

I am honoured to have been invited to participate in this Critical Dialogue and I am appreciative of Professor Monterescu's insightful comments. In one of his remarks, he calls for further research into the "sociological mechanisms that *connect* Jews to Israel while simultaneously *disconnecting* Palestinians from Israel and Palestine." This framing suggests that Israel/Palestine operates in zero-sum terms, so that one side's connection functions to the extent that it displaces the other. While much political discourse operates in this way, I suggest that this is a mistake. Such binaries and their consequences emphasize the need for rethinking politics. It was partly this need that led me to critique and develop an understanding of obligation. The idea of obligation has its limitations, but it is, I suggest, significantly better than the alternative of loyalty (which also suggests zero-sums).

Noting connections and disconnections, however, is also to acknowledge membership, but if the connection is for Diaspora Jews, is it the same for all Diaspora Jews? Obviously, the answer is no. In interviews conducted in Israel I did discuss the relationship between The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. The needs of these communities are different and thus their engagements with Israel and Zionism are different than those found in more established and larger communities. Yet, the purpose of the book was not to provide a comprehensive argument for all of Diaspora Jewry, but was focused on the large English-speaking Diaspora Jewish communities with some gestures toward France, which hosts Europe's largest Jewish population.

Monterescu takes issue not only with the empirical focus, but also on the limited ethnographic work. Yet, the work is not an anthropology. Rather, the point was to combine a form of qualitative empirical research concerned with revealing meaningful interpretations with political theory. Monterescu's comments on methodology, serve, I suspect more as a proxy for the complications in the qualitative representation when using the concept of "Diaspora."

The idea of diaspora has come to serve as both an empirical descriptor and a normative position. This dual meaning is especially clear in the example of Diaspora Jews and critique about Israel, where the empirical condition of "diaspora" can produce a particular normative outlook that is "diasporic." It is in this context that we find the theoretical positions that Monterescu refers to when discussing cosmopolitanism. Yet, any cosmopolitan critique works largely as a response to various interpretations of communitarianism, which are statist. Neither of these positions work in the case of a diaspora population, which reflect more closely a form of Jewish transnationalism. It does not matter that my discussion of Jewish transnationalism is pre-Zionist because the point is about exploring a different geography for political obligation. In conclusion, the pre-Zionist examples combined with the empirical research demonstrate that it is possible to conceive of a political space that contains a form of political obligation that is both territorialized (statist) in its origin, but de-territorialized in its application, while remaining concerned with an exclusive community across multiple political geographies.