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Abstract

In this article, I revisit my 2007 piece on The Construction of EU Normative Power (NP) and the Middle East 'conflict' and bring in Manners' Arrival of NP in Planetary Politics' (NPA) frame to shed light on how the EU's southern neighbourhood and its social and political fragility becomes amplified by the 'force multiplier' of climate mitigation. For example, in 2018, Gaza sewage led to the closure of Israeli beaches and the shutdown of the desalination plant in Ashkelon, which supplies Israel with 15% of its drinking water. This is but one example of how Israel and Palestine are not only inter-dependent but, perhaps more importantly, co-dependent. This article therefore draws attention to the urgent need of thinking on the co-constitution of all life on earth, particularly in a climate-conflict scenario such as that of Israel and Palestine. Water scarcity, rising temperatures and electricity interruptions contribute to the region's instability. If policy-makers from the region and beyond are to co-ordinate policy interventions around water and food insecurity for instance, they cannot ignore intractable conflicts such as the Israeli–Palestinian issue and their ensuing implications for planetary politics. Such enduring 'conflicts' represent a microcosmic image of the planet as a whole. Along with the other contributions in this symposium, this piece invokes planetary politics as the space where we need – out of necessity – to think differently: Otherwise, others will be writing the script for us.

In a 2007 *Journal of Common Market Studies* (*JCMS*) article entitled 'The Construction of EU Normative Power', I sought to engage with the meaning and substance of 'normative' and 'power' in Ian Manners' concept of Normative Power Europe (NPE) (Manners 2002; Pace 2007). For an entity like the EU to be referred to as 'normative' necessitates leaving us with the impression that the EU, as a global actor, behaves in ways that relate to its core norms/foundational standards. Normative Power European Union (NPEU) more specifically is, in this vein, loaded with an understanding of the EU (and its primary agents) as upholding the rule of law, good governance, democracy, human rights, order and justice (see Manners 2006). Thus, the label 'normative' carries strong positive connotations: We expect the EU to behave in a good way, where, by 'good', we refer to principled behaviour.

I attempted to apply this concept and to analyse it critically in the context of the EU's involvement in one of the most enduring, and apparently intractable, global 'conflicts' in modern international politics: the Israeli–Palestinian question. I started by asking whether NPE serves as an analytical concept or whether it is a political concept that serves the purpose of creating/constructing a positive image and attitudes towards the EU and its role in global affairs: in other words, whether it is a (positive) branding exercise for the EU. (On this, see also Sjursen 2006.) Analytically, I concluded that NPE is a weak concept because

it is 'a semantically empty notion'. I argued that: 'the quest for a just and lasting solution (to the Israel Palestine issue) has long been one of the EU's top foreign policy priorities' (Pace 2007, p. 1060 and 1042). This is no longer the case today, writing at a time when the Palestine–Israel file is no longer a priority on the EU's in-tray. After 4 years of the Trump administration, the Middle East (ME) 'peace process' was deemed as no longer viable, and the US's credibility, as a fair and effective broker, was once and for all thrown into the dust of history. With the Palestinian issue no longer a priority for Trump's America, nor the Arab world more generally, the EU followed suit. Having enough on its plate with Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and more pressing priorities (such as the EU's resolve to oppose Russia's invasion of the Ukraine since February 2022), the EU has put the Palestinian folder on the back burner. The current US President Joe Biden has also other priorities on his domestic and foreign policy agendas.

Arab states too (like the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain) have re-evaluated their own priorities in light of what they perceive as a diminishing American commitment to the ME region. This anxiety led these countries to sign the Abraham Accords (or so-called Israeli 'normalization' agreements with Gulf countries). Looking towards the EU's southern neighbourhood, the social and political fragility of the ME becomes amplified by the 'force multiplier' of climate mitigation. Water scarcity, rising temperatures and electricity interruptions contribute to the region's instability. If policy-makers from the region and beyond are to co-ordinate policy interventions around water and food insecurity, as well as help modernize farming practices in the ME through more efficient water use, they cannot ignore intractable conflicts such as the Israeli–Palestinian issue and their ensuing implications for planetary politics.

Therefore, although this article focuses on one particular case, the case of the EU and the Israel–Palestine question, it speaks to the bigger issue addressed in this symposium, namely, that the world needs 'a tectonic shift' if we are to revere our planet and its well-being. As the ongoing conflict in Ukraine reveals, many countries have woken up to their heavy dependency on pollutants and the increasing urge to use renewables to achieve energy security (International Crisis Group 2022).

This is precisely why a new language is needed in this context and why a revisiting of my 2007 *JCMS* article on the constructed nature of the EU's normative power in the ME conflict is called for. Thus, in this article, I (re-)engage with Manners' own developments in regard to his original 2002 piece (and ensuing reiterations) and bring in his 'Arrival of NP in Planetary Politics' (NPA) frame. Manners' works are also triangulated with those of Hass (2021) and Mamdani (2020). By doing so, this article attempts to draw attention to the urgent need of thinking on the co-constitution of all life on earth, particularly in a climate-conflict scenario.

