

APLICANDO EL EMPIRISMO TRASCENDENTAL:
DELEUZE EN MEDIO-ORIENTE
Using transcendental empiricism: Deleuze in the Middle-East

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Abstract

This article applies some of Gilles Deleuze's concepts, particularly the ideas supporting his transcendental empiricism onto a particular field of action: Arab-Jewish radical activism in Israel-Palestine. Specifically, the article interrogates three scenes: housing activism, bilingual education and professional football. Deleuze's empiricism, the findings help to argue, is not only an approach to understanding but necessarily also an activist perspective on social life.

Keywords: Arab-Jewish activism, identity, resistance, transcendental empiricism.

Resumen

El presente artículo aplica algunos de los conceptos de Gilles Deleuze, en particular aquellos vinculados a la idea de un empirismo trascendental, a un campo específico de acción: activismo radical en el conflicto Palestino-Israelí. En particular, este artículo se concentra en tres escenarios: activismo a través de la construcción de viviendas en territorio en conflicto, escuelas bilingües y fútbol profesional. El empirismo de Deleuze, se intentará demostrar, no es simplemente una aproximación teórica, sino necesariamente una perspectiva militante respecto de la vida social.

Palabras claves: Activismo árabe-judío, empirismo trascendental, identidad, resistencia.

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As with other Deleuze's thought-modulations his empiricism is significant and important because it deploys a critical function in regard to the ways we live. Rather than knowledge or truth, its function is activism – to hold by the forces that, in their creative acts, resist the authority of conformism and current identifications. It is so thanks to an understanding of reality loyal to the complexities of change and variation. According to this understanding, perceivable empirical changes happen in connection with another series of changes working as the former's conditions, defined by Deleuze as transcendental conditions. We always negotiate with these conditions by experimenting with passions but the well-ordered world of us would not be perturbed as long as enacted identities, images and perceptions manage to capture and propel to classification whatever we sense and feel. This is how a subject conserves itself in the given. A subject anticipates and re-invents itself only through sensations and imaginations triggered by experimentations that are in disagreement with standard behaviour and common sense. "Empiricism is then not the identification of things as facts; it is the reconnection of illusory and temporary identifications with their transcendental conditions through sensations and experimentations..." (Williams 2005, 23). The key in Williams's definition is on "reconnection", the act of putting back together connections that produce *change and variations* against the actions and thoughts that continually disrupt them with the violence of the identity in the concept. These connections are in fact the scene of the struggle for change between reactionary forces tending to isolate and fortifying actual and stable relations and identities, and the activist force of empiricism forcing the actual to open itself constructively to its conditions. There is no more urgent political struggle than this. It is precisely the very existence of this struggle that which endorses Deleuze's solution to the problem of subjectivity: "The transcendental empirical subject...is as much the product of self-invention, as it is the consequence of a conformity to existing structures" (Buchanan 2000, 86). Indeed, though actual things and their conditions connect as a natural rule of the social world (the subject invents itself), it is in the social world also to suffocate the proliferative character of these connections (the subject conforms to its invention). Empiricism is then about movement – and about the struggle to keep alive the movement of the real in all its grandeur – rather than about the static recognition of objects and subjects and its fascistic applications. This movement or process is that through which things transcend beyond their actual forms and boundaries, hence is "to move from the known to the unknown" (Deleuze 1991, 127). This travel is not without dangers, and for this reason we need to see in the relation established by Deleuze between empiricism and (always temporary) subjectivity, the ethical justification for to respect identity in the way we respect idiocy and violence, with courage and prudence.

Deleuze's empiricism does not bring to the death of the subject but to its redefinition. "The subject is defined by the movement through which it is developed. Subject is that which develops itself" (Deleuze 1991, 85). Deleuze's subject is always in motion, in a state of becoming. The actual or the given, understood in its completeness together with the forces that conditions it and the relations between these two realms, explains why a subject can transcend itself (Williams 2005, 10-2). "[The subject] extracts from which affects it in general a power independent of the actual exercise, that is, a pure function, and then transcends its own partiality" (Deleuze 1991, 86). Deleuze vest this process

on the forces of *to believe* and *to invent*, “the two modes of transcendence” (Deleuze 1991, 132): “To believe is to infer one part of nature from another, which is not given. To invent is to distinguish powers and to constitute functional totalities or totalities that are not given...” (Deleuze 1991, 86). Loyal to the complexities of change and variation, Deleuze’s empiricism puts brute empiricism in the light of its main function, *to ground* a legislator (subject) with self-validation. Note how the difference in kind of these two types of empiricism is expressed in the action of their relevant verbs: while *to believe* and *to invent* are constitutive actions, *to ground* functions as a relay in the chain of sovereign power. By establishing an agreement between the a priori rules which constitute the subject and those responsible for the reproduction of experience, the tradition deriving from Kant duplicates the empirical through abstraction (only to fall back on it with pre-arranged measurement categories) thus foreclosing the enquiry on relations and passages that resist enacted identifications.¹

“Going beyond the given” is then the practice that makes justice with the ways the social world functions. “Going beyond the given” is in other words resisting “the identifications associated with well-determined subjects and objects” (Williams 2005, 22), and hence this empiricism prioritises the interrogation into, and the experimentation with the conditions begetting the active subject upon and beyond the passively synthesised self. The most comprehensive practical manual to this transformative process Deleuze will only produce in collaboration with Guattari many years after he launched his enquiry on empiricism, in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, abridged perhaps in the articulation of the three tasks of schizoanalysis (1983, 296-382). How this system of action and thought, this approach to experience, might actually inform militant research of specific topics?

The empiricist researcher comes to face a state of things without authoritative a priori categories and criteria, and dissuaded from the intention to extricate essences and universals from that which is investigated. She engages with her investigation on the basis of its singular dynamics, in itself and for itself. Therefore, the concepts an empirical research extracts from a state of things are said of the dimensions of the particular multiplicity been investigated: its internal connections and external openings, the nodes of proliferation and those of bifurcation, the stoppages extinguishing the multiplicity, the failures to avoid sedimentation, the focuses of unification and the planes of intersection, the centres of totalisation and the points of subjectivation (Deleuze and Parnet 2002, vii-viii). Above all, Deleuzian empiricism urges us to evaluate practices “entirely with respect to whether their effects increase or decrease someone’s or something’s power of acting” where I suggest seeing this agency in relation to its engagement with the forces of anticipation and invention (Baugh 2010, 290-1). However, the evaluation of the effects on invention of particular practices is identical with the enquiry on how some zone on the limits of our well-ordered society is transgressed, in turn indistinguishable from seeking for the conditions of actual experience. Importantly, these conditions “are not logically necessary, but contingent upon the nature of experience as it is lived” (Stagoll 2010, 288). It seems

¹ For “Kant, relations depend on the nature of things in the sense that, as phenomena, things presuppose a synthesis whose source is the same as the source of relations” (Deleuze 1991, 111).

tempting then for an anxious empiricist researcher to focus on events that appear as resisting the violence of identity while experimenting with un-identifiable sensations and imaginations.

