Israeli warring foreign policy and the writing of identity: the case of *Operation Cast Lead*

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To the memory of my mother, Micheline Plasse,
1949-2009

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Abstract

The purpose of the present thesis is to investigate how socially embedded interpretations of Israeli identity influence Israel's warring foreign policy towards Palestinians and conversely, how this warring foreign policy contributes to securing and stabilizing the underlying identity narratives of the dominant Israeli national identity. Based on an interpretative Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework which adopts a Foucauldian conceptualization of discourse as social practice, this thesis argues that today's dominant Israeli discourse of identity provides the interpretative framework for enabling and legitimizing the formulation of a warring foreign policy. It further contends that this formulation is pivotal to the cultural governance of the Israeli state by reproducing the dominant Israeli political identity and dismissing alternative Israeli and Jewish subjectivities. The case under study is the 2008 Gaza War, bearing the Israeli code name *Operation Cast Lead*. Borrowing from a CDA maxim which insists that analysis should be multimodal, this thesis takes the "aesthetic turn" and provides a reading of the Israeli film *Waltz with Bashir* (2008), showing how this popular cultural production may provide alternative critical discursive narratives about the Self and the Other, that may offer a challenge to war-as-policy.

Résumé

L'objectif du présent mémoire est de questionner comment des interprétations socialement construites de l'identité Israélienne influence la politique étrangère guerrière d'Israël envers ses voisins Palestiniens, et inversement, comment cette dernière contribue à sécuriser et stabiliser les tropes et le narratif identitaire sous-jacent. À l'aide d'un modèle épistémologique interprétatif que fournit l'*Analyse Critique du Discours* et qui adopte une conceptualisation Foucaldienne du discours comme pratique sociale, la thèse tu présent mémoire est que le discours identitaire Israélien actuel fournit le cadre interprétatif pour rendre possible et légitimer la formulation d'une politique étrangère guerrière et que cette dernière est un outil central pour la gouvernance culturelle the l'État Israélien afin de reproduire le discours identitaire dominant et rabattre des discours identitaires alternatifs et contestataires. À ces fins, le cas sous étude est la Guerre de Gaza (2008), aussi appeler sous le nom de code Israélien de *Operation Cast Lead*. En tenant compte de l'aspect multimodal de la CDA, ce mémoire prend le *Aesthetic turn* et fournit une lecture du film Israélien *Valse avec Bashir* (2008) pour démontrer comment ce produit culturel populaire peut offrir un discours identitaire critique à propos du Soi et de l'Autre ainsi qu'offrir un discours critique quant à la formulation de la politique étrangère guerrière.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Once, I remember, we came up a man-of-war anchored off the coast. There wasn't even a shed there, and she was shelling the bush… In the empty immensity of earth, sky and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent. Pop, would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech – and nothing happened. Nothing could happen. There was a touch of insanity in the proceeding, a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight; and it was not dissipated by somebody on board assuring me earnestly there was a camp of natives – he called them enemies! – hidden out of sight somewhere.

- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

From our vantage point, you would just see clouds of smoke or see war planes flying very low on attack mode and then seconds later you would see mushroom clouds in the distance. It kind of had a bit of a surreal aspect to it.

- Moises Saman, *New York Times*, January 25th 2009

Living in Israel is like living in a villa in the jungle.

- Ehud Barak, December 2006

Introduction

On December 27th 2008, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched Operation Cast Lead – "Israel's largest sustained military operation against the Palestinians since 1948" (Esposito 2009, 286) – in the Palestinian territory of Gaza. With an unanimous voice, the Israeli government justified OCL by invoking the "barrage" of Hamas' rockets falling on Southern Israel and the refusal of the "terrorist faction" to renew the ceasefire agreed upon in June 2008 and arriving to term on December 19th 2008. OCL would then - if we are to observe Israeli official statements – be simply the common response of a "victim", given in the name of the "democratic" and "civilised" world that challenges the Islamic "terror" and the "obscurantist" regime established by Hamas. Is this case really as patent and indisputable?

A close look at the reports and statistical indicators reveals that in the case of OCL one cannot jump hastily to such a conclusion. First, according to

international press, Israel – not Hamas – broke the four-month ceasefire on November 5th 2008 when IDF Special Forces entered Gaza and killed six Hamas members (McCarthy 2008; Hider 2008; Catignani 2009, 66; Kanwisher and *al.* 2009). Moreover, statistical evidence – this time provided by the IDF itself, – showed that from the date of implementation of the ceasefire until the IDF attack of November 5th 2008, rocket firing had dropped almost to zero compared to 149 and 126 attacks for the two months before and after the ceasefire respectively (see Figure 1 in Annex)[i].

Also, while it was explicitly stated from the implementation of the ceasefire "that Israel lift the virtual siege of Gaza which Israel had imposed after the June 2007 Hamas takeover" (Porter, 2009); the Israeli government did not follow up on its pledges. Instead, it maintained the siege, systematically blocking basic food supplies, medicines and other necessary goods (Mitnick & Levinson 2009). Moreover, during OCL, in the *Hasbara* campaign led by Israel, government officials accused Hamas not only of breaking the ceasefire, but also of refusing to renew it. Yet again, evidence provided by news reports and members of Ehud Olmert's family show that Hamas sought to extend the ceasefire. In fact, on December 14th 2008 – 13 days before the beginning of OCL – a "proposal to renew the ceasefire was presented by a high-level Hamas delegation to the Egyptian Minister of Intelligence Omar Suleiman at a meeting in Cairo" (Porter 2009; see also Beaumont 2009; and Eldar 2009). Accordingly, the Palestinian delegation told Suleiman that "Hamas was prepared to stop all rocket attacks against Israel if the Israelis would open up the Gaza border crossings and pledge not to launch attacks in Gaza" (Porter 2009.). The Egyptian negotiator proceeded to transmit the proposal to Israel officials, but the Israeli side remained silent.

Finally, sources in the defense establishment revealed that Defense Minister Ehud Barak had "informed the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to prepare for the operation over six months ago, even as Israel was beginning to negotiate a cease-fire agreement with Hamas" (Ravid and *al.*, 2008) which means that the alleged break of the ceasefire was the only thing the Israeli government was waiting for to proceed to its "*rattonade*" (Lustick 2008, 47). Therefore, in light of these reports,

one can hardly speak of a strictly self-defense lead operation – a "war of no choice" – carried out in response to more recent rocket fire. From the above, OCL appears as the continuation of a line of anxiety-driven policies towards Palestinians within Israel and outside Israel.

OCL as a Molière Play

Even though the Israeli government had tried to restrict as much as it could the presence of journalists or media representatives *within* the Gaza strip, many photographs and videos of the ongoing massive killings and urbicide were provided to Western medias. This variety of visual media content concerning the events that were offered to general public had been anticipated by Israeli officials, and this anticipation, was in fact the major difference between the Second Lebanon War of 2006 and OCL. It was also the difference which marked the relative success of the latter compared to the failure of the former. Frederic Jameson once pointed out that in a play, there is a "separation of the domains of facticity" (Shapiro 1992, 117); that is between "the brutal visual facts, the moments of pure happening" (here the visual media), and "its area of assumption: the speeches in which these events are taken up into language" (Jameson 1984, 17).

In Molière's *The School for Wives*, Arnolphe decides to send his younger fiancée to a school that will provide education to the young women and by doing so, Arnolphe thinks he has found the solution to avoid the risks of infidelity that, he believes, come with such a young marital partner. During most of the play, he believes that he managed to keep his young mate for himself. Yet, the spectator is well aware that this is not the case. In that sense, the play appears as a "demonstration of the knowledge-effect of the interaction between verbal script and visual event" (Shapiro 1992, 117). What is most interesting about this play however, is the strategy of ideological containment Molière uses (just like the Israeli state) to contain the subversive sequences of the visual. In fact, while the latter could be perceived as subversive and critical of Arnolphe's strategy to produce a docile and obedient wife, the author introduces a twist in the plot: it turns out that, even though the two young lovers (Arnolphe's fiancée and her

lover) are not aware of it, their wedding has been approved by their respective parents priorly, thanks to a series of coincidences (*Ibid*.). Hence, the subversive potential of the visual is contained by the author *thanks to a twist in the narration*.

Hence, to come back to the object of concern here, the Israeli officials inundated the world and national media with declarations that equated OCL with "a war of no choice" (Catignani 2009; Cohen 2009) against "terrorists". At the very least, the mixture of Israeli *Hasbara* and shocking visual medias gave the feeling of watching one of Molière's play.

This feeling was particularly reinforced when one would take a look at the images and reports of Israelis gathering alongside television crews on a hill near the Israel-Gaza border, in the outskirts of the Israeli town of Sderot – later baptised by Western media "the Hill of Shame" – where, "Armed with binoculars and zoom lenses, they watch[ed] F16 aircraft streak across the sky, trailing flares, before unleashing their missiles on one of the distant white buildings" (Fletcher and Farago, 2009). Among others, there were "[a] group of police officers nearby [Sderot, who] took turns snapping pictures of one another with smoking Gaza as a backdrop" (Raviv 2009), Shimon and Boaz, two "firefighters from out of town, [who] came to pose with a smile for pictures with the Strip smouldering in the background" (Lagerquist 2009, 89) or an Ultra-Orthodox Jew pictured while playing with his friend's side locks as he watched the bombardment through binoculars.

Figure 1. Orthodox Jew plays with his friend's sidelocks as the latter watch the unfolding of OCL near Sderot (Lagerquist 2009, 92)

Amongst the numerous journalists and photographers from around the globe was Moises Saman, a photographer rushed into the spot by the *New York Times* to take shots from the Israeli perspective, while another colleague inside Gaza (Tyler Hicks) completed the other half of a photograph collage entitled *Photographer's Journal: A War's Many Angles* (New York Times, 2009). Commenting on the collage after its online publication, an independent journalist who was also present among the flock on the "hill of shame", remarked that

> The Israeli collage is marked by its somber sense of interiority, showing soldiers praying in quiet dignity, mourning falling comrades, taking a break; captured on foot in twos and threes against vertiginous expanses of earth and sky, vulnerable and isolated. Not a single one is shooting, loading a gun, or cleaning a tank barrel. Plumes of smoke across the border are pictured only distantly, one of them from elevation, unfurling elegiacally from a remote, empty beach. *It is as if some other army were in the process of killing fourteen hundred people.* […] What was excluded from this image? Israelis, killing (Lagerquist 2009, 88-89; my emphasis).

Figure 2. "Plumes of smoke across the border are pictured only distantly..." (Saman 2009)

In contrast with the visuals provided from within Gaza, Saman's photographic montage perfectly expressed and reflected the Israeli government's narration of the event. More than 1400 Gazans had died in barely two weeks; and Israel and its "most moral army in the world" were held responsible for nothing: it was Hamas, and solely, Hamas' fault. Israelis were the victims of "evil forces" forcing them to kill innocent Palestinians[ii]. As the famous Israeli novelist, Amos

Oz put it when he commented on OCL, using theological terms: "Hamas' calculation is simple, cynical, and *evil*. If innocent Israelis are killed – good. If innocent Palestinians are killed – even better" (quoted in Lagerquist 2009*.,* 88; my emphasis). As Peter Lagerquist put it, "It was the feeling that it is not *we* who did *that*" (*Ibid.*). In fact, Oz's comment gave a second life to Israel's former Prime Minister Golda Meir 1977 statement in a strange but accurate way: "We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children. We cannot forgive them for forcing us to kill their children" (quoted in *Ibid.*, 91); Israel had no responsibility for the "war in the South", as Meir put it during the Yom Kippur War, "because all the wars against Israel have noting to do with it" (As quoted in Rose 2005, xi).

In this vein, the jungle outside is always responsible for the unleashing of political violence the "outpost of progress" performs against it. Or as Jacqueline Rose wrote: "Israel is innocent of the violence with which it is beset. There is nothing in the actions of the state, the history of the country or of Zionism, that can explain it" (*Ibid.*). The only thing that can unleash political violence is "evil"[iii]. Yet, for an outside observer, the situation in Israel, exposed by Saman's photographs among others – which stood in glaring contradiction with the images and numbers from Gaza – certainly did not help dissipate the feeling and questioning regarding the "lugubrious drollery in the sight" (see epigraph).

The developments of OCL triggered a wave of protests around the globe, which in the end, led to the denunciation of IDF and Hamas actions by the international community and eventually to a U.N. inquiry[iv]. Interestingly enough, although OCL gathered wide support within Israeli population[v], the harshest recriminations against the Israeli government and IDF often came from elements of Israeli society itself. In fact, during OCL, Israeli newspapers were divided with editorials and opinion articles denouncing Israel's "racist" and "hatred-filled behaviour"[vi], while others praised the courage and morality of the young soldiers defending the nation.

The contrast in views over this particular occasion should not be seen as an isolated contestation over the meaning of the 'We' in the name of which war-as-policy and military action can be articulated. Indeed, I believe that OCL inscribes

itself in the continuity of a series of events – such as the proposition of the Israeli Foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman, to deport Israeli-Palestinians[vii], settlement issues[viii] in Occupied Territories (OT) and Jerusalem or, more recently, the Israeli Cabinet approval of the imposition of the loyalty oath to non-Jews[ix] – which came to constitute an increasingly fragmented and divided[x] Israeli society (Silberstein 1999, 1).

These developments evoke two interrelated problems. On one hand, they bring forth the question of the role of Israeli identity politics in the violent outcome of OCL. How do socially embedded representations of identity influence political violence against the 'Other'? How were the discourses of identity in Israel mobilized to support and legitimize political violence (war-as-policy) during Operation Cast Lead? And conversely, how did OCL help to reproduce and strengthen those discourses? That is, how is a specific discourse of Israeliness, as the subject of (in)security, constructed, reproduced and secured through war-as-policy? On the other hand, the fragmentation of the Israeli discourse of political identity calls our attention to questions about the role of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (seen through OCL here) in the debate over identity politics in Israel.

Foreign Policy, Security and International Relations

Realism and Neo-Realism

Realists argue that the basic driver of international politics is the inherent anarchical structure of the international system. In opposition to the domestic sphere – where the state is the supreme authority and has the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence over its territory – the international realm is "decentralized and anarchic" (Waltz 1979, 88). The State's authority is necessary because of the "lust for power" inherent in human nature (Morgenthau 2006, 4). However, at the international level, because there is no superior authority, "Units in the condition of anarchy – be they people, corporations, states or whatever – must rely on the means they can make for themselves" (Waltz *Op. Cit.;* see also Mersheimer 2001, 32-33 and Schweller 2004, 103). Therefore, the international order is governed by the rule of self-help for ensuring each and everyone's

security and survival. This governing self-help principle makes that the state's interests are defined primarily in terms of power (Morgenthau *Op Cit.*).

Power in Realist understanding is usually material and approached in relative terms. More specifically, Realists will look at the relative distribution of material power such as military capabilities, a strong economy, natural resources, large population etc that ensure the strength of a state in the international arena. For realist scholars, the former attribute of power is the most important: "The supreme importance of the military instrument lies in the fact that the *ultima ratio* of power in international relations is war [… and] the foreign policy is limited not only by its aims, but also […] by the ratio of its military strength to that of other countries" (Carr 1946, 109-110). States that fail to respond to a change in the relative distribution of those capabilities will quickly be weakened and will become – if not annihilated – insignificant actors on the global politics stage (Waltz 1979, 116-122; Gilpin 1981, 85-87).

This struggle for security and power to ensure one's survival brings uncertainty and fear which in turn creates the 'Security Dilemma':

> It is his uncertainty and anxiety as to his neighbors' intentions that places man in this basic [security] dilemma, and makes the 'homo homini lupus' a primary fact of the social life of man. Basically it is the mere instinct of self-preservation which, in the vicious circle [of the security dilemma], leads to competition for ever more power (John Herz as quoted in Tang 2009, 590-591).

Put simply, the security dilemma emerges from the very basic assumption "that an increase in one state's security decreases the security of others" (Jervis 1978, 186; see also Butterfield 1951; Herz 1951; Jervis 1976, chapter 3; and Glaser 1997).

The structural variant of realism – neo-realism – has emphasized the role of anarchy and of this very security dilemma in alliance behavior, conflicts, and problems of cooperation. This means that the system will push states to "respond to shift in the distribution of power between them either by developing their own capabilities (internal balancing) or by forming alliances of convenience to check potential threats (external balancing)" (Nexon 2009, 30; see also Waltz 1979, 102-128). This approach emphasizes the importance of the structure of the international system and tends to downgrade the importance given by classical

realists to the decision makers, (mis)perceptions and 'human nature' and 'internal' variables such as the capacity for extraction. For instance, classical realists have criticized structural realists for bracketing the latter:

> This assumption of "constant mobilization capacity" allows balance-of-power and other systemic theories to ignore the politics of extraction, treating responses to threats as if there were no significant variations across time and space in elites' ability to mobilize domestic resources in pursuit of foreign-policy aims […] Thus, efforts to create an elegant systemic theory of international politics set aside differences in unit attributes such as state extractive capacity (Schweller 2006, 13).

Also, the concept of 'national interest' is central to any foreign policy analysis since it is, thanks to this concept, that we can understand the objectives and goals to be pursued in the formulation of foreign policy and government decision-making.

Drawing from the anarchical nature of the international realm and the dilemma exposed above, realist scholars have inferred and determined deductively the content of 'the national interest'. The foundation of any state's national interest should be "to protect physical, political and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations" (Morgenthau 1952, 972). Therefore, the national interest is always determined by the state's position in the system according to the distribution of relative power: it is "calculated according to the situation in which the state finds itself. […] To say that a country acts in its national interest means that, having examined its security requirements, it tries to meet them" (Waltz 1979, 134). Hence, the content of national interest can be defined by realists as security (long term survival) and the very immediate survival of the state.

Yet, there are serious lacunas with this conception of national interest. In fact, realist theories give barely any account of how state interests are formed and how they change. According to Sondermann, this conception is "too broad, too general, too vague, [and] too all-inclusive" (1987, 60). It cannot tell us exactly why states take a specific action because "the dictates of power are never clearly manifest" (Rosenau 1968, 37). For instance, why were Soviet ICBMs so central to the formulation of the United States foreign policy during the Cold War and not so much anymore in today's world? One quickly notices that, the way national

interest is theorized by realist scholars "cannot tell us about the historically contingent content of the national interest as identified and pursued by state officials" (Weldes 1999, 6).

Even more important for this thesis is the fact that the realist notion of national interest rests on a very problematic ontological claim – that an independent reality is accessible for decision makers and scholars. As we shall see in the first chapter of my thesis where I develop my theoretical framework, objects and events do not offer themselves unproblematically to the analyst – they always require interpretation. In itself, the materiality of the ICBMs tells us nothing. Israeli leaders or analysts have to rely on some sort of interpretation to render those weapons meaningful. On this basis then, realism "cannot explain why certain actions, ostensibly taken in response to [threats], are in the national interest in the first place" (*Ibid.*, 7).

Therefore, both structural and classical realism – because of their emphasis on power politics understood narrowly around the role that material capabilities play – have argued that religious beliefs, norms and ideational factors of all sort matter very little in the equation that determines state behavior and foreign policy. As some have argued, "necessity and reason of state trump morality and ethics when those values conflict" (Schweller and Wohlfort *Op. Cit.*, 69; see also Morgenthau 2006, 4) with economic and military interests. Hence, according to realism, states pursue a "logic of consequences" instead of a "logic of appropriateness" (Nexon 2009, 29). This Realist 'logic of consequences' relies on pre-given actors with pre-given interests, and hence, states and their national interests appear – not as social construction – but as *a prioris*.

Neo-Liberalism and Liberalism

Institutional neo-liberalism and liberalism are major contenders to neo-realist and realists approaches. Neo-liberals have picked on neo-realists' reification of states' national interests and showed that their "efforts to define the national interest on a priori basis […] or to use the concept for prediction and explanation, have been unsuccessful" (Keohane 1986b, 182). Moreover, they argued that ideas

must be incorporated into a successful theory of international politics because purely rationalist explanations are insufficient (Goldstein and Keohane 1993). In fact, the major difference with the diverse realist schools of thought and institutional approaches does not lay in the conceptualization of the international system – both consider anarchy as inherent – but rather in the fact that ideas matter. Those ideas materialize in the form of norms and worldviews that constrains foreign policy decision-making. Others within the liberal school of thought have emphasized that democracies do not go to war with each other – the Kantian peace theory.

Liberal theories in general tend to adopt a less pessimistic vision of international politics in which cooperation and international collective action is actually achievable on the long term. Even if actors are self-interested, they realize that creating international institutions such as the U.N. and its different bodies, legal agreements and treaties as well as democratic governance can render the international realm more predictable. Including ideational factors in a theoretical framework does not, and should not exclude the use of social science empirical methodologies (Goldstein and Keohane 1993) argue proponents of liberalism. For this reason, Goldstein and Keohane conceive their approach as a middle ground between realism and 'reflectivist' approaches.

In fact, neo-liberals too tend to assume that norms are exogenous factors that simply recast the pre-existing foreign policy interests assumed by realist schools of thought (Krasner 1982, 1993); they do not challenge the major ontological assumption and *a prioris* of realism. Indeed, according to neo-liberal theory, the state is still considered as a unitary actor evolving in an anarchical system, which determines state behavior. For them too, there exists *a* reality that is independent of any social construction and language and that can be studied empirically.

Constructivism

The constructivist movement, born in the early 80's, grew as an alternative to 'mainstream' approaches which adopt a rational choice ontology and positivist epistemology. As mentioned previously, adopting such approaches means that one

considers actors and concepts as exogenously given and that they "act in the pre-given world according to the demands of instrumental reason" (Zehfuss 2002, 3). Yet, constructivists are opposed to such an objectivist and static vision of international relations by arguing that the world is socially constructed: "We construct worlds we know in a world we do not" (Onuf 1989, 38). In other words, "constructivism is epistemologically about the social construction of knowledge and ontologically about the construction of social reality" (Guzzini 2002, 147).