This revitalizing of Manners' NPA in the ME context brings us to his 'practical theory' and how action in concert can bring us to an *Arrival* by giving some nuanced reflections on how – if we had to look at the whole array of past diplomatic efforts in the ME conflict – we could possibly start to relive a new reality, one that is based on the right to have rights (Arendt 1951) for all concerned. Here is where Manners' Arrival holism/holistic and symbiosis/symbiotic approaches provide a timely and useful analytical framework: Questions of (in)equality, (in)justice, (un)sustainability, (in)security, and (ir)resilience in the ME 'conflict' are intimately linked; they are symbiotic.

Thus, the holistic planetary political approach set out in Arrival provides a good start for a realization of this in the case of the ME and its relationships to and impacts on the rest of the world. Using Arrival in the context of the ME conflict helps us rethink possibilities of moving beyond (often) destructive binary oppositions of seeing the every-day lived realities of Israelis and Palestinians alike. The conclusion suggests that the language of Arrival offers a feasible way forward to reviving an analytically useful NPEU concept and to decolonizing the political in the ME conflict.

In light of the above, this article is structured as follows: The first section briefly captures what is referred to as a simultaneous mode of awareness. Building on academic debates within environmental security (Abrahams 2020; Beaumont and Coning 2022), it elaborates on the argument that climate change leads to an intensification of conflict. This in turn requires an analytical reflection on the Israeli state's colonial context, its occupation of Palestine and current/ongoing Israeli settler colonial practices.[1] As a result of (what Pace and Yacobi 2021 call) this 'slow violence', the impact this has on current and future environmental destruction is presented. Through this approach, the aim here is to highlight the importance of prioritizing the protection of rights and human security of Palestinians and Israelis over maintaining a 'peace process' that has failed miserably. In a separate second section, the article then moves on to conceptualize how it is possible to conceive of non-adversarial relations using Mamdani and Hass to explore *a form of the state other than that of the nation-state*. This section asks the following question: *Is it possible to realize a non-two state solution – to imagine a non-adversarial relationship?* Thus, it explores the possibility of the subjective sharing of relations through a form of state other than a nation-state. This is done through a de-silencing of non-mainstream voices on the ME 'conflict' in order to realize what such 'deep relations' will entail. This exercise will give us some potential ideas on what a democratic and inclusive order could look like – a way out of the cycle of civil wars. This builds on Manners' subjective sharing of relations and corresponds to his development of explanatory theory (Manners 2018). In a final, third section, the article captures how we can move beyond this cycle of civil wars through democratic and inclusive action in concert. This section brings together the principles of 'mutual respect and recognition of the other' as proposed by Manners (2023, this symposium), which, in turn, relate to the 'Goals or desired outcome of NPEU construction' as presented in my *JCMS* 2007 article and Manners' (2023, this symposium) 'ethic of cooperative empowering actions in concert' and his 'impact of a communion of equals through reconciliation'.

In conclusion, it is argued that Israel and Palestine are not only *inter*-dependent but, perhaps more importantly, *co*-dependent. They therefore represent a microcosmic image of the planet as a whole. Along the other contributions in this symposium, this piece invokes planetary politics as the space where we need – out of necessity – to think differently: Otherwise, others will be writing the script for us.

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[1]The academic literature on settler colonialism is a long standing and vast one. Starting with Wolfe's seminal book (Wolfe 1999), Veracini's (Veracini 2010) work, up to Mamdani's (Mamdani 2020) book, there is a solid body of academic literature that shows how settler colonialism, as a conscious and planned enterprise, develops a complex set of narratives and practices that erase indigenous people's humanity. Moreover, this extensive academic debate details how the settler colonial imaginary of empty land becomes a social construct: an imagined space that supports and legitimizes the violent and invasive settler colonial agenda by constructing indigenous peoples as threatening others/erasing indigenous presence on existing land: see also Pace and Yacobi (2021).

I. Simultaneous Mode of Awareness: Where We Stand Today in Terms of the EU's Engagement in the Middle East Issue

When it takes a look at its balance sheet, there is not much that the EU can credit itself for when it comes to bringing the Palestinians and Israelis closer to any political solution to their 'conflict'. As a prominent Israeli journalist and critic, Amira Hass (2021) has put it: 'The sloth of the European Union has once again been revealed in all its shame. The EU is good at giving the Palestinians charity and preaching about the rule of law. It fails politically when it comes to stopping Israel's plans to concentrate the Palestinians into reservations in the West Bank and clear most of the land for Jews'.

In fact, the EU is the largest humanitarian donor in the occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt), legitimizing its position by stipulating that it 'responds to the most pressing needs of the population' (European Commission n.d.). The reality for more than 1.5 million Palestinians (out of 5.2 million in the oPt) is that they rely on humanitarian assistance because they have experienced an Israeli and Egyptian blockade since 2007, three devastating Israeli wars in the last 13 years, compounded by internal divisions and a crippled local economy, making over 80% of the population aid-dependent (Asharq Al-Awsat 2018; European Commission n.d.).

