relational-real. In this context, the existence, suffering and subjugation of the Palestinians is denied by not choosing to support their struggle. No ontological determinacy secures this, but the ontological relationality of our entangled connection with others, wherefore denial of this entangled reality is to disavow the undeniable. This affirmation of entangled matter is not just then for Palestinians, but for life everywhere.

One can be hospitable to identity politics when one understands that identity is not a fixed essential thing but an ongoing becoming. In order to explore these ideas, I want to think about the famous Zionist justification of settlement, that Palestine was 'A land without people for a people without land' which led to the creation of the State of Israel and to the ongoing structure of denial of Palestinian existence. What I will go on to do is to trace the formation of Palestinian identity in order to show that 1) Palestinians undeniably existed before 1948; 2) that this undeniable existence was not a fixed stable thing but rather an on-going becoming and 3) that the undeniable and the undecidable can co-exist complementarily without denying one or the other. In doing this, I counter the claim that there were no Arabs on the land of historic Palestine and give credence to the Palestinian's claim to the land prior to that of the Zionist settlers.

Having set this ground, I will then go onto ask how the Derridean notion of hospitality might be useful in deconstructing the host/guest dichotomy, but also to ask how it is possible to be hospitable to Palestinian identity politics when this dichotomy takes on the same instability as ontology. I argue that through Barad's agential realism and theory of intra-action, despite the undecidable nature of identity and ontology, it is still possible and crucial to take a responsible and accountable position on the undeniable existence of the Palestinians and the colonial subjugation imposed upon them by the Israeli Zionist State. The undecidable here informs, but does not erase, the undeniable. This will be elaborated upon in a discussion of an ethics of the undeniable relational-real.

A sketch of Palestinian identity from the late Ottoman Period until the Nakba.

The denial of Palestinian existence manifests in various ways. For example, in the previous chapter I explored David Grossman's portrayal of Palestinians and potential options for peace in the novel *The Smile of the Lamb,* which I argued embodied an

unwillingness to grant the same rights to Palestinians as he does to Jewish-Israelis. The dehumanising attitude of such liberal-Zionism can be traced back to one of the founding Zionist myths: that Palestine was 'a land without people for a people without land.' Molavi argues that 'The continued presence of Arabs in the area of Mandate Palestine is a historic fact well-documented by Palestinian, Israeli and international scholars, the rejection of which can only be symptomatic of a case of historic denial (Molavi 2013, 113). This claim of an uninhabited land denies Palestinian existence, as was famously proclaimed by Golda Meir in 1969: 'There was no such thing as Palestinians...They did not exist' (Khalidi 2010, 147). This claim helpfully demonstrates how the denial of Palestinians on the land before 1948, 'there *was* no such thing...', is inseparable from contemporary denial, and Meir's claim does not even entertain the possibility of the Palestinians' present existence. This discourse of denial has been continually reproduced and disseminated to the extent that still, in 2012, two Republican presidential candidates in the United States both reiterated this false claim. Therefore, in the following exploration of Palestinian identity before 1948, my effort is also to avow and make claim to the undeniable existence of Palestinians on the land, and therefore to resist the apartheid denial of Palestinians inherent in the contemporary Israeli State practices and the material-discourses which maintain this oppression and denial.

Therefore, I will assert: Palestinians exist. It really hardly needs to be said. It may or may not be surprising to hear such an assertion, depending on a range of different factors that build one's own history, politics, and sense of identity. But, that a group of Arab people, indigenous to the land which spreads geographically from the Mediterranean sea to the Jordan River, existed before the 1948 creation of the state of Israel and inhabited that land needs avowing.

In this section I will trace the formation of Palestinian identity from the late Ottoman period until the Nakba. In doing this I will move through four historical changes; 1) the Tanzimat reforms; 2) World War One and the end of the Ottoman Empire; 3) the beginning of the British Mandate; and 4) the Zionist invasion. In each period I will look at a further three things; a) the changes to Palestinian identity that came with these historical shifts; b) how this sense of identity pertained to the geographical area; and c) how the indigenous population defined their identity. It will become clear that Palestinians' identity has changed and transformed over time and that this has often been in response to crisis induced by external opposition to such an

identity. From the late Ottoman period until the present day, Palestinians, along with other Arab peoples, have been forced into an identity which must, more and more, conform to the ideals of the modern nation state, which imposes its limiting formation of identity through nationalism. This discussion, however, does not claim to fully explore or define Palestinian identity or national consciousness: in fact, such a task would be impossible. What is attempted here is rather a brief sketch of an emergent Palestinian identity from the late Ottoman Period until the Nakba.

In his study, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of a Modern National Consciousness* (Khalidi 2010), Rashid Khalidi examines how the formation of a Palestinian national consciousness has evolved over time. Edward Said comments that is it 'the first book to work from the premise that such an identity does in fact exist' (Khalidi, 2010), which should be coupled with the understanding that Khalidi's assertion of such an identity also has a premise; that identity is that which is transformed over time[113]. Thus, Khalidi's work escapes the trappings of blind nationalism, while affirming the existence of an indigenous Arab people living on the land of Palestine before 1948. This approach also avoids a desire to return to an essential Palestinian identity by asserting that identity can 'be fully understood only in the context of a sequence of other histories, a sequence of other narratives' (Khalidi 2010, 9). Identity, then, is an ongoing construction that needs a context. Khalidi quotes Stuart Hall who writes that identity 'is partly the relationship between you and the other' (9), and is followed in Khalidi's text with a citation from Said, who writes 'the development and maintenance of every culture requires the existence of another, different and competing *alter ego'* (10). This is to say, in Baradian terms, identity is an entangled phenomenon.

Contextual, situated, and relational aspects of identity are present in Khalidi's unfolding narrative of Palestinian identity. He begins with the claim that

> several overlapping senses of identity have been operating in the way Palestinians have come to define themselves as a people, senses that have not necessarily been contradictory for the Palestinians themselves, but can be misunderstood or misinterpreted by others (19).

These different identities include, but are not limited to, those associated with the Ottoman Empire, religion, Arabism, the land, the city, the region, the family. And they

[113] This point is often elucidated by Khalidi in reference to Benedict Anderson and the notion of 'imagined communities'.

were embodied without a sense of contradiction or conflicting loyalty (19). The history of the region of Palestine before both the British Mandate and the creation of the State of Israel is often forgotten/denied when discussing the politics of the Palestinian people. Khalidi narrates the rapidly changing political landscape of the Middle East towards the end of the Ottoman Empire and its consequential impact for the self-perception of the Arabs living on the land during these changes.

The first of these changes was the implementation of the Tanzimat reforms[114] by the Ottoman Empire. These reforms were introduced across the Ottoman Empire, in part as an attempt to quell growing senses of nationalism. The way in which the Ottomans controlled their Empire was to divide up the land into administrative regions, called Eyalets, which were further subdivided into provinces, Sanjaks. Until 1864, the land which became known as Palestine was included in the Eyalet of Syria, whose capital was Damascus. After this, in line with the reforms, the Ottomans implemented a new administrative order to increase governmental control over specific regions, which then abolished the Eyalets, creating new provinces called Vilayets. Then, in 1874, a special Sanjak was created, taking those of Acre, Nablus and Jerusalem away from the Vilayet of Syria to form new administrative region, commonly known as Southern Syria. This understanding of land is close to what became Mandate Palestine, and serves as one foundation of Palestine as a country.

Along with land division and region classification, the Tanzimat reforms also introduced new schools, courts, and government systems, diminishing the role of traditional Arab and Islamic social structures and replacing them with those of European society, which were more secular and/or Christian in nature. Khalidi states that these reforms were crucial to the 'transformation of society in terms of the formation of new social strata, professionalization along Western lines, and the familiarisation of large segments of society with the everyday routines of the modern, Western world' (47). However, along with these changes, identification as both Arab and Ottoman were felt strongly, without crisis[115]. Identities were possible which had varying strands, affiliations, and loyalties that were 'flexible enough to contain

[114] The Tanzimat period is characterised by the reforms implemented by the Ottoman Empire, designed to increase power and dominance over their territories in an attempt to protect their empire from growing senses of nationalisms and other opposing forces, e.g. the British and French Empires.

[115] Perhaps unlike some more modern forms of colonial rule, Khalidi shows that 'Ottomanism was natural and ingrained' and thus many had lived their whole lives under such rule while still living fairly autonomous existences. The Tanzimat reforms began to change that, but eventually did not stop foreign colonial powers from exerting their power, imposing upon the Middle East new colonial rule.

incipient contradictions between the various ethnic groups, nationalities and 'imagined communities' [they] encompassed' (87). Again, this understanding of identity corresponds with Edward Said's comment in an interview with Salman Rushdie, where he says 'the whole notion of crossing over, of moving from one identity to another is extremely important to me' (Said 1994, 122). Elsewhere, Said speaks of needing to go beyond identity politics with which the notions of overlapping, crossing over, and flexibility correlate.

Between the Tanzimat reforms in 1864 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, we can see that the land divisions and governmental control were changed. And while the Ottomans did not refer to the Sanjak of Jerusalem as Palestine, there are many references of such a naming that did occur which correspond with the Ottoman administrative land divisions. Some of these are traced by Haim Gerber in his article 'Palestine and other Territorial Concepts in the 17th Century', which, in agreement with Khalidi, argues that

> though the all-inclusive identity of Middle Eastern Muslims under the Ottomans was Islamic and Ottoman first, territorial identities existed beneath them and that these territorial communities are commensurate with the modern Middle Eastern states (Gerber 1998, 563).

Gerber is careful to steer clear of claiming that Palestine (*Filastin*) was a term used for political purposes, but does stress its social use as a term and concept left over from the era of Roman rule, indicating that an 'embryonic territorial awareness' was in play (563)[116]. Many examples are given from Islamic court rulings, *fatwas*, where *Filastin* is referred to as a geographical area: Gerber writes that a man is described in these rulings as coming 'from a village of the villages of Palestine' (565), and another as settling 'in a village of Palestine' (566). The term then was in use, in both social parlance and legal documentation, despite the region not having the name Palestine under Ottoman administration.

Khalidi also sees this embryonic territorial awareness towards the end of the Ottoman period. He focuses on local and parochial forms of identity, serving as 'important roots' for Palestinian identity 'which go back before the development of national consciousness' and came to be 'the bedrock for an attachment to place, a love of country and a local patriotism that were crucial elements in the construction of a

[116] For further discussion of the term 'Palestine' before the British Mandate see Geber (1998); Dounami (1992); Sabbagh (2006); and Said (1980).

nation-state nationalism' (Khalidi 2010, 21). This is both reinforced and advanced by Khalidi as he proffers the idea that the beginning of a national consciousness emerges alongside this geographical sense of place. He writes, 'As the Ottoman era drew to a close in Palestine, what can be seen in the press, as in few other sources, is the increasing usage of the terms "Palestine" and "Palestinian," and a focus on Palestine as a country' (58).[117] This self-definition is only reinforced by external views from foreigners, which also describe the land by the name Palestine, in documents such as travel memoirs and maps[118]. This naming, while not signifying the understanding of a 'nation' does clarify a sense of a community of Arabs living on the land of Palestine before 1948. In fact, this community was there for at least twenty generations (159). However, this indigenous population was to be further disrupted by the consequences of the demise of its long reigning rulers.