Therefore, constructivism rejects the materialism of neorealist and neoliberal schools on the grounds that it highly reduces the role of norms, rules and culture in international and security studies (Williams 2007, 26). A key concept for constructivist is the one of *intersubjectivity*, which allows one to understand how social facts, and material artifacts get their meaning and how those meanings evolve through time. Adler says of constructivism that it "is the view that *the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world*" (Adler 1997, 322).

Systemic constructivism could be associated with Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics*. Wendt argues the nature of the international system is not given but made by states themselves because identities and interests are themselves social constructs which have an intersubjective meaning. Therefore, if the international arena is socially and historically contingent, the premise of the security dilemma – that the nature of the international system is inherently anarchical – is not pre-given, but also the product of state's interactions: "Anarchy, is what states make of it" (Wendt 1992). To that end, the international system is better understood as a normative realm.

Because identity relates to the intersubjective aspect of structures, Wendt is able to shift from a materialist to a constructed reality argument (Wendt 1999, 23-24). In fact, he is concerned to show that identities, even if they are "relatively stable", change through interaction; "identities may be hard to change, but they are not carved in stone" (*Ibid.*, 21). But more importantly, for Wendt, identities are constituted through interaction between states, and those states exist prior to

interactions (*Ibid*., 235-237). This pre-given form is the "corporate identity" of states, which are "constituted by the self-organizing, homeostatic structures that make actors distinct entities" (Wendt 1995, 50; see also 1999, 198-214). To sum up, structural constructivism maintains that identities evolve with the interactions of actors within the system.

Social constructivism, on the other hand, has faulted Wendt's constructivism for its oversimplification and "making a priori assumptions about the nature of its units and their interactions" (Hopf 2002, 288). Therefore, social constructivism seeks to fill this gap by understanding state identities through the inductive retrieving of their domestic socio-cognitive roots (*Ibid.*, 278). Those socio-cognitive structures are constituted by what Hopf calls the "logic of everyday practice" (or habits)[xi]. Yet, the meaning of those identities is only established through interaction with particular Others (Wendt 1999, 147), and meaningful Others exist both at home and abroad. They even can be historical selves or ideas. Hence, neither the domestic nor the international realm dominates the construction of state identities: "social constructivism assumes that all state identities are a product of both" (Hopf 2002, 289).

Constructivists analyses of *Israeli* foreign or security policy are scarce[xii] and they have tended to distance themselves from poststructuralists which, they faulted for "neglecting 'conceptual elaboration and sustained empirical analysis'" and for not explaining why one discursive formation prevails over another (Hansen 2007, 4). On the other hand, poststructuralists have criticized constructivists because they usually "agree on the assumption of limited construction" of the social reality: "when their constructivist analysis starts, some reality has already been made and is taken as given" (Zehfuss 2002, 10). In fact, Zehfuss (2002, 36) has pointed out – accurately I believe – that those 'givens' are not apolitical: "the treatment of reality in constructivism and in politics are not two separate issues but rather two manifestation of the same problem [… and] therefore, claiming a reality to start from, be it one of states, norms or natural raw materials, already involves a political act." Yet, the ability to claim and to portray

something as real and to be able to produce knowledge about this reality has immense political power attached to it (*Ibid.*, 255).

For instance, if we take Wendt's aforementioned famous phrase that "anarchy is what states make of it", we realize that, grammatically, the state becomes a thing that can be treated as given. Constructivism, in a sense, assumes a unilateral relationship between discourse and the subject. Hence, the subject comes back as a fixed or solid: "Discourse in this sense is taken to constitute a being, an 'is', wherein one 'is' a gendered subject rather than always in the process of becoming" (Masters 2009,118; see also Butler 1993).

Israeli Foreign Policy and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Case of Operation Cast Lead[xiii]

Most of the work produced in the scholarly field of IR pertaining to the Israeli foreign policy in the Middle East since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 revolves around realist assumptions: This "powerful trend in contemporary international relations theory has proceeded as if identity mattered little for our understanding, [and] Post-World War II international relations theorizing became increasingly systemic" (Telhami & Barnett 2002, 2). For this still very dominant school of thought, Israel has been seen as the hyper-realist state ideal-type, behaving exactly the way neo-realists expected 'rational' states to behave when their security was considered to be threatened (Telhami 1996, 30). As one scholar put it: "It has become almost an axiom to view Israel's foreign policy through a realist prism" (Jones 2002, 115). The common analysis put forward was that Israel's security calculations, ensuing from the considerably hostile near environment it finds itself in, were sufficient to explain Israel foreign policy decision-making process and its tendency to go to war with its neighbours (*Ibid.*).

Its 'national interest' – primarily understood by realists and neo-realists as power maximisation and security concerns or short and long term survival fears – greatly affected Israel's foreign policy. A still largely cited and widely recognized classical realist analysis of Israeli FP is Michael Brecher's two volumes published in 1972 and 1975. Brecher adopts a cognitive approach to FP by focusing on what one could call the "bounded rationality" of Israeli FP "elites," investigating the

impact of diverse factors, such as stress, on their perception of the "operational environment". For Brecher, there exists an unambiguous "operational environment" that, if perceived "accurately, [the "elite's"] foreign policy acts may be said to be rooted in reality and are likely to be 'successful'."

As the debate over classical and structural realism evolved and the latter gained more prominence, internal variables such as identity were ever more overlooked, and it "was assumed that major foreign policy decisions such as those pertaining to war and peace could be accounted without reference" (*Ibid.*) to those internal factors. Those analyses of Israeli FP have emphasized the importance of the security dilemma triggered by constant re-armament of Israel neighbours such as Egypt, Syria and more recently Hezbollah, Hamas and Iran. The role of the U.S.-Israel relationship is also often underlined. A recurring analysis is that, given the geostrategic factors – such as Israel's location, small territorial size and small population – the strategy Israeli elites employed was to pre-emptively bring the battle to the enemy's territory (Tal 1998, Shlaim 2000). OCL was portrayed by many in this very way. In fact, it was cast as a "'war of no choice', a term normally used by Israeli policy-makers for wars involving major conventional threats" (Catignani 2009, 66; see also Cohen 2009).

Those realist analyses – such as Walt's *Origins of Alliances* (1987) or Schweller's "Domestic Structure and Preventive War" (1992) – have been made possible only to the extent to which the Zionist narrative depicting Israel as a "state under siege" (264), an outpost of progress in a jungle, is accepted and naturalized (Isacoff 2005, 74-76). Adopting uncritically the Zionist narrative – that "all the wars against Israel have nothing to do with it" –, those scholars contributed to the reification of a problematic Israeli narrative and provided a moral ground that legitimated Israeli aggressive foreign policy that valorized military solutions to the detriment to political ones (for instance during what the new historians have called the 1956 "war of choice") and which contributed to the empowerment of the Ashkenazim elite by naturalizing its narration of the Israeli nation (*Ibid.*76-77).

In light of the information provided in the first section of the present introduction as well as the works of the Israeli New Historians, another question arises concerning the timing of OCL: Why did Israel choose to launch its offensive when the rockets fired by Hamas were at an all time low? Why wait for the rocket firing to stop and for the full implementation of a ceasefire to attack Gaza? For Shlaim (2009) and Cohen (2009), the timing had nothing to do with Qassam rockets and everything to do with electoral considerations. Pointing to the upcoming February elections in Israel and the arrival of U.S. President Barak Obama into office: "And lurking behind […] was the suspicion, all the more powerful for being so opaque, that the timing of both Cast Lead's initiation and cessation owed less to strategic calculations than to electoral considerations…" (Cohen 2009)[xiv].

Yet, there is another question that I believe cannot be answered when we use the approaches outlined above. That is, how did the Israeli government manage to gather significant degree of political and social consensus within Israel and among international community to legitimize such large-scale political violence that represented the war-as-policy of OCL? To answer such a question, one must be attentive to the State's representation of the 'Self' and 'Other'. Those States' articulations of identity constitute "historically developed, socially embedded interpretations of identity and space that constitute the frames within which enmities give rise to war-as-policy [which] are constituted as an inter-articulation of geographic imaginaries and antagonisms, based on models of identity-difference" (Shapiro, *Op. Cit.*).

Chapter Outline

In the first chapter of this thesis, I elaborate on the theoretical framework – Critical Discourse Analysis – that I intend to use in subsequent chapters. This is a necessary step because, Critical Discourse Analsysis (CDA) "remains virtually unknown" (van Dijk 2008, 95) and is almost totally absent from IR or even Political Science research agendas. In doing so, I explain why language is so important to political and sociological analysis involving power.

The second chapter will be dedicated to fulfill the 'historical' aspect by offering a critical assessment of the development of the dominant metanarrative of Israel, as a gradual process of inculcation and naturalization of ideology through a process of orientalization of Jewish population in Europe (Khazzoom 2003) and during their settlement in Israel. I believe, like some others, that it is a matter of identifying the historical preconditions for action (Neumann & Sending 2010, 20). This will help me situate *Operation Cast Lead* historically, as a result of a larger process, contingent to the development of the political identity discourse in Europe and in Israel. For this first part, I rely mainly on secondary sources such as monographs and articles from peer-reviewed journals. To be clear, this section does not claim to offer an alternative storyline which better describes a linear history of modern Israel, but it is rather to highlight breaks, disjuncture as well as the contingent and arbitrary character of the present Israeli metanarrative.

In a third step, I proceed with a textual and intertextual analysis of Israeli official discourse. Here, I highlight what the illocutionary strategies were and the other discourses that had been drawn upon by state officials to legitimize the actions taken. I look at the language used to describe the events that led to OCL and the Operation itself. I argue that the words chosen to describe Hamas and Israeli actions are not simply a neutral reflection of what was really going on, but actually and effectively working to enforce a particular interpretation and meaning of the events and the actors participating in it. Their social power lies in their performativity that produces reality, and that producing this reality effect is part of the discursive battle of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It legitimizes the claims and actions of one side while delegitimizing the Other's. I then argue that Israel's politically constructed understanding of OCL which normalized the Israeli government's harsh response. In the meantime, I also look at how language was used to construct the dominant identities of Hamas and the Israeli State.

In a fourth step, I move on with my analysis to highlight competing discourses that seek to offer alternative meanings to warring foreign policy and the identity narrative legitimizing them. The point here is to use societal voices as a check on the views of elites and governmental actors. Following the works of

critical theorists – such as Deleuze and Shapiro – I argue that films constitute another space that supplies alternative images and narratives that contest militarization, securitization and violence. I read the Israeli film *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) and investigate how it can offer a counter-space to the Israeli metanarrative by contesting the violence that has emerged from Israel's practices of securitization and militarization.

The major contributions of this thesis lies in the fact that the role of language and discourse in the construction of political processes such as foreign policy making/legitimation is still very marginal in IR, even more so in accounts of episodes relating to the Middle-Eastern conflict. As noted at the beginning of this thesis, most accounts of Israeli foreign policy and the conflict focus on their geo-political, diplomatic, economical or legal dimensions. This thesis thus aims at redressing this imbalance by investigating the way pre-constituted subjectivities are reproduced through language and how those discursive practices legitimate and normalize war-as-policy. Also, by introducing aesthetics and popular culture into the framework of the analysis, I hope to show that multi-modal analysis may better highlight possibilities of change, as well as identify the unreflective stance that most of the academia entertains by adopting a state-centric view.

Notes Introduction

[i] Interestingly enough, Kanwisher and *al.*'s analysis, by investigating the entire timeline of the second Intifada and its various ceasefire "shows that it is overwhelmingly Israel that kills first after a pause in the conflict […] Indeed, it is virtually always Israel that kills first after a lull lasting more than a week" (2009). The *Ha'aretz* analyst Uzi Benziman also noted that "a pattern of Israeli behavior that has recurred since Sharon began running the country: When a period of calm prevails in the confrontation with the Palestinians, circumstances are created that induce Israel to carry out military operations in a manner that renews, or accelerates, the cycles of violence" (Benziman quoted in Reinhart 2005, 140)

[ii] Israeli officials kept underlining in their statements that "the people of Gaza are not our enemy" (Livni 2008a, 2008b; Olmert 2008; Peres 2009; Shalev 2009a)

[iii] As Mahmood Mamdani (2004, 4) – following Hannah Arendt – noted, political violence "gets discussed in two basic ways: in cultural terms for a premodern society and *theological* terms for a modern society" (my emphasis). When Europeans justified the colonisation and the massacres that accompanied it, it was always in reference to the superiority of their culture, and the backwardness of Africa, or pre-modern America; it was justified violence for the sake of progress

and civilization. On the other side, when referring to violence perpetrated by Europeans against other Europeans (the Holocaust), which obviously "does not fit the story of progress [, it] tends to get discussed in theological terms" (*Ibid.*)

[iv] The full report is available at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf
The main author recently retracted his criticism of Israel, but he never challenged any of the findings of the inquiry, which are present in the report.

[v] A Survey monitoring Israeli-Jewish opinion conducted between the 4th and 6th of January 2009 from a research center at Tel Aviv University shows us that 94% of the polled supported OCL (Catignani 2009, 67).

[vi] See for instance Haaretz 2009; Levy 2009a and 2009b.

[vii] See Lieberman 2010.

[viii] See for instance Ben-Meir 2010.

[ix] See BBC 2010.

[x] See recent *New Statesman* issue titled "Israel Divided: Politics, Religion and a Nation's Identity Crisis" for instance (November 8th 2010). For various academic works on this very subject see Cohen and Susser 2000; Liebman 1993; Pappé 2000; Ravitzy 1996; Kimmerling 2001; Evron 1995; Friedman 1989; Ravitzky 1996 and 2005; Urian and Karsh 1998.

[xi] Thanks to this conceptualization, Hopf is able to escape the problems identified with the two classical logics of action that are "the logic of appropriateness" and "the logic of consequence". For more details, see March and Olsen 1998.

[xii] For examples, see Michael Barnett, 2002 ; Emmanuel Adler 2005; And Jonathan Rynhold 2007.

[xiii] As aforementioned, the Israeli army launched the first phase of *Operation Cast Lead* on December 27th 2008. By that time, Gaza inhabitants were already experiencing the harsh reality of living under varying degrees of closure of the borders since the election of Hamas, in February 2006.

OCL lasted for approximately three weeks; from December 27th 2008 until January 18th 2009, ending with a unilaterally declared cease-fire by Israel joined later by Hamas. During those three weeks about 5300 Gazans were wounded; at least 1417 Gazans were killed, amongst whom 83% were civilians; 22% were children. On the Israeli side, 13 were killed, amongst which, 10 were soldiers (4 killed by friendly fire) (Journal of Palestine Studies, 2009b).

Operation Cast Lead started "at midday on 27 December 2008 with a 3-minute, 40-second 'shock and awe' campaign involving 64 warplanes hitting more than 50 Hamas-related security targets across the Gaza Strip" (Journal of Palestine Studies, 2009c). Following this first strike, the first phase of the operation (December 27th 2008 – January 3rd 2009) opened with naval and air bombardments of tunnels and Hamas infrastructures.

The second phase of the operation started on January 3rd 2009 at around 20:00 with a ground forces investing the Gaza strip. This ground attack "focused on controlling open areas and encircling towns and refugee camps, but stopped short of making deep incursions into densely populated areas, brought tanks, artillery, and other armored vehicles into play" (*Ibid.,* 176). Air and naval

bombardments continued as the ground assault was taking place.

From January 12th until the end of *Operation Cast Lead*, the Israeli leadership considered opening the third phase of the operation, which was meant at delivering a "knockout blow" to Hamas (*Ibid.*). The Israeli politicians refrained from giving the order to proceed, fearing that "deep ground incursions into Gaza's urban areas and refugee camps that would result in heavy casualties on both sides, inevitably erode the very strong domestic support for the war, and result in stronger international criticism" (*Ibid.*).

[xiv] Avi Shlaim (2009) also underlined the timing of OCL, linking it to Israel's defeat in the North against Hezbollah in 2006 and the need for Olmert's government to remove the stain by winning decisively in the South:

> The timing of the war was determined by political expediency. A general election is scheduled for 10 February and, in the lead-up to the election, all the main contenders are looking for an opportunity to prove their toughness. The army top brass had been champing at the bit to deliver a crushing blow to Hamas in order to remove the stain left on their reputation by the failure of the war against Hezbollah in Lebanon in July 2006.

Previous studies on the effects of the use of force on Israeli public opinion have shown that the generally stable support in Israel for certain modes of force – especially short and forceful anti-terror campaigns with few Israeli causalities – "allow political leaders to engage in warlike activities not only when dealing with national security challenges, but also when attempting to gain popularity" (Barzilai & Inbar 1996, 70). The timing and conjuncture of OCL cast reasonable doubts on the real intent and purpose of the war. In fact, the argument that Israeli FP can be explained by looking at Israeli party politics and the use of FP for electoral or domestic purposes by different parties can be defended and seems to have great explanatory power (*Ibid.;* Kieval 1983; and Freedman 2008).

Chapter 1: Critical Discourse Analysis Theoretical Framework

> The power to construct a popular understanding of the context is a crucial discursive task of geopolitics.
>
> > - Simon Dalby, *Geopolitics and Global Security*

In this chapter, I develop on the Critical Discourse Analsyis framework I intend to use, and explain how I believe it can be useful to make sense of foreign policy. I do so because I feel the need to explain in greater details the ins and outs of CDA to fellow IR scholars and Political Scientists. In the first section, I present my conception of the "knowable" – and by the same token, distance (ontologically and hence, epistemologically speaking) the present thesis from the other IR approaches I have addressed previously in my literature review. In the second section, I discuss the implications of adopting such ontological/epistemological ground for central concepts of IR and Political Science such as power, security, identity and foreign policy. In the third section, I discuss the tenets of CDA, and finally, in the fourth section I discuss methodological issues.

Social Sciences and the 'linguistic turn': towards a discursive ontology and epistemology

> The enactment of any large-scale project of political violence – such as war or counter-terrorism – requires a significant degree of political and social consensus and consensus is not possible without language.
>
> > - Richard Jackson, *Writing the War on Terrorism*

The foundations of Discourse Analysis (DA) rest upon the major shift in social scientific research referred to as the 'linguistic turn' (Bergmann 1961, 2). Initiated by Wittgenstein (1958) with his *Philosophical Investigations,* where language is for the first time no longer referred to as a mere transparent medium of thought but as constitutive and performative of reality, the linguistic turn casts serious doubts about positivism's (and its variants) ontology and epistemology

that proposes to study the world as an objective entity that exists "out there". In fact, for Wittgenstein, "there is no reality that exists independently of language" (Chouliaraki 2008, 4; see also Harris 1990, 27-45; Thompson 1984, 281-282).

In line and reminiscent of Saussure's concepts of 'sign', 'signfier', and 'signified' which are at the heart of semiotics and structuralist theories, Wittgenstein's concept of "language games" underlines the fact that words, or utterances make no sense on their own, but only as part of system of language activity governed by rules specific to a certain context (Wittgenstein 1958, sec. 23; See also Saussure 1982). Far from being a private entity, language is inherently social. Moreover, language is not only about representing the world in words (constitutive), but also about doing things with them (performative). It results that far from being stable, the meaning of words (sign), far from fixing a stable relationship between human mind (signifier) and an external object (signified), is itself inherently unstable and contingent upon social interactions (practices). Put simply, "there is no objective or 'true meaning' beyond the linguistic representation to which one can refer" (Hansen 2007, 18; see also Shapiro 1981, 218). In that sense, language appears as a structure, or a system of signs (semiotic system) that needs to be interpreted as a network of interlocking options (Lentz 2008, 1), that is constantly being remoulded, reproduced, changed, and challenged.

Assuming the logical consequences of Wittgenstein's conception of language means overcoming the intuitive opposition between culture and nature and taking seriously the pragmatic principle that reality (material *and* ideational) is constructed through social practices (discourse)[xv]. Discourse conceptualized as social practice means that it not only involves statements by state officials and written policy documents, but also the symbols they use (flags, colours, national emblems etc.), the myths and histories they refer to (as their condition of possibility), the organizational structures they create, the procedures they follow, and the actions that ensue (Foucault 1971).

Drawing from those conclusions, the works of Austin on *How to do things with words* (1962) and its continuation through Searle's works on "*speech acts*"

(1968) and the "*construction of social reality*" (1995), the distinction between speaking and acting is definitively dealt with. Thanks to those works, we can now cease to conceive language strictly as "statements" that can be true or false, and perceive it with its illocutionary power and its "performativity" (where a speech act is never true/false but rather succeeded/failed). In that sense, this thesis radically takes its distances from 'mainstream' IR, which until today, rests on positivist ontology and epistemology assuming that a "reality exists 'out there' […] driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms" (Guba 1990, 20), and where language appears as a transparent medium.

Furthermore, I adopt the view that "the nature of being (*ontology*) cannot be separated from ways of knowing (*epistemology*)" (Karin Fierke quoted in Pouliot 2010, 56; see also Guba and Lincoln 1990, 108-109) and therefore, discourse "*gives rise* to *both* 'things' *and* 'thoughts'" (Patrick Jackson quoted in Pouliot 2010, 56-57). Clearly then, epistemologically speaking, the knowledge that we produce is also socially constructed through discourse. In line with Foucault, I take the position that knowledge and reality are mutually constitutive. To say that reality constitutes knowledge means that any and every form of life creates its own modes of subjectivity or identity and its own systems of meaning and values (Shapiro 1992, 3) and the discursive battle is precisely about who will impose his possible form over others'.

Therefore, to produce knowledge about an object or a subject and to manage to settle the meaning of that knowledge as "common sense" so that it is adopted to the extent that it becomes 'reality' is truly a powerful device (Fairclough 1992, 87). In that sense, "power is knowledge": "power produces knowledge […] power and knowledge directly imply one another; [t]here is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault 1977, 27). Put simply, knowledge and reality are mutually constitutive. Of course, this is not to say that there is no material "world out there" or that "material capabilities" do not play in power equations; but it is to argue "that we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would only have to decipher;

[…]; *there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favor*"
(Foucault 1971, 22; my emphasis).