Hass also highlights how the EU has, for a long time, pressured the Palestinian Authority (PA) (under Israeli occupation) to hold legislative and presidential elections. As I had highlighted in my 2007 *JCMS* article, when free, fair and transparent elections were held in the oPt in 2005 and 2006, the EU made a huge blunder when it refused to recognize the election result that brought *Hamas* to power. Seventeen years since the last Palestinian elections, the EU finds itself in an urgent situation to reassess its engagement in the Israel–Palestine file. But the EU's request to send an observation mission for the scheduled 2021 parliamentary elections in Palestine (which were later postponed) was met by a non-responsive Israel (Nielsen 2021).

In rethinking the EU's encounters in the ME, it is worth examining Manners' (2023, this symposium) conceptualization of normative power in planetary politics. Here, Manners traces the EU's colonial past and its postcolonial legacies not least in continued exploitation of natural resources in its former colonies (see also Pace and Roccu 2020). It is now openly acknowledged that the ME region specifically faces a number of multi-dimensional impacts from climate change in the 2020s: From the shape of the energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy to the social and humanitarian impacts of environmental stress in the ME and the market dynamics to anticipate around these issues, there is much space for reflection on how the global community, not least the EU as one of the purported leaders in climate change mitigation (Schreurs and Tiberghien 2007), can better support allies in the region in abating drastic climate change. As aptly noted by Balsari, Dresser and Leaning (2020, p. 406, my own emphasis): 'The 2013 IPCC (*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*) report forecasts that, by the late twenty-first century, intense heat and dryness will affect countries extending across North Africa into Egypt and Sudan and northeast to Saudi Arabia, the Levant including Syria, Iraq, and Iran … Intense regional heat may render some areas *uninhabitable* … A 2019 model suggests that *business-as-usual approaches to climate mitigation and population growth* may expose one in three humans in this belt to high temperatures currently found only on 0.8% of the earth's surface'. So, while the anthropocene designates the age

in which humankind has become the driving force of the state of the Earth system and its advent is intimately bound up with the emergence and growth of the global political economy, global policy-making processes relating to acute threats to the flourishing of ecosystems cannot omit the crucial importance of the 'political' in a truly integrated mitigation system. Academic debates within environmental security have also highlighted how climate change leads to an intensification of conflicts, particularly in the ME region. Abrahams (2020), for instance, underscores how policy organizations have been tasked with incorporating climate-conflict into policy and programming. He exemplifies by shedding light on how climate-conflict discourses inform development policy and, in turn, how the structures of development enable or constrain institutions' ability to address climate-conflict priorities. Similarly, Beaumont and Coning (2022) emphasize how, over the last two decades, climate security has become an increasingly salient policy agenda in international fora. Their work urges scholars and practitioners to recognize and embrace diversity and uncertainty in climate-conflict scenarios and to practice humility and dialogue across difference (see also, amongst others, Bremberg et al. 2019; Conca 2019; von Uexkull and Buhaug 2021).

For this reason, Hass's point about how the EU fails 'politically' in the face of the Israel–Palestine climate-conflict context requires elaboration. On 18 December 2019, a group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) questioned the Commission in regard to which steps it would be taking in response to Israel's continuous demolishing and confiscation of key public structures built using EU and Member States' aid in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (see EEAS, 2020; see also Galindo 2020). The reality in the oPt (as numerous European Parliament reports show) is that there are huge economic disparities between Israelis and Palestinians, a lack of substantial and sufficient infrastructure and of effective water resources management in the oPt, which is compounded by pollution and climate change and which together have led to disproportionate allocations of water and to substantial depletion and contamination of water resources. Water consumption specifically highlights the stark inequalities between Israelis and Palestinians. As a result of the Oslo II accords (in connection with allocations of trans-boundary water resources), Israel controls approximately 80% of water reserves in the West Bank. Military conflict in Gaza in the summer of 2014 left over a million residents without access to water. As Omar Jabary Salamanca (2011) poignantly shows in his work, the destruction by Israel of Gaza's only power plant and the subsequent sanctions on electricity and fuel have had severe consequences on Gazans' daily lives, particularly in terms of their health. For Jabary Salamanca, this infrastructural violence had led to Gaza's humanitarian collapse. As the Peace Treaty between Israel and Jordan has shown, the management of shared water resources has worked well so far even if every now and then these relationships also experience uncertainty. Brooks et al. (2020) shed light on the search for permanent freshwater agreements between Israel, Palestine, and the western portions of Jordan, while emphasizing the benefits of shared water management among these countries/territories. The authors imagine efforts to share transboundary water in ways that are simultaneously physically feasible, ecologically sustainable and socially equitable. The current arrangements for Israel and Palestine remain challenging though and are inadequate and, in some cases, counterproductive. The possibility of imagining a comprehensive trilateral agreement on water before seeking to resolve the full range of issues that remain uncertain in a Final Status Agreement between Israel and Palestine highlights the

precarious story not only of the lived lives of Palestinians under Israeli settler colonialism but also of the lived reality of Israelis.