Empiricism applied

With this empirical approach in mind I took an interest on radical forms of transversal activism in Israel-Palestine, generally called Arab-Jewish activism. However, to avoid the traps of identity I suggest thinking of this practice in terms of a rumour, lacking any certain definition, a mix of perceptions and sensations about radical resistance in Israel-Palestine, or a set of percussive stories both thought-provoking and amplifying paranoia. Thought of as the mere unification of two recognisable identities and modes of being, one Jewish-Israeli the other Arab-Palestinian deployed in whatever combination of whatever known sub-parts, is insufficient for to reach a deduction of the effects of these particular practices on new formations.

When applying transcendental empiricism to a study in Israel-Palestine, the most important political question is how inter-ethnic civic networks might flourish given the settler colonial segregative framework. Again, the question is how subjects formed in a given organisation of life might produce experimentations that transcend the order of things and the current ways of life from which they effect. This is about going beyond Aristotle's conservative diagnosis on the correspondence between constitutions and ethics, for it is expectable to have blood-thirsty nationalists across a colonial divide such as in settler societies, but it is revolutionary to disengage from foundations by connecting elements in new creative ways. More exactly, first and foremost transcending is about realising such disrespect on existent organisations of finite modes, putting them in such a shock so continuing to keep previous arrangements becomes a matter of choice rather than social inertia. Activists are the most extroverts amongst those setting ablaze the tribe. Particularly, the success of activists working across the colonial divide depends on their ability to "trigger limit-sensations that disturb well-ordered perceptions and make us aware of the mistaken identities and orderings that we use to keep the world stable and usable" (Williams 2005, 23). When this occurs, we also become aware that totalising concepts are spilt over by the sensations and modifications emerging in the encounter. As I will show, Arab-Jewish activism is not such a concept but a multiplicity, transversed by different lines, irreducible to one another.

Setting the stage: a brief history of the Palestinian-Zionist encounter

In its embryonic stage in the pre-state era (from 1882) the Jewish-Zionist society in Palestine evolved as a settler colonial polity grounded on a series of restrictions placed upon the definition and formation of what would become the State of Israel in 1948 (cf. Shafir 1989). At the core of this definition, the native Palestinian was discounted as a historical and constitutional consociate. Israel then, was founded as a political immunity, the ontological opposition of community. As I have been arguing in late works, this project took the form of *terra-nullius*. But rather than a legal apparatus by means of

which a colonial force legitimises its conquests, *terra-nullius* need to be seen in terms of desiring production, as the ways through which Zionist delirium developed in Palestine (Svirsky 2010, 2012). In the creation of a separated society and culture since the Zionist inception in Palestine, in the incremental accumulation and unification of tracts of land taken out the free market to base national ownership and segregated housing while evicting Palestinians peasants, through a separated economy and labour force structurally constructed to avoid the share of its fruits with the native – all these processes manufactured the production of collective displacement-and-replacement of Palestine making the way to a Jewish-Zionist *corpus-separatum* in relation to both the native and the imperial power (first the Ottoman Empire and after WWI, the British until 1948). In this reading, the concept of *terra-nullius* is not explained in terms of a quarrelling about native title and the claim of lack of a proper system of land title as in the case of Australia (Patton 2000), but it explains the production of historical social machines that factually made the *terra, nullius* – as specific means of reterritorialisation of social, economic and cultural life in a particular region.

My intention is to stress that the sort of society Zionism was gradually forcing on Palestine which eventually took the form of a State, evolved through the codification of capital, land and labour by the distinction between “Jews” and “non-Jews”. Palestine then, became carved into ethnic enclaves. It was never a national conflict a priori. Rather, it progressed as the ethnic separatist dynamic became the dominant explanation of Palestine. This reversal of causes is crucial for to properly place separatism: it didn’t miraculously emanate from the encounter as something we are bound to respect as its unavoidable logic; rather, it was historically laboured (cf. Buchanan 2000, 26).

The Nakba, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine during the war of 1948-9² executed by Jewish military forces, which brought about 700,000 Palestinians to become refugees, and the physical erasure of almost 600 Palestinian towns, urban neighbourhoods and villages (Pappe 2006) – added another tier of materiality, a particular perverse intermingling of bodies, which transformed one more time the Zionist assemblage. However, the ethnic cleansing was not complete and about 150,000 Palestinians found themselves within the boundaries of the newly State of Israel. Although the ethnic cleansing of 1948-9 met Zionists with an altogether ontological preference for ethnic separatism, these tragic events marked a change of direction. If up to 1948, the production of interruptions throughout the social circuits of Palestine (and their fusion) characterised the workings of the Zionist ethnic machines, from this period onwards Palestinian fragmentation – the imperfection of the ethnic cleansing – now became that which would problematise Jewish existence in the region. The new State responded immediately to this imperfection with “follow-ups” policies: Palestinian return was avoided at all costs (Piterberg 2001), Palestinian towns were targeted for destruction, names of places were changed, a massive heroic narrative functioned to erase the memory of the ethnic cleansing (Gur-Ze’ev and Pappe 2003), and the unwelcomed Palestinian citizens (who remained in the country) were put under military rule until 1966 (Pappe 2011). A new crisis was created, invented. Not that of the

² Although civil warfare between Palestinian and Jewish forces was already taking place before, with the declaration of independence of the State of Israel on May 1948 the war was expanded and in addition to the internal fight Arab nations invaded the country (Jordan Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi-Arabia).

Palestinian refugee problem (or the under-status of the Palestinian citizens within Israel) which interested almost no one in the new State of Israel, but a crisis that eventually took the form of a “collective anxiety” which reflected continual dissatisfaction and alertness in relation to the Palestinian condition: simply put it, in their minds, Israelis cannot rest as long as Palestinians are around but on the other hand, they cannot imagine another state of affairs. This collective anxiety, which would be also strengthened by the ways Israel manipulated the memory of the Holocaust, based a post-1948 infinite Zionist cohesive commitment (as cleansing or destruction can never be completed), which retrospectively can be defined in terms of a social contract: the ethnic cleansing as a social contract. The history of Palestinian resistance in the pre-1948 era must be said, is not one of victories; only after the 1967 war and the occupation of the West-Bank and Gaza, Palestinian *sumud* (steadfastness) started to base fierce resistance (Kimmerling 2003).

However, the change in 1948 should not be read as a rupture but as a change of direction and intensity of vectors. The pre-1948 exemption upon the commitment to engage in the construction of a shared political community became after 1948, into a commitment to eternalise the exemption. Indeed, the great cultural success of Zionism is that most Israelis and Palestinians believe that segregation is natural, not even a collateral damage of their historical encounter, but something we are obliged to respect. As a consequence, something has become external to thought in the region, the very possibility of envisaging and performing alternative, non-exclusionist ways of existence. This is the historical damage Zionism brought to the inhabitants of the region. We need to hone here the focus: displacing the body of the Palestinian community was not without the displacement of the thought of a political community in Palestine. For to exclude a concrete other, colonial oppression must keep at distance integrative ways of existence, hence, in their recuperation lays the significance of resistance. The last sentence already moves this reading closer to the significance of that rumour, Arab-Jewish activism.