Following the Ottoman reforms, the eruption of the First World War was the next major cause of change in the Middle East, resulting in the end of the existing Empire and its succession by the British and French. Khalidi states that, 'Ottamanism as an attempt at a transnational ideological synthesis was rendered obsolete by the outcome of World War 1' (157), causing the understanding of identities to change, leaving 'the field open for nationalism...which had been growing rapidly in the late Ottoman period' (158). The war had a huge effect on the people living in the land of Palestine, as men of draft-age were called up, many to be killed; large sections of land were devastated with the arrival of Ottoman troops; famine was rampant among all classes due to the economic blockade imposed by the British, furthering the demographic shock. Yet, despite all of this, Khalidi claims that, 'however serious the material impact of the war on Palestine, the political and psychological consequences were greater' (159). Alongside the trauma and fragmentation, these 'upheavals made possible and…. necessitated rapid changed in consciousness' (160) and caused a coming together of diverse groups of Palestinians. Again, referring to press sources as the evidence of his claim for a growing national consciousness, Khalidi points to the first newspaper established in Palestine after the war, entitled *Suriyya al-Janubiyya*, meaning "Southern Syria" as an indicator of the growing alliances and hopes of the

[117] In 1911 the newspaper *Filastin*, based in Jaffa, was established, showing one example of a strong sense of national identification with the land and that recognition of the existence of a place called Palestine was present.

[118] For example, while feeding the Zionist myth that the land of Palestine was desolate and in need of cultivation, Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad* (1869) still names the land visited Palestine.

Arab population of Palestine. This regional affiliation spread across what is now known to be Syria, Lebanon, and Israel/Palestine, in a commitment to the first Arab State, ruled by King Amir Faysal in the capital Damascus. However, just as quickly as this new focus of identity emerged, it ceased abruptly with the French creation of Syria in 1920, and the subsequent imposition of the borders of Palestine under the British Mandate. This rapid supersession seems to have aided the becoming concrete of a national Palestinian consciousness along with reinforcing a sense of a specific geographical area called Palestine. An influential Palestinian leader declared, after the removal of King Faysal, that 'we have to effect a complete change in our plans here. Southern Syria no longer exists. We must defend Palestine' (165). The growing and cumulative effect of these changes is the greater specification by which the people of Palestine began to put their Palestinian identity first, over their commitment to either Arabism, religion, or more local patriotisms etc. To be Palestinian was becoming a national identity.

While it is difficult to specify when most of the Arab population of Palestine began to see themselves in this way, the arrival of the British in 1919, at first as military rule until 1920, made significant shifts of identity become more firmly rooted on what could be termed a 'national' scale. This is not to affirm the creation of Palestine or the Palestinians by the British, but to indicate that the evolution of a national consciousness was necessitated by the borders and limits imposed upon the people of Palestine as they became separated from their larger Arab communities. Again, Khalidi writes 'the distinction between the two forms of patriotism [Arab and Palestine]...formed the basis of nation-state nationalism in Palestine' (169) and through the press and the growth of education, a specific Palestinian national consciousness became more and more widely accepted. An example given by Khalidi is a textbook published in 1923 entitled *The Natural Geography of Syria and Palestine,* indicating that by this time, if not before, throughout Palestine, students were being taught that Palestine was to be treated as a specific territorial entity.

The British Mandate, which lasted from 1920-1948, was supposed to be in place until the inhabitants were thought to be able to stand in a position of independence. Yet this stretch of land was so strongly desired, as shown by the fighting over it between the French and the British, that it is difficult to believe that granting the indigenous population independence was ever a main thrust of the British government's goal. Thus the decision to support the establishment of a national Jewish homeland, outlined in the Balfour Declaration, only confirms that the British had very

conflicting projects, which would ultimately end in failure for Palestinian Independence and success for the Jewish State.

The Zionists' project to make the land of Palestine a national home was happening throughout these other historical shifts, which led to, and influenced, the evolution of Palestinian identity. However, increasing immigration at the beginning of the Twentieth Century and the tragic consequences of the Second World War can be conceived of as phases of major, if not decisive, crisis for the Palestinian people. And yet, in looking at this period and manifestation of history after the previous phases and transitions of identity for the Palestinians, it should be made clear that Palestinian identity did not emerge as a cause of the Zionist take over, even while it impacted it greatly. Khalidi writes clearly that,

> it is worth stressing that [religious, parochial, local, familial, arab] attachment to Palestine all antedated the encounter with Zionism. It is necessary to stress this obvious fact because of the common assertion that Palestinian identity was no more than a reaction to Zionism, and the attachment of Palestinian Arabs to the country no more than a response to the attachment to it of those inspired by Zionism. There is a kernel of truth in these assertions: in some measure...identity develops in response to the encounter with an 'other'. But for the Palestinians there were always other 'others' besides Zionism...the Arab population of Palestine had a strong attachment to their country - albeit an attachment expressed in pre-nationalist terms - long before the arrival of modern political Zionism on the scene in the last years of the nineteenth century (154).

This understanding helps to quash the common misconception that Palestine did not exist before 1948, just as neither did a people called the Palestinians. As detailed above, this group of people ostensively existed, and had a strong sense of identity, albeit it with multiple foci and pre-nationalist understandings. The whole Arab region was coming into the world of the modern nation state in its encounter with European forces and yet the complaint that Syria, or Egypt or Lebanon did not exist before 1948 is rarely heard. The only difference here being that they did manage to gain independence and establish a nation state, whereas the Palestinians, who were arguably on the same trajectory towards this goal, were cut off by the cowardice of the British and the militancy of the Zionist dream for their own national home.

From the beginning of the first Aliya[119] (1882-1903) the impact of the Jewish settlers was being felt by Palestinian society. Contrary to the mainstream view that it

[119] Immigration of Jews to Israel/Palestine.

was only the effects of the Second World War that caused Jews to flee Europe and move to Palestine, and that this was when Arab opposition to Zionism began, a steadily increasing population of Jews were being met by a Palestinian population aware of and resistant to the Zionist plan from the late 1800s. The second Aliya (1905-1914) almost doubled the Jewish population of Palestine from 30,000 to 60,000 (94) and these Jews were more fervent in political Zionism than their predecessors. Ownership of land became the knot of contention as pre-existing understandings of ownership came to be destroyed and displaced by more 'modern' and European conceptions, leading to violent clashes between Jewish settlers and Palestinian peasants (*fellahin*). Again, Khalidi writes

> from a very early state in the process of Zionist colonization, the establishment of a new Jewish colony frequently led to confrontations with the local populace. The process would begin with the purchase of land, generally from an absentee land lord, followed by the imposition of a new order on the existing Arab cultivators - sometimes involving their transformation into tenant-farmers or agricultural labourers, and sometimes their expulsion - and finally the settlement of new Jewish immigrants (98).

Incidents of expulsion not only dispossessed Palestinians of their homes, but also their livelihoods, their land, their ancestral heritage and reinforced more than ever their identity as a people who lived and worked on the land called Palestine. And, it was the resistance to land appropriation that helped draw different sectors of Palestinian society, both geographically and economically, together in a solidarity against the invasion of their country by these Zionist territorial immigrants. A sense of shared experience in the face of dispossession, unemployment, and colonisation spread across urban-rural divisions, which radically helped to solidify a sense of national consciousness. Again the press was hugely influential, through what Benedict Anderson calls 'print capitalism', in cultivating a growing and strong sense of an 'imagined community' called Palestine. There are numerous cases taken from Palestinian newspapers in Khalidi's book which demonstrate a very perceptive understanding of what was to happen if opposition to the Zionists was not enacted.

Yet, the British were committed to the idea of a Jewish homeland, as stated in the Balfour Declaration, so that Arab opposition, namely in the revolt of 1936-1939, was almost doomed to fail from the beginning. When the British finally did put a limit on Jewish immigration, it was far too late to change the course of events, and only furthered the militancy of the Zionists who were fleeing Nazi persecution in Europe, as

the British were seen to be opposing their freedom and safety from such a regime. During this time, hundreds of Palestinian villages were destroyed and erased from the landscape, thousands were murdered or died fighting to protect their land, and around 700,000 were forced to flee their homeland. In 1948 the State of Israel was declared and immediately recognised by the U.S.A and Soviet Russia. The British abandoned their plan to help the Palestinians gain Independence, and the Palestinians were left to pick up the pieces of their identity and continue, by-in-large, alone.

The ultimate consequence for Palestinian identity of the Zionist colonisation of Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel was to dispossess Palestinians of their land, but to reinforce their national consciousness like never before. Khalidi writes, 'The Palestinians, of course, do have one asset in spite of everything: a powerful sense of national identity...[which] they were able to develop and maintain in spite of extraordinary vicissitudes' (205). This asset continues up to the present day, in the face of continuing opposition to the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

At the end of this period of history however, neither a fixed, defined or finished idea of Palestinian identity or national consciousness can be said to have been found. This exploration of Palestinian identity has not been in order to define or essentialize Palestinian-ness. Rather, it seeks to demonstrate the evolution of Palestinian identity, which has overlapping, multiple affiliations and directions, and which continues up until the present day. This is both the case for identity and for the limits of what is said to be 'Palestine' geographically. But, while this is the case, what has to be acknowledged is that a group of indigenous Arabs, inhabiting the land between the Mediterranean and the River Jordan for at least twenty generations, existed and exist and have come to define themselves, like all other nations and groups of people do at some point in their histories. The transformation and evolution of this identity and self-perception does not disqualify the reality and existence of such a people. The desire to invalidate Palestinian existence and experience is based, in part, upon a false notion of what nationalism and identity is founded upon. Palestinian identity cannot be distinguished from the processes and transformation of other imagined communities merely because a colonising force says so. (Khalidi 178).

What has been outlined above is the complementary nature of identity in its emergence and becoming. Identity changes over time through intra-actions with the world, as demonstrated above. However, it is also clear that Palestinian-Arabs were on the land prior to 1948, and that this reality is undeniable. We can therefore take this

undeniablility as a form of identity politics which we can be hospitable to because its 'reality' does not rely on an ontological foundation or claim to reassert the violence of essentialism.