As a case in point, Israel's 'slow violence' tactics in Gaza have an increasing impact on Israel itself. The water crisis in Gaza today essentially began in 1948 with the creation of Israel when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their towns and villages and the population of Gaza quadrupled in a matter of weeks. Today, three-quarters of Gaza's two million people are refugees, and their descendants put enormous pressure on Gaza's aquifer, drawing it down so far that seawater is flowing in. Israel's bombing of water delivery infrastructure – including wells, water towers and pipelines and sewage plants – in the 2014 war made matters much worse. And as Gidon Bromberg, director of Tel Aviv based-Ecopeace Middle East (see below) highlighted in 2018, Gaza sewage led to the closure of Israeli beaches and the shutdown – at one point – of the desalination plant in Ashkelon, which supplies Israel with 15% of its drinking water. Bromberg called this reality 'a ticking time bomb' and warned of an outbreak of pandemic disease – a direct consequence of Gaza's contaminated water. He also urged Israel to recognize the humanitarian disaster in Gaza and its ensuing implications on Israelis themselves. These risks flow beyond Gaza and Israel. As articulately put by Gregor von Medeazza, a UNICEF water and sanitation expert working in Gaza: 'Under the circumstances, isn't investing hundreds of millions in donor funds too big a risk' and therefore '… what is the way forward?' (Tolan 2018). EcoPeace Middle East is a unique organization working for such a way forward and for peace through concerted, environmental co-operation: It brings together Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmentalists who work together to protect water in the ME and for a sustainable future for this region and beyond. As Julie Trottier puts it: 'The essence of the EcoPeace Proposal is to recognise water as a flow and then to use continuous monitoring and ongoing mediation as the main management tools to achieve equity, efficiency and sustainability. These tools provide the basis for decisions to adjust withdrawals from each well or reservoir, or to modify use of water from a spring. They also encourage interaction between state and non-state actors. Ongoing mediation means that rulings or regulations can be appealed by any actor involved, whether scientist, officer of a non-governmental organization, or member of an agency that manages water. Social and economic developments over time can be accommodated and integrated within geologic, hydraulic, and engineering constraints' (in Brooks et al. 2020). She continues to argue that: 'As mutually interdependent riparian states, Israel, Jordan and Palestine must have the right to access and use water from shared supplies. They must also accept the parallel responsibility to maintain the quality and quantity of flow in all shared natural water sources, within the limits set (and sometimes changed) by natural conditions' (Brooks et al. 2020). The example of EcoPeace highlights what the EU could actually do to overcome obstacles towards broader societal change in the Israeli–Palestinian climate-conflict scenario, namely, that planetary politics require a continuous negotiation of relationships within Israeli–Palestinian living spaces in order to survive and thrive together.

A compelling report launched by Human Rights Watch on 27 April 2021 calls on the International Criminal Court to investigate 'systematic discrimination' against Palestinians. The report examines Israel's treatment of Palestinians and presents the present-day reality of a single authority, the Israeli government, ruling primarily over the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, populated by two groups

of roughly equal size, and methodologically privileging Jewish Israelis while repressing Palestinians, most severely in the occupied territory: It calls on the 'Israeli authorities (to) dismantle all forms of repression and discrimination that privilege Jewish Israelis at the expense of Palestinians, including with regards to freedom of movement, allocation of land and resources, access to water, electricity, and other services, and the granting of building permits'. Similarly, one of the themes addressed in Amnesty International's (2022) own report is the expropriation of land and resources. The report explains that 'the definition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and the commitment to Jewish settlement of the land has precluded any possibility of Palestinians enjoying equality in access to land, property and resources, with disastrous consequences for their enjoyment of social and economic rights.' Noura Erakat and John Reynolds (2021) also reflect on Israel's settler-colonialism and its 'spectacular and structural violence'. Like HRW and Amnesty International as well as B'tselem (2021), they also support the charge of Israel's discriminatory practices against Palestinians. Palestinian activists, including scholars, have long been arguing that the oppressive Israeli regime that Palestinians in the oPt face stems from a sophisticated form of apartheid,[2] which began a century ago in Palestine in the shape of the Zionist settler colonial project. Although these reports and publications are crucial in that they shed important light on the everyday lived reality of Palestinians under settler colonialism, they do not go far enough in calling for, in the words of Al-Shabaka's senior analyst, Yara Hawari (2022), 'seismic shifts (that) are still needed in the higher echelons of global political establishments'.

Manners' NPA in Planetary Politics pushes us to strive for a perspective that requires Europe to turn its gaze towards efforts by Palestinians to create pathways of empowering political transformations in the renewed articulation of their right to have rights. An example in point stems from UNESCO: In December 2021, the United Nations' cultural agency (UNESCO) acted upon a radical imagination move by adding the art of Palestinian embroidery, '*tatreez*', to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. 'The craft, which dates back more than 3,000 years, is a traditional form of cross-stitch embroidery originally made and worn in rural areas, known for its coloured threads and unique patterns. The colours used symbolise different stages of life, and different shades of the same colour denote regional differences. Over time, the art has also taken on a meaning of resistance as it continues to play a key role in Palestinian cultural and even economic life'. For Palestinians, resisting Israel's settler colonialism is an action in concert, that is, an embedded, national and political consciousness known as '*sumud*' or 'steadfastness'. This example tells a very important story about what the EU chooses to see and what it does not see by way of action in concert in the oPt and highlights possibilities that would change the language from one about the ME 'conflict' to one about a simultaneous mode of awareness. The planetary politics/earthly ethos proposed here results from a pathos that goes beyond rationality or recognition because it is based in Israeli–Palestinian embodied relationality, which binds both people to each other as living