October 2000

We have so far followed some significant turning points (events) in the history of the encounter.³ As a multiplicity, this encounter is populated ° many concepts. The machines of *terra-nullius*, separatism, collective anxiety, and so on – each explaining a different dimension of the unfolding encounter. Precisely by extracting these concepts which deduce the structural conditions of the encounter, cultural

³ I'm not referring for instance to another significant point of inflection in this story, namely the 1967 war and the effects of the since then the military occupation of the West-Bank and the Gaza Strip. This event brought to the “doubling” of the Israeli regime, in what Azoulay and Ophir (2008) have defined as the “Sea to the River” structure (from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River). Briefly, the occupation project has evolved in the Sea-to-River region as a dynamic system of domination, in which intertwining libidinal flows – of authority, of people, of material things, of cultural ideas, and of economic investments and profits – run in both directions, from Israel proper into the Palestinian territories and vice versa. From the point of view of the two metastases, the main conclusion is that since 1967, the occupation has broadened Israel's range of governmentability beyond the international Green Line, and that the “Line” itself has since become a differentially permeable membrane through which a new political regime has developed. The Green Line is the 1949 armistice line agreed between Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria following the 1948-9 war. From the point of view of resistance, the significance of this analysis lies on the claim that the struggle for decolonisation must expand itself according to the structure of the regime, from the Sea to the River, without leaving unattended the necessary decolonisation of Arab-Jewish relations within Israel proper. Therefore, the decolonisation of Palestine has two dimensions, one referring to the revoking of the separatist principle and the other is its geo-political spatiality.

criticism contributes to the revitalisation of the communication with actual state of affairs in the sense of disrupting their logic, their continuance and their violence. Rather than duplicating victorious identities these concepts counter-actualise them; they tear apart the consistency of dominant representations by extricating the conditions that define them historically, materially and discursively. We must stress: counter-actualisation does not take sides, in the traditional sense. It offers a critical and constructivist viewpoint which bypasses nor the oppressor fascism neither the oppressed reterritorialisations of nationalism and identity. Precisely for this reason, we need a new definition of what the oppressed is. *The oppressed* need to be understood beyond the conservative definitions vesting subalternity on recognisable collective human subjects coping with actual forms of oppression; *the oppressed* are the ways of life prevented from us by current systems of oppression.

Moreover, counter-actualisation or the extraction of concepts is not the monopoly of philosophers; their *sense* is felt and experienced and eventually agglutinates social forces so as the invitation to transcend the given is answered collectively. This leads in turn, to the actualisation of ways of life prevented from us. One crucial event which would trigger such agglutination of forces in Israel-Palestine is the "October events" of year 2000. The second Palestinian Intifada (uprising) is well-known as an act of resistance of the Palestinians in the West-Bank and Gaza. Not many are aware of the role of the Palestinian citizens of Israel in this uprising, that "forgotten" minority as Pappe recently put it, reaching the twenty percent of the population in Israel proper (2011).

Most chronologies of the October events start telling the story either with the visit of the then political opposition leader Ariel Sharon to the Islamic holy site of *Al-Haram Al-Sharif* (or the Temple Mount) in Jerusalem's Old City on 28 September 2000, or with the failure of the negotiations between the President of the Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and US President Bill Clinton in the Camp David summit about two months before Sharon's visit (Usher 2003). Sharon's alibi for the provocative mission was to check personally the restoration works made by the *Waqf* (the Islamic trust administrating the site) which allegedly were threatening the biblical sites of the Temple Mount, especially the "Solomon's Stables". Perhaps no other person in the history of this conflict has had more negative import for the Palestinians than Ariel Sharon. His military curriculum alongside his political views and actions, have helped him gaining that dubious place of enmity. So entering physically into a focal point of religious and national dispute – the small compound of the *Al-Aqsa Mosque* and the *Dome of the Rock* – could not have had any peaceful repercussions. Indeed, Sharon's intention to visit *Al-Haram Al-Sharif* caused deep objection amongst Palestinians in the occupied territories and within Israel proper, and already on the same day riots started near the site; few dozens of Palestinians and Israeli police officers were wounded. Mass demonstrations rapidly expanded the next day first in Jerusalem during the Friday's prayers (the *Jumu'ah*) at the *Al-Aqsa Mosque*, and then protests spread throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The second Palestinian Intifada, the *Al-Aqsa* intifada, was launched.

In contrast with the events of the First Intifada (1987-1993), Palestinians within Israel soon joined the wave of protests. On the first of October, the High Follow-Up Committee for the Arab

Citizens of Israel⁴ declared a strike-day, and called for protest marches and demonstrations in cities, towns and villages as an expression of solidarity with the Palestinians compatriots in the 1967 occupied territories. In the course of ten days rallies and marches erupted everywhere, but mainly in the north and the centre of the country. Tens of thousands demonstrated in more than forty Palestinian cities and towns, and in the mixed cities of Jaffa, Haifa, and Akka. Silent marches, hot-tempered demonstrations, and civil violence changed intermittently at different places. Roads were blocked by demonstrators and public property was damaged (such as post offices, street lights, and bank branches); tyres burned, stones were thrown at the police, at some places also Molotov cocktails. A wave of rage swept the country at once. The intensity of the events, their spatial distribution, and the determined political discourse which accompanied the demonstrations took all by surprise – demonstrators, repressors, and spectators. The police response against the Palestinian demonstrators was lethal: as Marwan Bishara put it, “Israel went to war against its Palestinian citizens” (2002, 47). The response involved the use of special sniper units, live ammunition and rubber bullets. Thirteen men were killed and scores wounded by the Israeli police during the ten days of popular civil disobedience. The killers were never brought to court and the Israeli government never assumed responsibility for the loss.

The disgraceful reaction of the police, the approval granted by the Israeli government and the almost all-encompassing support amongst the Jewish majority can only be comprehend in terms according to which “Arab protest is still not seen as a legitimate response to continued injustices but as a mortal threat to the security of the state by a disloyal minority” (Zureik 2001, 95). For the Zionist hegemony the October protests proved to be an actualisation of the allegedly “existential threat” Israel as a Jewish state faces, and twistedly, they became a reminder and a reason to maintain the Palestinian minority’s underprivileged status. Perversely, inequality and racism are re-justified in terms of what they unchain, the protests. For the Palestinians citizens this entails to cope simultaneously with their disrupted citizenship and with an expectation for gratefulness on the side of the oppressor, for the disrupted citizenship that has been granted.

Since the October uprising, the fear of decolonisation unchained a series of new policies and laws. The list of these initiatives may fill the pages of a complete encyclopaedia. A very partial yet terrifying list includes the legislation to limit the political freedom of expression of Palestinians on 2003 (Rouhana and Soutani 2003); in the same year (31.07.2003) the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) enacted a “Temporary Provision” under the name of The Citizenship and Entrance to Israel Law – 2003 which restricts permanent residence of Palestinians from the occupied territories married to citizens – and the Provision is ever since extended; on 10.10.2010 the government approved a bill- amendment to the Citizenship Law which obliges new citizens to declare an oath of allegiance to Israel as a “Jewish and

⁴ This committee was formed on 1982 as an independent political parent-organisation of the Palestinian political forces within Israel. Its members are the mayors of the Palestinian local councils and municipalities, the Palestinian members of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament), and Palestinian organisations in civil society. Its main functions are to follow Israel’s governmental policies towards the Palestinian minority and to respond to them through formal political action in the Knesset and in other official bodies, and to organise general protests on specific issues. Although the committee is considered by many as a sort of representative body of the Palestinian citizenry, Israel never recognised it officially.

democratic state". In 2011 the Knesset amended the Foundations of the Budget Law 1985 (amendment 40; *The Knesset*, 22.03.2011) to restrict the commemoration of the Nakba,⁵ and also it amended the Cooperative Societies Order (No 8) 2011, an amendment that legalises in tortuous ways exclusion of Arab families from rural housing in communities built for Jews only. On 11.07.2011 the Knesset passed the "Law for the prevention of harm to the state of Israel by means of boycott" which criminalises individuals, citizens of Israel that call to support the BDS call for boycott.⁶ This is, as I said, only a very partial list which continues as I write these lines.