Following this discussion I would like to ask how it is possible to be unconditionally hospitable to such an undeniable existence. I will now give an overview of Derrida's thoughts on (un)conditional hospitality and then attempt to read it through Barad's agential realism and the undeniable relational-real in order to posit that, in the case of the Palestinians, unconditional hospitality must take into account the undeniable reality of Palestinian identity and Israeli colonial subjugation.

'We have never been closer, perhaps, to Jerusalem'

In his essay 'Mal de Zionism (Zionist Fever)', a lucid essay on Derrida's *Archive Fever* and its resistances to Zionism, Gil Anidjar makes the point that, through Derrida's thinking of hospitality 'the host' is dispossessed of their 'chez-soi prior to any belonging' and is revealed 'for the colonizer that he is' (Anidjar 2013, 52). The suggestion being that, following Derrida, the assumed sovereignty of the host is seen to be in fact a fiction, and, therefore, any claim to being a host denies this, and they become a coloniser of whatever space it is from which they claim to host. But can it be claimed that the host, in every instance, is a coloniser? For what about the instance where the host is the colonised, or perhaps, becomes the colonised, as in the case of the Palestinians? The question of priority and ownership when it comes to the land of Palestine is a contentious one, particularly in light of Derrida's stance towards origins and claims to sovereignty. Shourideh C. Molavi writes in her book *Stateless Citizenship* that 'In the case of the Palestinians and the Jewish-Israelis, both lay claim to a certain *indigeneity*, or host-status, in defining their relationship with the space' (Molavi 2013, 113). Therefore, there is a fundamental opposition when both camps claim ownership and prior right to the land. 'Acceptance of the hospitable invitation of one collective with the premise that this group is the master of the household', writes Molavi, 'is necessarily a fundamental *existential question* for the other collective' (Molavi 2013, 114). Therefore, as Anidjar goes on to suggest in his article regarding the Derridean logic of différance (the supplementary logic of the trace) implicit in hospitality and the archive, 'We have never been closer, perhaps, to Jerusalem' (Anidjar 2013, 52).

What I would like to explore here in this section is how the notion of hospitality in Derrida's thought might help us think about the Palestinian struggle in the face of the settler colonial oppressor. The difficulty, in my mind, is of reconciling the reality of Palestinian existence on the land before 1948, the trauma of the Nakba, and the continued dispossession of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland, with the challenge Derrida's logic of différance brings to the concept of origins and the sovereignty that is dislocated here in order to guard against the repeating of the metaphysical violence within the illusion of mastery yet again. How then is hospitality a useful concept for those under colonial subjugation whose land has been illegitimately taken from them. Surely one cannot be hospitable to the coloniser? Currently, 'Jewish-Israelis assume the role of the host or the master of the house (a house which has, particularly since 1967, continued to grow exponentially) through economic control, legal manipulation, political blockade, and military force and occupation' (Molavi 2013, 114). The necessity to bring this to an end has resulted in the BDS campaign, spoken of in Chapter 2, for it would appear that there is no possibility of hospitable relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians until the end of the colonial subjugation. Again Molavi writes, 'part of a genuinely hospitable arrangement between Arab and Jews in the Israeli regime is the dissolution of its mechanisms and practices of ensconced Jewish ascendancy and control' (Molavi 2013, 112). Judith Butler agrees, writing in about the possibility of co-existence, that 'the vast and violent hegemonic structure of political Zionism must cede its hold on those lands [historic Palestine] and what must take its place is a new polity that would presuppose the end to settler colonialism' (Butler 2013a, 4) such that 'coexistence projects can only begin with the dismantling of political Zionism' (7). The end of settler colonialism then would be a 'condition' of hospitable relations between Palestinians and Israelis. It would be claimed then that for hospitable relations to arrive between the Israelis and Palestinian-Arabs there would be a condition set by the existence and presence of Palestinians. However, I would contend that this condition is not only a requirement of the Palestinians, but for all those who would choose peace over violence, life over death. Tied into this 'condition' would be an affiliation with a certain identity politics in affinity with the Palestinian cause, that could be seen to be prioritising the Palestinians over the Israelis, or falling prey to the metaphysical violence that is inherent in any identity politics, as it includes some at the expense of excluding others. Another question in this context then will be, how can one be hospitable to identity politics, or

can identity politics be hospitable? And finally, to add to this list, what would hospitality look like offered from the Jewish-Israelis to the Palestinians, and vice versa, from the Palestinians to the Jewish-Israelis? And how would both groups become one another's guests? The solution here would appear to be a relinquishing of sovereignty and an acceptance of co-existence. The relationship between hospitality and co-existence is one which will provide potential ways forward for thinking about two peoples living on the same land.

In light of the destruction of any simple origin, does this render all claims to the origin equal? If this was so, then the presence of the Palestinians on the land of historic Palestine before 1948 becomes irrelevant in the discussion. Therefore, it must be argued that despite the impossibility of simple origins, claims of priority in terms of physical presence cannot go un-noticed, even if they similarly are not a claim which gives the right to expel or repeat the violence that was done to them back onto the Jews. However, the discourse which suppressed the Palestinians disavows and denies Palestinian presence. Avowing this undeniable reality does not make any absolute or totalising claims, such as Palestinians must rule the land they once lived upon and have complete sovereignty, but rather it asks for the reality of their lives, presence and history to be acknowledged. It is only from such an acknowledgement that any prospect of peace can arrive. It must be stressed that the Palestinians' presence on the land and their existence is not a claim to a pure origin or a violent gesture, but a claim to a reality which is continually denied, which in turn continues destruction and violence. It is this recognition and avowal of the Nakba in 1948 and the end of settler colonialism and Jewish supremacy which are preconditions for peaceful co-existence.

Why Hospitality?

'[The] loss of incommunicability is precisely what allows for hospitality' (McNulty 2006, xlix)

Derrida claims that the issue of hospitality is 'at once timeless, archaic, modern, current, and future [à venir]' and that it magnetises questions relating to the domains of the 'historical, ethical, juridical, political and economic' (Derrida, 2000b, 3). It touches on many aspects of society and is related particularly to the concepts of citizenship, asylum, immigration, refuge and state-power. To claim it as yet another byword for deconstruction, and/or a radical politics, has been viewed by some as

nothing other than a 'well-intentioned liberalism' (McQuillan 2011, 108), and, therefore, insufficient in the face of the urgent political and ethical concerns of today's world. But Derrida claims that 'deconstruction is hospitality to the other' (Derrida 2000b, 364), and it is therefore an important concept as we seek to interrogate the possibility of a hospitable relationship between Palestinians and their Jewish-Israeli others.

Hospitality's uptake in the field of the humanities, and the range of publications which deal with hospitality as that which has both ethical and political import, offers the opportunity to question this assumption. Derrida's work on hospitality responds to previous philosophical explorations on the topic by Èmile Benveniste and Emmanuel Levinas, and has in turn launched a flood of writing on the concept[120]. And yet, while not proving otherwise to the challenge of well-intentioned liberalism, the huge engagement with this concept signals, if nothing else, that hospitality has much to provoke, challenge and offer to the debates surrounding ethics and politics.

Tracy McNulty situates the term in a long history of religious and social convention, proffering the opinion that:

> the problem of hospitality is coextensive with the development of Western civilization, occupying an essential place in virtually every religion and defining the most elementary of social relations: reciprocity, exogamy, potlatch, "brotherly love," nationhood (McNulty 2006, vii).

It is the association of hospitality with social relations and nationhood that will be my main concern. Yet, the context of Western civilization is not without problem, and may in fact help to highlight the difficult, or impossible, nature of hospitality within a Western framework of thought, if it were to be 'applied' to the Middle East. It is potentially a Western understanding of relationality, between monads, which is the ultimate problem for hospitality in this conception. In light of the discussion in Chapter 4 of Karen Barad's agential realism, I will reiterate again that ontology is indeterminate and relational, i.e. the smallest ontological unit is not in fact a unit at all, but a relation: potentially that of différance. Therefore, individuals emerge out of phenomena, which is to say out of relations. Otherness is constitutive of that which is referred to as the self: not just on a psychic level, but in the very fibre of our bodies. Being *of the world* rather than *in the world* will challenge the understanding of how 'a self' relates to 'an

[120] Emile Benveniste (1973); Emmanuel Levinas (1969).

other'. It raises questions of what type of relation this is, and how an 'I', implicated in the world of the other, emerges, as well as to the question of what is an ethical and responsible relation to an other?

The idea of hospitality allows for a thinking through of these theoretical, abstract and ethical questions. They will form a basis from which to go on to explore the political or practical (for want of better terms at this juncture) implications and value that such exploration could add to a discussion of Palestinian self-determination and an ethics of solidarity.

The movement of peoples across the world, between nations, over borders, and through different territories, is one of the defining features of our age. Globalisation has both, contradictorily and unjustly, professed the freedom of movement, the disbanding of borders, and the notion that we live in a 'global village' as progress towards greater liberty, caused in part by the speed and access we now have to things and people through the advancement of telecommunication and technology. Yet, it is clear that for many, this 'freedom' has only resulted in its opposite: restricted movement, the securing of borders, and confinement to a very limited local. Take, for example, the people of Gaza, who have been blockaded on every side now for over a decade, in what has been termed the world's largest open air prison. The paradoxical nature of modernity appears to pull in two directions, with the 'free' market of capitalism being granted more rights than people; roaming over borders without challenge, championing a placeless sense of geography; while the increase of nationalism, fundamentalism and racism signals a desire to secure what is thought of to be a loss of power, sovereignty and cultural/national self-determination. Hospitality then, with its relation to the identities of host and guest, nation and foreigner, the welcome and the unwelcome, the invited and the excluded, the 'at home' and the dispossessed, seems pertinent to a discussion of an apartheid state, where movement is restricted for some (the Palestinians) supposedly in order to assure the freedom of movement for others (the Jewish-Israelis); where some (from all over the world) can come to reside with legal citizenship, and others who were born in that land are never allowed to return; where some are unconditionally welcomed and others treated with violent hostility.

Martin McQuillan suggests that 'hospitality requires us to think the law, the nation, the self, sovereignty, action and program otherwise' (McQuillan 2011, 109). This is a challenge to theory and practice, which cannot be disassociated. In doing so it

might be possible to begin to think of hospitality, not just as *an* ethics, but as *the* ethics. Indeed, as Derrida has said 'hospitality is ethics', and that 'hospitality is culture.' This approach to hospitality means that, as James K.A. Smith writes, 'what is at stake in considering hospitality [as ethics] is not just international law or immigration but also the nature of intersubjective relationships' (Smith 2005, 96). Intersubjective relationships will be crucial to this discussion of hospitality as it relates to the Palestinians and Israelis. It may seem that the gap between the nature of intersubjective relationships and questions of national and international importance regarding citizenship, border control, and asylum, is too great to begin associating the two. However, I would like to insist that this approach is not one of conflation or merger between the 'spheres' of theory, but rather that the modes of thought which dictate intersubjective relations and international relations have similar foundations, which need challenging in similar ways. This is, namely, a contestation of sovereignty, of either self or state. Through Karen Barad's work, these relations can also be informed by the nature of matter itself. For if, following Derrida and Barad, the distinction between ethics and politics, culture and nature, are forever indeterminate and blurred, it might be possible to posit that the nature of nature/culture, of ethics/politics, is hospitality. In this way hospitality would be embroiled and entangled as an ethico-onto-epistemological question.