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[2]Apartheid in international law refers to a system of prolonged and cruel discriminatory treatment by one racial group of members of another with the intention to control the second racial group. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and B'tselem all draw on this legal definition in their reports on Apartheid in the oPt. The Apartheid Convention declares that apartheid is a crime against humanity and that 'inhuman acts resulting from the policies and practices of apartheid and similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination' are international crimes (art. 1). See United Nations Treaties Collection (n.d.) and the definition of the crime in the Rome Statute (1998).

beings not only through the shared places and histories but also through the larger bio-sphere and ecosystems that sustain the two communities, and ultimately through their sin-gular bond to the earth. Such an ethical planetary politics stance is one in which ethics supercedes political contingencies and forces Israelis and Palestinians to continually and vigilantly reassess and reinterpret their responsibility-sharing towards each other, even if – perhaps especially if – those others are threatening.

Mamdani (2020) also reflects on the violence inherent in state-mandated adversarial relations and engages with a number of cases including the Israel/Palestine question. He eloquently offers an in-depth political history and genealogy to elucidate the entangled Zionist logic of colonial statecraft and nation-building. He argues that the work of Zionism has resulted in the violent manufacture of a permanent majority and a permanent minority in Israel and the oPt of today. This crucial analysis offers important lessons about the complicity of the EU in this everyday 'slow violence' (Pace and Yacobi 2021).

Bringing in Ian Manners' Arrival article (this symposium) into the manner in which we can reconceptualize the Israeli–Palestinian climate-conflict scenario allows us to retheo-rize more distinctly 'the state' and possibly its disaggregation in order to imagine the United States and Europe supporting Palestinian efforts at 'internationalizing' this issue and engaging with the Palestinians' mode of awareness – namely, '*sumud*', as a core Palestinian cultural value of perseverance in the face of continued Israeli settler colonial adversity. Given that international law, including international human rights law, is made by states for themselves and their peers, and given the violence of the non-entre/contact free control policies of a number of states that defy international human rights law, this renewed Arrival NPA/articulation produces a *savoir orphelin* (an orphan knowledge) 'which cannot be tamed as a form of Europe-centred desire and development' (Dimitrovova and Kramsch 2017, p. 799).

This requires a further recognition on the part of the United States and Europe that this is not a 'conflict' between equal partners but a long-standing climate-conflict issue with a massive power asymmetry between the two main sides: Furthermore, an acknowledge-ment on the part of external actors that Palestinian resistance is a national, political con-sciousness that goes hand in hand with their sense of '*karamah*' or dignity. Starting with a recognition that the natural environment is a shared one and a good place to start for peace through environmental action in concert, Brooks et al. (2020) argue: 'Much of the Israeli increase in water use since 1967 comes from occupied Palestinian land. This water cannot be considered as "prior use" in the usual sense. Further, the availability of large volumes of "desal" allows the Israelis to give up previously used water voluntarily … Israel has been able to reduce its withdrawal from the aquifers significantly because a high and growing percentage of its household water now comes from desalination. More generally, if the Israelis do have to give up sizeable quantities of water, they can expect in return to have a better quality of water flowing back to them than was formerly the case'.

II. Non-adversarial Relations: Exploring a Form of the State Other than that of the Nation-State

The end of 2022 deepened the gloom over prospects for the EU's much touted 'negotia-tions' pathway and the 'two-state solution' for the Israel–Palestine conflict. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest serving prime minister, once again took the helm of Israel's

government – just 18 months after losing power in the wake of a series of stalemated elections. Netanyahu's hard-line approach to Israel's occupation of the Palestinians, together with his governing coalition (now dependent on the support and partnership of once-fringe extremist parties and politicians), already proved to hold the potential for conflict-driving disruption (OHCHR 2023).

In 2018, Israeli law declared Israel as 'the nation-state of the Jewish people', that is, as a Jewish state rather than a Jewish and democratic state. Thus, under the watch of the world's global powers, including the United States and the EU (scrutinized here as a NPE), Israel declared a South African style apartheid state. Of course, unlike South Africa, as Mamdani reminds us, 'most of the national minority was expelled from Palestine' (Mamdani 2020, p. 352). As highlighted in HRW's report (2021), a rights-based approach to conflict settings[3] necessitates that the EU conduct a holistic assessment of the implications for EU and member states' relations with Israel arising from HRW's findings of Israel's crimes of apartheid and persecution. Amnesty International's report (2022) backs this recommendation stipulating that: 'Without taking any meaningful action to hold Israel to account for its systematic and widespread violations and crimes under international law against the Palestinian population, the international community has *contributed* to undermining the international legal order and has emboldened Israel to continue perpetrating crimes with impunity'.