Many scholars and observers have contended that though the October protests erupted first in solidarity with the protests carried by the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and appeared to be as a direct response to Sharon's provocative visit to *Al-Haram Al-Sharif*, they soon started to be perceived in the press and by the general public in relation to the Palestinian minority' restricted citizenship within Israel (cf. Zureik 2001, Sa'adi 2010, Pappé 2011, 232-3). But "what was new in October", explains Azmi Bishara, "was that a strike that had nothing to do with local interests per se fired the population to such an extent that the protestors soon deviated from the planned marches and spontaneously erupted into expressions of vehement anger that no one anticipated" (2001, 55). The extent of the anger and what it unchained was unexpected, but the events were not disconnected from the ongoing cultural and political circumstances. As MacKenzie explains for 9/11, October 2000 "alerted us that political events had already taken place. Something significant had already happened, some turning points had already occurred in the material constitution of the political" (2008, 17). What this change attested for? As Jamal explains, a process of dissatisfaction with the citizenship status was building up for many years (2011). A new Palestinian society was in the making already when October shattered into pieces the pseudo-tranquility that for decades enveloped the relationships between the Palestinian minority and the Jewish majority. This was, as Pappé explains, a process of "building a civil society that was able to do what the political elite had failed to do for years – mobilize people to participate in a mass civil disobedience at the right moment" (Pappé 2011, 240).⁷ Azmi Bishara, a year after the events, claimed that "the massive demonstrations that

⁵ Foundations of the Budget Law – 1985 (amendment 40), *The Knesset*, 22.03.2011; in fact, article 3b-4 (the amendment) states that the Minister of Finance is entitled to subtract budget from state-budgeted institutions that commemorate the Israeli Independence Day as "a day of mourning". The Knesset reads a day of mourning' as the commemoration of the Nakba, and by that not only warns schools, NGOs and other budgeted institutions but also any institution seeking for financial support from the state, and more generally casts on the commemoration of the Nakba a public prohibition.

⁶ The movement calling for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel launched by Palestinian civil society organisations in July 2005; see: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/>.

⁷ The development of the Palestinian civil society is an important factor in the transformation Palestinians in Israel experience during the last two decades (Jamal 2008a, 2008b; Pappé 2011, 217-21). This development has put the Palestinian civil society in Israel on a counter-hegemonic track, especially by organisations working for social, cultural and political change, and on rights advocacy (Jamal 2008b, 297). The constitution of a new political discourse of the Palestinian minority have been benefited also by the changes in their "media orientation", which merge the proliferation of local newspapers and radio stations, and the choice of Arab television broadcasted via satellite with the strategic consumption of Hebrew media (Jamal 2009). The peak of this political process of change of the Palestinian minority is the publication of the "Future Vision Documents" (published between December 2006 and May 2007 by four leading Palestinian non-governmental organisations) which aimed at opening a debate on restructuring the state from a multiple perspective that merged liberal-democratic, multicultural and indigenous views. Jamal adjudicates an explicative force to the October events: "A long-term factor that triggered the formulation of the future vision documents was the growing oppositional consciousness among the intellectual, political, and civic Arab leadership in Israel and its activation after the crisis of October 2000" (2008a, 6).

swept the Arab towns and villages and the mixed cities...were the culmination of a national reawakening that had been gathering momentum for some time" (2001, 57).

A new political culture of resistance transpired the October events to become an open and conscious challenge not only to state policies but also to paradigms that were still tradition a moment before October. These changes have been framed by Jamal and others in terms of a politics of indigeneity involving a political horizon far beyond political multiculturalism (2011, Jabareen 2008). Indigeneity appears as a diagrammatic route that passes through crucial stations as the 1967 war and the Nakba, but more importantly places these historical facts to be thought as pertaining to the plane of colonial formation and therefore relocates resistance and decolonisation. Hence, thinking Palestinian indigeneity not only shakes the political back and forth in chronological time, but also calls for a rethinking of the subjectivities shaped by the political disruption of nativeness. Indigeneity provides with new solutions to *the problem of a minority in a settler-majoritarian state*. These new solutions express significant turning points in the graph of the relations between the state and the Palestinian minority, between this minority and the Jewish majority, and in the prospects for Palestinian unity – making transparent that accommodation and full and just integration were ever since an impossibility. But only after October 2000 we could take notice that something has changed in the public sphere in Israel. October 2000 "was pregnant with impersonal significances that conditioned the very possibility of a variety of subjective meanings" (MacKenzie 2008, 19); indeed, the actual events during October 2000 were conditioned by a transformation in the political itself. A time for new connections arrived, opening the present to embrace future alternatives: "The actor occupied the instant, while the character portrayed hopes or fears in the future and remembers or repents in the past" (Deleuze 1990, 147). New political significances, triggered by the October uprising, not only remit to the the series of transformations in the public space in Israel that have been taking place before October. They trigger new sensations in bodies, their mixtures and in actual state of affairs – taken to construct in turn material connections which give life to new modes of existence (MacKenzie 2008, 21). This is the subject of the next section: how these changes communicate with upcoming forms of activist cooperation between Palestinian and Jews in civil society, immediately with the October uprising.

Experimentations

Arab-Jewish political groups and social organisations have a complex history which started together with the advent of Zionist colonisation on Palestine at the end of the nineteenth century. In many senses this is not only the story of a certain aspect of resistance against an oppressive coloniser but also a tale about the problematic relations between Arab-Jewish radical groups and those fabricated by the Zionist left that have mainly functioned to contain profound resistance. October 2000 provided with an opportunity to reframe these relations. Practically, the morning after "dialogue groups" and "peace tents" flourished everywhere in the country. But eventually, the October events became portrayed in terms of a lament, as if a delicate but significant fabric of relationships was ruptured: *this is how*

subjects conserve themselves in the given. In fact, this is the vocabulary the Zionist left uses to laundry their regret for the loss of control over the political desires of the Palestinian minority. Not without a reason; as Pappé explains, following October, “the political and educated elites of the Palestinians in Israel lost all belief in “coexistence”, liberal Zionist discourse or a future of change within the present parameters of the Jewish state” (2011, 240). This is indeed one of the crucial liberationist moments of October: the uprising not only did break up the semblance of a plausible style of Arab-Jewish relations; they also buttressed a critical attitude towards the compliance with the corrupted basis on which these relations laid. After October, the submissive conception of Arab-Jewish coexistence and the sorts of activism this conception yielded lost their hegemonic force to become regarded as the image of that which inhibits alteration.