The question can be asked, then, as Derrida himself anticipates, of whether 'the ethics of hospitality...would be able to found a law and a politics, beyond the familial dwelling, within a society, nation, State, or Nation State' (Derrida 1999a, 20). This type of question, Derrida says, it already itself canonical, and so in an attempt to go beyond the it, he suggests that between the ethics and the law/politics of hospitality there would be no passage, an aporia, which in turn could suggest a failure to found a politics of hospitality on such an ethics of hospitality. Hospitality then, for Derrida, is seen be conditioned by the aporia, the undecidable of différance. Yet, instead of seeing this as a failure of the undecidable, Derrida says that this juncture would instead necessarily open up a possibility;

> Would it not in fact open - like a hiatus - both the mouth and possibility of another speech, of a decision and a responsibility (juridical and political, if you will), there where decisions must be made and responsibility, as we say, taken, without the assurance of an ontological foundation? (21)

Enacting an ethics or a politics of hospitality without the assurance of an ontological foundation is akin to the understanding of hospitality that I would like to proffer as that which rejects static and traditional forms of identity politics, but accepts the undeniable relational-real. Différance, as the condition of possibility, is also crucial here to the understanding of Derrida's approach to hospitality, and will be discussed below, by way of thinking about the need for what Derrida calls 'radical separation'. It also chimes with Karen Barad's approach to responsibility, challenging the traditional grounds for ethics, as demonstrated when she asks 'What if instability, or rather the indeterminacy of in/stability, is the condition for the possibility of taking a stand?' (Barad 2012). Ontological indeterminacy then can be seen, not to disable the ability to 'take a stand', but rather to condition it. This absence of ontological assurance disrupts cosmopolitan hospitality, as will be now explored through Derrida's reading of Kant and Levinas, before moving on to read Derrida back through Barad.

Cosmopolitan Hospitality and Sovereign Identity

'We are going' says Derrida at the beginning of his essay 'Step of Hospitality/No Hospitality [Pas d'hospitalité]' (Derrida 2000c, 75). But where to?

Hospitality moves; is a movement; is moving. It cannot keep still. It is a non-static, fluid happening, *that we are of,* not that we are in. This movement is relational, between host and guest; self and other; identity and non-identity; and pertains to the idea of hospitality as negotiation. One of these areas of negotiation is between States and the attempt to maintain peaceful relations between states, as to ward off war. Derrida's essay 'Hostipitality' (2000b) begins (or rather does not begin) with a 'long and celebrated passage' from Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, which I will also quote in order to expose and unpack some of the resonance that this concept of hospitality has for questions of peaceful relations between Palestinians and Jewish-Israelis. The passage comes from 'The Third Definitive Article for a Perpetual Peace. Cosmopolitan right shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality'. Derrida notes that even from the title of this section from Kant, 'already the question of conditionality, of conditional or unconditional hospitality, presents itself' (Derrida 2000b, 3). Conditions and lack of conditions are crucial to the (im)possibility of hospitality.

As in the foregoing articles, we are concerned here not with philanthropy, but with right. In this context, hospitality [l'hospitalité (hospitalitas)] means the right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else's territory. He can indeed be turned away, if this is done without causing his death, but he must not be treated with hostility so long as he behaves in a peaceable manner in the place he happens to be. The stranger cannot claim the right of a guest to be entertained [un droit de résidence], for this would require a special friendly agreement whereby he might become a member of the native household for a certain time. He may only claim a right of resort [un droit de visite], for all men are entitled to present themselves in the society of others by virtue of their right to communal possession of the earth's surface. Since the earth is a globe, they cannot disperse over an infinite area, but must tolerate one another's company. And no one originally has any greater right than anyone else to occupy any particular portion of the earth...[...]...But this natural right of hospitality, i.e. the right of strangers, does not extend beyond those conditions which make it possible for them to attempt to enter into relations with the native inhabitants. In this way, continents distant from each other can enter into peaceful mutual relations which may eventually be regulated by public laws, thus bringing the human race nearer and nearer to a cosmopolitan constitution. (Derrida, 2000b, 5).

Kant's formulation of the 'right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else's territory' has formed the basis for international law concerning cosmopolitan rights.[121] It is clear from the passage above that the identities of host and guest form a traditional hierarchy of power relations. The duty of hospitality, which Kant would like to see universalised in order to move towards perpetual peace and a cosmopolitan society, is based upon the sovereignty of the host nation. The condition of welcome to a foreigner is founded upon the guest behaving in accordance with the rules of the host nation, thus not posing a threat to the sovereignty of the host's territory. Place, or territory, is crucial here. Meyda Yegenoglu comments that Kant's 'Cosmopolitan right is modelled on the givenness of the nation state and their sovereignty' (Yegenoglu, 2011, 10), denoting that the supposed equality of the earth's surface and the freedom to move between territories is predicated on a reaffirmation of the unity and necessity of the State, which necessarily affirms the State's power over a certain territory rather than a shared right to occupy a territory[122]. This is the same for hospitality in all contexts, not just in terms of national territory. It is assumed that in order to offer hospitality, one must have a place from which to offer such a gesture, a place where one is 'master of one's own home.' Again, Yegenoglu's insights here are helpful;

[121] Meyda Yegenoglu writes 'the Kantian understanding of hospitality which has constituted the background of the moral and legal codes of hospitality in Western civilization' (Yegenoglu, 2011, 8).

[122] The shared right to occupy a territory rather than the affirmation of the State's sovereign power, is surely what this exploration of hospitality is moving towards.

The Kantian framework is based not only on an understanding that makes the nation's sovereignty fundamental and indivisible, but also on the condition that the individual host's sovereign identity has to remain intact while the act of hospitality is offered to a stranger' (11).

Here we see that the opening up of borders, in order to welcome the stranger, actually serves to reassert one's sovereignty, be this of the nation, the home, or of an individual identity. On a national level then, this pact of hospitality is founded on the agreement between States, on behalf of their citizens. This pact is guaranteed by the ability to identify a foreigner in relation to the state they come from. The foreigner here is, as Derrida says, 'not the absolute other, the barbarian, the savage' (Derrida 2000b, 21), but the recognisable other. Thus, it is not only the host's identity which is reaffirmed as stable and sovereign but also that of the other, the foreigner whose identity as a foreigner must be namable: 'Cosmopolitan right of hospitality begins by asking the name, to state and guarantee [the foreigner's] identity' (Derrida , 2000b, 29). Thus, the foreigner is not the unexpected other or the unknown, but instead an identifiable, named subject, safeguarded in language and law so that their identity is guaranteed by the authority of the State, via the name (e.g. by a passport, or residents card). We see here a contradiction in Kant's desire to extend hospitality universally, as it is predicated on citizenship, sovereignty and the contradiction within the host/guest relation, which reaffirms identity to the exclusion and 'hostility' of its other. Thus unconditional hospitality is sullied by the desire to reinforce the stable Cartesian subject, which is ultimately a hostile act. For Derrida, this contradiction, whereby the duty to offer hospitality is nullified on the grounds of the conditions/rights which enact the duty, is internal to the question of hospitality. Derrida writes, more eloquently,

hospitality is certainly, necessarily, a right, a duty, an obligation, the greeting of the foreign other [*l'autre étranger*] as a friend but on the condition that the host, the Wirt, the one who receives, lodges or gives asylum remains the patron, the master of the household, on the condition that he maintains his own authority in his own home, that he looks after himself and sees to and considers all that concerns him [*qu'il se garde et garde et regarde ce qui le regarde*] and thereby affirms the law of hospitality as the law of the household, *oikonomia*, the law of his household, the law of a place (house, hotel, hospital, hospice, family, city, nation, language, etc.), the law of identity which de-limits the very place of proffered hospitality and maintains authority over it (Derrida 2000b, 4).

For the Israeli State, this reaffirmation of sovereignty over the 'household' propels the Zionist desire to reclaim the biblical lands of the Old Testament as the homeland of the Jewish people, dispossessing and ethnically cleansing Palestinian Arabs on a daily basis.

But this relationship is also not that of citizenship, as Kant's cosmopolitan ideal retains the foreigner as a foreigner, who has the right of visit but not the right of residence. Hospitality, for Kant, is dependent upon the foreigner having citizenship elsewhere, pertaining to their 'legal' and 'named' identity being verifiable. Hence, Kant's notion of hospitality has no merit for the dispossessed, the asylum seeker, the *sans-papiers*, or the refugee. The instance of Palestinian-Israelis (a contested naming in itself), also known as present-absentees, is a particularly difficult situation, explored by Shourideh C. Molavi, who calls it a brutal rendering of 'hostipitality' which renders Israeli-Palestinians 'fifth class citizens' in the words of Mahmoud Muna[123]. However, those outside of Israel, in Gaza or the West Bank, have no legal citizenship or status. Are those without legal citizenship anywhere considered in terms of the absolute other, the barbarian, as opposed to the foreigner? What would this mean for Palestinians who are all, effectively stateless, even those with Israeli citizenship, which is at best, partial citizenship. Thus we glance the difference between the foreigner/the Other and the absolute Other. This is explored at length in the first of Derrida's articles in *Of Hospitality*, entitled 'Foreigner Question: Coming from Abroad/ from the Foreigner'. In this piece, we see how the guest poses a threat or challenge to the host in the movement or relationship of hospitality.

Of Hospitality begins with a discussion of *The Sophist,* in which Derrida shows how the hospitality relation presupposes the sovereignty of the host, and subsequently, the necessity of the foreigner's identity to be validated by belonging to another nation. The foreigner is understood to pose a threat to this sovereignty. In fact, the foreigner is figured as the one who puts into question the question of the foreigner (What to do with them? How to relate to them? Who is the foreigner?). Socrates' challenge of parricide to the Father, the logos and to mastery, is launched as he tried to argue that 'non-being somehow is, and that being, in its turn, in a certain way is not,' which Derrida calls the 'revolutionary hypothesis of the Foreigner' (Derrida 2000c, 7). The destabilising of the self, identity, and sovereignty is key here to Derrida's deconstruction of Kant's notion of universal hospitality. It is 'as though', Derrida writes,

[123] http://mondoweiss.net/2014/05/interview-educational-bookshop.html

'the foreigner were being-in-question, the very question of being-in-question...But also the one who, putting the first question, puts me in question' (3). What it outlines here in this series, beginning with the foreigner and ending with 'me' is that being itself (if we can say such a thing) is ultimately what is really being questioned. In other words, ontological indeterminacy.