This call for a radical imagination relates to this symposium's discussion on the de-silencing of non-mainstream voices and agonistic cosmopolitical knowledge production. Starting at the EU, in particular, European states need to identify the legal consequences and obligations under EU and international law that apply to EU institutions, member states and EU-based private businesses, and the steps that should be taken accordingly, and make such an assessment public. Returning the gaze inside Europe is what is called for here. An example of this was made concrete in February 2004, when, following the Euro-Med Human Rights Network (EMHRN)'s 6th General Assembly, the EMHRN Working Group on Palestine commissioned its first review of the EU's human rights obligations and commitments in relation to Israel. The review constituted an important development in EMHRN's work of promoting the implementation of human rights commitments in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and in bilateral association agreements. Thus, the review set out to examine actual EU and significant Member State positions and responses to Israeli violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in the oPt and in Israel. It clearly concluded that: 'Israel implements its agreements with the EU in violation of general international law, and in violation of the agreements themselves. The EU has repeatedly chosen not to prevent this'.

'In addition, a review of several key elements of the EU's *operative* diplomacy, including its contractual relations with Israel, reveals a striking lack of coherence with the EU's (own) legally correct *declarative* diplomacy … (Thus) … *The EU may have actually facilitated Israel's violations of international human rights and humanitarian law* by deferring to them in its own dealings with Israel. The review presents several instances where Israel's implementation of its agreements with the EU has been based on its rejection of

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[3]Tania Harry (Hary 2019) – Gisha's Executive Director – and Daniel Seidemann (Israeli expert on Jerusalem) have both been working tirelessly on a rights-based approach that would benefit both Israelis and Palestinians. See also Statement by Jamie Eldridge (2021).

its key international obligations as an occupying power, and as *a state of all its citizens*. (Citizenship is here understood as a right (not a privilege)).[4] *The EU can not knowingly allow its contractual relations with any third country to operate in this manner without itself violating European Community law and international law*'. (EMHRN 2004, my own emphasis).

The starting point for a reset in the EU's gaze is this lived reality of Palestinians and Israelis on a daily basis. A normative policy cannot continue to encourage the 'conflict' parties to return to 'negotiations' or to pursue any other 'peace' plan. Instead, the Arrival climate-conflict rights approach points to a trend that has become increasingly evident amongst Palestinians themselves: the need to prioritize the protection of people's right to their rights, for Palestinians and Israelis equally. The rights of Israelis in this specific context refers to the right to live in security and safety, which can only be sustainably accomplished by simultaneously ensuring full rights for Palestinians. The point of this article about the co-dependence of Palestinians and Israelis means that ensuring Palestinians their rights would render any advocacy of armed resistance needless and hollow if not frowned upon. This is reflected in, for instance, when Israel granted Gaza's population some limited easing of the blockade and right to work (allowing 12,000–20,000 Gazans to work in Israel, Boxerman 2022): it created a strong deterrence against violence from Gaza to the extent that Gaza's population would perceive any violent actions negatively as ruining the improvements they have realized. Hence, imagine the deterrence to violence that granting Palestinians their full rights would create in comparison with Israel's tactics of control, repression and humiliation against Palestinians in the name of maintaining 'security', which only creates bitterness, rage, despair and fuel more violence in return (Kershner 2008). Hence, it is in the interest of the Israeli public that Palestinians realize a dignified and decent life.[5]

Torczyner (2021), Arya et al. (2010) and Hassan and Munayyer (2021), amongst others, have written extensively about what a rights-based struggle entails. Their focus is on subaltern stakes that question Israel's lack of accountability for its 'strategic lying' tactics through which, for example, it deems all Gazans as terrorists. As Ivor Gaber (2021) has shown, this has been a very dangerous game because lying/untruths – even if rebutted – can create public awareness and heighten the dominant Israeli discourse (especially when Israel legitimizes its 'slow violence' on Palestinians in the name of 'security') as the most important issue in Israel–Palestine. The EU – perhaps unaware of its actions – may have unintentionally amplified Israel's dominant discourse and inadvertently legitimized it since its involvement in the so-called peace process. This has also left a huge

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[4]Citizenship – like human freedom and human rights – is a right not a privilege. Slave traders believed freedom to be a privilege and not a right of *all* human beings.
[5]There is also another aspect to Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinians. That is when young Israelis are sent to enforce the occupation in the West Bank and carry out violent assaults on Gaza: there is much harm done to them – mentally and physically. Many Israeli parents have expressed their sense of fear and anxiety with this author when their children serve in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in the West Bank: They have openly declared that not only are they worried about the physical safety of their children, but more so about how their IDF service will change them for the worse when they have to constantly act with violence towards Palestinians. See Greenbaum and Elizur (2012) and Webb (2020). Another example consists of testimonies Breaking the Silence gathers from Israeli soldiers. See McGreal (2022) for one example where an IDF soldier admits that they used to be 'calm and relaxed', but enforcing the occupation in the West Bank turned them 'more and more violent'. These voices from Israeli society led the former Israeli president Rivlin to declare that Israel is a sick society that needs urgent treatment (see Cashman 2014). A rights-based approach that gives Palestinians their rights will end the need for sending IDF soldiers to the West Bank to violently enforce the occupation.