The activist narrative that follows is based on a cluster of multi-sited ethnographic researches conducted in Israel-Palestine between 2006 and 2011 (for full findings and analysis see Svirsky 2012).⁸ Obvious reasons of space force us in this article to select episodes and scenes. We will be looking into three scenes: housing inequality and segregation, bilingual education and professional football. A definition is to the point here: I understand activism in the spirit of transcendental empiricism: as a wound of alterity within the habitual, causing an assemblage to swing “between a territorial closure that tends to re-stratify [it] and a deterritorialising movement that, on the contrary, connects [it] with the Cosmos” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 337). It is the swing which carries the subject to transcend itself.

Scene N°1

I mentioned above the amendment to the Cooperative Societies Order (No 8) 2011, known as the “Admission Committees Law”, which legalises exclusion of Palestinian families in rural housing built on state land, a policy affecting mainly, but not only, the region of the Galilee in the north of Israel-Palestine.⁹ An Arab-Jewish NGO, “An Alternative Voice in the Galilee” (AVIG),¹⁰ formed as a ricochet of the October events, led the struggle to abolish the administrative mechanisms through which exclusionary housing was carried out. In fact, the amendment to the law was effected as a result of many years of AVIG’s “Living in Equality” project since early 2000s.¹¹ AVIG had four main routes of action: to incentive Palestinian owners of small plots of land within the Jewish Regional Councils to build houses and disrupt the logic of Judaisation; to incentive and organise Palestinian families to

⁸ Parts of the field work were conducted together with Aura Mor-Sommerfeld.

⁹ Exclusion affects also other social groups in the population but it will be deceiving to ignore its effective demographic paranoiac causes: to incentive Jewish families to populate areas in which Palestinians are a majority. This policy was called “Judaisation of the Galilee” ever since it appeared in the late 1960s. It should be added that rural housing in small communities for Jewish families is organised through Regional Councils and comprises very solid infrastructures as education, roads, industrial areas and leisure centres which as a social compound indent the segregative realm in relation to the Palestinian surroundings (Yiftachel 1999, 2000, 2006).

¹⁰ See: <http://alternative-voice.org/catpage1.php?id=6&pageidcall=138>.

¹¹ AVIG was not alone, other collectives also took part in this struggle; see Svirsky 2012, 94-109.

apply for housing in the Jewish communities;¹² to build a democratic community open to all; and lastly, to gain public support within the Jewish communities.

The peak of the “Living in Equality” project came with the well-known *Rakefet* Case. On March 2006 AVIG assisted Fatinah Abrik and Ahmed Zbeidat, then a newly married couple from Sakhnin (one of the biggest Palestinian cities in Israel), to apply for housing in the Jewish Galilean community of Rakefet. On 05.03.2006 the couple application was rejected, and also their appeal; this brought to the decision to submit a petition to the Supreme Court demanding to revoke the whole mechanism of selection and specifically to grant the Zbeidat family a plot in Rakefet to build their house.¹³ A hunch that the Supreme Court will back the petition was in the air and since then, the campaign for and against became the main political issue of the day in the Galilean Jewish communities. The topic was ever since widely exposed by the media, in countrywide distribution newspapers, in radio and television. The race to foothold race was reaching its climax. From 2008 to 2010 new, right-wing and Zionist left organisations joined the struggle. While right-wing Zionists asked to support the system of selection, the Zionist left was content with getting rid of the racist image, not to pursue common housing. On 03.08.2009 the Knesset amended regulations to grant settlement institutions power to determine rules regarding the right to inhabit a small rural community. This came as the first institutional reaction to *Rakefet*. But the down-top popular efforts within the Jewish communities deserve no less attention. Since the *Rakefet* plea was submitted, two communities sanctioned an internal code to unit fronts and back the selective system of housing admission and other communities still debate to enact such a code. On 13 September 2011 the Supreme Court granted the Zbeidat authorisation to build their house in Rakefet; however, the decision in regard the petition to revoke the whole mechanism of selection was postponed.

Before the drama begun, the Jewish communities discriminated without any public attention. Segregative life between Palestinians and Jews in the Galilee was an unquestioned stratum; not anymore. It is questioned, by a civil language that imposes new questions in so doing problematising the whole field of citizenship in the region. AVIG succeeded, at the very least, deterritorialising the public discourse on housing inequality, local as well as national. This is about introducing new sets of order-words with their implicit revolutionary presuppositions within the Zionist majoritarian language. In the Galilee one cannot talk anymore of “admission committees” without bringing upon the conversation the ethical and political implications AVIG and other organisations have injected during the last ten years. Uttering “admission committees” is nowadays a speech act that terrify most speakers: a certain feeling of shame hovers and transmits itself through the speakers’ statements. If in the past, uttering “admission committees” would have point only to the anxieties of those Jewish families applying to housing in rural communities, now, this individual focus has been overran by socio-political implications which involves a critical sense of the collective far beyond the boundaries of a particular

¹² This route of action was supported by the Palestinian legal NGO Adalah (The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel) which granted free legal aid. See: <http://www.adalah.org/eng/>.

¹³ The appeal was submitted in the name of Fatinah Abrik and Ahmed Zbeidat, and the following organisations joined the petition: AVIG, the Arab Centre for Alternative Planning, the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow, Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights, the Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance, and Adalah.

community. As Lundborg explains, “the order-word states that things are no longer the same as they once were, and that consequently the content of the body has changed and taken on a new form as well” (2009). The “burden” of this social character of the enunciation “admission committees” has been taken also into the very marrow of the law in the body of the “Admission Committees Law” and in so doing the language of resistance has found a formal domicile to disturb the syntax of power.

The whole enterprise of housing activism has indeed engraved a linguistic territory, a strident assemblage of sounds that by-passes none Zionist. This is not a secret language, spoken in smoky rooms by preoccupied activists. This is a syntax woven by a minority – comprising the politics of indigeneity, and Arab-Jewish activism among other progressive political forces – but introduced in the language of the colonisator.

It is worth expanding the story to grasp an understanding of how reterritorialising machines work. The Zionist left organisation that took part in this struggle is called “Atid” (future in Hebrew);¹⁴ this is a Jews-only group which their focus is on struggling against the legislation that ratifies in law the power to select. The question is however, how Atid’s activities stand in relation to the problem of a non-segregated way of existence. The relation between working against the law and the desire to pursue a non-segregated life is not obvious at all and needs specification. One may reject the law for many reasons, but there is no evidence suggesting any connection, material emotional or discursive, between Atid’s efforts to bring about the revocation of the law and a complementary effort to strive for common housing; none conference, workshop, lecture, protest, or any kind of collaborative work with Palestinian activists that may attest for an experimentation with the idea of a non-segregated life.¹⁵

The point is that this sort of activism has no answers or connections to what in principle appears to stand at the very foundation of its action, namely to strive for common housing: we may ask why to oppose a law for selective housing if one does not actually oppose selective housing which logically conduct to non-selective housing. *“Not to transcend” issues political interests forcing a restricted connection on the collective production of desire.* Activist flows are cut so as to conform to a long un-ruptured history of familial and institutional Zionist training connecting through active and passive memory to the whole of the virtual past of the colonial encounter. Here, resistance is carried out by forces that *maintain a faithful distance* from the far boundaries of power, namely from the possibility of truly challenging material life organisations in land and housing. Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptual difference between limit and threshold is of use here: “the limit designates the penultimate marking a necessary rebeginning, and the threshold the ultimate marking an inevitable change” (1987, 438). While AVIG’s activities demonstrate a striving towards a threshold (dismantling rural housing as it is to make it open and democratic) after which there is room only for new assemblages, Atid plays on the *“penultimate mechanism”* which submits a beginning (a sought-after revocation of the Admission Committees Law) to the logic of segregation. There is an imposition of a limit – the struggle against the law – which keeps activism enslaved, faithful to Zionist territories and at distance from a

¹⁴ See http://www.atidmisgav.org.il/?page_id=84.