The questioning of identity is crucial here, and Derrida notes that, 'power (despotic sovereignty and the virile mastery of the master of the house) is nothing other than ipseity itself' and that 'The question of hospitality is also the question of ipseity' (Derrida 2001c, 15). The entwining of questions of identity, power, and hospitality allows us to posit that the stability of the host/guest dichotomy is unable to persist in our thinking of a possible hospitality. Therefore, as long as Israel continues to affirm its supremacy, its racial superiority and its right as host in the land of historic Palestine, hospitality towards the Palestinians will never be a reality.

Unconditional and conditional hospitality

In *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* (1999a), Derrida asks 'Is not hospitality an interruption of the self?[...]One will understand nothing about hospitality if one does not understand what 'interrupting oneself' might mean' (Derrida 1999a, 51/56). This proposed challenge to individuality will be the departure point for thinking about how hospitality can move beyond the fixed identities of host and guest; where the individual identities of Palestinian and Israeli will not be disintegrated, but must be re-conceived to acknowledge their mutual implication, co-constitution and future boundedness. For, it is the sovereignty of the host and the presumed 'right' to welcome, which needs to be displaced if hospitality is going to be rethought. What I would like to trace here is how the conception of the self is changed in Derrida's reading of Levinas and its implications for the host/guest relationship, which may in turn open up 'new spaces of hospitality' (Derrida 2000c, 57).

Part of this logic is a 'going beyond the self'. Derrida reads Levinas as offering an opening up of the self to the other, where the attempt is made to '*receive* the other from beyond the capacity of the I' (Derrida 1999a, 25). This gesture, if possible, is one of hospitality. This conception deconstructs Kant's notion of hospitality, in which the self must retain sovereignty over identity and territory in order to offer hospitality. As David Caroll comments 'the host who welcomes the other and offers hospitality does so also as a subject displaced from his/her own subjectivity, a subject other than and no

longer in possession of him/her self' (Carroll 2006, 225). If the self is constituted in a relation with that which is outside of itself, then a mastery of ipseity can no longer be claimed. Subjectivity becomes displaced, to the degree where Derrida called it 'originary dispossession' (Derrida 2000c, 42). This going beyond the self, or 'originary dispossession', is in fact an understanding that self-possession is only ever an illusion.[124] Dispossession then is rather a re-evaluating of the notion of possession, in relation, not only to subjectivity, but to territory. We see this when Derrida connects the notion of identity to that of the home, writing

> To dare say welcome is perhaps to insinuate that one is at home here, that one knows what it means to be at home, and that at home one receives, invites, or offers hospitality, thus appropriating for oneself a place to welcome [*accueillir*] the other, or, worse, welcoming the other in order to appropriate for oneself a place and then to speak the language of hospitality (Derrida 1999a, 16).

Here, Derrida makes explicit the connection between ipseity and place in the gesture of Kantian hospitality, which requires one to have a place from which to offer hospitality and to welcome to. Dispossession would seem to make hospitality impossible in this sense, as one could ask to where are you inviting your guest, and from where do you propose the welcome? Ownership and possession are not to be found in this new space of hospitality, as 'hospitality precedes property' (Derrida 2000a, 45). Yet the prerequisite of the welcome, for Derrida, is a challenge to the perceived sovereignty of self and place, to delimited borders and boundaries, and instead, the admittance of interconnection, inter-relationality, co-existence: *a being-with-and-of* the world. Indeed, as Levinas writes, 'subjectivity is hospitality'.

However, if hospitality is subjectivity, and subjectivity is constituted by alterity, then an important question still remains to be asked: *what is the nature of this constitution and relationality between self and other*? I would like to tackle this question by mapping the self/other relationship onto the contradiction, which pervades Derrida's writing on hospitality, between the conditional and the unconditional. This contradiction arises from the aporia that emerges between what Derrida calls the unconditional demand of the law of hospitality, and the conditional laws of hospitality

[124] There is some similarity here with Lacan's notion of identity formation in his essay 'The Mirror Stage', where the child comes to identify itself with that outside of itself: their mirror image. This notion of identity as formed by aid of an object outside of the self later became not only a crucial stage in the infant's maturity, but a permanent structure for all subjectivity. In this, the self disavows its *corps morcelé* in order to function as an individual in society, becoming alienated from 'itself' via association with that outside of itself.

which must accompany such a demand. 'The antinomy of hospitality', Derrida writes, 'irreconcilably opposes the law, in its universal singularity, to a plurality that is not only a dispersal (laws in the plural) but a structured multiplicity' (Derrida, 2000c, 79). The emergence of the terms universal, singular, and multiplicity, speaks to another formulation of this relationship, which is given in *Adieu*, where Derrida's guiding question for the essay concerns 'on first view, the *relationships* between an ethics of hospitality (an ethics as hospitality) and a law or a politics of hospitality' (Derrida 1999a, 20-21, *my emphasis*). This oppositional relationship will hold our attention here also, as it emphasises or even optimises, the relational aspect of hospitality, because neither the law, nor the laws, of hospitality would come to anything outside of this relationship. It is their difference which constitutes both their separation and connection.

This relation, however, presents a problem, and could be called a non-relation. Derrida describes the meeting of these 'two regimes of law' as both a collision (Derrida 2000c, 77) connoting violence, and as one where it must be assumed that there is no assured passage between the two. The latter description is often called an aporia in Derrida's writing. The non-passage implies separation, distance, and impossibility: all things which pose further problems for the question of hospitality, which hopes for meeting, welcome, and communication between people. Difference will be an important concept for thinking through such a relationship, as it clearly is also with the relationship between self and the world; self and other. And Derrida asks himself, 'How, then, are we to interpret this impossibility of founding, of deriving, of deducing [the relationship between the two realms of hospitality]? Does this impossibility signal a failure?' (Derrida 1999a, 20).

This potential failure is captured in hospitality's relation to its seeming opposite, hostility. As we have seen, an act of hospitality necessarily comes with a set of conditions, and conditions are just another way of saying limits, boundaries, oppositions. Derrida discusses this complicity in an essay entitled 'Hostipitality' (2000b), which exemplifies Derrida's notion of the supplement in this context.

'[H]ospitality' is a Latin word (*Hospitalität*) a word of Latin origin, of a troubled and troubling origin, a word which carries its own contradiction incorporated into it, a Latin word which allows itself to be parasitized by its opposite, "hostility," the undesirable guest [*hôte*] which it harbours as the self-contradiction in its own body (3).

No concept being pure, but always/already supplemented by its other, leaves us with the potential that hospitality is an impossibility. But Derrida is keen to emphasise that he does not want this juncture between the laws and the law of hospitality to create a paralysis, nor to imply that the possibility of hospitality is just 'abstract, utopian [and] illusionary' (Derrida 2000c, 79). Instead, it is this seeming impossibility that has to be dealt with.

> I am not claiming that hospitality is this double bind or this aporetic contradiction and that therefore wherever hospitality is, there is no hospitality. No, I am saying that this apparently aporetic paralysis on the threshold "is" (I put "is" in quotation marks or, if you prefer, under erasure [*je le rature*]) what must be overcome <it is the impossibility which must be overcome where it is possible to become impossible. It is necessary to do the impossible. If there is hospitality, the impossible must be done>, this "is" being in order that, beyond hospitality, hospitality may come to pass (Derrida 2000c, 14).

This speaks to the idea that there is a new way of thinking the impossible, a necessary re-thinking of seemingly impossible situations, or theoretical impasses within Western philosophy, and that Derrida wants to acknowledge the impossibility and attempt to open possibilities to go beyond the impossible, or, as he writes 'to do the impossible'.

The 'lack' of foundation upon which, or from which, to secure or ground hospitality, disrupts the self/other relation. And yet, as noted above, hospitality is a movement, a fluidity, that has the potential to resist such a need for a foundation or ground. This impasse is created by the wholly other nature of the other. The dynamic of this relation between two selves cannot be thematised, or specified, due to the face's infinite and non-appropriable nature: what Derrida calls the singularity of each and every one, 'each other is wholly other'. How can we think this relation without reducing the other to the same, appropriating alterity, and/or erasing one's own singularity in such a constitutive relation? And what of sameness in the relation of hospitality?

It is this prominence of the relation with another that troubles identity. As Tracy McNulty writes 'hospitality...insists on the primacy of immanent relations over identity and law' (McNulty 2006, xiv). The question of law (summoning issues of citizenship, rights, passports etc.) is also challenged here as inadequate to allow for hospitality, confirming hospitality's primacy over property. Relationality then is not about fixed identities, and positions from which to interact, but instead about the possibility for fluidity, for movement, between positions. As was the case with the impasse between

an ethics and politics of hospitality, in the self-other relation we reach the same opening. An opening I would like to explore as the notion of 'radical separation'.

The notion of a 'beyond' the self is, in many senses, one of the most difficult concepts or ethics to comprehend, because, as the question might be posed, how can my consciousness know anything of your consciousness, as we are infinitely separate and distinct? I cannot read your mind or be inside your thoughts. This reality of separation is, for Derrida, crucial for the possibility of hospitality. He writes, 'Hospitality assumes "radical separation" as experience of the alterity of the other' (Derrida 1999a, 46). The implication being that if there were no separation, then the possibility of otherness would not come into being, and sameness would pervade. Différance then is the possibility and condition of hospitality (and indeed life), which Derrida denotes as radial separation. And it is this separation, this difference of the other - which Derrida says is wholly other - that has to be surmounted in hospitable relations.

However, on the other hand, Tracy McNulty writes that '[The] loss of incommunicability is precisely what allows for hospitality' (McNulty 2006, xlix). As much as hospitality is predicated on radical separation, for Derrida, the complementary reality is its predication on connection. This is not a fact that escapes Derrida's thinking, as his comments from his interview with Maurizo, quoted in Chapter 3, demonstrate. It is this double nature of différance, the double bind which confounds philosophy. However, if we were to posit that hospitality is impossible, due to radical separation, we must also affirm that radical separation's opposite, and therefore the possibility of hospitality, exist within this impossibility, as the logic of différance maintains that otherness is inherent within its opposite[125].

I would like to suggest that it is hospitality itself which 'bridges' or 'connects' these two realms of law, ethics of politics, nature and culture, and that, perhaps law is not the only way to think about hospitality. Derrida writes that, although he has separated the ethics of hospitality from the politics of hospitality, the unconditional and hyperbolic from the conditional and juridico-political, 'ethics in fact straddles the two' (Derrida 2000c, 135). This is because, for Derrida,

> ethics is culture itself and not simply one ethics amongst others. Insofar as it has do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the

[125] For more on the unknowability of the other as philosophical scepticism, see Glendenning (1998).

manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality' (Derrida 2001a, 16-17).