mark on Israeli society at large. As Gaber argues: 'once a statement – or lie for that matter – has found a sympathetic ear (think about Israel's labelling of any criticism as anti-sem-itism) then no amount of rebuttal will convince people that it is not true … (not all Gazans are terrorists but many in Israel's society believe this to be the truth). … This is because the lie fits their worldview and to believe anything else would create a sense of cognitive dissonance (the legacy of the Holocaust, etc) something we all seek to avoid'. Thus, 'there is a need for a radical paradigm shift in EU foreign policy, one that would problematize and deconstruct normative assumptions and well-established preconceptions, regarding a range of so-called European values, values on the basis of which entire societies located on Europe's margins are judged and around which preferential relations with the EU are established' (Dimitrovova and Kramsch 2017, p. 800). As Roy (2007), quoting George Orwell, eloquently puts it: 'uncritical and unthinking accommodation to the status quo … has the effect of giving "an appearance of solidity to pure wind"'. Roy cautions against becoming 'indifferent to consequences and unable to engage in a range of imaginative sympathy'.

This leads us to important subaltern/translocal thinking on exploring a form of (Palestinian) state other than that of the nation-state. *Arrival* and agonistic cosmopolitics support the Palestinians' push for the right to have rights and the move beyond the one-versus two-state solution debate and for international organizations and actors to pursue the more just approach – the rights-based struggle coupled with a clear-cut political vision that can be realized within the framework of a unitary state with guaranteed equality for all its citizens regardless of religion, ethnicity or gender. As Honig aptly puts it: 'agonistic cosmopolitics' is 'located squarely in the paradox of politics – that irresolvable and productive paradox in which a future is claimed on behalf of peoples and rights that are not yet and may never be' (Honig 2006, p. 118).

Arrival and agonistic cosmopolitics thus shed light on regionally specific, postcolonial traditions and practices that offer Palestinians and Israelis a more grounded perspective than that offered by the increasingly disconnected abstractions of the EU's postcolonial canon.

III. Action in Concert: Moving Beyond the Cycle of Wars Through Democratic and Inclusive Action

It is here where Hass's and Mamdani's reflections can shed light on the possibilities for moving beyond the cycle of wars and violence through democratic and inclusive action. The question remains: How can those segments of Israel's society (but also global society) which are convinced about Israel's untruths be reached and brought into an open dialogue and action in concert? What is needed is a deliberate set of actions that can change the political calculations of Palestinians and Israelis and that can create opportunities for a *sustainable* political solution that revitalizes the NPA in the ME context. This much needed approach is urgent in order to change the negative trajectory the Palestinians and Israelis are on. From the EU's side, it must continue to bolster its support to Biden's presidency for a restoration of multilateralism and respect for a norms-based international order. The protection and preservation of the equal rights of Palestinians and Israelis have to be prioritized by a revitalized NPEU. As planetary politics show us, Israelis and Palestinians co-habit one space of 'circulation, passage, not from one culture or country

to another, but from one margin to another, from border to border, edge to edge: never "in," but always "in between"' (Bensmaia and Curtiss Gage 1993, p. 69).

So far, the EU has invested way too much time, effort and public funds on encouraging negotiations (as a goal in themselves) between Israelis and Palestinians. Palestinians' expectations for a better life with equal rights as their Israeli counterparts have been dashed. And what we are left with in Israel today is an emboldened hardline government. The dire conditions in which Palestinians live in the oPt, the environmental destruction, and Israel's as well as the EU's own violations of international norms give us plenty of reason to rethink the Arrival of NP in the ME's planetary politics by productively centring our analysis on the transformed and rapidly transforming conditions for postcolonial sustainable agencies in Israel and Palestine, by thinking through their entanglements.

As with Hass, Mamdani concludes that only by winning over those Israelis who are disillusioned with the way that the Israeli government is going ever more to the extreme right (see also Goren 2023) can help to tip the balance in favour of a political solution to Palestinians' struggle for self-determination. Could this be a pathway for a renewed Arrival of NPEU in the specific context of the ME? NPE is not politically innocent, but the Arrival of planetary politics into a rethought NPE can not only illuminate the neo-colonizing logic of EU interventions in Israel and Palestine: It has the potential to erupt into the open what is one of the most 'silent questions' of our times (Khatibi 1983, p. 18), a sustainable future for all human kind. Thus, the Arrival helps to decolonize our perspective: one which from the borders of Europe produces an orphan knowledge that cannot be re-domesticated as a form of Europe-centred (normative) power (Khatibi 1977).

As Ian Manners points out in the framing article to this symposium, the 'story of our life' and subsequent Arrival include the idea of linguistic relativity, the idea that language use can change the way people think. This speaks directly to the empty rhetoric and focus on negotiations in the ME conflict. As with the arts that convey the messily actual and not just the ideal (Knausgaard 2021), our political/radical/moral imagination requires that and must convey the messiness of reality out there and not just the ideal of planetary politics. A renewed focus on democratic and inclusive action in the ME issue requires building on the efforts of those on the ground: Israelis and Palestinians alike who seek to radically imagine that another life/reality/world is indeed possible.