¹⁵ See Svirsky 2012, 135-39.

threshold beyond which ethnic striations are challenged. The conceptual difference between limit and threshold explains as well, the incompatibility between activism such as Atid on the one hand and AVIG's, on the other hand. Given a territory, one may choose how to engage: with its destruction by letting desire to pursue thresholds, or with its rejuvenation by inhibiting desire with limits. The restraint put on the action reaffirms an orbit that spins around the centre of gravitation of hegemony. Resistance at the hands of Atid moves the system (state policies/activism) to a previously established emotional-political centre of gravitation – *common housing is not in the social agenda*, now actualised differently – *by opposing the law that makes public that common housing is not in the social agenda*. The conclusion is that Atid strives to erase the symbolic stain, and do not problematise the restrictive operation of their collective unconscious. As Saldanha so rightly put it in his analysis of white hippies' psychedelic experiences in Goa, "what needs to be explored more precisely is not just that hippies at least nominally identify themselves with sideshow exhibits and the disenfranchised, but how in that very act they demonstrated their continuing stickiness to a dominant culture" (Saldanha 2007, 55).

Scene N°2

Five successful Arabic-Hebrew bilingual schools are currently operating within Israel. In 1984, a bilingual school was set up at Neveh Shalom/Wahat al-Salaam (*Oasis of Peace*), a village founded jointly by Israeli Jews and Palestinian citizens of Israel. In 1998, the NGO "Hand in Hand" (Center for Jewish Arab Education in Israel) in cooperation with a group of parents founded the *Galilee School*. A year later, a third bilingual school was opened in Jerusalem; in 2004 a fourth school was opened in Wadi Ara, and in 2007 the first Arabic-Hebrew bilingual school in Beer-Sheeva, the southern region of the country, was opened.¹⁶ At these schools, native Arabic and Hebrew speakers live and study together. Every class has approximately equal numbers of Arabic first-language (AL1) and Hebrew first-language (HL1) pupils, with two tutor teachers – AL1 and HL1.¹⁷ This structure of cooperation, based on a dual formula of coexistence, epitomises the school's vision. Indeed, integration is enshrined in a symmetrical "side by side" mode of working, based on the joining of two – two nations, languages, narratives, cultures, halves in every class, teachers, and so on. This is the formula with which *Galilee* challenges segregation.¹⁸ The kind of experimentation at work in *Galilee* is particularly significant in societies with a strong relationship between belonging and the right to a good life, and a space meticulously divided along ethnic, religious and national lines – such as the Israeli society. The teachers, undoubtedly, are kingpin in the everyday of *Galilee*. In response to the question of how *Galilee* impacted on her life as a teacher and as a person, one HL1 teacher said:

¹⁶ The non-profit organization "Hand in Hand" was established in 1997 with the aim of promoting bilingual schools for Jewish and Arab children. These schools are recognised by, and partly financed by, the Ministry of Education.

¹⁷ Children learn to read and write in both languages to develop bi-literacy; equal emphasis is placed on the narratives of both cultures. See: Amara 2005; Bekerman 2003, 2004; Bekerman & Shhadi 2003; Bekerman and Horenczyk 2004; Feuerverger 2001; Mor-Sommerfeld 2005; Svirsky et al. 2007, 66-7.

¹⁸ The school also organises a wide range of social activities throughout the year (such as language courses, parent courses, excursions, workshops, open lectures and festivals) to expand its communal basis of support.

I think that what happened was that from that moment onwards, my life changed completely [...]. During the first year I was totally in a trip of the senses [...] I lived it very intensely, I wanted to know more, to read and learn more [...] *It* was as if it completed me [...] I have something that apparently was there all along but I didn't know existed. I think that from the moment *it* hits you, you cease to be the same person [...] I think that being a teacher at *Galilee* has significance for me and affects everything I do (interviewed on 02.10.2008; emphasis added).

The *it* in the teacher's discourse is that which is differentiated in the event of the encounter, that which spins and scrambles the senses. Against a background of segregation as a way of life, sending children to joint schools is perceived as non-normative (for both communities), and as expressive of a conscious political decision by the parents. This is because the school not only offers a chance for an intercultural encounter but, crucially, it also opens up a chance to commit the entire family to experiment with unknown practices beyond the secure realm of tribal frameworks, even with some regarded as socially subversive – such as changing principled political and historical views, and considering inter-ethnic coupling. For some Jewish families, the encounter at *Galilee* forces on them a re-examination of their conventional approach towards the army and the conscription of their children. We may say that on the stage of *Galilee*, an intercultural encounter is being dramatised: segregated bodies and things connect and mix, interpenetrate and affect each other with passions and actions as they do not do outside the school (where bodies live apart, are coupled apart, their languages do not meet but in conflict situations, have hierarchised life-opportunities and so on). The confusion *Galilee* causes amongst its members, is a source of creativity: when asked how on this matter, an AL1 teacher answered,

I want to know who I am, not to answer who am I but to be able to go forward...perhaps a sort of common or plural personality, a common identity, to reach something common and then to act. But first I need to know who I am, not to enclose myself but not to forget. Yes, I don't want to forget, but neither to get stuck there. I want to break through, to go on, to enjoy life...not all the time be stuck...me, the Palestinian...what's next? What's next? I want to move on... (interviewed on 04.05.2008).

"*What's next?*" – this is perhaps the main political question. But, as in the case of housing, reactionary forces in *Galilee* are as real as the empirical forces of radical activism. In the case of *Galilee*, the project is being betrayed and overturned from within: desires that erupt, weaving new forms of cooperation and lifestyles, are being partially stifled by the interests of identity and ethnicity. We already can sense this in the words of the AL1 teacher just quoted ("*first I need to know who I am...*"). She adds:

There is no blurring of identity or vagueness at the school, I can tell. There is a clear identity demarcation and sharpening of defining who you are, and who you are here – I mean mainly for the Arab children, who were significantly lacking a sense of identity. They don't do that at the Arab schools – they don't commemorate "Land Day" [...] Here the Arab teachers have the opportunity– since we are already within this encounter [...] We really have been through a process, a long and amazing process of defining identity, sharpening identity, and it comes back to the children (interviewed on 04.05.2008).