Extrapolating from the epistemological conclusions mentioned afore, we can
draw three major theoretical challenges for the field of IR and Security Studies: 1-
security and foreign policy problems are obviously the result of social
constructions even though they do concern 'real' lives, infrastructures, etc.; 2-
struggles about concepts, system of values, forms of being, knowledge and
meaning are an essential element of security and foreign policy debates; and 3-
foreign policy and security discourse have both material and power effects as well
as being the effects of material practices and power relations (Feindt & Oels 2005,
161).

First, saying that "security problems are social constructions" does not mean
that there is no violence, perpetrators or victims; it means that there is not one
authoritative interpretation of any event concerning the realm of foreign policy or
security such as OCL (or the Cuban Missile Crisis for instance, see Weldes 1999).
There are multiple and contested interpretations. This point is reflected in my
analysis in the next chapter for instance, when I discuss Israeli identity narratives,
I assume that there is not *a single* Jewish history or narrative; there are multiple
Jewish *histories* and narratives. It is important to underline that some are more
open and prone to welcome 'Otherness' and acknowledge the Middle-Eastern
character of the majority of Israeli Jews than the dominant Zionist version of
Jewish history is willing to acknowledge for instance.

Second, saying that it is about struggles to impose concepts, knowledge and
meaning of security and foreign policy, means the way we articulate and pose a
security problem shapes *if* and *how* the problem is dealt with. For instance, we
cannot understand how a single Iranian nuclear warhead becomes more important
to the Israeli government than hundreds of Russian ICBMs without understanding
the interpretation of the security imaginary of the Israeli leaders. Moreover, in
order to have resonance and penetrating power, the Israeli security discourse must
rely on other pre-existing, already circulating security discourse(s) that will
provide it with a purchasing power to national and international audiences i.e. the

discourse of the "war on terror" and the "axis of evil". In other words, a state's security discourse is always part of a broader discursive landscape – that is Bakhtin's dialogic principle: "the necessary relation of any utterance to other utterances" (Stam *et al.* 1992, 203).

Also, as I have stated in the introduction, the Israeli security discourse during OCL competed with other discourses – coming from within and outside Israel – that seek to delegitimize Israel's warring foreign policy (for instance, drawing on the principle of "proportionality", or discourses on Human Rights and humanitarian intervention). These discourses are critical of *how* the situation is understood, represented and dealt with. What that means is that, although the State's discourse of the "fight against terrorism" has been dominant since 9/11 (for critical reading see Reid 2006; and Dillon & Reid 2009) – it has been used to justify two major wars (Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003) – it is by no means homogenous. Instead, basic conceptions of "security", "freedom", "democracy", "Jewish-ness" and "Israeli-ness" imbedded in such discourse are contested, and this is where the battle is waged (Foucault 2003, 183).

Thirdly, the concepts that are part of the security discourse (knowledge) "are intertwined with practices, institutional capacities and technologies" – in sum, they have a material and institutional grounding (Feindt & Oels 2005, 163), and this is where the focus on intertextuality – as we shall see later in this chapter – becomes important. This knowledge helps to legitimize certain practices – for instance, militarization and war-as-policy in the case of "the fight against terrorism" – but not others (i.e. negotiation), and therefore, they are central elements of power.

Discourse and Power

Departing from the discursive ontology and epistemology outlined above, there is no other option but to distance the present thesis from the rational choice style of reasoning which is still dominant in IR. In fact, as I have stated above, rational choice approaches consider 'material capabilities' as the main determinants for conceptualizing power. The state is often unquestionably taken as the basic unit, and its "national interest" assumed *a priori*. As Shapiro (quoted

in Schouten 2010) bluntly puts it, "the dominant forms of realism and rationalism in the discipline tend to naturalize the geopolitical world of states and to allow an unreflective discourse on sovereignty to dominate the problematics that mainstream inquiry entertains."

Again, those ontological *a priories* about international politics that are presented as "natural" are in fact, the products of "specific cultural (and epistemic) transformations, identity practices and political values" (Williams 2007, 4); they are cultural products. Opposing this stream of thought, constructivists have highlighted the role of ideas (Barnett & Finnemore 2004) but have been faulted by their peers in IR for leaving issues of power aside (Williams 2007, 2). In a very interesting article, Barnett and Duvall produced a conceptualization and typology of power that reconcile ideational and material premises and puts "productive" power back at the centre of the IR political analysis (2005). However, most analyses of Israeli warring policy do not take seriously the role of language and discourse in producing identities and social relations that legitimate violence. Power is at the center of CDA (Fairclough 2010, Wodak and Meyer 2009, van Dijk 2008), and this is why I believe it should be integrated into Political Science, IR and security studies analytical framework.

Concretely, the power/knowledge nexus is easily pictured by the example where one manages to impose the meaning "terrorist" upon an opposing faction instead of calling them "freedom fighters" (Fairclough 1992, 75). The move is linguistic. It is a simple utterance, but it has concrete repercussions on the ideational and material world. The speech act of naming one a "terrorist" will influence the way this individual is going to be dealt with (for instance, in this case, terrorists do not fall under the Geneva convention, or one might be subjected to special security measures), its position in a system (arguably, freedom fighters benefit from a much better position because of the already recognized and institutionalized right to self-determination for instance; while the terrorist is totally delegitimized)[xvi].

Therefore, power is not only conceived as a repressive device, something that can be possessed and wielded upon someone (Foucault 1990), it is productive:

"the historical productions of discourses of knowledge are power-invested enactments. They produce new discursive objects and new privileged locations from which speakers can make intelligible and legitimate utterances" (Shapiro 2004, xv; Hall 1997, 44). It produces subjects, and assigns them with a place within the matrix of a discourse and society in general. What it also means is that power is always relational: "what characterizes the power we are analyzing is that it brings into play relations between individuals (or between groups)" (Foucault 2000, 337).

Discourses then, are more than just language uses. They have to do with larger ideological perspectives that shape how people perceive the world and their own identities; how they become subjects and objects. The "terrorist" is produced, discursively thanks to governmental discourse of security and identity that are supported by the hollywoodian film industry, the academic institutions (especially the political science departments and the think tanks which work on "the war on terror") and the media institutions amongst others.

To be sure, discourses never exist by themselves, left unchallenged. One discourse might be dominating a field or a discipline to the extent that it appears as the "natural", but there are always competing discourses, occupying weaker positions, lower in the order. Also, a dominant discourse might draw from emerging competing discourses – for instance, think of how the state security discourse relatively recently introduce ecological concerns, or the concept of "human security" drawing from other discursive formations that had been traditionally left out of domain state security. Hence, we can talk about an "order of discourse" (Foucault 1971). In short, "orders of discourse" are "the totality of discursive practice within an institution or society, and the relationships between them (Fairclough 1992, 43).

Were the founding fathers 18th century terrorists or freedom fighters? It all depends of the story (or narrative) that manages to impose itself. Hence, CDA, by adopting such a conception of power acknowledge that the discursive power of narrating (or block alternative narratives) is a central aspect of any conflict[xvii] (Scham 2006; Neumann & Sending 2010). Hence, when a certain narrative

(ideology)[xviii] or concept (knowledge) becomes so naturalized – that is when the "cultural" becomes the "natural" – so as it appears as "common sense" or "the universal", that is when its uses "goes without saying", than we can say that the relation between signifier and signified is hegemonic, of domination[xix] (Fairclough 1992, 87, 92).

Identity, Security and Foreign Policy

Following the discursive foundation of power, I theorize foreign policy, security and identity as discourses. Identity (structure) and foreign policy (agency) are mutually constitutive – they are constituted through a process of narrative adjustment, which aims at legitimizing foreign policies, but also producing and reproducing a political identity of the state (Hansen 2007, 7). This mutual "constitutive-ness" means that identity is not something that exists independently from the discursive practices purported by the implementation of foreign policy. States do not have a pre-given or 'natural' pre-existing identity. Neither is this identity fixed; it is constituted in relation to difference (recall "language games"), and thus, it is "perfomatively constituted" (Campbell 1998, 9), that is produced, reproduced and transformed through discourses. In fact, the political identity of any particular state should be understood as "tenuously constituted in time…through a stylized repetition of acts," and achieved, "not through a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition" (*Ibid.*, 10; see also Butler 1991, 21). Thus, the Israeli state, just as any other states have "no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitutes its reality" (Campbell 1998, 10).

This also means that identity is relational, political and social. In fact, it is political because representations of identity place foreign policy matters within a specific interpretative context, which have consequences for which foreign policy, can be formulated as an adequate response (Hansen 2007, 6). It is relational because the understanding of identity implies that it is always given through reference to something it is not, and it is social because identity "is established through a set of collectively articulated codes" (*Ibid.*).

28

As for foreign policy, I argue that it constitutes one of what Foucault called a "'local center' of power-knowledge" (Foucault 1990, 98). It is a site where a certain discourse of truth about Israeli political identity is produced and reproduced. In fact, it is the ultimate tool for delimitating national identity since foreign policy represents the way the national "Self" deals with the "Others". It is also a site where the relation of domination is exercised: it is "both, an instrument and an effect of power" (*Ibid.*, 101). Indeed, "foreign policies rely upon representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced" (Hansen 2007, 1). Yet, it is also a site that produces "'reverse' discourses", a point from which resistance and opposing strategies take life; where contestation of the collective action may trigger a shift in the meaning of the identity (Israeli-ness here), a disturbance in dominant narrative securing the "ontological security" of the nation-state.

Thus, foreign policy decision makers always legitimize the implementation of a certain foreign policy by referring to a certain representation of the political identity which is itself informed by a dominant narrative or version of the "people's" history, and this very narration of the nation is reproduced through foreign policy (amongst other sites). Indeed, the goal for the policy maker is to present the foreign policy as legitimate to its electorate. It must appear consistent with the political identity of the nation-state. Hence, "In 'speaking back' their representation of a foreign policy issue, politicians are in turn influencing what counts as proper representations within a particular foreign policy issue" (*Ibid.*, 7).

Hence, foreign policy, especially through processes of securitization, is not only concerned with relation with other states or external entities, but before all, it is concerned with "the production and reproduction of an unstable identity at the level of the state, and the containment of challenges to that identity" (Campbell 1998, 71). This process of securitization entails that "*In naming a certain development a security problem, the 'state' can claim special right*" (Weaver 1995) to use legitimately certain mechanisms of power such as curfews, blockades, embargos, house demolitions and military operations over a

population, situated 'outside' the state. Yet, this 'external' threat is linked with resisting elements to the dominant state narrative located 'inside' by a discourse of danger or threat for which the securitization process is mobilized.

Therefore, the militaristic foreign policies of Israel, such as OCL, are only formulated as an adequate response following a certain "articulation of geographic imaginaries and antagonism based on models of identity–difference" (Shapiro 2008, 18). Those articulations are based on "'historically developed, socially embedded interpretations of identity and space" from which the frames for war-as-policy response appear as legitimate, moral and adequate (*Ibid.*).

Drawing from this section of the present work, one can conclude that in the case of Israel, as in any other modern state, the boundaries of the political identity "are secured by the representation of danger integral to foreign policy" (Campbell 1998, 3). Hence, foreign policy plays a key role in producing and reproducing an identity specifically because it marks the outside from the inside (Walker 1992). Therefore, "the constant articulation of danger through foreign policy is thus not a threat to a state's identity or existence: it is its condition of possibility" (Campbell 1998, 13).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Two preeminent scholars and theorist of CDA – Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak – have summarized the main tenets of CDA as: "1- CDA addresses social problems; 2- Power relations are discursive; 3- Discourse constitutes society and culture; 4- Discourse does ideological work; 5- Discourse is historical; 6- The link between text and society is mediated; 7- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory; and 8- Discourse is a form a social action" (quoted in van Dijk 2008, 86).

Hence, for point one, the social problem from which I depart is not only the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also the identity politics of the Israeli society. I believe, as Aziza Khazzoom (2003, 483) has pointed out, the internal ethnic divisions (Mizrahi/Ashkenazi) and external national (Israeli/Palestinian) are intimately connected, and it is necessary to study them jointly. As for point two, three, four, six and eight, I hope I have addressed them sufficiently above, in the

previous section. As for point five, "discourse is historical", the key to address this issue is intertextuality (inspired by Bahktin's dialogism I have addressed earlier). I should explore intertextuality later in this chapter.

It should also be added that, CDA overcomes the agency/structure debate[xx] because it accounts for both; it conceptualizes agents and structures as mutually constitutive (i.e. foreign policy (agency) and identity (structure)). It is so because, from a CDA stance, "structures are not only presupposed by, and necessary conditions for action, but are also the *products* of action; or, in a different terminology, actions *reproduce* structures" (Fairclough 2010, 38; see also Giddens 1981).

This latter argument leads us to the last of eight tenets of CDA, point seven arguing that CDA is interpretative and explanatory. If the relationship between structure and agency – that is identity and foreign policy – is one of mutual constitution and performativity, then it cannot be a causal theory. This however, as argued by Lene Hansen (2007, 28), should not be considered as a flaw within the framework rather than an ontological and epistemological choice.

Intertextuality/Interdiscursivity

> Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double.
>
> - Julia Kritseva, *Word, Dialogue and Novel*

> Poser le primat de l'interdiscursivité, c'est récuser toute approche qui ferait d'une identité discursive un pur rapport à soi.
>
> - Dominique Maingueneau, *L'Analyse du discours*
>
> -

Text (as agency) is what gives meaning to an event (here OCL). Text produces the interpretation or a narration of the event that as a reality effect. This very text is constrained and made possible by identity (structure). This structure is in turn reproduced (continuity) or modified (change) through text. Hence, we must see text as a *productivity* (Slembrouck 2002, 1); "Étudier le texte comme une transformation sur l'axe diachronique signifie que nous l'abordons comme

une STRUCTURATION plutôt que comme une STRUCTURE" (Kristeva as quoted in *Ibid.*, 2).

But how do we grasp the presence of the previous structure within the newly produced text? The answer is thanks to intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Intertextuality refers to the signs and marks of the ways a text "reads" history and inscribes itself within it (Paveau 2010, 94, my translation; see Kristeva 1967); it is about "how history is inscribed into a situated practice" (Slembrouck 2002, 21). For Fairclough intertextuality is at the center of a CDA that seeks "to map systemic analyses of spoken and written text onto systemic analysis of social contexts" (as quoted in *Ibid.*, 4).

As we shall see in the next chapter, textual analysis subsumes linguistic and intertextual analysis. Both are essential. Intertextual analysis is essential because it "shows how texts draw upon orders of discourse, the particular configuration of conventionalized practices which text producers and consumers have available in particular circumstances", it "draws attention to how texts depend upon society and history in the form of the resources made available within an order of discourse" and "how texts transform the social and historical resources, how texts mix and 're-accentuate' genres (discourses, narratives, registers)" (Slembrouck 2002, 4). Genre understood as "a configuration of text-internal and text-external factors" (Bhatia 2010, 32).

Intertextualiy is central to CDA because it allows us to understand the "dynamics between hegemonic struggle, crises in socio-cultural values and forms of social linguistic creativity at the level of genre conventions [… and it] points in the direction of an impersonal history of generic constitution with different degrees of 'naturalization'" (Slembrouck 2002, 5). In fact, intertextuality – therefore conceptualized as a function of *appropriation of generic resources* across contextual and other *text-external* resources (Bhatia 2010) – becomes central to CDA of FP because it highlights the strategies state officials uses to legitimate their decisions:

> Interdiscursivity […] refers to more innovative attempts to creat various forms of hybrid and relatively novel constructs by appropriating or exploiting established conventions or resources associated with other

genres and practices. Interdiscursivity thus accounts for a variety of discursive processes and professional practices, often resulting in 'mixing', 'embedding', and 'bending' of generic norms in professional contexts (Bhatia 2010, 35).

To show more concretely what interdiscursivity is about, consider the following former IDF chief-of-staff quote taken from an interview with a journalist from the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* (Shavit 2002):

Ari Shavit: There is something surprising in the fact that you see the Palestinian threat as an existential threat.

Moshe Ya'allon: The characteristics of that threat are invisible, like cancer. When you are attacked externally, you see the attack, you are wounded. Cancer, on the other hand, is something internal. Therefore, I find it more disturbing, because here the diagnosis is critical. If the diagnosis is wrong and people say it's not cancer but a headache, then the response is irrelevant. But I maintain that it is cancer. My professional diagnosis is that there is a phenomenon here that constitutes an existential threat

The genre expressed here is official state discourse about security. As the head of the IDF, Ya'allon is positioned as a highly authorized speaker to address issues of security. Yet, what we see here is clearly the presence of a discourse about medicine, or even more precisely oncology (the fight against cancer in human body). Yet, what is really in question here is the fight against Palestinians (see Shavit's question). So clearly, there is a process of "hybridization", "mixing" or "embedding" of the state official's security discourse with a medical discourse, the human body and diseases. To sum up, to say that interdiscursivity is constitutive is also to say that a discourse is not, as it seeks to appear generally, a return to things as they are or to common sense, but as an assemblage and work over other discourses (Maingueneau 1991, 163).

Methodology

The following chapter focus on social construction of the Israeli dominant identity. This chapter is a macro- historical analysis of the founding myths, narratives and tropes that shape the dominant discourse of Israeli-ness, which in turn will appear as a lens through which events (such as terrorist attacks or OCL) are interpreted. In that sense, it seeks to investigate the conditions of possibility

for the speech act of securitization that lead to OCL to be successful; how through discourse, the representations of the social become hegemonic as to render war-as-policy legitimate. In sum, it is a macro-analysis aiming at understanding what are the discourses drawn upon in order to produce and interpret text (FP).

To do so, I rely mostly on secondary sources coming from different disciplines of the social sciences (anthropology, psychology, sociology, and political science) in order to get a transdisciplinary understanding of various discourses of Israeli-ness. As mentioned earlier, the focus in this chapter is on the social construction of identity through myths and narratives. In this chapter, I want to provoke the reader to think not so much of *the* history of Jewish people but rather in terms of multiple *histories* of Jews in the Diaspora, and to question how those histories are repressed, marginalized or silenced to fit the dominant – Zionist – narration of the nation.

In the third chapter I shift my focus from structure to agency; or put differently, I move from macro- to micro- analysis. Therefore, I seek to understand how participants (Israeli officials) produce and interpret texts on the basis of the cultural resources identified in the previous chapter. As argued by Halliday (1985, 345; quoted in Lentz 2008, 1), "the study of discourse cannot be properly separated from the study of grammar that lies behind it". Therefore, in this chapter I explore the ideational and interpersonal dimension of text that seeks to give a sense of reality to the event that is OCL.

Therefore, the third chapter is a textual analysis of eight top Israeli government officials' statements pertaining to OCL effectuated between December 27th 2008 (very beginning of OCL) and January 17th 2009 (OCL's end). Some might consider the number of text analysed in this chapter as very small. But it should be noted that it is the analytic consequence of a practical choice. I believe it represent a fair trade-off between breath and depth[xxi]. Official speech is the most important genre to be looked at when analysing the language of warring policy because "it sets the parameters of official thinking and forms the basis of policy and action; it establishes the core principles, assumptions and knowledge of the warring-policy approach, implies the kinds of action that will be

undertaken and provides the overall story or narrative for public understanding of the issue" (Jackson 2005, 17).

I do so by focusing on four analytical categories proposed by Fairclough (1992): 1- *vocabulary* (that is word meanings, wording and semantic forms such as hyperboles, euphemisms and metaphors), 2- *grammar* (modality and transitivity), 3- *cohesion* (rhetorical and argumentative strategies, how words are connected together to produce new effects), and 4- *structure* (the structure of the text). I mostly focus on the first two categories because this is where most of identity construction/reproduction is achieved in the text. I shall explain in more detail what each of the concepts aforementioned means as I encounter them in the following chapter.

The fourth and final chapter is also about agency. But the focus is shifted from the reproduction of discourse towards contestation and challenges to Israeli dominant identity narrative through the Israeli film *Waltz with Bashir*. In that sense, I analyse the agency of recent Israeli war cinema in narrating the nation in an alternative manner; the way it narrates the nation in a way that denaturalizes and destabilizes the official dominant narrative the State of Israel uses to legitimate its warring policy. To do so, I use David-Martin Jones' framework for analyzing cinema narrative in relation to national identity (2006).

The use of aesthetic practice and film text is sound because CDA aims at denaturalizing dominant representations and to problematize what is taken to be "natural". To do so, the use of multiple genres ("multimodal analysis") and transdisciplinary framework impose itself. In fact, all social science disciplines each have there own genres of writing, and how they focuses on specific objects and subjects of analysis. Hence, "empirically adequate critical analysis of social problems is usually multidisciplinary" (van Dijk 2008, 121).

On a final note, I would like to underline the extent to which the role of language and discourse are left aside when it come to understand the construction of political processes such as the formulation and legitimation of warring foreign policy. As mentioned in the introduction, most scholars studying Israeli FP focuses on geopolitical, diplomatic, legal or economical aspects. Hence, the key

purpose of this thesis is to redress this lacuna by examining the way the formulation of State official formulation of FP (OCL) uses language and other discursive practices (implying identity narratives) to create and maintain hegemony, to impose a particular interpretation of Israeli and Arab identities and a particular reality of the conflict on the rest of the Israeli society and international community, and to rationalise, legitimise and normalise the practice of war-as-policy   (Jackson   2005,   20).

Notes: Chapter 1

[xv] I take the Foucauldian conception of "discourse" as social practice (see Wiener 2009, 176-177; and Pouliot 2010, 22)

[xvi] For a concrete example about the power of naming specific to Israel, see Piki Ish-Shalom 2010.