Following this logic, it is possible to say that *hospitality is ethics as emerging culture*. But what then is culture? As mentioned above, it may be possible to see hospitality as Barad's ethico-onto-epistemology when the nature of matter is seen to be intra-active, rendering our relation to the world as one of entanglement. This entangled nature would be the complementary undeniable reality to Derrida's undecidable radical separation.

Intra-action and the possibility of hospitality

I want rather to say that facts are avowals and acknowledgements of what can be known and said to be the case...[...]...The undecidable also opens out onto the undeniability of the other as subject' (Rooney 2005, 215).

I would like to explore the proposal that the undeniable reality of the relational-real is complementary to the undecidable, and that it may allow for an emphasising of solidarity and connection regarding hospitality over its impossibility and undecidability due to radical separation. It will be proposed that Barad's ethico-onto-epistemology is hospitality in response to our entangled reality, in albeit partial situated settings. And it is through this understanding of entanglement that the possibility for an accountable and responsible hospitality can emerge.

Returning to the exploration of agential realism in Chapter 3, Barad offers a challenge to the notion of radical separation. This approach to reality affirms that difference emerges out of relationality, where agential-separation denotes separation occurring out of phenomena, which is ontological relationality. Therefore, there are no pre-existing independent things or identities, but rather 'things' emerge out of phenomena. Barad, then, might pose the complementary opposite to Derrida's radical separation as radical connection, or, in her language, entanglement.

What is at stake for thinking through Barad's agential realism alongside Derrida's understanding of hospitality is the possibility of an ethics of solidarity, and an avowal of the undeniable existence of the Palestinians and their struggle. This continues to elaborate an emphasising of the undeniable over the undecidable in the

situation of the Palestinian struggle. This emphasising of the undeniable is not contrary to the ethics of deconstruction but is an attempt to forge a mutation within deconstruction such that an ethics of solidarity might become possible for deconstruction. As surely, following Derridean logic of the supplement, the other of the undecidable must be present within it, i.e. the undeniable. For in numerous places, Derrida asserts that 'the undecidable, isn't it the undeniable'[126]. Rooney offers us a complementary alternative when she writes that, 'The undecidable also opens out onto the undeniability of the other as subject' (Rooney 2005, 215).

What agential realism brings this discussion is the complementarity of our being *of the world*, where the world's emergence is not based on foundationalism, but due to the 'nature of matter' being indeterminate and relational, the world emerges out of intra-action as a material-discusive practice of differing. It is perhaps this 'of-ness' of the world that is lacking in deconstruction; a certain emphasis on materiality. Whereas Derrida emphasises that the future 'can only be anticipated in the form of an absolute danger' (Derrida 1998, 5) as alterity is completely unknown, Barad emphasises how we must 'meet the universe halfway, to move towards what may come to be in ways that are accountable for our part in the world's differential becoming. All real living is meeting. And each meeting matters' (Barad 2007, 353). Uncertainty, then, does not require than that any and all possibilities are open, but that indeterminacy is apparent. That there is 'nothing outside of the text', also meaning 'there is nothing outside of context' imposes a limit on the potential possibilities that are open for the future. To ignore this risks imposing relativism onto all situations, and a denial of the material-discursive nature of the world. Meeting becomes that which defines real living. What I would like to explore now then is the possibility of meeting and how this effects Derrida's notion of hospitality, for meeting in deconstruction always seems to be deferred.

The nature of the meeting the universe half way, as Barad encourages us to do, is an entangled one. For Barad 'differentiating is not about othering and separating but on the contrary about making connections and commitments. The very nature of materiality is entanglement. Matter itself is always already open to, or rather entangled with the "Other"' (Barad 2007, 393). While this is very similar to Derrida's understanding of otherness, it is at the same time quite different, as there is no proposed radical separation, but rather everything that is separate is also together:

[126] Derrida (1986), Derrida (2002a)

entangled. There is no absolute exteriorly in the agential realist view, which comes very close to Kirby's understanding of Derrida's 'there is nothing outside of the text' being read as 'there is nothing outside of nature.' Through this understanding,

> Nothing stands separately constituted and positioned inside a spacetime frame of reference, nor does there exist a divine position for our viewing pleasure located outside of the world. There is no absolute inside or absolute outside. There is only exteriority within, that is, agential separability' (Barad 2007, 377)

Therefore, this exteriority within means that 'Connectivity does not require physical contiguity' (377). The relationship then between host and guest, while being in flux and indeterminate, where figures must become both host and guest at once, now comes to be reconfigured materially in an entangled sense, showing that if the other is always already threaded through the self, such that self and other are not absolute separate entities, radical separation is a myth of a Cartesian monadic understanding of the world. This approach challenges further the dispossession of the self and ipseity's sovereignty, by emphasising connection and collectivity over an individual who interacts with others, presupposing individual entities (monads). Through this entanglement of being of the world, responsibility takes on a radically different meaning, such that

> We (but not only "we humans") are always already responsible to the others with whom or which we are entangled, not through conscious intent but through the various ontological entanglements that materiality entails. What is on the other side of the agential cut is not separate from us - agential separability is not individuation. Ethics is therefore not about right response to a radically exterior/ized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part' (Barad 2007, 393).

These lively relationalities in the context of Israel Palestine require an acknowledgement of the specific histories of both Palestinians and Jewish-Israelis and an avowal of their entangled nature. While both sides may want to violently disagree, there is a way in which the disavowal of the connection between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and how one group is entangled and co-constitutive of the other, is the most irresponsible attitude that can be held. Various writers, Israeli, Jewish, Palestinian and other, comment on this, in various forms of articulation (Said, Butler, Veracini, Rose, Khalidi). Their histories are now inseparable. It is this recognition and

emphasis that is crucial over and above the undecidable of radical separation, when it comes to hospitality between Palestinians and Israelis.

However, for the Israeli State, there is an ongoing denial of Palestinian lives and history, and of the mutually co-constitutive reality of which their lives and histories are now a part. Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat writes on the 66th anniversary of the Nakba that:

> The concept of an exclusively Jewish state naturally entails the denial of the Nakba. It tells us: "This is our land. You were on it illegally, temporarily, by mistake." It is a way of asking us to deny the existence of our people and the horrors that befell them in 1948. No people should be asked to do that[127].

Hospitality cannot exist under such conditions, where it is illegal to acknowledge the Nakba. Mutual recognition and respect for equality must be the condition for an unconditional hospitality to arise, as paradoxical as this sounds. For an unconditional hospitality to be offered then by the Palestinians to the Israelis, there are indeed conditions that would make peaceful co-existence possible. These would be an avowal of the Nakba and of Palestinian lives, the end of colonial subjugation, and the renunciation of exclusive Jewish sovereignty. These conditions, however, do not seek to re-impose a Palestinian sovereignty over Israelis, or to erase the history and troubles of the Jewish people. Therefore, the condition of hospitality is not to be a master in one's own home, but must be located elsewhere. What is the nexus of the conditions mentioned above and reiterated by those such as Edward Said, Judith Butler and others fighting for mutual respect and co-existence? Because of ontological indeterminacy outlined above, there is no ground upon which to confirm that Palestinians and Israelis must be treated equally. It must be acknowledged then that the choice to do so is indeed a politics. It would be a choice to choose equality over racism, respect over violence, co-existence over war. And yet, regardless of the inability to 'ground' or 'confirm' the 'truth' of such a desire, what is possible is to respond to the agential realism of the 'fact' that there are two peoples on the same land, and in order to find a solution which does not continue the violence of identity politics and ethnic cleansing, a polity of co-existence is the only way to proceed.

It is also clear from Derrida's writing that unconditional hospitality in the Palestinian context does not mean accepting colonial subjugation. Without law and

[127] http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.590646

without pre-knowledge, unconditional hospitality is caught in a danger of not knowing what or whom it welcomes, but is required to welcome without question or the expectation of reciprocity. For the Palestinians, this could be interpreted as an imperial ideology which aims to pacify resistance to the Zionist colonisation by calling for an attitude of submission to their arrival and continued occupation. Yet in hearing Derrida speak in 'Pas d'hospitalité', this is clearly not his desire. First, it is beyond doubt from his text that Derrida is not doing away with all forms of condition in the concept of hospitality: they are significantly linked, 'both imply and exclude one another simultaneously' (Derrida 2000, 81). Furthermore, the idea that the law of absolute hospitality welcomes the *arrivant* is bound to the notion that what arrives is that which is unknown, outside of knowledge. Therefore, unconditional hospitality cannot welcome the coloniser or imperial force because we have knowledge of them. Significantly, Derrida says this in another of his works called *Aporias* (1993): the absolute *arrivant* is 'not an intruder, an invader, or a colonizer, because invasion presupposes some self-identity for the aggressor and for the victim' (Derrida 1993: 34).

Hospitality to the other then is hospitality to oneself: or hospitality to the on-going material-discursive practices we cannot not be a part of. Hospitality is reality. We cannot escape it.

If life is meeting, as Barad suggests, such that we cannot disentangle ourselves from others, or from the world, then the situation of Palestinians and Jewish-Israelis must be one in which there is an attempt to meet on equal ground. However, regardless of this nature of matter and the relationality of our being of the world, this does not define or determine the type of meeting that we encounter or that occurs. 'Ethics is about accounting for our part of the entangled webs we weave' (Barad 2007, 384). Barad writes 'We are responsible for the world of which we are a part, not because it is an arbitrary construction of our choosing, but because reality is sedimented out of particular practices that we have a role in shaping and through which we are shaped' (390). Therefore, the choices we make, and the responses we have, in certain situations, have effects beyond what we know of them, because we are entangled with alterity beyond 'ourselves.' This means that the agential cuts we make, and the separations we allow to occur, when meeting the universe half way (indicating our participation in, but not sovereignty over, what happens) matter!

> We are accountable for and to not only specific patterns and marks on bodies - that is, the differential patterns of mattering of the world of which we are a part - but also the exclusions that we participate in enacting. Therefore accountability and responsibility must be thought of in terms of what matters and what is excluded from mattering (Barad 394).

This is where the complementarity of the undecidable and the undeniable must be acknowledged. We are accountable and responsible for turning a blind eye to such an Israeli settler colonial violence and on-going political Zionism. We must choose an ethics of solidarity in the face of one racially superior people who colonially subjugate another. The undeniable existence of Palestinians and their history of oppression do not produce an ethical response, it cannot, as the Israeli State continues to deny and ethnically cleanse. However, our own response-ability can be hospitable to the undeniable existence of the Palestinians and stand in solidarity with them despite the undecidable nature of ontology, identity and origins etc. In a locally resolvable situation of Israeli settler colonialism and the continued dispossession of Palestinian lives, we must acknowledge the undeniable reality of Palestinian life as a guarantee of equality for all.