This is about making the encounter a machine of identification: *"an amazing process of defining identity, sharpening identity"*. National identity is objectified as something to be acquired, something lacking and something that recruits bodies by funneling desire through predetermined viaducts. After categories have been distributed, this forces a decision that must be made: you are either a Jew or a Palestinian, where is your place? This insistence on "drawing" bodies passes not without the teachers' criticism as the following statements express – from two teachers, one AL1 and one HL1 – each in their turn:

I have always said that between Years 1 and 4 this whole thing of Jews and Arabs is a mistake. First we need to integrate them socially on the basis of their childhood and partnership, then we can start to see the big picture afterwards, from Year 5 and 6 onwards [...] (interviewed on 04.05.2008).

From Year 1 onwards [...] you're continually saying "Jews", "Arabs", "Jews", "Arabs" – it's like you're reminding them – so that one day a boy comes up to you and says "The Arabs hit me..."...So perhaps this very thinking ensures that the walls of separation are built-in. Because the first wall was the notion of "Co" – that in itself is the first barrier! [...] Because it is as if there is a separation: although the intention is to foster cooperation, it's nevertheless two nations, two groups, whatever [...] (interviewed on 11-18.02.2008).

Intercultural frameworks like bilingual schools may develop a quality of causing people to oscillate between different and contradictory identity contents. This is in other words, about re-locating subjectivity. I'd like to claim that this function can be expressed in terms of a "pendulum-practice", and more exactly, as a *cultural pendulum of identity*. A pendulum however, operates on the basis of a restoring force:

During the first year [at Galilee] it took control of my entire life. Slowly but surely, I found a balance; it is not the same now. In the first year I went to the other extreme – and then I found my place. It's still in flux...By "the other extreme" I mean our role and place as Jews in any Jewish-Arab encounter. I became a Palestinian in the way I saw the world – in everything, because of my feelings of guilt. But I found a balance, whereby there are certain things in the essence of myself as a Jew and as an Israeli that I realised are OK.

I'm not at the point of feeling responsible for all the bad things Jews have done to Arabs, but I feel balanced – I have come to terms with myself as an Israeli and as a Jew (interviewed on 02.10.2008).

The sort of territory carved by the pendulum is one onto which "to balance" functions as its regulatory principle. Connections and forces that were excessive ("*in the first year I went to the other extreme*") are counterbalanced by pre-existent essences and further transformations are halted. We cannot grant recognition to that which is in constant variation; in other words, the reaffirmation of identity cannot advance without the principles of recognition and representation:

If we place too much of an emphasis on identity formation, we might lead the children to racism [...] – on the other hand, we might see it as helping them to know themselves if only as a first step towards knowing and recognising the identity of the other (AL1, interviewed on 04.05.2008).

The right thing to do is to [...] represent both sides by using two teachers. It is not right that I should teach about national day by myself [...] I would teach it from my Jewish perspective, not from a Palestinian one. I am a Jew, I represent that narrative, that story and those feelings [...] and the children sense and know that even if I'm very much open to both sides, it is not the same as having the subject taught by a Palestinian teacher [...] to her it comes naturally, from her language [...] She must communicate the culture and the essence because she is Palestinian [...] I can do it, too, but I might cause harm to the children if I don't impart the right messages [...] This is the right model for the children[...] it gives legitimacy to both sides perfectly (HL1, interviewed on 02.10.2008).

The right model is equated with perfect communication of pairs of discrete signifiers. In this way, tribal distributions are granted with powers of judgement. Harm, therefore, would be that which crosses and perturbs the implementation of the right model, in this case, say, that a traditional "Palestinian" topic as the Nakba would be elaborated disregarding ethnic affiliations; this kind of transversality is not representable because it cannot be tamed: there is no identity-category for such a fluid practice or feeling. The problem of course, is that in this way, third-way affects and compositions are overlooked and considered alien to the school's soul.

This ethnography gives evidence that at *Galilee* tribal subjectivity is part of the infrastructure, underlying a conception of the Arab-Jewish intercultural encounter in Israel-Palestine as a tricky process of escape. The analysis shows that the intercultural encounter at *Galilee* is both "creative and constricting" (Saldanha 2007, 8). My conclusions join Saldanha's diagnosis on experimentations with escape: intercultural experimentations traversing ethnic segregation in *Galilee* can coexist "with the reinstatement of where one is coming from" (Saldanha 2007, 6). It is this tendency of the bodies in *Galilee* to assemble around origins that I find to be betraying: limits are being imposed on imagination regarding how we might play with subjectivity. What happens in *Galilee* is that an escape from ethnic

segregation to form an educational community “can perversely reinforce” the conditions for segregation (Saldanha 2007, 10). In other words, identitarian rhythms, with which the Arab-Jewish school vibrates, envelop and slow the speed of the intercultural pulses.

Scene N°3

It should not surprise the reader that, based on the the definition of activism I offered above, the narrative is not limited by traditional conceptions of political change. The story is about Jewish players in the Israeli Premier League football team “Ittihad Abna Sakhnin” (Arabic) or “Ihud Bnei-Sakhnin” (Hebrew; Sons of Sakhnin), located in the Arab city of Sakhnin (from now Bnei-Sakhnin).¹⁹ As Sorek stated, “due to the central place of soccer in the leisure culture of Arab men in Israel, and due to the increasing visibility of Arab soccer players in the Israeli public sphere, soccer is much more than another “interesting angle” for the investigation of Arab-Jewish relationships” (2007, 5).

Sakhnin is not just one more Arab city. For its historical involvement in resistance, it has earned a central political status within the Palestinian community in Israel. The promotion of Bnei-Sakhnin to the Israeli Premier League in the 2002-3 season, Sorek rightly points out, has contributed to this local pride and brought the city to public awareness in the larger society. Just one year after the debut in the Premier League, Bnei-Sakhnin won the “State Cup” (the equivalent of the English FA Cup). As far it concerns the composition of the team, “with the growing professionalisation of the club, the relative share of Arab players has declined”, hence nowadays only third of the players in the team are locals, about another third Jewish players and the rest foreign (Sorek 2007, 167).

Based on the Bordieuan notion of “contested terrain” as “an arena in which struggles are waged over the potential meanings that can be attributed to it, and over the formulations of identities that are derived from these meanings” (Sorek 2007, 6), Sorek has explained the role that football plays for the Palestinians in Israel in terms of an “integrative enclave”. According to Sorek, “the integrative enclave is a social sphere that is ruled by a liberal-integrative discourse of citizenship – in sharp contrast to the ethnic discourse that governs the Israeli public sphere in general. It is a sphere which permits a limited and well-bounded inclusion in Israeli citizenship” (2007, 2). Sorek is right in claiming that the integrative enclave in football “is not translated into a tangible change of the discriminatory character of the state”, and hence, it “may play a conservative role that legitimizes the political, social, and economic inferiority of the Arabs in Israel” (2007, 9-10). This sheds light on the missed potential of the football enclave; however, this perspective does not capture creative aspects from which we may learn about non-colonial possibilities. I claim that the football arena, specifically as it is unfurled by the Arab team of Bnei-Sakhnin, liberate meanings and possibilities that lie beyond the conventional contents of the idea of liberal integration according to which minorities are integrated into the dominant society. This is why I cannot agree with Sorek that football in Arab teams in Israel is necessarily “far from being a site for political resistance or explicit national identification” (2007, 9). The problem is, that by caging the analysis around national identity not many available options left

¹⁹ The footballers we interviewed played in Bnei-Sakhnin for at least two years (they played before for “Jewish” clubs).

that do not resemble colonial rationalities. The problem with Sorek's narrative is that every piece of it is weighted to fit one of two necessarily contradictory sides: its is either Palestinian nationalism (the use of Palestinian symbols by fans during football matches, cursing in Arabic, and so on) or its opposite defined as a route of a servile integration (excluding Palestinian symbols, cursing in Hebrew, and so on). As if anything but a separatist attitude on the part of the Palestinians is what should count as true resistance.