[xvii] That is,

> … discursive power takes two forms within the narrative method, one that uses concepts to construct and contextualize agency through storylines and another which draws on broader ideologies to privilege certain plots over others. […] Liberalism, or any other form of discursive dominance, shuts down alternative ways of thinking and acting. Reproduction of institutionalized practices leaves little room for change, including within the academy, because silent assumptions naturalize conventional perspectives (Klotz and Lynch 2007, 51).

[xviii] I use the term "ideology" as understood by Gramsci, that is: "a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in the manifestation of individual and collective life" (Gramsci 1971, 328). But I do so with great circumspection in the sense that, ideology – especially so in neo-Marxist theory – "always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth" (Foucault 1980, 118), as if the "masses" were disconnected from a "reality" which only the intellectual elite would have understood thanks to highly theoretical debates. Hence, we must remember, truth is an effect of power, not something existing independently "out there".

[xix] This is precisely where I distance myself from IR constructivism (see Pouliot 2010 for instance), because it stops short after denaturalizing the "habitus", "background knowledge" or "common sense". I do recognize that constructivism, by denatuarilzing, constructivism problematizes; but it is also necessary to explore alternative routes that are not normally explored in the field of inquiry (i.e. IR and security studies) (as I do in the last chapter on *Waltz with Bashir* for instance).

[xx] I refer here to the debate in social science between those who see power as exercised by individuals *or* institutional *agents* and those who see it as a result of structural factors within systems.

[xxi] The only statement used that was *not* made *during* OCL is February 1st 2009 Israeli President Shimon Peres' statement made at the *World Economic Forum* in

Davos. I decided to include it because it was specifically made to answer the critics of OCL.

Chapter 2: Constructing Israeli National Identity: The Zionist Palimpsest[xxii]

It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left to receive the manifestation of their aggressiveness.

- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*

Preceding the judgment that regulates and settles, there is a founding narration.

- Michel De Certeau, *The Pratice of Everyday Life*

Introduction

In this chapter I want to elaborate on the 'historical' aspect of Israeli political identity by offering a critical assessment of the development of the dominant metanarrative of Israel – itself a gradual process of inculcation and naturalization of ideology through a process of orientalization of Jewish population in Europe (Khazzoom 2003) and during their settlement in Israel. I believe this to be important since it identifies the historical preconditions for action (Neumann & Sending 2010, 20). To that end, the chapter aims at situating *Operation Cast Lead* historically, as a result of a larger process, contingent to the development of the political identity discourse in Europe and in Israel. To be clear, this chapter does not claim to offer an alternative storyline, which would better describe a linear history of modern Israel. Instead of presenting the development of the Israeli political identity as a path already trodden to a definite and permanent structure, I want to present the process of identity construction as contingent and arbitrary and I want to do so by highlighting the breaks, disjuncture, power struggles and "discursive battle" over "truth" which led to the present Israeli metanarrative and subjectivity.

In that sense, I adopt the critical view about national and social identities in general which defines ethnic identity as a product of continual social construction (Bhabha 1994; Brubaker 2004; Nagel 1994) and which conceptualizes the nation as a modern collective, an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983), shaped by

cultural invention and imagination of elites to create a uniform nation-state awareness among masses with different histories (Gellner 1983; and Giddens 1985). Moreover, the nation's unity-promoting cultural governance should not simply be treated as ideological representations, oriented toward supporting a particular apparatus of state power. Here, it will be conceived interpretively as the struggles between the legitimation of the dominant political identity and culture, and what Bhabha has referred to as "those easily obscured, but highly significant recesses of the national culture from which alternative constituencies of peoples and oppositional analytic capacities may emerge" (Bhabha 1990, 3).

I contend that a close inspection of the Zionist discourse and practices that embody a specific Jewish and Israeli mode of subjectivity shows that this discourse serves to instantiate and sequestrate a specific Zionist national identity; a particular Israeli Jewish subject among many other possibilities. In fact, with the rise of the Israeli Western/strong subject came a variety of in-between Jewish and non-Jewish subjectivities that have been excluded from that which is considered properly Jewish, Israeli or Occidental. To deconstruct the Zionist narration of the Israel nation also helps to better understand the role of the violence and encounter with the Arab/Palestinian/Oriental 'Other' in the construction of Israeli 'Self'.

Before questioning the dominant tropes and narrative of Israel's national identity I would simply like to briefly outline the major the dominant voices on the question. Without entering into the internal and various religious/secular as well as leftist/rightist over Zionism one can identify a set of core assumption or *doxa* which defines the current premises of Israeli identity. Zionism is a form a nationalism that adopts the Eurocentric ontology holding that the world and humanity are divided into natural social and cultural entities that forms nations. Zionism assumes that Jews have always form such an entity. It takes for granted the pre-existing Jewish nation with its essential traits of identity such as language, cultural practices, ethnic kinship and etc. The Zionist conceptualization of time is one in which there is one homogenous teleological Jewish time. *The* Jewish history is the story of the origins and development of *the* Jewish nation. Like almost all nationalists movements, the conceptualization of space in the Zionist

discourse is also, like time, one that presumes a natural, isomorphic relationship between the Jewish nation and its homeland (Israel). Hence, most Zionists historians tends to accept four key assumptions: namely that (1) the Jews form *a* single national body; (2) the only normal location for a Jew and the Jewish nation is the homeland, Israel; (3) that outside the homeland, Jewish life and culture is always threatened and face inimical relations; and (4) that Jewish claims to Israel are the only legitimate claims and other's aren't (Silberstein 1999, 16).

Since the late 1980's a new current as emerged in Israel's academia and society in which the core Zionist assumptions are challenged. This "postzionist" current as triggered a debate and struggle over the control of cultural space, production of knowledge and meaning of Jewish and Israeli subjectivities. The postzionist movement – incarnated in authors such as Ilan Pappé, Benny Morris (who changed camp), Shlomo Sand, Boaz Evron, Gershon Shafir and Baruch Kimmerling amongst others – have produced an interesting body of knowledge in various disciplines of social sciences and humanities which problematizes historical narratives and representations of Israel identity and the exclusive control of Zionist and Ashkenazim discourse over Israeli culture. This chapter is greatly indebted to that later movement as well as the postcolonial one.

Pre-1948: European Estrangement and the 'Great Chain of Orientalism'

Zionism has constituted the dominant discourse of Jewish Israeli identity and political identity since the creation of the State of Israel (Aronoff and Aronoff 1996, 85). Zionism is, first and foremost, a narrative of Euro-Jewish construction of a "self" living within European space (a Jewish westerner in the West) that later informed contemporary Israeli Zionism which emphasizes the 'return' to Israel as the (re-)building of a cultural West in the geographic "East".

In essence, Zionism was a nationalist project that took shape as the European Jewish population encountered exclusion through a process of Orientalization[xxiii] during which Western Europeans stigmatized the Jews as Orientals. The violent story of Christian-European and Jewish-European relationship began when the Christian European elites – infused with the ideas of the philanthropic and

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Universalist Enlightenment philosophers – decided to allow Jews to integrate and participate fully in the social and economic activity of the nation, but at a price (Khazzoom 2003, 489; see also Bar-On 2008, 8; Dowty 2005, 30).

From the late 1700s until late-1800s and even on into the 20th century, European Jews "were expected to 'prove their fitness for equal rights' by shedding their 'backward' traditions, dismantling their separate communal infrastructures, and moving forward into 'modernity'" (Khazzoom *Op. Cit.*). European Christians started demanding from Jews, those "unfortunate Asiatic refugees", to become 'Western' or 'Occidental' by reforming their lifestyles, values, and social, economic and educational structures (*Ibid.*, 490; Silberstein 1999, 4). This Euro-Christian animosity to 'Occidentalize' was characterized by a double movement where Jewish alterity (read 'abnormality'[xxiv]) was simultaneously revealed and rejected in order to be translated and then assimilated into the Euro-Christian ('normal') world (Todorov 1982, 67). In that sense, the Euro-Christian West imposed the stigma that led to Zionist identity: "We are one people. Our enemies have made us in our despite" (Herzl as quoted in Rose 2005,113).

This process of 'Orientalization' stigmatized the European Jewish communities. Its members started telling each other about their individual responsibility to change the specificities of their 'backward', 'abnormal' Jewish characters: "Look at yourselves in the mirror! […] As soon as you have recognized your unathletic build, your narrow shoulders, your clumsy feet, your sloppy roundish shape, you will resolve to dedicate a few generations to the renewal of your outer appearance" (Walter Rathenau, quoted in Khazzoom 2003, 493). Take, for instance, the young Chaim Weizmann, who became Israel's first President in 1948, who in 1912 declared that "'the greatest challenge to the creative forces of the Jewish people, its redemption from the *abnormalities* of exile'; 'scattered among foreign cultures ... our life displays somethings *abnormal*'; 'our relations to the other races and nations would become more *normal*'; 'We shall revert to *normal* ... 'like unto all the nations'" (as quoted in Rose 2005, 76). The Zionist physician Max Nordau wrote at the turn of the

century: "We shall therefore renew connection with our ancient tradition: We will again be broad-chested, vigorous and fearless men" (as quoted in Bar-On 2008, 15).

In other words, inspired – but most of all – stigmatized by the Christian discourse, European Jews undertook the project of historically rescuing themselves from the obscurity and alienation that made their mode of subjectivity unrecognizable or external to the Western Christian European society of 'civilized states' (Opondo 2010; Fanon 1994). According to George Eliot's last novel *Daniel Deronda*, written in 1876, "the outraged Jews shall have a defence in the court of nations", they would "redeem the soil form debauched and paupered conquerors" on which they would "found a Jewish polity, grand, simple, just like the old" where they would give it "more than the brightness of Western freedom amid the despotisms of the East" (quoted in Said 1979, 122-123), *Eretz Israel* was to be restored as a Western state, on a land without a people for *the* Jewish people, an outpost of progress in the East: "Herzlian zionism is thus itself the civilizing mission, first and foremost directed by Jews at other Jews and then at whatever native happen to be there, if indeed, these natives were noticed at all" (Boyarin 1997b, 303).

Thus, it is in this process of orientalization or, as Aimé Césaire would put it, "thingification", that the "spoiled identity" (Goffman 1963) of Zionism saw the day. Zionist ideals basically argued that Jews would not obtain respect by assimilating to European societies, but by creating a state of their own and by building their own nationalist pride. Jews needed to awaken from their "false dream of assimilation," and create their own modern and western state (see Pinsker 1882). Only then would the Jews stop being the 'object' upon which the European 'Self' was building its modern and occidental subjectivity. In the words of Sternhell describing his arrival to the newly founded Israeli state in 1951:

> Only then, when I disembarked at Haifa from the ship Artza, did I stop being an *object* of others' action and became a *subject*. Only then did I become a person who is in control of himself and not dependent on others. […] The last stop of the wandering, of the changes of identity. Of a certain falseness that was an integral part of it all. Of not being you, not being yourself. And here, here you suddenly shed that

falseness. Something artificial peels away, something that could sometimes be frightening, having to do with the constant need to justify yourself, to explain why you are here (as quoted in Shavit 2008; my emphasis).

Overall, a great majority of West European Jews assimilated to the demands of the new nation-states' societies, and became what some later called "assimilitionists". The Zionist project – which was essentially another form of European nationalist ideology – found only a small minority of adherents to their cause. Its basic tenets and myths – that the Jews constituted an ethnic group or race, the idea of Jewish blood, and the idea of building a Jewish nation-state – were relatively new and far from being universally accepted amongst Jews (Dowty 2005, 2)[xxv].

It is imperative to note that Zionism did not necessarily have to take this nationalistic form where messianism is passed into the State of Israel – a nationalization of God. In fact, Jacqueline Rose's second chapter in *The Question of Zion* (2005) demonstrates that there was an internal 'discursive battle' within the early Zionist movement between the nationalists such as David Ben-Gurion, Vladimir Jabotinski, or Theodor Herzl and non-nationalists such as Gerschom Scholem, Hans Kohn, Simon Rawidowicz, Freud, Hannah Arendt or Martin Buber. While Herzl and his cronies failed to imagine a Jewish subjectivity outside the ontological premises of the Eurocentric nation-state:

> I have already drafted the entire plan. I know everything required for it. Money, money, money, and more money; means of transportation, provisions for a vast multitude, maintenance of discipline organisation ... treaties with head of state ... the construction of new splendid dwelling places. And beforehand, a prodigious propaganda ... pictures, songs ... a flag (as quoted in Rose, 75-76).

Martin Buber had already foreseen and criticized the assimilation of Jewish culture, ethics, and values to European ontology of nation-states: "Of all the many kinds of assimilation in the course of history, this nationalist assimilation is the most terrifying, the most dangerous" (as quoted in Rose 2005, 70; see also Pianko 2010)[xxvi]. Hence, it is important to note here that there were other currents and

alternatives, and that it was not (and it is still not) all Jews who supported the creation of the Jewish state at the expense of an indigenous Arab population.

Moreover, Zionism reflected the desire to move toward being non-stranger within Europe by revealing and creating the Jewish 'Self' through the ontological basis of the nation-state and thus achieving autonomy and freedom. In that sense, the orientalization stigma was embedded in the Zionist discourse and project, and hence traveled to contemporary Israel with the first settlers (Khazzoom 2003, 499). The first Zionists to settle in Ottoman (and later British mandate) Palestine were *miskilim* – "proponents of the Jewish enlightenment (*haskala*) and of integration into modern Western liberal society who felt betrayed" by the West and the European nations (Dowty 2005, 30-31).

What those *miskilin* were fleeing was not just violence in Europe, but mostly the idea of the European Jew who was considered weak, backward, and the victim of history: "It was with the establishment of the Zionist movement in Europe that the Zionist self (and, later on, the Israeli self) was defined in opposition to previous Jewish Others, by setting itself apart from them" (Bar-On 2008, 15). Hence, the Arab (or the Palestinian) was not the first 'Other' constituting the Israeli Self, and this is what is missing from any analyses of the conflict that do not account of the Jewish times in Europe and elsewhere.

The Arabs almost never appeared in the writings of nationalist Zionists such as Herzl and Ben-Gurion, and when they did, they were romanticized and described as part of the nature, just like other colonial descriptions of "natives" in European colonies. In sum, they were "looked through" as part of the natural landscape – of the "land without a people for a people without a land" – that needed to be conquered, tamed and turned into an outpost of progress ("Making the desert bloom") (Bar-On 2008, 16; Shohat 2010, 25-51).

In fact, and interestingly enough, the Zionist locus revived the same slogan Euro-Americans used – there is more than a century and a half ago for the conquest of the West – of "a land without people for a people without a land", perpetuating the national myth of the nonexistent Arab inhabitants (Said 2000, 126). Hence, the absence of indigenous presence in contemporary Israel was

regarded as a preexisting fact rather than an aggressive spatial practice (Shapiro 1997a, 28). The Zionist discourse considered that there was nonexistent Arab inhabitant and that the "empty" land was open for the rebuilding of a vanquished a "pure" Jewish state (Said *Op. Cit*). As succinctly explained by Shohat:

> Carrying the same banner of the 'civilizing mission' that European powers proclaimed during their thrust into 'found lands', Zionists text viewed Palestine as *terra nullius* and indigenous Palestinian *cultura nullius*. […] The concealment of Palestine took place within two parallel narratives that put forth two opposite times-lines; Palestine was in excess of the march of Progress but it was also in excess of the disinterring of remnants of the Biblical past. […] Discourses of colonial discovery, in other words, were intermingled with discourses of return to the land of origins (Shohat 2010, 253).

Zionism in Early Contemporary Israel

For their part, the Jewish immigrants from Arab countries arriving in the newly found Israel were referred to by Ben-Gurion as "human dust" and by Yitzhak Tabenkin as "non-existent" (Bar-On 2008, 16). Close to a million of those "Arab-Jew" emigrated to Israel and almost overnight, a new Jewish 'Other' appeared in the socialscape of contemporary Israel: The "ethnic" Jew. The *sabra*[xxvii] – the Israeli born Jew – which was defined in opposition to the 'backwardness' of the European Jews and Holocaust survivors who themselves were associated with the 'East', found itself very quickly challenged by those new immigrants who did not share the Zionist ideology nor its Euro-historical background, and whose relationship with the Middle East (their historical proximity with the Arabs and shared cultural practices) had barely anything to do with the Zionist myths and narratives (Bar-On 2008, 17; Kimmerling 1998, 66).

In the meantime, the non-Jewish indigenous population had taken the relay of Nazi Germany with the 1948 independence war, and were absorbed into the role of "external demonized Other" (*Ibid.*, 18). Of course, the numerous wars that followed the Holocaust during the first 30 years of Israel's existence, reinforced this feeling towards the Arabs and thus supported the "siege mentality" – the feeling that "the whole world is against us"[xxviii] – ethos which is a core element of the Zionist narrative (Bar-Tal and Antebi 1992, 254, 256-258). For many

European Jews, the new Jewish Other, the Arab-Jew and the Holocaust survivor seamed to emerge from within that "demonized" Other and the "Zionist discourse turned the concept of 'Arab-Jew,' into an antonym, an oxymoronic identity" (Shohat 2010, 255).

Therefore, to reproduce and posit their new found state as 'modern' and occidental, and to counter their orientalization, European Jews resolved to a strategy that would cast other groups as eastern by marginalizing Middle Eastern Arab-Jews, West European Jews were producing themselves and contemporary Israel as western (*Ibid.*, 486): "The Ostjuden, perenially marginalized by Europe, realized their desire of becoming Europe, ironically, in the Middle East, this time on the back of their own 'Ostjuden,' the Eastern Jews" (Shohat 2010, 188). In fact, "The Zionist discourse also held wide currency, and Zionist condescension, even disgust, toward 'weak' Holocaust survivors, 'backward' Yiddish-speakers from the East European ghettos, 'non-ideological' refugees, and Diaspora Jews generally" (Khazzoom 2003, 488; Zerubavel 1995).

Thus, the westernization project of the state to be created was embedded into the Zionist one. According to Herzl, the new Jewish State to be found should "form a portion of the rempart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism" (as quoted in Khazzoom 2003, 499). The Zionist project was one of "proselytization" of the Ashkenazim in the contemporary Israeli state: Israel has a three-tiered structured society where East European Ashkenazim are cast as western, the Mizrahim as assimilable easterners, and Palestinian and other Israeli-Arabs as inassimilable easterners (*Ibid*., 489; Shohat 1988).

East-European Jews and Mizrahim were expected to assimilate and "vanish altogether" within the Israeli political identity of the time (Kimmerling 1998, 66-67). To do so, they had to assert and reassert their Israeliness and "prove" their "fit 'Occidental' Jewishness" to the first arrived Ashkenazim. As the Mizrhahim and East-European Jews were encouraged to abandon their "traditional" conception of Jewish subjectivity to fit with the Zionist conception of what it

meant to be an Israeli and Jewish, the *Sabra;* A "Judaism with Muscle"[xxix], fit to live in the Western, modern newly established state. Therefore,

> the internalization of the representational codes meant that [European Jews, Non-European Jews and Arabs] came to think about each other in terms of superiority and inferiority or as part of humanity made possible by the assimilation of [Jews] into a pre-established set of European cultural values or *habitus* (Opondo 2010, 111).

Thus, the Zionist ideology that ensued from the stigmatization and the orientalization process is based on a very Eurocentric and ethnocentric conception of Judaism, which feeds segregation into two axles at the same time: Jew vs. non-Jew and Occidental vs. Oriental (Khazzoom 2003, 482; Raz-Krakotzkin 1998), where the Arab represents this inassimilable "Other" upon which the Israeli 'Western' political identity is constructed:

> The 'East', in the Israeli case, is simultaneously the place of Judaic origins and the locus for implementing the 'West'. Associated with the backwardness, 'the East' is also associated with the solace of a return to origins and reunification with the Biblical past. The 'West', meanwhile, is also viewed ambivalently, both as the historic crime scene of anti-Semitism and as an object of desire, an authoritative norm to be emulated in the 'East' (Shohat 2010, 253).

The promotion of Zionist ideals and this establishment of the new enmity-based identities completed the moral, economic and spatial formation required to support the perpetuation of the "Great chain of Orientalization" and the east/west, bad/good, modern/backward, sick/healthy, Arab/Jew (See figure 2 in annexes).

Post-1967 Israel and Zionist Cultural Governance

Just before the defeat of pan-Arabism that accompanied the Arab defeat of 1967, the Israeli-Palestinians, whom had been under the martial law since the creation of the State, were allowed civic rights (1966) even though they remained virtually excluded from Israeli society until today (Kook 1996, 202) and a few years later, after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Mizrahim formed a majority of the Israeli-Jewish population.

The "Arab threat" to survival quelled, the "Oriental Jews" started demanding for political and economic liberalization. The Israeli State responded positively,

which led to the formation of new political parties such as the Likud, which was created in 1973, and took power for the first time in 1977. This shift of power reflected the disenchantment of the Ashkenazim-Sabra with Labor leftist ideology without really departing from the core Zionist assumptions, political *doxa* and entrenched structures of power within society (Shohat 2010, 210). In front of the rising political power of the Mizrahim, the "evil" Palestinian came to fulfill the role for the Mizrahim that the European Jew had played for the early Zionists; any character associated with an Arab became a sign of weakness, backwardness, non-Israeliness:

> Just as German Jews had reacted to cultural insecurity by orientalizing East European Jews, so many westernizing Middle Eastern Jews became invested in discursive and symbolic separation from their own Oriental other, Moslem Arabs. Over time, these groups developed identities in which, at the most extreme, Jewishness meant non-Arabness" (Khazzoom 2003, 498; see also Lustick 1999 and Eyal 1993).

If Prime Minister Golda Meir could declare in the early 1970s that "there is no such thing as a Palestinian people" it was much more difficult after the conquest of the Occupied Territories (OT) and the Camp David agreement (1977) to do so, and hence the Palestinian became the subject of disgust and racism, and the embodiment of a new "evil". More precisely, the alien Arab Other became the Palestinian Other (Bar-On 2008, 85).