The example of EcoPeace Middle East mentioned earlier as well as the case of participants in a West Bank immersive language project is another case in point: Rather than allow state mandated violent practices to divide Israelis and Palestinians, Maya Mark and Nnur Zahor, two Israeli Arabic speakers, created an immersive language-learning course for like-minded young Israeli activists, taught by eight local Palestinian women in the south Hebron hills. The local community has become an open space for non-violent Palestinian activism, often working together with the anti-occupation movement in Israel. In the absence of any meaningful top-down and externally driven 'peace process', Palestinians and Israelis involved in this project are part of a new generation of activists who are quietly taking action in concert and thus moving beyond the cycle of violence, wars and hatred through dialogic, democratic and inclusive action: This is indeed an extraordinary step that shifts state mandated adversarial relations into a non-adversarial community within a space that is not that of the state. Over a number of months, this initiative has, in the words of its initiators, forged strong bonds between

students and people across several villages in the southern Hebron hills. Importantly, the presence of Israelis helps counter the rising tide of settler violence. This empowering example of action in concert shows how every margin is a centre – and a powerful one at focusing efforts on democratic and inclusive action (McKernan and Kierszenbaum 2021). Such practices require a form of 'desert thinking' whose intimate contours are the task of future generations of Israelis and Palestinians to jointly explore, decipher and make their own sustainable futures.

IV. Conclusion: Decolonizing the Political Through the Language of Arrival

In rethinking and reimagining EU engagement in the ME issue in the context of planetary politics, this article has revisited my original *JCMS* (2007) article on the construction of EU normative power. In doing so, and in the context of the arrival on normative power in planetary politics, it has shown how a decolonization of the political in this case requires a simultaneous mode of awareness that necessitates an understanding that the wealth and overdevelopment in Israel not only steals from Palestinians but also steals from alternative futures for both Israelis and Palestinians alike.

It has also shown how non-adversarial relations and agonistic cosmopolitics can help in the creation of new forms of the state through a radical, moral and political imagination, namely, a focus on the end of Israel's settler colonization and occupation, the right of Palestinians in Israel and the oPt, as well as those in exile to have rights.

Thirdly, this imagination requires action in concert by way of a shift from a focus on negotiations towards a focus on democratic and inclusive actions and practices. The examples of EcoPeace Middle East and an immersive language project in the south Hebron hills were given to elucidate the potential of lived, collaborative actions in concert.

Could this be a way forward of reviving an analytically useful NPEU concept? This will require a critical assessment of the role of the EU and its prescriptions – how far have these been and continue to be aimed at securing EU MS interests but which have cynically been presented as securing self-determination for Palestinians? The false sense of a (Palestinian) state to come (Pace and Sen 2019) has been constructed by the international community since the Oslo Accords. The Palestinians have made a number of attempts at declaring independence from external forces. Lester Murad has long made the case that aid-funded development in Palestine has not worked, as millions continue to suffer despite billions of dollars (and euros) being spent. Her calls for Palestinians to assert themselves, boycott international aid and take control of their own development (Lester Mourad 2012) have been heeded. As alternatives to dependency on aid, she called upon the Palestinians in diaspora and supporters worldwide to help Palestinians develop new models of sustainability that do not require them to mortgage their future to international actors whose 'vision' for Palestine will not lead Palestinians to be treated as equal citizens.

The EU's incentive structure for Israelis and Palestinians thus far has been heavily distorted (see also USMEP, 2021). As Manners' useful thought device in this symposium reminds us – based on the 'Story of Your Life' and *Arrival* – it would be good for the revitalization of NPEU to recall the idea that 'language use can change the way people think'. Similarly, Mamdani calls for a decolonization of the political. For him, such a political process cannot be brought about through armed conflict since violence defines who

is a member and who is not and where the boundaries of the community lie. For Israel to be a truly democratic state, there needs to be a decoupling of the nation from the state. For Mamdani: 'At a minimum, we can think of politics as a negotiation over the boundaries of membership in a communal formation' (Mamdani 2020, pp. 329–331).

As concluded by Manners in this symposium, what an analytically useful NPEU concept in the case of the ME conflict requires is for the EU, as a first step, to recognize the discriminatory policies of Israel in the oPt: that is, a 'planetary consciousness of the tragedy, fragility, and brevity of indivisible human existence that is all the more valuable as a result of its openness to the damage done by racisms'. Secondly, an EU recognition of the praxis/reality as lived by Palestinians that, by definition, demands an engagement with Palestinians' settler colonial conditions in an effort to introduce transformative (planetary politics) change. The very act of an imagined EU engagement with Palestinians' colonial contexts opens up the possibility of perpetuating through practice (and recognizing) the colonial structures that one rejects in principle. Thirdly, such a renewed NPEU concept necessitates an EU engagement with Palestinians' mode of awareness – that is, their resistance to settler colonialism and *sumud* as well as with the existing examples of action in concert in the shape of EcoPeace and the south Hebron hills immersive language project.

Acknowledgements

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