Integration is always looked at centripetally, but we may also interrogate into the accommodation of majoritarian subjects in minoritarian spaces. Thus, we were interested in understanding how experiences of life, embedded with a dichotomised perception hinged on hegemony which with the Jewish players came to Bnei-Sakhnin, were actually disrupted by the social experimentation in the team. In other words, we wanted to understand what happens to all those hegemonic ways of thought when faced with the possibility to experiment the impossible. When asked about these impacts, one of the interviewees answered:

Something that I can tell has really changed in me is my relation to the language. I like the language, I like to hear Arabic. Really, but I must say, I am not an ideologist, I am not preaching about coexistence and dialogue...For instance, the movie "Ajami"? The movie starts and they talk in Arabic for about half an hour, I sat, listened and I enjoyed it! I do not know how to explain it, people look at me but I enjoy it (interviewed on 27.02.2010).

This change in the relation to Arabic is unexpectable in many senses. Arabic is barely taught in Israeli Jewish schools; Arabic as well, has been for years securitised – the fact that in the media and Hebraic popular culture it plays the role of the enemy is reinforced with the fact that in high-school education, Jewish students taking the only available course in Arabic are generally courted by the army to join intelligence units after graduation (Amara and Mar'i 2002, Amara 2002). Therefore, this player's transformed attitude to Arabic need to be seen as the footprints of agency, enhanced through new material mixings in Bnei-Sakhnin, but understood as a new actualisation of the problem of the relation to the language of the minority in a settler society. The experience in Bnei-Sakhnin opened up for the Jewish players, also an interest about Islam. Two traditionalist players (put on phylacteries and visit the synagogue on Fridays), confessed that sharing the dressing room at the time their Arab mates had to pray, after training sessions or matches, intensified their own belief. For one of them this experience was particularly striking:

I learnt to respect and admire the way the Arab players pray; it really intrigued me to understand and know more about their religious rituals, maybe because I am myself a bit religious...it stroke me the fact that I became interested in this...I felt like a contradiction in my mind (interviewed on 27.02.2010).

We might assume that a similar sort of non-sympathetic relation, as with the Arabic, explains this player's former attitude to Islam. In this way "contradiction" may be seen, as that which flashes in consciousness but points to the unconscious effects of this professional type of togetherness: *contradiction forcing subjectivity to transcend itself*. I have no intention of any kind to portrait a perfect picture of reality taking place in Bnei-Sakhnin, neither to obliterate the general state of things in Israel-Palestine as if we already found salvation. For instance, we found an affirmation of Sorek's claim about the difficulties of immediate transfer of the effects of the Bnei-Sakhnin encounter into other circles of thought and action. Part of the players we interviewed shared with us their discomfort during the war on Gaza (2008-9), when a massive demonstration took place in Sakhnin:

During the big demonstration in Sakhnin against the war...I had to choose side, and I did choose side, I did not come to the trainings a couple of times...I didn't like the jokes the Arab players made, which shown that they have a "we" together with the Palestinians in Gaza, with which I felt very uncomfortable (interviewed on 28.02.2010).

The political crisis did test the potential for propagation of what is being experimented within Bnei-Sakhnin and gives a chance to study the composition of the becoming more deeply. However, we need to keep in mind how bodies interact. Bodies are not discrete entities "defined by stable boundaries and a set of fixed characteristics; rather, it is an assemblage of components bound into a coherent form, but this bodily consistency is only ever temporary and is always shifting" (Bignall 2011, 170). The explication to this is to be found in the fact that "component parts of a body constantly change as they enter into new relations with other parts encountered by an assemblage in its interactions with its existential milieu" (170). Thus we can suggest that the professional encounter in Bnei-Sakhnin between Palestinian, Jewish and foreign players, affect elements in the encountering bodies so while some relations of composition (for instance, to language, to religion) are deterritorialised through the encounter, others remain in their previous structure. Obviously, "some aspects of each culture naturally remain unaffected, relatively stable and intact, allowing it to persevere in some recognisable form" (Bignall 2011, 174-5). A fourth interviewee commented also about how their engagement in the team is perceived by others:

Jewish players, during matches, sometimes ask me, what are you doing here in this club? I smile at them but generally I do not answer, they would not understand...Once we came to the Alliance School in Tel Aviv, they organised a kind of questions and answers with the students; it was about how Arab and Jewish players get along together...I was embarrassed of the kind of questions they asked, so much racism and misapprehension was there...at a certain point I had to stop the questions, and I just told them "you need to come to our trainings session just once and you will see how good we get all along together" (interviewed on 03.03.2010).

What this player understands and feels, “they would not understand”: for him, *they* are those who are not experiencing what he is. Again, what is at stake here is not one’s ethnic identity but on which side of the new experimentation one is. This brings us back to the use of “contradiction” above: *the one experiencing contradiction, may eventually understand, as understanding is gained through encounters.*

Closing comments

“Series are not inert and passive receivers of an excitation...they transform themselves with the event that has selected them” (Williams 2008, 2). The series: Palestinian indigeneity – the October uprising – Arab-Jewish activism, each a multiplicity in their own right. It may be argued that for about more than a decade Palestinian indigeneity endows its elements and relations with affects that make Arab-Jewish activism to become radical, a new assemblage, a becoming-Palestinian of the Arab-Jewish assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 258), though this becoming has little to do with national identity.

Changes propagate and infect, they violate borders, are epidemic in character (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 242); they transcend. Even the latest Zionist counter-insurgency laws and policies need to be seen as a response to the emergent practices of resistance in the region, as resistance always comes first (Hardt and Negri 2004, 64; Papadopoulos et. al. 2008). The new concepts on radical forms of Arab-Jewish collaborative action we extracted in this study do not coalesce to form an overarching concept. They compose a milieu of action and thought populated by lines, entangling, disagreeing, at times weakening the plane and its powers of affection and sometimes connecting to growth further. All in all, they fall back as a hammer on both fetishised and saddening conceptualisations of what commonly is addressed as Arab-Jewish activism. As Buchanan put it, new concepts “enact a terrible violence on existing concepts, forcing them all to prove their viability before the new concept, or sink into disuse” (2000, 81).

There is no more radical political claim and motive for an activist than the fundamental claim of empiricism: “that there is no theoretical subjectivity and that there cannot be one” (Deleuze 1991: 104). It dilutes without mercy the formal legitimacy of fixed national, ethnic, or religious identity to be the sole litmus test of society and the incorporation into it. The only subjectivity available is in a perpetual state of constitution. “Subjectivity is in fact a process, and ... and inventory must be made of the diverse moments of this process” (Deleuze 1991, 113).

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