Hence, the consolidated Israeli Zionist Self of the first two decades became challenged by the Jewish Other from the Diaspora, the ethnic Other (mostly from Arab countries) and the alien (Arab, non-Jewish) Other who threatened the Jewish-Israeli from both, outside (mostly Palestinians in OT) and inside (Israeli-Palestinians) (Bar-On 2008, 51; see figure 2 in annexes). With the securing of the borders and the occupation of the territories, and later on with signature of the peace process with Egypt, and even more so with the debacle of the 1982 war in Lebanon, the Israeli society saw the rising polarization and collapse of national consensus (Bar-On 2001, 336; 2001, 342). From this episode in the Israeli history until today, the Zionist "monolithic" identity faces a process of disintegration, which accelerates as internal contradictions such as multiples ethnicities, histories, non-Jewish migrants and roles attached to gender and religion surface

within the society (Bar-On 2008, 9; Aronoff and Aronoff 1996, 86, 95; Lustick 1999). This disintegration is reflected in the deterioration of the Sabra ethos and what is commonly referred to in Israel as the "crisis of values" (Shohat 2010, 210-211; Kimmerling 1998, 53; Silberstein 1999, 189).

At the foreign policy level, this crisis of identity was also triggered by the fact that Israelis realize that securing the existence of Israel in the Middle East with the victory of the 1967 War and the occupation of the West Bank (WB) and Gaza did not bring about much peace or ontological security. The expansion of the territory had merely expanded the dimensions without changing the nature of Israel's fundamental ontological dilemmas[xxx]. The only intact tenet left unchallenged of the Zionist monolithic identity was the Israeli culture of victimhood and need for self-defense and protection that accompanies it (Bar-On 2001, 342). It is of little surprise then, that the environment they find themselves in is more and more conceived in terms of "Middle Eastern Muck" (*habotz haMizra-Tichoni*) (Lustick 2008, 34) "no-exit situation", the "siege mentality" (Bar-Tal and Antebi 1992), "the people that dwells alone" (Aronoff and Aronoff 1996, 87) or even under labels such as "us here, them there" as some Israeli right-wing politicians have done in recent years.

Hence, to safeguard the Eurocentric Zionist narration of the nation and resist its disintegration, the State had to engage in cultural governance. The portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinians as inassimilable and thus excludable from the Israeli society us reflected in the domestic "anxiety-driven" policy-making such as the recent "loyalty law" or even deportation, which is advocated by the present Israeli foreign minister. On the other hand, for the Arab-Jews who were depicted as assimilable, it meant that they would end up being an economic[xxxi] and tactical asset for the State. All the same, their Arabness had to be dealt with, it had to be cleansed (Shohat 2010, 257): "at the time the Sephardi's Oriental 'difference' threatens the European ideal-ego which phantasizes Israel as the prolongation of Europe 'in' the Middle East, but not 'of' it" (Shohat 2010, 188). Hence, the reaction of the *sabras* vis-à-vis the idea of heterogeneity of Jewish cultures and the amalgam of "Jewishness" (seen as backwardness, opposed to the

Westernization of Zionism) was an ideological impulse which manifested itself into policies that stripped Arab-Jews of their heritage (*Op. Cit.*).

It is not evident how the expression "Arab-Jew" came to be accepted as an oxymoron by the Israeli Jewish populations having their origins in the Middle East. Their assimilation in the name of the preservation of the European Israeli-Zionist political identity necessitated a complex process of cultural governance: "The use of Hebrew language in songs, theatre, and dance and cultural rituals and festivals reinvented from ancient Jewish tradition served the monolithic construction of the new Zionist Jew" (Bar-On 2008, 51; see also Shapiro 2004) as well as the external "desirable enemy" that represented the Palestinians.

With the project of founding a 'modern', 'western' and Jewish national-state came the duty of re-writing national myths, an identity story of *the* Jewish people, which would produce a clear title to 'the land of Israel' for an unambiguously continuous 'people' with a linear and singular Jewish history (Shapiro 1997b, 11). Without a doubt, one of the most effective tools for inculcating the new political identity into the Arab-Jews and break the hyphen was Eichmann's trial (Esler 2011). According to Hannah Arendt, "The trial was supposed to show [Oriental Jews] what it meant to live among non-Jews, to convince them that only in Israel could a Jew be safe and live an honorable life" (1977, 8). It is worth quoting at length a passage from her book written as she covered the event for *The New Yorker* (the quotations she uses are Ben-Gurion's):

> Thus, the trial never became a play, but the show Ben-Gurion had had in mind to begin with did take place, or, rather, the "lessons" he thought should be taught to Jews and Gentiles, to Israelis and Arabs, in short, to the whole world. [...] The Jews in the Diaspora were to remember how Judaism, "four thousands year old, with its spiritual creation and its ethical strivings, its Messianic aspirations," had always faced a "hostile world", how the Jews had degenerated until they went to their death like sheep, and how only the establishment of a Jewish state had enabled Jews to hit back, as Israelis had done in the War of Independence, in the Suez adventure and in the almost daily incidents on Israel's unhappy borders. And if the Jews outside Israel had to be shown the difference between Israeli heroism and the Jewish submissive meekness, there was a lesson for those inside Israel too: "the generation of Israelis who have grown up since the holocaust" were in danger of losing their ties with the Jewish people and, by implication with their own history. "It is

necessary that our youth remember what happened to the Jewish people. We want them to know the most tragic facts in our history" (Arendt 1977, 9-10).

Hence, with the trial, the identity of the victim was passed on to all Israelis, regardless of their origins or past. The Arab/Palestinian was cast as the new Nazi (Arendt 1977, 12), this "desirable enemy" so central to the societal and political engineering (*mamlachiut*) that could force the Arab-Jews to shed their "backward" traditions and merge into the Euro-modernity with the Ashkenazim[xxxii].

Amongst other tools of cultural governance, museum and archeological sites (Azoulay 1993) literature (Hever 1994) as well as the rewriting of myths were central. The myth of *terra nullius*, although central to legitimizing the Zionist practice, was far from being the only one mobilized for the purpose. In one of his most recent films – *Avenge But One of my Two Eyes* (2005) – the Israeli film maker Avi Mograbi presents two other myths that occupy a central role in the formation of the Israeli fundamental tropes such as victimhood and the "evil" Arab, by playing on the symbol of the sacrifice for the nation, the '*Akeda*'. The first story is the myth of "Samson the Hero", who killed many Philistines during his adulthood and committed suicide in a temple in order to take with his, the lives of more Philistines than he killed in his entire life after losing one of his eyes in a previous battle[xxxiii].

The other story playing a role in the symbol of the *Akeda* is the myth of the fortress of the Masada rock, where Jewish zealots – after resisting a long siege against Roman armies – preferred to kill their own entire family during the night, and then commit suicide rather than being taken alive by their assailants. This latter myth is central to understand the nexus of Israeli identity and foreign policy as it shows how a collective suicide is transformed into a "myth of fighting to the bitter ends and a symbol of national renewal" (Zerubavel 1995, xviii; see also Ben-Yehuda 1995). Still today, every Israeli soldier takes an oath at the fortress: "Masada shall not fall again." Those two stories first provide the moral ground for Israeli soldiers to die defending the 'nation'; Israeli existence and subjectivity is

then perceived through the cultural stamp that sacrifice provides (Weiss 2001, 54).

Also, one of the most recent foundational myths in the development of the state of Israel has been the myth of the "Tower and Stockade"[xxxiv]. This is a story of brave and courageous "historical acts of settlement" in defiance of the "antagonistic policy of the British mandate and armed attacks of Arab gangs" (Katriel and Shenhar 1990, 361). This last narrative has an important explanatory power, as it "serves to energize the continuing settlement process into disputed territories, a process reflecting the extent to which 'Israel' has been a continuously frontier society" (Shapiro 1997b, 13). As a matter of fact, the dominance of the pioneering, Euro-Jewish settler over various Arab and Jewish others in Israel is maintained only to the degree the story of violence at the frontiers remains the primary national story (Shapiro 1997b, 14). In the end, this story posits both, Israeli-Palestinians and Palestinians as immediate security threat and into a "demographic problem" – a "cancer" or an "existenstial threat" to use former IDF Chief of Staff Ya'allon words – threats to the construction of Israel as a Jewish state (Shapiro *Op. Cit.*, 14), with a Zionist national political identity.

In sum, the Zionist ideology and the national political identity that ensue are a Western palimpsest and form what one could refer to as 'the Zionist metanarrative'. It is constructed by the reconstruction of stories, myths and symbols, such as the '*akeda*' or sacrifice and the trope of the victim reasserted in mythical stories such as 'Samsom the hero' and the ' Zealots of the Masada'. Hence, those stories, myths and symbols are historical artifacts that are continuously reappropriated by the narratives that constitute the Israeli nation (Shapiro *Op. Cit.*, 2). They are national narratives that lay the moral basis for sacrificing one's life for nation and killing or excluding others. They construct epistemological models of the Jewish and Arab subjects and provide an ethnographic 'knowledge,' that allows one to talk about the what one could call the 'Nation of Zion' or the myth of *the* Jewish people and they provide geographic imaginaries, places such as the Masada.

Yet, just as the old Roman palimpsests – on which one first needs to erase a section in order to rewrite a new one – the Zionist metanarrative is also a forgetful one. Entire parts of the various Jewish histories have been suppressed. Ambiguities in the founding stories of Israel are erased; from the encounters with the Canaanites to the contemporary presence of Arab-Jews and Palestinians, the myth of "a land without a people for a people without a land", of "pure Jewishness" have been made possible through a purposeful forgetfulness of entire pans of the Israeli history, and Jewish *histories*.

In the past 20 years or so, with the growth of the right-wing ultra-nationalists ideologies and political parties, many concerned Israeli scholars (called "the revisionists") felt the need to reopen the books of those national stories and they produced historical, political, and sociological scholarships that contest conventional Zionist interpretations about Israeli politics and society. Among those works, ethnohistorical ones on ancient Israel have showed that "it is problematic to speak of Jews as *a* people" (Shapiro 1997b, 12; see also Sand 2009). Of course, this is far from being unique to Israel, but the idea is particularly strong within the Zionist imaginary and it has served to legitimate racist policies and political violence.

Thus, one can now understand, that "the ethnohistorical trajectory disrupts the identity story of 'the Jewish people', which aims at producing a clear title to 'the land of Israel' for an unambiguously continuous 'people'" (Shapiro 1997b, 11). In fact, from the very old days, with the Canaanites, to today's Palestinian:

> The alien "other" haunts the story of that "people", producing an impetus to repress more strongly aspects of internal difference. And, second, the nature of the spatial history, which produced a hybrid nation out of an amalgam of desert herders and patriarchs, on the one hand, and city-dwelling agriculturists and monarchists, on the other, provides a contrast to the contemporary structures behind motivational injunctions surrounding the construction of the alien "other" (Shapiro *Op. Cit.*).

And thus, the production and reproduction of the Israeli Zionist identity coherence and exclusivity continues to be a matter of how *a* people's story is told.

Israel and Zionism Today: Governmentality and Body Politics in Israel

> A eugenic ordering of society, with all that implied in the way of extension and intensification of micro-powers, in the guise of an unrestricted state control.
>
> - Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol. I*

Today, although the Sephardic/Mizrahim groups represent a majority of the Jewish population in Israel, many Israeli Jews consider shifting to pluralism as a move backward or as a 'regression' from the actual trend of moving toward Westernization that they believe in – "'progress' that would enable the continuation of their hegemony" (Bar-On 2008, 103). The reasons invoked by the politicians to avoid, or at the very least delay, what would most certainly be a political suicide (opening the debate about Israeli identity and the place of the Arab character which would most certainly cause the end of Ashkenazim hegemony) generally revolves around the fact that outside threats have not yet been removed and it is not a safe situation to enter into debates around national identity issues:

> One of the instinctive reactions of the monolithic collective self, threatened by the process of disintegration, is a neo-monolithic backlash that manifests itself as strong religious fundamentalism or extreme nationalism bordering on fascism. Positing an alien, life-threatening Other legitimizes the renewal of the monolithic identity as well as political hegemony in the present (Bar-On 2008, 106; see also Kimmerling 1998, 52).

The threatening Palestinian has become the Other at the center of Zionist Israeli-Jewish identity and the last buoy (a "desirable enemy" see Shapiro 1997a, 42) for the Ashkenazim and the Zionist Eurocentric project. The Arab or Palestinian is invoked and is present in everyday life of Israel's Jewish citizens, to legitimize the governmentality of the State.

In fact, today in Israel, it can be argued that the political leadership manipulates and exploits identity politics and the national political identity in a top-down manner where the government and various state institutions play an important role (Bar-On 2008, 100). By invoking frightening events such as the second *Intifada*, the 9/11 attacks, to rallying people around the flag in the "war on

terror" as well as by alluding to traumatic events of the past such as the Holocaust (see for instance Finkelstein 2001), politicians try to secure a certain identity and resist the process of disintegration that started 40 years ago (Bar-On, *Op. Cit.*).

In the present chapter, I have tried to recover the union between modern sovereignty (and governmentality) and Jewish collective subjectivity in the Israeli nation-state[xxxv]. From the above, it becomes clear that with the colonization of State sovereignty by the discourse of the nation and race, war's role appears not as "a condition of existence for society and political relations, but the precondition for its survival in its political relations" (Foucault 2003, 216). As the Foucault puts it:

> At this point, we see the emergence of the idea of an internal war that defends society against threats born of and in its own body. The idea of social war makes, if you like, a great retreat from the historical to the biological, from the constituent to the medical (Foucault 2003, 216).

Heeding this insights, I would like to take the reader with me to look at how, today in Israel, the Israeli-Jewish body is subjectified, how it is constrained or permitted to do one thing and not another and how the state's national political identity is inscribed in it. By doing so, I think we can better understand how Israeli-Jewish subjectivity (as well as its Palestinian Other) is conceived today in Israel, and hence understand who qualifies for life and who doesn't. Therefore, for the rest of this chapter, mainly by drawing on the works of Meira Weiss amongst others, I take the Israeli-Jew's body as a site of inquiry that testifies of the disciplinary and bio-political power of the Israeli state which makes legitimate the warring policy and for which, war becomes a conditions of possibility (see Foucault 2003).

As 'the revisionist' and 'postzionist' scholars were challenging the foundational narratives shaping Israel's Western palimpsest, others – in the departments of biology, genomics and medicine – were using the latest technologies and were doubling efforts in attempt to identify a 'Jewish Gene'. With the production of such an ethno-medical knowledge, what ended up being at stake was precisely the integrity of the national narrative. This specific story, of

the search for a moral basis of the statist national project in the image of the "Jewish body" reflects a will to sequestrate the Zionist narration of the nation . In fact, the figure of the body has often been used in discourses of national and foreign policy to instantiate the moral space of identity.

In Israel, the trope of the "chosen body" is ever present and used as an instance to narrate the nation; from the fetus to the cemetery, bodies create the Zionist Israeli society, and the society demands that the bodies be formed and used in particular ways (Weiss 2002, 32). In fact, there is in the Israeli society a eugenic discourse which is integral to Zionism, where Nordau's "Judaism with muscle" alluded to above, must be reproduce and Rathenau's "unathletic build", "narrow shoulders", "clumsy feet" and "sloppy roundish shape" must be avoided if not eliminated (see Chinski 1997, 203).

The effect of this gendered eugenic discourse in Israel today is that, for instance, "Israeli women hold the record for fetal diagnostics" (*Ibid*., 2), and "the Zionists' eugenics turned into a selective prenatal policy backed by state-of-the-art genetic technology" (*Ibid.*, 32). Moreover, "About 50% of the impaired children were rejected altogether", and among the 50% of impaired babies taken home by their parents, 80% are kept secluded. Far from being apolitical, the project of the perfect Zionist body is backed by those same scientists – in search of the 'Jewish Gene' – those "Physicians who regard themselves as 'commando fighters' will justify abortions by the military thinking that sees killing as a necessary means for attaining its goals" (*Ibid.*). Thus, by selectively valuing or rejecting their babies based on a strictly appearance based judgment; those parents reproduce the values of the Zionist discourse. Bodies are chosen before, during, and after birth.

After birth, the most important selection Israelis have to go through is at 18 years old, when they face the military conscription and training. As a matter of fact, in Israel, military screening's legitimacy is largely due to the military's perceived role not only for survival but also as educator of national values (Weiss 2002, 42). Thanks to the military service, "Imperfection" (*Ibid*., 46) is weeded out, and "People unfit for such national service are bound to be deemed marginal"

(*Ibid.,* 88). Interestingly but not surprisingly, every Arab citizen, physically fit or not, receives, prior to any military screening exams, an exemption from the mandatory military service. This is quite troubling when one adds that for many Israelis, having served as a soldier forms part of one's self-definition as a citizen and that the consensus view is that failure fulfill one's military duty is equivalent to "a kind of primordial taint" (Shohat 2010, 199).

The sexualization of young children, especially young Jewish Israeli girls and women is accomplished in the form of a crusade for the health of the nation and the race (Foucault 1990, 146). While in Jerusalem patrols *à la* U.S. border vigilantes work to stop Arab men from mixing with local Jewish women, the city of Petah Tikva created a hotline that Israeli citizens can call to in order to denounce Jewish women who mingle with Arab men. Once the women are identified, they are "treated as pathological cases and sent to psychologist" (Zizek 2011). Moreover, the city of Kiryat Gat launched in 2008 a program in its schools to teach Jewish girls about the dangers of dating local Arabs thanks to a video called *Sleeping With the Enemy,* which presents mixed couples as an "unnatural phenomenon". One of the Rabbis of the city – Shmuel Eliyahu – informed the local newspaper that the act of "seducing" a Jewish girl by an Arab should be considered as "another form of war" – hence, the Yad L'Achim organisation which rescues Jewish women from "hostile" Arab villages. Yet, such controversial projects, do not end there (Zizek 2011). In 2009, a government-backed television campaign urging Israeli Jews to report relatives outside the country who were in the process of marrying a non-Jew was withdrawn after being on air for a while (*Ibid.*).

Body politics are also reflected on the Israeli media, where the "body, as a literal and metaphoric vehicle for collective fears, hopes and commitments" is often depicted by the journalists and state officials as an agent of 'Israeliness' and "terrorist events are described, explained and given meaning through what is primarily a rhetoric of the body" (Weiss 2001, 38). In fact, the Israeli media plays a significant role in narrating the nation and molding the foreign policy in "reshaping collective representations of [sic] and reactions to such public issues as

terrorism – issues that define the national boundaries of the Israeli" collective body (*Ibid.,* 40). Places where terrorist have stricken – such as markets or buses – are described as having a body of their own, "a torn and scarred body" which after the attack must be "rehabilitated and renovated" (*Ibid.*, 44). After a bus bombing, the media quoted Israeli President Weizmann: "they must not be given satisfaction of having wounded our body, the body of Israel […] *We must keep our backs straight…*" (as quoted in *Op. Cit.;* my emphasis).

Just as forensic medicine played a central role in the history of policing in Europe (Foucault 1977, 1990, 2003), the Forensic Institute of Medicine of Israel, where bodies of fallen soldiers and terrorism victims end up, uses "'body identification' and 'bodyTalk' as complementary aspects of the discourse of collective, national identity in contemporary Israel" (Weiss 2001, 38-39). Practices of staff at the Forensic Institute, such as the handling of the body and collected tissues reflect the boundaries of collective identity in Israel (*Ibid.*, 47). Dichotomies are marked – through the handling and exams – between Jewish bodies and non-Jewish ones, and between soldiers and non-soldiers.

To go back to the symbol of the *akeda* and the myths of Samson the Hero and the Masada, in Israel, Meira Weiss illustrates how:

> The death of fallen soldiers has been conventionally accounted for within the national narrative of sacrifice. Themes of idealized sacrifice and the purity of "the fallen" are central to the ethos of bereavement and commemoration, and their root in tradition provides yet another aspect of the duality of Judaism and Zionism, religion and territory, a duality that is – once again – fused in the body (*Ibid.*, 54).

In the end, what stands out is that the embodiment of the militaristic ethos of the nation-state takes place during various commemorative settings such as the organization of military cemeteries, political iconology of war memorials, the military screening for conscription, body reconstitution at the Forensic Institute and even fetal diagnosis (*Ibid.*, 39).

Moreover, the sacrifices of the soldiers (and even those of the citizens) are seen as inevitable and represent the price to pay for the "persistence of the 'Jewish state' in the 'promised land'" (*Ibid.*). Bodies – just like organs or the sacrificed eye of Samson the hero – are sacrificed in return to land while the Nation itself is

considered to have a body, whose borders are extensions of the personal body of its citizens (*Ibid.*, 56; Hever 1995; Silberstein 1999, 195). As former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon once said: "A normal people does not ask questions like 'will we always live by the sword', the sword is part of life" (As quoted in Reinhart 2005, 189). Therefore, the sacrifice of young Israeli men "has been a central, recurrent, and usually taken-for-granted issue in Israeli literature, endowing the 'fallen' with an aura of symbolic immortality" (Weiss *Op. Cit.*, 40):

> The image of the individual death is transformed in the mythic life of the collective life which elevates death in battle to the plane of transcendent national experience. According to the cultural logic, one may say that to the extent that the individual identity is blurred, the power of the collective national identity increases (Hever 1995, 104).

In such a context, the Israel's Zionist discourse is intertwined with its militaristic history, and it is showed that "One of the main reasons for a coherent, collective Jewish community is that Israeli society faces a military threat on a daily basis" (*Ibid.*). Hence, the above suggest that the dominance of the pioneering, Euro-Jewish settler over various Arab and Jewish others in Israel is maintained only to the degree the story of violence at the frontiers remains the primary national story (Shapiro 1997b, 14).