Conclusion.

This thesis began by arguing that we live in the wake of the ineluctable due to the structuring effect of différance, which dislocates identity and renders us all exiled from natural citizenship and belonging, whether to family, country, nation or religion. This same dislocation is true of responsibility and origins, which aspires towards non-teleological aims, a resistance to totalisation, and an openness to the wholly other, and I have argued that, in relation to Derrida's own identity and commitment to Algeria, the undecidable nature of identity via the aporia of différance should be accepted as a structural part of experience and, more crucially, as a commitment to 'non-belonging' in terms of the refusal of a dialectical movement of identity which would otherwise continue a legacy of appropriation and violence towards alterity. Instead, Derrida's writing displays an openness to the irreducible alterity and indeterminacy within identity and responsibility. This approach to identity supports the movement of solidarity between and across boundaries of identity and protects against essentialising ontology. Différance at the origin also provides a way of critiquing the mastery of origins and so helps dismantle the aspirations of fundamentalist claims to ownership. Deconstruction then is a useful tool in the critique of political-Zionism.

However, deconstruction's reduction of everything into an economy of violence, and its emphasis on the performative nature of reality which is derived from différance at the origin can be seen to foreclose the reality of the undeniable relational real, beyond the performative. What is at stake here is a possible shared common ground before the differing and supplementing logic of différance, as argued by Caroline Rooney, found in that of a non-dual wholeness before supplementation. What this may make possible, in ontological and epistemological terms, is a radical sameness before différance, and therefore before an economy of violence, which would allow for a common humanity to be affirmed and a web of solidarity and connection to be woven beyond the divisions of race, religion, ethnicity etc. This is clearly what is needed in Israel/Palestine if co-existence is to become a reality beyond the logic of oppressed and oppressor, coloniser and colonised. Deconstruction then, while offering a useful

critique of essentialism and a helpful tool for critiquing political-Zionism, requires a different future if it is partake in an ethics of solidarity so keenly needed in contemporary international politics.

Derrida's position on the Palestinian struggle ultimately appears to be one of liberal multicultural tolerance, which affirms symmetry between Palestinians and Israelis, rather than identifying and avowing the on-going settler colonial nature of the situation. And as I have tried to show, Derrida was right and wrong, today more than ever, in his attempt to show solidarity with the Palestinians. The liberal Zionist position does not go far enough in its avowal of the reality under which Israel forces the Palestinians to live. Without this acknowledgement of the settler colonial structure of oppression, attempts to bring peace will be forever frustrated. 'There can be no workable 'living together' under conditions of colonial subjugation…Co-existence projects can only begin with the dismantling of political-Zionism' writes Judith Butler (Butler 2013a, 7). While deconstruction offers tools to help challenge and dismantle political-Zionism, it does not go further to allow for the avowal of the undeniable.

My proposal for deconstruction is to open itself up to the undeniable relational real, explored through the work of feminist theorists Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Vicky Kirby and Caroline Rooney, in order to complement the undecidable and indeterminate nature of ontology with the possibility of locally determined situated knowledges and witnessing, which fight for an understanding of the world which simultaneously affirms the radical historical contingency of all knowledge claims, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of the real world (Haraway 1986, 579). What I believe this refiguring of feminist objectivity does, through recourse to the undeniable, is to affirm the possibility of 'seeing alongside' and to bearing modest witness[128] to realities in the world without becoming essentialist. The potential to see and witness together partially is particularly helpful in the relationship that the Palestinian struggle can have on deconstruction. Placing deconstruction alongside the Palestinian struggle opens it up to the undeniable in a way that challenges the performative logic of différance and the indeterminacy of the undecidable, and asks for an avowal of love for humanity. This may allow for deconstruction to bear witness to the undeniable in certain situations, such as the Palestinians' struggle. This opens up the possibility of a new type of responsibility which affirms the complementarity of the undecidable and the undeniable as co-existent, which allows for the solidarity that is

[128] Or 'bearing withness' as a creative typo suggested.

needed, as stated above, for all of our humanities and freedoms to be protected. Palestinian Literature and Film offer some sign posts and contrast to deconstruction's commitments to the undecidable, and offer examples of how to bear witness to the undeniable, while not erasing the complementary pole of undecidablity.

In terms of deconstruction and hospitality for and between Palestinians and Israelis, what has also emerged from this thesis is the reality of the entangled and implicated nature of self and other, such that the concept of self-determination for either Palestinians or Israelis is compromised. As quoted earlier, Edward Said affirms that the history of 'Palestinians today is so inextricably bound up with that of Jews that the whole idea of separation, which is what the peace process is all about - to have a separate Palestinian thing and a separate Jewish thing - is doomed. It can't possibly work' (Said 2004, 424). The co-implication of self and other, as explored through the notion of Derridean hospitality and supplemented through Barad's agential realism, offers an understanding of co-existence which demands the rights of Palestinians, Israelis, and all living on the land be treated with equal respect alongside the dismantling of political-Zionism if such co-existence is to be attainable. Judith Butler's latest book *Parting Ways* develops this thought of the implicated realities of Palestinian and Israeli lives, advocating that 'the other is not over there '*la bas*' beyond me, but constitutes me fundamentally. The other does not just constitute me – it interrupts me, establishes this interruption at the heart of the ipseity that I am' (Butler 2013a, 60) – this interruption and co-constitution echoes Barad's notion of agential realism and the entanglement of matter, being and ethics, again highlighting the importance of the undecidable and the undeniable as complementary strategies for peaceful co-existence. The undecidable interruption which makes it impossible to identify where I end and another begins, but also the undeniable reality of the living together which cannot be avoided. The dislocation of the origin also means the impossibility of escaping our entanglement with others: there is no singularity. Therefore for a future peaceful co-existence for all those living on the land of historic Palestine, the avowal of the undeniable entanglement of reality must be emphasised over that of difference and radical separation.

Afterword

We are all Palestinians.

In 2002 as Israel Occupied the West Bank, Mahmoud Darwish managed to leave his besieged home and join a solidarity event at the Beirut Stadium, Lebanon, attended by 25,000 people. Before reading his poetry, Darwish made a speech within which he said, 'Now, we are all Palestinian, without exception.' [129]

As I sit to write the final pages of this thesis, Israel has launched a ground invasion into Gaza after 12 days of air strikes, already killing over 400 Palestinians. Thousands of people have demonstrated in major capital cities against Israel's new war against the Gazans, and Darwish's words are being repeated across the world, in chants, on placards and in newspaper headlines; for the sign of solidarity in such times is to identify with Palestinians.

Udi Aloni echoes this sentiment in his letter to David Grossman in 2011, entitled 'From now on Say I Am a Palestinian Jew.' 'The time has come' Aloni writes, 'to cross the lines and change your identity' (Aloni 123). There is something about identifying with the Palestinians, identifying as Palestinian, that gestures beyond the fixed and essentialist conception of identity. As Caroline Rooney writes, 'the Palestinians have come to stand not merely for the secondary and inferiorised term in an oppositional battle between two identities, but for precisely a wider universality for humanity' (Rooney 2009, 49). It is a small gesture, but one which announces that until Israel's colonial rule and violence end, all of our humanities and freedoms are being compromised, such that we must protest against the violence committed against the Palestinian people. Therefore until Israel dismantles political-Zionism, ends its colonial rule, subjugation and violence, we are called on to bear witness to the undeniable reality of Palestinian existence and say, in solidarity and love for our common humanity, that we are all Palestinians now!

[129] http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/582/cu4.htm

Appendix 1.

A Message From Jacques Derrida

Dear Friends

Without neglecting any difference nor any singularity, I would like to speak here to all those who, Palestinians or Israelis, in my eyes have exemplary courage, have taken all risks to testify publicly, in speaking, in writing, and by political and poetic engagement, of the necessity to oppose the forces of death, of terror and military repression, wherever they come from, whether the side of an instituted state, or of a state on its way to being instituted.

Since I must, with much regret and much sadness, put back the meeting I was dreaming of, allow me to send you, from the depths of my heart, an affectionate and warm greeting. Before speaking to you of the promises and the hopes that I would like to share with you today, Palestinians and Israelis, allow me to evoke some of my dearest memories, some of which we probably have in common, at least for some of you here.

First, there is something that I would like to remind you of, to make things clear: each time I came to this land, over the last few years, I made it plain that my desire was, to demonstrate my solidarity and friendship, to meet not only Israeli intellectuals, writers and colleagues, but also Palestinian intellectuals, writers and colleagues.

At each occasion I made this demand apparent to my Israeli hosts. They heard it during the 1988 conference in Jerusalem. In the text, now published as Interpretations at War, I declared, if you will allow me to remind you:

"Two years ago, during an international conference in Jerusalem (c.f. 'How to avoid Speaking: Denials' in Psyché: Inventions of the Other') I had proposed that our next, projected for the following year, have as its theme, "The Institutions of Interpretation." The title was retained and the meeting took place in Jerusalem on June 5-11, 1988. The preamble of my paper, the English title of which, difficult to translate, I have kept, describes the spirit in which I participated in this meeting - as well as in others, simultaneously, in the occupied territories, with Palestinian colleagues, outside of their universities, which were then, and still are, closed by administrative decision (on July 15, 1988).

Why is this relation a necessary one?

Like other papers, mine will consist of a set of interpretive hypothesis on the subject, precisely, of the institutions of interpretation. Consequently, it will stand, certainly and de facto, in a relation to an institutional context, the one which is determined today, here, now, by a university, a state, an army, a police force, religious powers, languages, peoples and nations. But this de facto situation also calls for interpretation and responsibility. I therefore did not think I should accept the fact of this situation passively. I have chosen to treat a subject which would allow me, while touching directly on the themes stated in the agenda of this conference ("The institutions of interpretation"), to ask at least indirectly, and as carefully as possible, some questions about what is going on here now. Although the meditations required between the talk I am about to give and the current violence, here and now, are numerous, complicated and difficult to interpret, although these meditations call for as much patience as caution on our part, I shall not use them as a pretext to wait and remain silent before that which demands immediate response and responsibility.

I had already communicated my anxiety to the organizers of this meeting. I had expressed to them my wish to participate in a conference where Arab and Palestinian colleagues would be officially invited and actively involved. The organizers of this meeting, Professor Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, share my concern. I thank them for the understanding they have shown in this regard. With all the gravity this requires, I wish to state right now my solidarity with all those, in this land, who demand an end to violence, those who condemn the crimes of terrorism, of military and police repression, and those who advocate the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories as well as the recognition of the Palestinians' right to choose their own representative for negotiations that are now more indispensable than ever. This cannot be accomplished without ceaseless, well-informed, courageous reflection. This reflection should lead to new, or not so new, interpretations of what - two years ago, while this conference was being planned here - I proposed to call the "institutions of interpretation." But that same reflection should also lead us to interpret the dominant institution that is the state, here the Israeli state (whose existence, it goes without saying, must henceforth be recognized by all and definitively guaranteed), along with its prehistory, the conditions of its recent founding, and the constitutional, legal, political foundations of its present functioning, the forms and limits of its self-interpretation, and so forth.