In sum, in Israel, the trope of the body has been obviously implicated in the gendered discourse of power that forms the national identity of 'Zionist Israeliness' I have discussed above. The dual discourse of the terrorized bodies – of the nation and its constituents – "generates national solidarity by triggering a return to the mythical Jewish time, adapted to fit the new reality of the Zionist territory" (*Ibid.*, 55). The selection and shaping of Israeli bodies is primarily the selection and formation of Israel's political subject. The body politics presented in the media, at the Forensic Institute and even in the discourse of Israeli officials represent "an established and tenacious discursive economy that provides the resources for presenting difference as danger to the social" (Campbell 1998, 75); "the social" here is to be understood as forming a single unified Zionist body. Thus, Israeli-Palestinian, this "inassimilable easterner" disrupts the unified Zionist Body, and is posited as a "biological danger", which can legitimately be

eliminated (Foucault 1976, 181). In sum, appearance of statements such as that of Moshe Ya'allon (see quote p. 38 of present thesis), that Israel is being treated for cancer (the existential threat which represents Israeli Arabs and the Palestinian) at his department of oncology (the Israeli Defense Force), should be of no surprise.

Conclusion

In her *Israeli Cinema*, Ella Shohat analyzes the agency of the seventh art in narrating the nation. What she finds is that, in Israel,

> Too often the films betray a kind of failure of intellectual nerves, a paralysis of the political imagination, a refusal to radically supersede the exhausted paradigms supplied by the Zionist master-narrative. In cultural terms, Israeli cinema has been relentlessly 'Eurotropic' in the main, spurning any authentic dialogue with the East (Shohat 2010, 246).

In light of the cases above, Shohat's point could be extended to a whole range of practices in Israel and identity politics in general and especially so, for the purpose of this study, to foreign policy.

If we are to understand how the Palestinian (both the Israeli-Palestinian and the Palestinian from the OT) has come to constitute this demonized "Other", we cannot and must not take the 1948 as the starting point of the enmity relationship. At a minimum, the demonized "Other" forms the last ring of a "great chain of Orientalism" that started in Europe with the birth of the modern entity that came to be called the "nation-state". As Jacqueline Rose writes: "It is one of the defining problems of Zionism that it imported into the Middle East a Central European concept of nationhood in the throes of decline. This was a concept of organic nationhood, founded on ethnicity and blood (or 'land, descent and the dead')" (Rose 2005, 82).

How did the "Arab-Jew" become an oxymoronic entity? We can only understand that by looking at the ontological premises that guided the formation of the Israeli national identity from the early moments of the Zionist project. What I hope to have demonstrated above is that, in order to keep its own hyphen, the "nation-state" had to fight and break the hyphens of threatening entities such as the "Arab-Jews". Today in Israel, it seems like "Arabs" exist only in the world

surrounding the country; there is barely any reflection, if any, about an "Arab" presence from within which could help reconcile and bridge the gap between Israel and "the Middle Eastern muck". I think that once we have embarked on offering "critical ontology" of today's Israeli subjectivity, we can then take notice that, *"today we should consider that we are faced with a politics not simply of rational-actor-led sovereign-state war and oppression, but with a politics of collective subjective enmity wedded to a terrifying state machine"* (Neal 2004, 394), and it is from this perspective that we must look at Israeli warring foreign policy discourse – a task I set forth in the next chapter.

Notes: Chapter 2

[xxii] Here I use the term Palimpsest (a wax-coated tablet used to write on and that could be reused after being smoothed. Palimpsest comes from the two greek words *palin* (again) and *psao* (to scrape) and thus means to scrape and use again) because it represents accurately the process of history writing and erasing that nation-state identity formation must engage in to form a coherent and homogenous national body/history. It illustrates that the past is an active process carried onto the présent. In that sense I use the term in a similarly to Homi Bhabha (1990), Ella Shohat (2010 [1989]), and Michael Shapiro (1997b).

[xxiii] The term comes from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979, 3). The concept of Orientalism must be understood as a discourse which can be "discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."

[xxiv] "Abnormal" to be understood as in deviating from the norm, the common.

[xxv] In the Middle East and North Africa, for instance, the Jewish Diaspora had been generally much better off than its European counterpart (Dowty, 3), and the Ottoman Empire, which had controlled the historical Palestine until the end of WWI took pride in sheltering Jews from European anti-Semite policies (such as the Alhambra decree), and hence remain foreign to those European developments.

[xxvi] In that sense, the struggle over Jewish subjectivity did not really differed from the discursive battle between the two "historico-political discourses" of sovereignty and nation identified by Foucault in *Society Must Be Defended*, which eventually led to the colonization or hybridization of the sovereignty by race, which gave birth of the "Third Estate", the nation-state (see Foucault 2003, 214-224).

[xxvii] Dan Bar-On explains that "The *sabra* (prickly pear) is a cactus fruit, common in Arab lands but originally from Mexico, that has thorns on the outside and is soft inside. This became the nickname for the 'new' Israeli, who conceals a kind heart with brusque manners that successfully disassociate him or her from the

Diaspora Jew" (Bar-On 2008, 8). At the core of the *Sabra* identity is the notion of the hero; an heroism defined by the sacrifice of one's own needs for the wellbeing and survival of the collectivity (Bar-On 2001, 341).

[xxviii] That was the name of a song of Yoram Tahar – the popular Israeli songwriter.

[xxix] This is the term Max Nordau used in 1898, when describing how he saw the Zionist movement's aims.

[xxx] In this regard, Ella Shohat writes : "The 'opening up of the borders,' far from indefinitively pushing the Palestinians off the stage of history, meanwhile, left Israel as haunted as ever by the Palestinian presence, revealing in clearer contours what had always been the root of the Israeli-Arab conflict" (Shohat 2010, 213).

[xxxi] In the words of Ben-Gurion, "We need people who are born workers. ... The Oriental Jews' standard of living and their needs are lower than the European workers'" (as quoted in Alcalay 1993, 43).

[xxxii] In an article dedicated to the status of Israeli identity and the Zionist categories and concepts of "Jew" and "Jewish state", Ian Lustick has showed that "The increasing awkwardness of the identity question in Israeli is also apparent in the categories used by the government bureaucracy [… and] more and more Israelis now find themselves 'Jewish' for some purposes and 'non-Jewish' for other purposes" (Lustick 1999, 430-431). Most importantly, what he points out is that the identity of Israel political and national identity is mostly, and before all, defined by the " 'non-Arab' character of the state and its majority population" (433). It shows the extent to which the Arab or Palestinian has become the organizing Other at the center of the Israeli identity.

[xxxiii] Such heroes from the biblical past were cultivated by the regime and turned into Jewish nationalist symbols (Kimmerling 1998, 50).

[xxxiv] The "Tower and Stockade" was a settlement strategy used by Zionist settlers during the British mandate while settlement activity was restricted.

[xxxv] This was essencially Foucault's project *Society Must Be Defended* (Neal 2004, 393).

Chapter 3: Discursive Containment and the Writing of Israeli Political Identity

…when written, shit doesn't smell.

- Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*

Filth in name is far nobler than the thing it signifies: we much prefer to hear it than to smell it.

- Adeodatus, quoted by Dominique Laporte, *History of Shit*

Introduction

Having explored the macro level (context) that constitutes the conditions of possibility for action – namely the warring policy that represented OCL – I now turn to the micro level, or the level of action; that is to the text. More precisely, I look at *how* the text – as structuration – constructs the event and identities. I do so in order to demonstrate how action/text actually produces social life and reproduces the structures outlined in the previous chapter - structures that are in fact preconditions to action (Fairclough 2010, 175-176). In short, I want to close the circle of mutual constitutiveness of structure (identity) and agency (foreign policy). As I mentioned earlier, agency is not only what reproduces structure (and vice versa), but also what may be the cause of change. I will explore this latter aspect in the next chapter dedicated to the Israeli film text *Waltz with Bashir*.

What I show in this chapter is how – just as Saman's photographs have achieved – the Israeli official discourse on OCL reproduces and stabilizes this idea that "we did not do that"; how it produces and reproduces a self-image or representation of "Israeli-ness" associated with a positive "civilized," "western," "democratic" and "innocent victim" subject while delegitimizing the "Other," reproducing it as a "barbaric, inhumane, terrorist."

In short, this chapter analytically focuses on official discourse from top Israeli government members who were directly implicated in the decision-making of OCL. The object of analysis is official texts,[xxxvi] all of which are statements made during OCL and are available online on the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Web site. The goal of the analysis is to find how the official identity

discourse is stabilized and reproduced, to discover what the intertextual links that give it penetration power and credibility are and how it responds to or anticipates attacks that seek to challenge it (prolepsis). The official discourse is a specific genre[xxxvii] that ultimately takes the form of written and/or spoken text – itself made possible by a combination of a complex and evolving range of resources including linguistic ones (lexicon, grammar, structure), but also conventions about "official discourse," the culture of statesmanship and institutions that constrains the use of textual resources for a particular discursive practice (Bhatia 2010, 33).

Therefore, Israel utters and formulates war-as-policy, it is because it is recognized by other members of the international community to be empowered to do so – thanks to the highly codified and institutionalized set of rules and norms that constitute sovereignty, such as the Geneva convention and international law, for instance. Those rules and norms bear considerable responsibility with them, and many members of the international community criticized the Israeli government for not abiding by them[xxxviii]. Yet, as we shall see, it is not so much because of the principle of *jus belli* (which brings considerable responsibility and ethical set of norms, such as the rule of "proportionality" upon which Israeli warring practice has been largely decried) but most of all, because of a new post-9/11 reality and rationality that has recently emerged in the global security discourse of States. It is because of the basic discourse of *the war on terrorism* (see Jackson 2005, 13) – that Israel has managed to render its recent warring policies in the Occupied Territories (OT) legitimate in the eyes of the national and international audiences[xxxix]. I maintain that what needs to be investigated therefore is how the "Other" is relegated to the position of the "terrorist" and as such delegitimized while Israel's positive "self"-image, narrative and morality is constructed to legitimize Israel's violent policy.

To that end, I first use a methodology that draws from the theories of utterance, pragmatics and illocutionary strategies. More precisely, I use a set of different tools such as semantic analysis (use of active vs. passive sentences; and reversal of blame)[xl], lexical analysis (lexicon emphasizes the difference between the 'Self' and 'Other'; it underlines the contrast between Civilised (democracy)

and Barbarians (terrorists), and overwording), and grammar (modality and transitivity)[xli]. I will primarily look at the way in which grammar, syntax, and lexicon reinforce meanings and effects of the Israeli discourse, and how identities and war-as-policy are normalized by language in the text. Secondly, I focus on intertextuality to highlight what other discourses are being recuperated or used by the speakers to give their policy legitimacy and how the text is made possible from the structure of identity I have explored in the previous chapter.

Textual Analysis : Vocabulary, Grammar and Structure

Vocabulary : Lexicon, Lexicalization and Semantic Transformation

To construct and reproduce the meaning and the political identity of Israel, the Israeli officials repeatedly use a series of signs (words with strong connotation (lexical), hyperboles, metaphors and euphemism (semantic)) that are linked with each other in a manner that constructs a "relation of sameness" or by reinforcing a "differentiation to another series of juxtaposed signs" (Hansen 2007, 42). This is called "linking and differentiation." Hence, terms such as "democratic," " Western civilization" and "peace" are linked together to construct a positive identity while they are also linked to another group constituted of their opposites, such as "terrorist rule," "violent" and "war."

Lexicon and Lexicalization

First, the lexical analysis shows that the choice of words used by Israeli officials highlights the innocent character of the Israeli side, while highlighting the violent, irrational and barbarian character of Hamas. Consider the following table where I have listed some of those linking and differentiations found into Livni's *Address to the Knesset* (2008)

Other	Self
"terrorist rule of Hamas"	"State of Israel"
"extremists"	"moderates"
"those who try to impose their beliefs upon others"	"those who believe in live-and-let-live"
"people for whom hate, incitement, terror and violence are their daily routine, the basis for educating their children and the voices emanating from	"people who whish to live in peace"

some of their mosques"	
"radical and terrorist elements"	"Choosing peace"
"terror and extremism"	"Choosing peace and life"
"extremist Islamic organization"	"our values, our aspirations for peace, and our commitment to democracy"

This illustrates quite accurately the process of linking and differentiation Israeli officials engage in to construct Hamas as the ruthless perpetrator and Israel as the innocent victim.

One may also note that the verbs to describe Hamas' action are also chosen to produce the same effect. Always in Livni's *Address to the Knesset* (2008) Verbs used to describe Hamas's action usually bear a negative or pejorative connotation, while the Israeli state's actions are always put in a positive light[xlii].

Other	Self
"violate"	"fighting terror"
"holding hostage"	"wish to live"
"lives off"	"choosing peace and life"
"impose"	"to advance"
"hate"	"protect"
"ruling"	"telling the truth"
"to arm itself"	"disengage ourselves"
"continue firing"	"retained"
"refuse to advance"	"conducted ourselves"
	"to walk to school"
	"living quietly"

To further underscore that Israel and its citizens are *innocent* victims who have done nothing to be treated as such by Hamas; nouns that are linked discursively with the theme of innocence are used when talking about the Hamas targeting Israel with its rockets. This dense wording relating to the domain of innocence constitutes a process of "overwording" (Fairclough 1992; see also Halliday 1978). Overwording is a "sign of 'intense preoccupation' pointing to 'peculiarities in the ideology' of the group responsible for it" (*Ibid*., 193; see also Fowler and *al*. 1979, 210).

For instance, in the Israeli discourse, Hamas' targets always happen to be one of the following:

Wording of	Sources where the word can be found

"innocence"	
"children"	Ki Moon and Livni (par. 13); Livni 2008 (par. 2, 21, 23), 2009 (par. e 49); Olmert 2009 (par. 26); Peres 2009 (par. 1, 8, 11); Shalev 2009a (par. 1, 10), 2009b (par. 7, 11, 19)
"women"	Livni 2009 (par. 49); Peres 2009 (par. 8, the word "mother" also came up three times); Shalev 2009a (par. 1), 2009b (par. 7)
"school"	Ki Moon and Livni 2009 (par. 13); Livni 2008 (par. 21, 23), 2009 (par. 49); Olmert 2009 (par. 12); Shalev 2009a (par. 1, 10, 13), 2009b (par. 6, 10, 11)
"kindergarten"	Ki Moon and Livni 2009 (par. 13); Livni 2008 (par. 23), 2009 (par. 49); Peres 2009 (par. 4, 11); Shalev 2009a (par. 1, 13, 17), 2009b (par. 6, 18)
"citizens"	Ki Moon and Livni 2009 (par. 10, 13, 21, 22, 30); Livni 2008 (par. 12, 22); Olmert 2008 (par. 1, 2, 12); Shalev 2009a (par. 1, 2, 8, 12)
"civilians"	Ki Moon and Livni 2009 (par. 13, 14, 17, 39); Olmert 2008 (par. 8), 2009 (par. 15, 17); Peres 2009 (par. 4); Shalev 2009a (par. 16), 2009b (par. 2)

Hence, this overwording on the theme of innocence pinpoints an "intense preoccupation" on the part of the Israeli government to represent the State as innocent victim, which is central to a legitimate OCL. At the same time, this overwording works to delegitimize Hamas' by suggesting that only a barbaric, uncivilized terrorist attacks such targets.

Such a lexical analysis is of great importance because, as Fairclough points out (1992, 185), "the meanings of words and the wording of meanings are matters which are socially variable and socially contested." Therefore we must pay close attention to "alternative wordings and their political and ideological significance, […] how domains of experience may be 'reworded' as part of social and political struggles [and…] how certain domains come to be more intensively worded than others" (Fairclough quoted in Lentz 2008, 1).

Semantic Transformation: Euphemism and Hyperboles[xliii]

This choice of lexicon is combined with the use of rhetorical devices such as hyperboles and euphemisms in order to reinforce the victimization of the Israeli side while reinstating the demonization of Hama. For instance, the latter is emphasized thanks to the **hyperboles** exaggerating the efficiency of Hamas'

capabilities[xliv], dehumanizing the organization while shadowing the disproportionate number of causalities from one side to the other. This is achieved via words or combination of words such as "Hamas infrastructures," "terrorist factories and training bases," "stockpiles of rockets" (Shalev 2009a, par. 11), "a terrorist regime that fills [homes] with missiles" (*Ibid.*, par. 24) "placing over one million Israelis in the shadow of terror" (Shalev 2009a, par. 9), "incessant bombing" (Livni 2008, par. 1), "shelling" (Olmert 2008, par. 1), "the *factories* in which its missiles were *manufactured*," "smuggling *routes,*" "Hamas capabilities for *conveying* weapons" (Olmert 2009, par. 2) "*barrage of missiles*" (Olmert 2009, par. 12), "*kidnapped* soldier" (Olmert 2009, par. 23), "wild terrorist attacks" (Olmert 2009, par. 22). Finally, Hamas' actions against Israel are often illustrated by terms such as "Hamas' war against Israel," which suggest that – along with the aforementioned hyperboles – Hamas is engaged in a fully-fledged war threatening Israel's existence and hence, large scale military operation such as OCL is absolutely necessary. The effect is that, against such a massive military and "terror" apparatus, 1,400 dead Gazans appear as a very acceptable price to pay for the Israeli public.

At the same time, hyperboles are combined with **euphemisms** that downplay the gravity of the situation and the level of violence deployed against Gazans. Euphemisms like "Israeli defensive operation" (par. 26), "military operation"[xlv] (Shalev 2009a, 29), "humanitarian situation" (Livni 2008; 2009, par. 20), "set the action in motion" (Olmert 2008, par. 3), "actions against the terrorist organizations" (Olmert 2009, par. 19), "Israel is *acting* against terror in the Gaza Strip" (Ki Moon and Livni 2009, par. 17) are used to downplay the seriousness of what was happening in Gaza during OCL. Such euphemisms actually mark a stark contrast with the "hyperbolization" of Hamas' actions (i.e. "war" vs. "operation"), leaving the impression that Hamas is killing and destroying considerably more than Israel is.

Moreover, the "military naming" of Israel's attack on Gaza – *Operation Cast Lead* – is itself a strong rhetorical device. This "annihilative naming" (Gavriely-Nuri 2010) – which relies on euphemization "to blur undesired aspects – such as

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human and economical costs – associated with" (*Ibid.*, 825) the formulation of war-as-policy. In fact, it has been shown that "by using names coming from nature and the Bible, the Israeli military uses three strategies – naturalization, euphemization and legitimation – that mediate Israeli public opinion toward controversial military operations…" (*Ibid.*).

OCL belongs to the first group identified by Gavriely-Nuri; that is biblical, or religious. It refers to the dreidels, a Jewish gambling game played during Hanukah (Jewish holidays). It is interesting to note that OCL was launched during the week of Hanukah in 2008. On the dreidels – traditionally made of cast lead – are written the four letters NGHS, which refer to the religious phrase: "Nes Gadol Hayah Sham": "a great miracle happened there." Hence, OCL itself is euphemized by evoking a religious connotation, which annihilates the violent and degrading outcome of war, while simultaneously representing metaphorically what happens in Gaza as a sort of "miracle" which could also possibly be recalling the successes of the IDF during the almost mythic victory of the Six Day War (which has been referred to as "miracle" (Gavriely-Nuri 2010, 95)).

Euphemisms have a very specific function in language. They are a central device for "cleaning" language. They silence and erase the conditions under which things happen in order to make them safe for consumption by the "polite" society. In the case of OCL, they depoliticize the debate by cleaning the language in a way that makes it complicit to the silencing of certain voices while often contributing to the disavowal of violence. At the same time, this language cleaning is used to reproduce Israel's higher moral position by erasing episodes in which Israel is a victimizer: the feeling that "we did not do that" is reproduced, and tropes of Israel's Zionist narrative is left unchallenged.

Grammar : Transitivity and Modality

Transitivity: Passive-Active Syntax

Transitivity refers to the ideational dimension of grammar in a clause (Fairclough 1992, 177). Major concerns when one looks at transitivity include agency, causality and attribution of responsibility (*Ibid.*, 178). In fact, the "social motivation for analyzing transitivity is to try to work out what social, cultural,

ideological, political or theoretical factors determine how a process is signified in a particular type of discourse or in a particular text" (*Ibid.*, 179-180).

Hence, when one looks at transitivity, one of the central features to be investigated is the use of passive and active syntax structures. In the corpus examined for this chapter, passive syntax structure is used for deemphasizing the negative actions of Israel – and hence works also as a form of language cleaning – or downplaying the positive actions of Hamas. The active is employed to emphasize positive action by Israel and negative action by Hamas – hence reifying the higher moral ground of the "victim" of Israel, while delegitimizing any of Hamas' claims.

The passive construction is especially important since it serves to strengthen Israel's position as victim - that is, it constructs Israel as the patient tasting the medicine of Hamas (agent). To quote Wood and Kroger (2000, 102) "one of the most important devices for obscuring agency is the passive voice." The patient is always the one who suffers the consequences of an external force - of an agent who makes choices, follows plans and rules the game (*Ibid.*, 101). For instance, consider this par. taken from Livni 2008:

> Israel has been under attack from Gaza for the past eight years. We did everything we could to prevent a deterioration of the situation. We agreed to the calm that was immediately violated by Hamas when it refused to advance the release of Gilad Shalit, continued to arm itself, and continued firing. The calm was violated by Hamas. Hamas is the party responsible for violating the calm; and whoever has given Hamas support, assistance and refuge is today paying the price (par. 11).

The passive form is used to emphasize Israel's position of victim: "Israel has been under attack from Gaza for the past eight years," "…the calm that was immediately violated…" "The calm was violated by Hamas." It is combined with an active form presenting Israel's positive action: "We did everything we could to prevent deterioration of the situation," "We agreed to the calm…"; or combined with an active form emphasizing Hamas' negative actions: "Hamas […] refused to release Gilad Shalit, continued to arm itself, and continued firing," "Hamas is the party responsible for violating the calm".