As is evident from my presence here, this declaration is inspired not only by my concern for justice and by my friendship for both the Palestinians and the Israelis. It is meant also as an expression of respect for a certain image of Israel and as an expression of hope for its future.

I am not saying this, of course, in order to tailor my remarks artificially to some external circumstance. The call for such historical reflection, anxiety-laden as it might appear, courageous as it must be, seems to me to be inscribed in the most strictly determining context of our meeting. It constitutes in my view its very meaning - and its urgency. [130]

[130] Jacques Derrida, 'Interpretations at War: Kant, the Jew, the German', trans., Moshe Ron and Dana Hollander, in *Psyché: Inventions of the Other, Volume II,* Stanford University Press, 2008, pp., 241-243.

So, it is this demand which had driven me, in 1988, in the conditions which, as you know, were not easy, into the occupied territories where I was able, even though their university was closed under the order of the Israeli authorities, to be received in private, in the house of the President of the University, by a good number of Palestinian intellectuals and colleagues, both Muslim and Christian. I remember with emotion and gratitude, a long afternoon during which they told me, described and analyzed their suffering, every kind of limit that was imposed upon them, whether regarding passports, the freedom of movement, of teaching activities or political expression. The names of Ramallah and Bir Zeit are therefore dear and familiar to me. Because there was also, in 1998, ten years later, an unforgettable visit to the University of Bir Zeit. Of the generous hospitality which was offered to me there, I don't only remember the visits to the campus, the laboratories, the archives and the research departments on the law under constitution and reconstitution - many signs announcing and preparing the foundation of this new State that we hope for worldwide. I also remember, after my conference on hospitality and citizenship, the long and passionate discussions of political philosophy which went on outside the conference room of The Institute for Democracy, with colleagues and friends, including Professor Azmi Bishara whom I had the chance to see again not long ago in Paris, here even, to speak with him, listen to and support him in the unjust hardship that he was subjected to, whilst he was being prosecuted before the Israeli tribunal and threatened with the loss of his parliamentary immunity. On my return, four years ago, I noted some memories in the form of a kind of post card, since published in book entitled La contre-allée. It is dated the 11th of January 1998, from Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Ramallah. Allow me to read a few words today:

"I wonder how I manage to allow all these things to cohabit within my body, through a sleepwalking specter: millennia of amnesic love for every stone, every dead person in Jerusalem, and my "difficulties" (that's an understatement, and they are not only, and so seriously, so radically political) with so many Israelis, on the basis of my innocent culpability - that is to say perhaps, the last link that remains indestructible in me - that with every Jewish community in the world, to the extent that we remain infinitely guilty, and well beyond Israel itself, of the violence inflicted on the Palestinians, and my alliance with the Palestinian cause, and my affection and limitless compassion for so many Palestinians - and Algerians...Enormous subject for meditation about which I can't tell you anything in a letter. Lecture on forgiveness, again, in Jerusalem, another one, but in the end the same as the one in Poland the day before Auschwitz, then a sort of show organized by them in a large auditorium in Tel Aviv (2,000 people to hear me talk about 'The Foreigners That We Are," in English!). Relatively peaceful debate, there were

Palestinians there, both in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Conversation with Peres the next day (in his office, I'll tell you more) before dancing all night with friends...Next day, very early, set out for Palestine, passing checkpoints towards Ramallah. The Palestinian friend told me with a bitter smile that these check points, these shibboleths established by the Israeli police, make entering Jerusalem more difficult than before the "Peace Process." Remarkable discussion at Birzeit University (Institute for Democracy) after the lecture (on hospitality and citizenship), with Palestinian colleagues who suffer and resist on all sides: present Israeli government, Palestinian Authority, Islamic fundamentalists, international conspiracies. Absolute confidence, this time, I can breathe, we don't avoid any subject, starting with the violence of the beginning, expulsions, refugee camps, and all the way to the sinister curse of the arrogant Netanyahu. But also their impatient with the insufficient democratization of the Palestinian authorities...The last day, an interview filmed in Jerusalem for the Yad Vashem archives, the death camp museum..."[131]

I would also love to remember the meeting with Mahmoud Darwish at the Sorbonne a few years again in the company of my lifelong friend Leila Shahid.

More than ever the mission of the International Parliament of Writers asks us to be close to you, to all those who, regardless of any mistakes or past crimes, irreversible, incommensurable and indelible crimes, intend to take the responsibility against the continuation of these crimes, against their repetition, not to allow them to add to the legacy and future of those who are born or chose to live on this land.

More than ever the mission of the International Parliament of Writers asks us to give or to allow speech, by every method we have (cities of refuge, publications on paper and every other medium, translations, etc.) , to all witnesses, writers, teachers, journalists, men and women of speech and writing who take the risk, in Israel and Palestine, to resist every dogmatism, every fanaticism, and every logic of war and death.

Like I have said more than once, and I repeat here, the conditions for the foundation of the State of Israel remain for me a hive [*ruche*] of painful questions. Even if one assumes that any State founds itself, powerless by definition to justify itself, in violence, I have a million reasons to believe that it is better, all things considered, and for the interest of the largest number, here including [understood to mean] the Palestinians, including the other States of the region (and the world), to retain that this foundations here, despite its originary violence, is henceforth irreversible - provided that good neighbourly relations are set up, that is to say, with a Palestinian State equipped with all of its rights, in the fullest meaning of the word 'State' (at least for

[131] Jacques Derrida, *Counterpath: Traveling with Jacques Derrida*, trans., David Wills, Stanford University Press, 2004, pp., 263-265

what remains today, of the full meaning and of sovereignty in general), that is to say, within the same bi-national 'sovereign' 'State', with a Palestinian people free from every oppression and intolerable separation. I have no particular hostility towards the State of Israel; however, I have judged harshly the Israeli government's politics in regard to the Palestinians, almost always. My compassion and solidarity with those who live in this land, and with the historic victims (Jews and Palestinians) of the atrocities of this time, does not deprive me of the right to criticize all governmental politics, including those of the large powers, those before and since the foundation of Israel, also sometimes, including the Palestinian Authority. I dare to think that this concern for justice will not betray any of the memories of the most venerated traditions, I mean those which claim to inspire the Abrahamic cultures and religions: Judaisms, Christianities, and Isalms. It would distort the memories and traditions so as to reduce ethnocentric fantasies and fundamentalist intolerance. Instead, it would honor those who are inventing a way to live together, yet to be heard of, rather than disputing Jerusalem.

It is in this spirit that I asked myself and was wondering under which conditions 'we' are still able to say 'we'. In the collective volume 'on the idea of Sapho', Un très proche Orient, Paroles de paix. I would like to read this testimony, as though it was predestined to this meeting. The question which, in the title, follows the word nous? is strongly marked by the sometimes desperate suffering of a tormented question between life and death, but also between war and peace. But this point in question has also, beyond the question, come further than it, the sign of a hope or invincible promise, salvation, the call and the wishes I would like to confirm in these towards: in those words for you, for us.

By saying, 'courage', 'good bye', 'see you soon', I would like to believe that we will be together, us, to share the sign of life spoken of in this text that I end by reading.

Us?

To start, to re-start (to start again), is risky, sometimes impossible, as we know, by saying 'us'. The most accurate [*justement*] and least inaccurate [*injustement*] possible.

We, despite all the differences in the world, and the most respectable, we suppose and thus call, many of us in the world, on every side, to have exhausted, to exhausted ourselves, all the argumentative discourses, the army's rhetoric to say and

predict, regarding Israelis and Palestinians, but also to those, we who address them, the just, the most just, the least unjust possible.

We attempted yesterday, and before yesterday to go further still than we were able to in the analyses (historical, philosophical, theological, political, legal, ethical, etc.) to judge equally the respective and dissymmetrical responsibilities, which are incomparable. One side of the violent foundation of the State of Israel, with the complicity of such powerful States, is the prolongation and development of the present colonial and archaic oppression, that the Shoah cannot justify, but is also forbidden from being reduced to another example. Opposite, terrorism, a politics that many of the Arab countries of the region also guilty of, hardly democratic States, a Palestinian authority unable to cope, hardly democratic and irresistibly tempted or constrained by overstatement [*surenchère*], etc. We would, and must continue in this way, refining these complicated calls - while the two sides, each suffering, remain incalculable and incomparable.

Yet we know: it is now too late to continue arguing, even if it isn't always useless. The damage is done, it continues and if necessary they will be, endlessly, if informed as they can be today by the "New Israeli Historians", these analyses remain powerless - and inadequate to the urgency which shakes our hearts.

We think, therefore, that is upon this limit, in this place of exhaustion that it is necessary to start, and to restart. And this limit is the inside, and the bottom of our hearts. What we have decided to call again the heart, to give it a name. It is here that the 'we' by-passes reason and immediately wins the heart, it is here that it speaks with diplomacy to the heart, of the heart, heart to heart, the reason of the heart, its political reason.

We are sure of it: the heart, which does not want to say something else, is on the side of life. It is what we call the heart, to give it a name. It is that which must inspire the law, here today. If the word 'nation' still has one meaning (which I doubt) it will be to search for this side of the reason of the heart. Who must also dictate, without waiting, it's law to the political, legal, military and diplomatic initiative. To the governments, the decision makers, the diplomats, the generals, the 'religious' and the colonisers. The heart, which will always be on the side of life, says to us that it is better to live, and to live 'together', albeit separate, than to dying, one by one, in hatred.

We want to remind you of this simple evidence, that every Israeli, and every Palestinian must experience/feel [*ressentir*] in their heart. Clearer than the day,

provided that we turn towards it, that is to say towards the other, this evidence urges solutions that are practical, diplomatic, strategic, etc. Without preconditions. It is necessary to repair, as much as possible, everywhere where there is still something to be 'altered' [*réversible*], it is necessary to repatriate as much as possible, it is necessary to transform understandable the most legitimate griefs, it is necessary over all to share the land, it is necessary to share what one names, in the old language which it will be urgent to change, sovereignty (in particular on Jerusalem and the said 'places of meeting' or 'holy places', these places where it is necessary to search, if it is truly the faith of Abraham that we sincerely mean to speak of, an inspiration of peace and not of war.) It is necessary to work together for the needs which we know are common and reciprocal. What is irreversible has to be treated differently. Without losing its soul.

On the other hand: it is perhaps time to make the future with irreparable evil, if one doesn't want to lose, once again, along with one's soul, one's life.

Jacques Derrida, Paris, 2002.

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