When Hamas is positioned as agent, it is Hamas who bears the responsibility

and the blame for its action. Yet, when Israel is positioned as the agent, it is to credit it for its action. And conversely, when Israel is positioned as patient, "responsibility can be deflected" (Wood and Kroger 2000, 101). For instance, consider this other example from Amb Shalev statement (2009b, par. 8):

> As Hamas launches these attacks, they cower behind Palestinians civilians knowing full well the danger they invite. Civilian casualties in Gaza, as a result, are the heartbreaking consequence and sole responsibility of Hamas' terrorist actions.

Here, by using the active form to position Hamas as the agent and the passive form to refer to the "civilian casualties" as the patient, Israel's role in killing is completely evacuated, and Israel is reproduced as a victim to the same extent the Palestinians are.

Modality: Deontic Modals

Another discursive device frequently used in Israeli official discourse to reproduce Israel's position as of patient (or victim) is what scholars in the field of pragmatics have come to call the use of "modals." Modal elements are marks of modality[xlvi]. As pointed out by Wood and Kroger (*Ibid.*), "Modality is an important resource for fact construction, for identity construction (e.g., what one *can* do) and for a variety of other discursive actions (e.g. denying responsibility)." A major concern when we look at modals is therefore to determine how they reproduce social relations in discourse and how they control representations of reality (Fairclough 1992, 236). The use of *deontic* modal is especially useful because it covers the field of permission, obligation, and interdiction (*Ibid.*, 122), and they are frequently used in official speech or statements to back policy or decision-making for this reason.

Deontic modals can be particularly useful to construct necessity; that is to say that one must or has to do something. This strategy is particularly strong in influencing the agent-patient balance because to "say that one must or has to do something is a way of saying that one is *not an agent*, does not choose the action, and therefore is not responsible" (Wood and Kroger 2000, 101; my emphasis). In the case of Israeli discourse, it serves to strengthen Israel's position as victim (patient) because Hamas' imposed the killing of Palestinian civilians to the Israeli

government; that is to say that OCL and the use of lethal and brutal force is presented as an imperative, with no other choice. In most of Israeli official speeches, this rhetorical figure is present, and often more than one time in the same text. Take for instance Peres 2009:

> They [Iranians] supplied the rockets to Hezbollah, they supplied the rockets to Hamas, they are controversially the Arab making, and you know *we didn't have a choice*. […] What did you expect us to do, I don't understand? What would any country do? […] I am fighting for peace, what we did is not… the thing that we wanted to do… *It's not our choice, our choice is peace*. What we did is *because the lack of choice*, we were threatened with *a choice*. Would you vote for such a convention, to kill the Jews? […] We don't want to hurt you [Palestinians]. We made during those twenty days, 250,000 telephone calls before we shot [*sic*]. *What could we do, what was our choice?* […] For us victory is peace not war. We have power we should never use power *unless we don't have another choice and when we have a choice we want peace* and I think that Hezbollah has learnt the lesson (par. 9, 10, 11, 17; my emphasis).

In Olmert 2008, it is similarly put:

> The quiet that we offered was met with shelling. No country can countenance such a reality. The lives of our citizens are not forfeit. In recent days, it became clear that Hamas is bent on conflict. Whoever heard Hamas' statements understood that they decided to increase attacks on the residents of Israel by firing rockets and mortars indiscriminately. In such a situation *we had no alternative* but to respond (my emphasis, par. 1, 2).

In Ki-Moon and Livni 2009, "Israel showed restraint, but there was and is a moment in which a state has to say enough is enough, and to translate it into military operation, because *there is no other way to address Hamas*" (my emphasis, par. 14). In her declaration to the Security Council (SC), Israeli ambassador to the UN, Gabriela Shalev (2009a, par. 10) also used the rhetorical effect: "Many in this hall have condemned Hamas' terrorist attacks, and we welcome this statement of basic principle. But the families at home in the city of Sderot, and the children at school in Kibbutz Netiv Ha'asara will not be protected by these condemnations. In the face of such terrorism *we have no choice. We have to defend ourselves – …*"

What one may also note from those examples – aside from the use of deontic

modals – is that what gives considerable penetrating power to those utterances is the fact that they are all relying on the discourse on terrorism, which is, as I noted earlier, the central organizer, or what Hansen has called "basic discourse" (2007, 51-54). This is nowhere more explicit than in Amb Shalev, Israeli ambassador to the U.N., speech (2009b) when she says:

> Yet there exists one major threat, one distinct danger to civilians, that this council [SC] *must not* and *cannot* ignore.

> Terrorism.

> Terrorism, Mr. President, poses enormous harm to civilians in armed conflict. Terrorism turns civilians into targets and weapons. "Acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations are activities aimed at the destruction of human rights." So stated the United Nations in clear and unambiguous terms.

> Nowhere is this more apparent than in Hamas' terrorist war against Israeli civilians and the Palestinian people (par. 2, 3, 4, 5; my emphasis).

In this quote, the auxiliary verbs "must" and "cannot" are the modals, and they serve to reinforce the necessity or the imperative for action, which Israeli state happens to be performing. What is also implied in this task of fighting terrorism as an obligation of any civilized state is the notion that it is a war of last resort and that the way the Israeli government is doing it is the proper and only way to do so[xlvii].

To sum up, what one may note is that agency is tied up to issues of power, and discursive practices involving attributions of accountability and responsibility (Wood and Kroger 2000, 102). This is also where modality, transitivity and euphemisms appear as a cornerstone in the Israeli illocutionary strategy. Semantically and lexically (wording), the 'Other' is identified with not simply difference but with deviance ('illigitimacy') and threat (violence, attacks, terrorism); while syntaxically, the strategy is to de-emphasis and normalize Israel's actions (euphemisation of Israel's violent actions, hyperbolization of Hamas' capabilities and actions). Additionally, those illocutionary strategies, when combined, allow the Israeli government to effectuate a semantic reversal of the blame, in the same manner the former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir did when she said, "We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children. We cannot

forgive them for forcing us to kill their children."

Narrative Structure

This very last point leads me to address the specific structure of the official statements. The most striking finding here is that the structure of Israel's warring foreign policy discourse is very similar to racist discourses in general. In fact, in his study of racist discourse D'Souza identifies the structure as:

> Argumentative assertions of the depravity of black culture are combined with denials of white deficiencies (racism), with rhetorical mitigation and euphemization of its crimes (colonialism, slavery), and with semantic reversals of blame (blaming the victim). Social conflict is thus cognitively represented and enhanced by polarization, and discursively sustained and reproduced by derogating, demonizing and excluding the Others from the community of Us, the Civilized (summarized in van Dijk 2008, 98).

In addition to what I have exposed before concerning the reproduction of Israel in the victim's position, what is striking in the corpus being studied is how Israel apparently has never done anything that could provoke resentment and violent action from the Palestinian side: that is, episodes of victimizing. Therefore, there are rhetorical devices that normalize the everyday life of Palestinians living under the blockade in Gaza, with a military administration, and subjected to degrading situations such as check points, curfews, house demolition, crops destructions and the almost total collapse of their economy. Hence, normalization of the status quo and the victimization effect can be considered as the two sides of the same coin, for there can be no innocent victim without normalization of what would otherwise be considered illegal and warring practices[xlviii].

To achieve this normalization of the status quo *ante* situation – that is the occupation, colonization, land confiscation and blockade – different illocutionary strategies are implemented, such as, again, euphemisms or simply silencing[xlix] (not mentioning/ignoring a situation). In fact, euphemisms such as the "restoration" of "calm," "peace," or "the creation of a new security reality," "normal life" are used to refer to the status quo ante OCL. Yet, the blockade and illegal colonization are referred to as a "normal" or "peaceful" situation. Forty-

two years of military occupation and martial law – denying any political rights to the Palestinians – and the four-year blockade are all of sudden erased from the narrative. Again, Israel as a victimizer disappears while being reinstated as the victim of barbaric terrorists who gave it "no other choice." This very last point is strengthened by the fact that there is no mention of negotiation as a method of dealing with terrorism, even though it has been a successful method in the past (Jackson 2005, 19).

As such, negative Israeli actions remain absent. For instance, when it comes to the blockade of Gaza, the Israeli official discourse uses the euphemism "humanitarian situation" to convey that what is actually happening is not an act of war, but a mission that resembles an act of solidarity: "During the operation, we made widespread and concerted efforts to see to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population. We allowed for the transfer of equipment, food and medicine to prevent a humanitarian crisis" (Olmert 2009, par. 16), "We will see to the needs of the population in Gaza and will do our utmost to prevent a humanitarian crisis that will impinge upon residents' lives. […] We also made it clear that Israel will, at the same time, make every effort to prevent a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip" (Olmert 2008, par. 9). Livni states alongside the U.N. Secretary General that

> … today we discussed the humanitarian situation. Israel is acting against terror in the Gaza Strip, and simultaneously trying to help by easing the life of the population and giving medical and humanitarian support for the civilians. We understand and share the concerns of the international community on this matter. Anyway, these are our values as well (Livni and Ki Moon 2009).

In Shalev (2009b, par. 14) "As Israel has facilitated the movement of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip - more than 800 trucks totaling over 25,000 tons of aid - …" and in Shalev (2009a, par. 18, 19):

> Unlike the Hamas regime, which has targeted crossing points to prevent the entry of aid and has prevented Palestinians from boarding ambulances, Israel respects its humanitarian responsibilities. It has permitted Palestinians in need of medical care to enter Israel for treatment and has set up a special humanitarian situation room to coordinate with the aid organizations working in Gaza.

Since the start of the fighting, Israel facilitated the entry into Gaza of over 540 trucks, delivering over 10,000 tons of humanitarian assistance. In fact, just a few days ago Israel was asked by the World Food Program to halt supplies of food shipments since their warehouses were full.

What is achieved here is the normalization of a disastrous situation that existed *prior* to OCL, a situation for which Israel is responsible[l]. Israel persuasively defines the status quo as "natural," "just," "inevitable," or even "democratic" through denial and contortion of reality, or by the redefinitions of terms ("humanitarian situation"), and unique status of the situation (see van Dijk 2008, 72).

For a second time, the ongoing illegal occupation of Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza (until 2005) is silenced and even turned to Israeli advantage by focusing on Israeli pullout of Gaza in 2005. References to the latter are present in many of Israeli official speeches. For instance, in Livni 2008 "When we made the decision to leave Gaza in order to disengage ourselves from responsibility for what was happening there and to create an opportunity for peace…" (par. 9), and Livni 2009 "You have to understand that when we left the Gaza Strip in 2005, we said that if we were attacked, Israel could respond and act militarily" (par. 28), Shalev 2009a "In 2005 Israel removed from Gaza every one of its soldiers, and every one of its eight thousand civilians, along with their homes, and schools, their synagogues and cemeteries. We did this to try to create an opening for peace and for Palestinians to build prosperous society" (par. 3), as well as in Peres 2009 (par. 6):

> Israel left Gaza completely, no occupation. We took out all of our soldiers from Gaza, all of our civilians. People are talking about settlements, we took out from Gaza all the settlements and all the settlers, fifteen thousand of them[li]. Nobody forced us, it was our own choice. We had to mobilize forty five thousand policemen to bring them back home, at the cost of 2.5 billion dollars.

It follows then, according to the Israeli official discourse, the Palestinians and Gazans should thank the Israeli state for having encouraged openly illegal colonization of their territory so that when they would pullout, they would do so in exchange for "retaining" the right to control air, land and water access and the

right to bomb them if the Israeli government deemed it necessary. The daily occupation, colonization, blockade, and starvation of the Palestinian population are completely naturalized, and even turned to Israeli advantage.

Intertextuality

Finally, the analysis of Israeli official discourse on OCL cannot be complete without discussion about intertextuality[lii]. The main concern here is about the ways in which the texts under examination "are shaped by prior texts that they are 'responding' to, and by subsequent texts that they 'anticipate'" (Fairclough 1992, 101). As mentioned earlier in the introduction of this chapter, we cannot fully understand the strength and functioning of the Israeli official discourse during OCL without considering the already existing discursive formations – about the "war on terrorism"[liii], Israeli identity, and Palestinian/Arab identities and sovereignty – that constitute its condition of possibility.

In fact, thanks to those discourses, Israel managed to legitimize its warring foreign policy towards the Gazans by constantly making references to the scene of the "war on terrorism" that had been staged by the U.S. administration and other NATO members in the wake of 9/11, while also reifying its moral cartography and its "Western," "democratic" identity. This discourse often referred to the fight of "democratic States" and "civilization" against "terror" and "death-loving" militants, or referred to the "axis of evil" of which Iran is allegedly a major participant.

The marks of this discourse are everywhere present in the corpus analyzed and they serve to answer the national and international critiques. The best example of this is the extent to which the words "terror," "terrorism" and "terrorist(s)" are imbricate in every text in the corpus. Also, Israeli officials have learned from the 2006 Lebanon War that they needed to gather the international community support by mobilizing major media and diplomatic resources (Caldwell *et al* 2009, 6; Fitzgerald 2009). Therefore, we find often the marks of intertextuality in the form of refutation of anticipated diplomatic attacks (prolepsis) from "Western" countries or the international community. Nowhere

this is more visible than in Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni *Address to Knesset* (2008) when she declares:

> Israel is waging a struggle, but this struggle is not Israel's alone. *Israel is standing on the frontlines of the Western world's war against terror, and we expect support for doing the right thing and fighting the war of the entire free world*. It is true, the pictures broadcast on television all over the world are provoking harsh public opinion against Israel. Unfortunately, some of the world's decision makers are swayed by public opinion and the media, even though they know what is true and what is not, and how they would act in a similar situation. […] Each of you must choose a side, and the choice is not between Arab and Jew. The right side is the State of Israel along with all the moderate elements in the regions, including the lion's share of the Palestinian public and the Arab world. Then there is the side of terror and extremism. There is no middle ground (my emphasis).

Hence, one way Israeli officials answer these attacks is by constantly reminding their audiences that Israel is a "democratic state," part of the "free world," and that Hamas is the antithesis. What is also interesting to note here in this last quote is how it draws on the myth of the frontier. As Campbell (1998a, 146) notes, "This diposition has been exhibited each time it has been argued that a (particular) 'barbarian' group only understands force and cannot be reasoned with"; hence playing an important role in the Israeli discourse of "Just war", or "War of no choice".

 Other marks of intertextuality can also be spotted in the official Israeli discourse: "It is very difficult when a democratic country has to confront an illegal terroristic group" (Peres 2009, par. 1), "Hamas' despicable and cynical use of targeting civilians is an appalling example of the toll terrorism takes on all civilians. When *civilized* people look at children, they see the future. When *terrorists* look at children, they see targets and human shields" (Shalev 2009b, par. 19; my emphasis), "Hamas is not a member of the United Nations; Hamas is not thinking about accepting the international community's rules. Hamas does not share the same values that we all share as member of the free world and the international community" (Livni and Ki-Moon 2009, par. 15). This can be found in the structure of the text, where a

larger section must be considered. For instance:

These are the days when every individual in the region and in the world has to choose a side. And the sides have changed. No longer is it Israel on one side and the Arab world on the other. No longer is it a choice between the political process and hope, or a war on terror. *Israel chose its side* the day it was established; the Jewish people chose its side during its thousands of years of existence, and the prayer for peace is the voice sounded in the synagogues.

There is one thing I am unwilling to accept. Choosing peace does not mean surrendering to the radical and terrorist elements. And while fighting terror, it is forbidden to abandon the political process and hope. *Choosing peace and life* is part of the *war on terror* and extremism. And Israel's side, *the right side*, is the side of all those who want to advance the *peace process* based on the idea of two states and everyone who understands that we need to *fight against our common enemies*.

Let no one make the mistake of thinking that *our values, our aspirations for peace, and our commitment to democracy* will prevent us from doing what we must do in order to protect each and every Israeli citizen. Israel is making it plain yet again today that its desire for peace is not a sign of weakness (Livni 2008, par. 3, 4, 5; my emphasis).

Furthermore, often purposefully, the phrase "the State of Israel" is found in the same sentence as "Hamas" and "terrorist organization", underlining the righteousness of Israel action as a *sovereign* State while emphasizing that Hamas cannot be a government since Palestine is not officially sovereign. This is an appeal to the discourse on sovereignty, which is a highly institutionalized norm at the very base of state's legitimacy. However, this is also somewhat ironic since Israel's occupation and colonization of Palestinian OT is the major obstacle to the creation of the sovereign Palestinian State, but it certainly helps in hiding this latter fact and the fact that the juridical state of limbo in which Palestinians find themselves has served immensely the Israeli cause and the illegal practices in which it engages[liv].

Moreover, the recurrent appearance of the *axis of evil* under the guise of the evocation of Iranian support to Hamas is also a mark of the intertextuality. For instance, in Livni (2008), not too far after the aforementioned quote we find: "From this podium, I call upon the world's leaders, and particularly those from the Arab world – those who understand that the threat does not come from Israel but from the radical elements in the world, *headed by Iran* […]" and "Hamas

does not recognize the existence of Israel or Israel's right to exist here. It lives off fear and hate. Hamas receives *support from Iran and Syria*, in the form of money, weapons, and training. Hamas is a terrorist organization," in Shalev (2009a, par. 9, 27):

> With its new Iranian-made missiles, Hamas is now able to reach as far as the cities of Ashdod and Beer Sheva, placing over a million Israelis in the shadow of terror […] This conflict will end not when terrorism is appeased or accommodated but when the international community stands determined and united against it. Anything less than this will only embolden Hamas, lengthening this round of the conflict, and accelerating the next. Anything less will reward Iran – the coward's coward – which hides behind terrorists as they hide behind civilians, and encourage its world-wide efforts to use Hamas and other terrorist groups to fight its wars on the cheap.

In Peres (2009) "the problem is not the Arab world, the problem is the *Iranian ambition* to govern the Middle East," in Olmert (2009): "*Hamas in Gaza was built by Iran* as a foundation for power, and is backed through funding, through training and through the provision of advanced weapons. *Iran*, which strives for regional hegemony, tried to replicate the methods used by Hizbullah in Lebanon in the Gaza Strip as well. *Iran* and Hamas mistook the restraint Israel exercised as weakness." This appeal to the "axis of evil" discourse first introduced by the Bush administration represents the world in a Manichean fashion of "Us" vs. "Them" – "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (Bush 2001). Hence, Israel OCL discourse reproduces its identity as part of the "West," a frontier society engaged in a battle against "Them," the "terrorist."

Aspects inquired	Illocutionary strategies	Function	Effect/Identity
Vocabulary	Lexicon (Linking and differentiation)	Marks clear boundary between "Us" and "Them" according to logic of identity/difference	Demonized, aggressive, terrorist and delegitimized Other. Innocent, victimized, moderate and civilized Self.
	Semantic transformation	<u>Hyperboles</u>: Marks emphasis on the negative side of the	Accentuates the logic of identity/difference by putting emphasizes

		Other's action and on the positive side of the Self's action	on the negative/positive characters already associated with the Other/Self.
		Euphemisms: Downgrades the importance and the level of violence of the Self's negative actions; blurring of undesirable aspects associated with formulation of policy.	Cleaning of language to make is consumable to polite society (international and national community). Erases negative aspects of Self, and making possible to claim victimization and higher moral ground
Grammar	Transitivity	Passive/Active Syntax: Foregrounds agency of Self's negative actions and Other's positive actions; emphasizes the agency of the Other's negative action and Self's positive action	Emphasizes the Manichean identity/difference logic of identity. Reproduction of victim/victimizer, good/bad identities by erasing agency.
	Modality	Foregrounds agency of Self's action by deflecting of accountability and responsibility; transfer accountability and responsibility to the Other.	Central to the construction of the "Just War/War of no choice" discourse. Reproduction of victimization of the Self. Central to the construction for reversal of blame (racist discourse)
Structure	Denial/silencing of deficiencies or wrongdoings	Normalization and silencing of negative or unacceptable situation	Normalization of occupation hence reproduction of victimhood and innocence of Self; delegitimization of

			Other's claims and actions
Intertextuality	"War on terror"	Legitimates war as policy, dehumanizes enemy and legitimates killing. Gives strong penetration power to official discourse.	Reification of civilized/democratic Self evil/terror Other. Important to the "Just war" discourse and victimization of Self.
	Sovereignty	Legitimates unilateral military intervention and dodges international criticism	

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that the Israeli official discourse renders war-as-policy legitimate to national and international audiences by using illocutionary strategies that reproduced Israel as an innocent victim – victimization effect – and stabilized the *status quo ante* OCL as normal – normalization effect – thanks to intertextual links inserting the discourse of the "war on terror" as central organizer. When one reads Israeli officials' declarations about OCL, the first thing that can be noted is the extent to which the Israelis and their State are portrayed as innocent victims of terrorist factions. The theme of the "victim" is recurrent in recent Israeli security discourse and is by no means new in the formulation of Israeli foreign policy (see Dowty 1999). Nevertheless, the importance this theme carries in legitimating practices that have been judged to be illegal under international law and beyond the "Western/Democratic" norms[lv] are not to be underplayed.

As the Israeli government narrates the event of OCL, it also reproduces the main tenets of the Israeli Zionist identity metanarrative that define the Zionists tropes from which Israel legitimates its warring policy. In fact, as the event is narrated through the official foreign policy discourse, any episodes or action that

could translate Israel into the position of the victimizer are erased or silenced. At the same time, Hamas and Gazans are reproduced into a barbaric, terrorist population that can be eliminated if need be.

These strategies are rendered possible by multiple illocutionary strategies such as the use of words (lexicon) that construct a positive 'Self' identity opposed to a negative 'Other' through process of linking and differentiation (Hansen 2007, 42) and the use of rhetorical figures such as euphemisms and hyperboles, syntax structures such as the use of active vs. passive sentences (de-)emphasizing responsibility for action, depending if the action has positive or negative connotation for oneself or the "other." This is also achieved through the use of deontic modals, which emphasize the moral imperative for the international community – of which Israel is a member – to fight against terrorism, and the fact that Israel is a victim because it actually "had no other choice."

What also stands out and makes this victimization effect possible is the strong presence of intertextual reference discourse of "the war terrorism" which is dominating the post-9/11 (in)security discourse at a global level. This latter fact gives Israeli security discourse a hybrid character that provides an extremely strong penetration power. In that sense, the discourse on terrorism occupies the central position and serves the function of the security discourse organizer (basic discourse). Thanks to this discourse, Israeli officials posit their actions as the administration and protection of life worth living against threats that are conceived in biopolitical terms of populations not worth living. As Reid pointed out in his study of terrorism,

> Security is, first and foremost, a *discursive practice* through which states demarcate what Campbell describes as the "ethical boundaries of identity" between forms of life deemed normal, civilised and worthy of inclusion within society, and forms of life deemed abnormal, barbaric and dangerous, and which in being so are deemed to pose a threat to the constitution of the life of society (Reid 2006, 8).

Finally, as the Israeli government reproduces the Zionist narration of the nation, Arab/Palestinians are reproduced as body or a population that is identified as a threat. This is crucial for Israeli identity politics considering the fact that 20% of its population is constituted of Israeli-Palestinians who constantly disturb the

Zionist metanarrative of the nation. As Joanne Sharpe noted, the "war on terrorism" cannot take the form of a traditional battle; there simply is no frontline since terrorist actions "can be enacted anywhere throughout society" (Sharp 1998, 160; see also Shapiro 2008, 26) and hence, Israeli-Palestinian – the "demographic threat" – is directly linked with the external threat.

Through the repetitive drawing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the "war on terror" geopolitics, the Israeli metanarrative has been produced and reproduced. The fight against "terrorist" and barbarians – such as instantiated during OCL – also simultaneously contains Israel; it acts to discipline the numerous possible and parallel histories and characterization of Israel into a coherent "Western" moral agent (Sharp 1998, 157). The writing and rewriting of the Israeli political identity has been made possible by the performance of violence upon the "barbarian" other. In short, what could transpire as contradictory identities (democracy vs. Jewish State) are fastened in through warring practices that performatively reproduce the identity of the "doer behind the   deed".

Notes: Chapter 3

xxxvi The choice of focusing on official speeches is methodologically justifiable by the fact that, as Jackson argues, they are

> the most important component of the language of the 'war on terrorism' because it sets out the parameters of official thinking and forms the basis of policy and action; it establishes the core principles, assumptions and knowledge of the counter-terrorism approach, […] and provides the overall story or narrative for public understanding of the issues (17).

xxxvii Every genre has its "particular 'rational that shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constraints choice of content and style'" (Hansen 2007, 65). It is therefore closely linked and central to the concept of intertextuality.

xxxviii Here I mostly refer to the "proportional use of force," but the argument could also be extended to the Gaza blocus and illegal colonization. Two issues that are not totally disjoint from OCL context.

xxxix Suffice to glimpse at the official text and speeches produced during the operation to realize that "terrorism "is at the center of the concerns of the entire operation. Also, I concur with Jackson (2005) when he says that "the 'war on terrorism' is both a set of institutional practices and an accompanying set of assumptions, beliefs, forms of knowledge and political and cultural narratives" (16).

xl Because of space issues, I decided to leave out the textual analysis of this section the use of disclaimers, which could potentially be helpful. Speech act and the use of identity pronouns ("us" vs. "them") are also textual foci that have been left out which could present potential to enrich this textual analysis

xli I shall explain those in greater details as I encounter them in the chapter.

xlii Because of space limitation, I have limited the examples to one text, but the same pattern was observable in every other text from the corpus.

xliii I chose deliberately *not* to include <u>metaphors</u> for two reasons. It is first for a question of space, but mostly because Gavriely-Nuri already dedicated two entire articles in *Discourse & Sociecty* (2008 and 2010a) to metaphors and their role in war legitimation. In the first article, she demonstrates that thanks to the "intensive use of 'war-normalizing metaphors', the political discourse 'annihilated' the war: these metaphorical constructions framed the war as a 'normal' event, an integral part of Israeli daily life, despite the 3970 rockets that fell within the borders of Israel and the massive Israel Defense Forces bombing of southern Lebanon" (5). In the second, she demonstrates that the Israeli peace discourse serves two purposes: "first, the construction of the Israeli speaker's positive self-image as a peace-seeker together with delegitimation of rivals; and second, the facilitation of public acceptance of strategically problematic actions, primarily use of military violence, by their presentation as part of the peace discourse" (565). Hence, her findings are very similar to mines in this chapter. One specific finding of hers that would have been interesting to explore is the old and recurring metaphor of "we extend a hand in peace". She shows that Israeli state officials constantly use this to legitimate their warring policy by framing it in terms of "just war":

> analysis of the various appearances of the metaphor in Israel's parliamentary discourse exposes that the metaphor is, in effect, used to justify an initiation of a new war rather than invite peace. According to this logic, the refusal of the opponent to shake the 'extended hand' is perceied as a casus belli. [...] In other words, this metaphor is often introduced into the just war discourse. The motif of no-choice war – Israel's version of just war – has been part of the Israeli political discourse surrounding all the wars it has launched (1956, 1967, 1982, 2006 and 2008) as well as a series of local military operations (2010a, 576).

xliv Hamas' hand-made rockets have no targeting capability and they killed one Israeli in 2010.

xlv Gavriely-Nuri (2010b) has pointed out that "In Israel's military discourse, the term *operation* is used rather broadly" (827) and that "in Israel's civil arena, the Hebrew term *operation* means *sale*. It appears that some civil connotations of terminology have penetrated the military lexicon" (839).

xlvi Modality is a sort of linguistic encoding of "speakers" claims about the necessity, probability or possibility of beliefs and actions. Modals are most often auxiliary verbs ("must," "will," "shall," "can," etc.) but they can also be adjectives ("necessary"), adverbs ("probably"), or parenthetical expressions ("I think") (Wood and Kroger 2000, 211).

xlvii In his CDA of the U.S. "war on terrorism," Richard Jackson (2005) arrives to very similar, if not the same, conclusions:

"In the official counter-terrorism discourse, there are two main discursive strategies […] First there is an insistence that the 'war on terrorism' is the 'only way' to fight this kind of enemy […] there is no other choice. [… and] A second strategy is to insist that the reason this is the only way to conduct the campaign against terrorism is because the normal methods employed in the past will not work" (139-140).

xlviii For instance, air, land and water blocus – such as the one applied to Gaza – is normally considered as an act of war under international law.

xlix As pointed out by Wood and Kroger (2000, 92), "It is important to consider what is *not* there."

l In fact, in the year prior to OCL, 79% of Gazans were living under the poverty threshold. Of the 3900 industrial enterprises present in Gaza, 3877 had to close because of import restrictions and the average number of UNRWA truckloads of food entering per day in Gaza in November 2008 was around 4.6 while the truckloads of food imports per day required to sustain UNRWA's distribution of food aid was estimated at 70 to 80. Gaza was at the third rank "among emergency situations necessitating a UN humanitarian appeal," after Sudan and Congo (Journal of Palestine Studies, 2009a). During OCL, the influx of UNWRA trucks stopped almost completely, leaving the entire population of Gaza without any supplies of food or medicines.

li Note how numbers do not even match. In this quote, Peres talks about "Fifteen thousand" settlers, while in the previous Shalev (2009a) quote, it is a question of "eight thousand."

lii Kristeva defines intertextuality as the "inter-action textuelle qui se produit à l'intérieur d'un seul texte. Pour le sujet connaissant l'intertextualité est une notion qui sera l'indice de la façon dont un texte lit l'histoire et s'insère en elle" (quoted in Paveau 2010, 94).

liii In his post-9/11 study of the "war on terrorism," Richard Jackson (2005) pointed out that

"the language of the 'war on terrorism' has become the dominant political paradigm in American foreign policy since September 11, 2001, and [… that language] is deliberately and meticulously composed set of words, assumptions, metaphors, grammatical forms, myths and forms of knowledge – it is a carefully constructed *discourse* – that is designed to achieve a number of key political goals: to normalize and legitimize the current counter-terrorist approach; to empower the authorities and shield them from criticism; to discipline domestic society by marginalizing dissent or protest; and to enforce national unity by reifying a narrow conception of national identity" (2).

liv One could also add to the irony here by underscoring Hannah Arendt's point made in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* when she writes, "It was Eichmann de facto statelessness, and nothing else, that enabled the Jerusalem court to sit in judgement on him. Eichmann, though no legal expert, should have been able to appreciate that, for he knew from his own career that one could do as one please only with stateless people; the Jews had had to lose their nationality before they could be exterminated" (1977, 240).

[lv] Colonization of the Occupied Territories beyond the armistice line of 1967 (the Green Line), urbicides, targeted assassinations, disproportionate uses of force, siege/blocus of Gaza, imposition of curfews for more than hundred days straight to entire cities to name a few.

Chapter 4: Destabilizing Israeli Political Identity : The Aesthetic Politics of *Waltz with Bashir*

The nation-state is scripted – in official documents, histories, and journalistic commentaries, among other texts – in ways that impose coherence on what is instead a series of fragmentary and arbitrary conditions of historical assemblage. At the same time, other modalities of writing – e.g., journals, diaries, novels and counter-historical narratives – challenge the state's coherence-producing writing performances.

- Michael J. Shapiro, *Methods and Nations*

I am convinced that, in the long run, only a thorough investigation of our remarkable relationship with both the other and strangeness within ourselves can lead people to give up hunting for the scapegoat outside their group.

- Julia Kristeva, *Nations without Nationalism*

Introduction

While remaining true to the insights of this thesis, which acknowledge the mutual constitution of identity and foreign policy (Hansen 2007), I note that the state centrism at the heart of the IR discipline shuts down alternative ways of thinking about acting in times of conflict and the ways of conceptualizing identity and community[lvi]. It reproduces the institutionalized practices and discourses and leaves very little room for change all the while as it participates actively in the reproduction of violent-congenial conventional perspectives (see Campbell 1998; Kristeva 1993, 1994; Shapiro 1997, 2004).

In the previous chapter I have exposed how foreign policy and identity were mutually constitutive, and how the textual practices of foreign policy officials seek to eliminate tensions and incongruence between the two (recall Molière's twist in the plot). Yet, those tensions between a warring foreign policy and national identity are best exposed and appreciated when the subjects involved are mobilized via encounters and situations that reveal their complexities. As Shapiro points out, "it is aesthetic modes of apprehension, articulated in artistic texts – films and novels for example, – that often provide the most effective analysis" (Shapiro

forthcoming, 14) to reveal such complexities and provide a different gaze to the inquiry.

Therefore, in an attempt to provide a different site of inquiry, the following treatment of cinema at once reveals and destabilizes the assumptions articulated in the dominant IR inspired forms of inquiry. The textual engagement with cinema is to me, a way of taking the "aesthetic turn" which seeks to reveal the nexus between art and politics, and the specific articulations of resistance to hegemonic discourses and exclusionary practices (Jabri 2009, 222). In fact, as Sharp (1998) argues, cinema has "provided more imaginative reconceptualizations of international relations, and demonstrate a greater willingness to cast off the older ways of understanding global politics, than the formal theorists of international politics" (153). Hence, I want to make the case that cinema represents another space that supplies alternative images that contest militarization, securitization and violence: "a counter space […] a 'cinematic heterotopia'[lvii] […] to the violence-congeniality" of the state's metanarrative. Therefore, in this chapter, I engage the Israeli film *Waltz with Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008), and argue that the film text allows for a critique of Israeli nation-state metanarrative while engaging with issues of war and militarization. The purpose here is to use alternative societal voices as a check on the views of elites and governmental actors (Hansen 2007)[lviii].

The film demonstrates at best what Bhabha (1994, 223) has called "the filmic time of a continual displacement of narrative". Through film, the Israeli official linear history is destabilized through the disruption of the narrative structure in a repetitive performance that exposes the multiple origins of Israeli national identity (Martin Jones 2006, 36). *Bashir* illustrates in its content, and demonstrates in its non-linear narrative structure, the process of national identity de-/re- construction in times of war and political violence. It does so by inserting war memories, dreams and hallucinations within the intertextual chain of the nation. Hence, it is possible to consider it in terms of the minor actions it performs upon the major hegemonic discourse of national identity. It is here that the politics of *Waltz with Bashir* appears.

"Time-image": film text as cinematic "Heteropia"

In *Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity*, David Martin-Jones (2006) integrates Gilles Deleuze's concepts of "movement-image" and "time-image" to illustrate how cinema draws on different narrative structures to negotiate national identity (de/re)construction (13). The former, it is said, "expresses the classical conception of time because it only shows one 'True' time, and marginalises, expels or eradicates all others from the frame" (*Ibid.*, 24). The past maintains a linear trajectory that evolves chronologically in a clear causal fashion, with a clear beginning and end and in that sense, it represents the teleological time of "official history" (metanarrative) (*Ibid.*, 28). Hence, film texts that are constructed around a "movement-image" narrative structures participate and act as "pedagogical" tools in the nation-states' project of nation building and cultural governance: that is cinematic nationhood (see epigraph).

The "time-image" by contrast, with its multiple, reversed or fragmented narratives ("times") expresses potentially destabilizing forces of the metanarrative by replacing or substituting the "True". In a manner reminiscent of Nietzsche "power of the false", the power of those "time-image" structured narratives is to 'falsify' the alleged singular form of the "True" (*Ibid.*, 25). Such time-image filmic texts usually revolve around fragmented, multiplied or reversed narrative structures that reveal the difficulty of narrating the nation in a clear linear manner at a time of historical crisis and transformation such as warring episodes; "Such narratives formally demonstrate a nation's exploration of its own 'national narrative', its […] national past, present and/ or future in search of causes, and possible alternatives, to its current state of existence" (*Ibid.*, 1)[lix]. Moreover, not only does the "time-image" 'falsify' the 'true' national history, but in a manner reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's conceptualisation of the past, it also inserts the possibility for the official past to be made over as not necessarily true, and by doing so, it creates new memories capable of activating a new future (*Ibid.*, 60).

Borrowing from the conclusions of Martin-Jones, I argue that the Israeli national cinema that self-consciously manipulates narrative time so as to negotiate and provide alternative accounts of Israeli metanarrative – such as *Bashir* – can

provide a place of otherness from which one can gain an appreciation of the normalizing practices of the hegemonic discourses (Shapiro 2004, 67); a "cinematic heteropia". This cinematic heteropia resists the violence-congeniality securitization and militarization of the state's metanarrative by denaturalizing dominant tropes and inserting national episodes that do not fit into the national identity narrative. The remaining section of the chapter explores how the destabilization of the Israeli metanarrative is achieved in *Waltz with Bashir*.

Reading Waltz with Bashir

> In the contemporary period, however, many of the most hallowed myths of nation have been challenged and criticized in feature films that contest the basic premises of […] ideology – […] the power of national belonging to displace the lived identity of race, or the existence of a single homogenous nation […]. Even within mainstream Hollywood filmmaking, the foundational narratives of nation are increasingly being contested by films that open up the lock doors of the national past and that emphasize the histories forgotten or excluded from dominant accounts.
>
> - Robert Burgoyne, *Film Nation*

Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir* (*Vals im Bashir*, 2008) is quite unique in the sense that it blends the autobiographic documentary with the animated genre. It is partly a documentary because it is based on documentary video footage of conversations and interviews the director has conducted with friends, journalists and psychologists. Yet, the entirety of the film – with the exception of the last sequence – takes the form of a realistic animation that introduces sequences that verge on phantasmagorical hallucinations and dreams. In its composition, the film alternates sequences of interviews, under a very classical form, and dreamlike sequences, such as Folman's hallucination concerning the night of the massacre, which provide a rhythm to the latter's inquiry into the past. As such, *Bashir* inscribes itself in the hybrid cinematographic genres of the war film and the visual memory – fictional and documentary – of the conflict. The aesthetic universe – musical as well as visual – of this particular hybrid genre contributes to the blurring of the boundaries between documentary and fiction (Lautissier 2009).

Bashir is the story of Ari Folman – the director of the movie, who was also an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldier that participated in the First Lebanon War

(1982) – seeking to retrieve the lost memories of his involvement in the conflict. More precisely, the narrator tries to reconstruct the forgotten memories of three days during which he witnessed and indirectly took part in the Sabra and Chatila massacre. The reintegration, in the present, of a lived trauma, through an inquiry process of reconstruction brings the spectator to revisit key moments and the visual elements of the event as well as its inscription in the memories of those who participated in it. In that sense, beyond Folman's personal quest for memories, this very reflection conducted through multiple voices is more of a pretext to formulate a plural and open narration of the nation, which would situate itself in a permanent equilibrium between individual and collective memory (Lautissier 2009, paragraph 21).

In terms of narrative structure, the narrator's friend, Boaz Rein - who fought alongside Folman in Lebanon - provides the object of desire that those memories represent and which drive the action of the film. Boaz tells Folman that he keeps having the same nightmare every night. He sees a pack of 26 menacing dogs rushing down Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard on a rainy night. The dogs stop at the building in which Boaz lives and bark with their "mean faces" towards the window of his apartment. When Folman asks Boaz "How do you know 26 and not 30?", Boaz tells his story about the War, when he had to shoot 26 dogs so that that the arrival of the Israeli forces in a town would not be revealed by the animals' barks.

Here, the ghosts of the 26 dogs play a central role in the story of the movie as they force both Boaz and Folman to renegotiate their own narratives. In fact, the ghosts represent the memories of traumatic events that cannot be forgotten, but which do not fit the national narrative and hence, they force the characters to renegotiate their identities[lx]. In a similar manner, the 26 ghost dogs testify to the struggle Israeli soldiers have to engage in to recreate an image of the present that corresponds with the national narrative. The ghosts of the dogs render the present and the past indiscernible. For this very reason, Folman is forced into action once again, to ensure the correct realignment of national identity (*Ibid.*).

As Boaz narrates the traumatic events that lead to his nightmares, he also starts questioning Folman about his own memories: "No flashbacks from Lebanon? Beirut, Sabra and Shatila?" Ari Folman realizes that he himself can't remember anything of his time in Beirut: "The truth is that's not stored in my system." Yet, after parting from Boaz and while driving home, Folman experiences his first "flashback" in 20 years. In this flashback, he is staring at flares lighting up Beirut's sky while lying on his back in shallow water by the city's beaches. Along with two other young soldiers, he dresses up and slowly starts walking towards Beirut's narrow streets. As Folman turns a corner, he crosses a group of panicked and shocked veiled women, who he knows are coming from Sabra and Chatila refugee camps. In this scene – that is shown repetitively at different key moments during the film[lxi] – Folman can only recognize one of the two soldiers – Carmi Cna'an , who he will later interview.

Figure 3. Folman's oniric memory of Beirut's beach and the veiled Palestinian of Sabra and Chatila.

I want to argue that this very scene constitutes what Deleuze has called "the crystal of time" of the movie, or more precisely Folman's crystal time[lxii]. As Martin-Jones notes, "The crystal exists in 'disturbance of memory and… failures of recognition' that break up the logical progress of the self in time. […it] is a double-sided image, in which neither the virtual or actual has yet crystallised, but in which both are caught up in the process of so doing" (58). For the spectator, "Folman's memory is part real, part fantasy" (Yosef 2010, 318), it is part "virtual" part "actual", for in the crystal of time the past always appears as a palimpsest – it is always misrecognized (Martin-Jones 2006, 59)[lxiii]. For the purpose of our

analysis of the identity and foreign policy nexus, what this means is that the discursive processes in the Israeli dominant historical discourse of identity – by which alternative voices have been silenced and by which the systematic denying and purposeful forgetting of events are the condition of possibility for the formulation of warring foreign policy – are being challenged, distablized.

Coming back to the analysis of the film, Folman sets on a journey, in search of those lost memories. It takes him to Holland, and to different parts of Israel, where he meets with friends, a journalist, a psychologist and an ex-IDF officer who took part in the First Lebanon War. His repressed past slowly resurrects as he carries his interviews and discussions with his acquaintances, which among others include the loss of comrades on the battlefield, the evacuation of dead soldiers, fighting children in an olive grove, and the murder of civilians.

The very first person Folman contacts after his meeting with Boaz is his best-friend and "ready made therapist" Ori Sivan. Folman asks Ori why Boaz's memories jogged his own, even if it had nothing to do with him. Ori explains, "Memory is fascinating… Memory is dynamic. It's alive. If some details are missing, memory fills the holes with things that never happened." What he emphasizes here is the subjective character of memory, in opposition to the fixed and supposedly objective character of a national metanarrative[lxiv]. It also highlights Walter Benjamin's point that the past is an active process carried onto the present; the past is inevitably a palimpsest. At a minimum then, the film rejects the positivistic premise that the past is fixed and closed, which can be susceptible to objective observation (Silberstein 1999, 178; see also Raz-Krakotzkin 2007).

In that sense, *Bashir* does not seek to reveal the "true" narrative of the First Lebanon War. Rather, the film's emphasis is on the subjective dimension of memories and experiences of war and hence, it is less concerned with the history of the War itself (Yosef 2010), than engaging into a critique of war-as-policy[lxv]. To do so, the film explores the temporality of Folman's "identity to negotiate transformations of the Israeli national identity allegorically. As Martin-Jones points out, in time-image narrative film, "this is achieved through the use of a character's memory to represent the reconstruction of the national past" (2006, 50).

Ori then suggest that Folman should talk to Carmi – who now lives in Holland – if he wants to find answers to his questions concerning the Lebanon episode. Folman retorts, "Isn't that dangerous? Maybe I'll discover things I don't want to know about myself", here highlighting the ontological insecurity that memories can bring when disturbing a well established and stabilized identity narrative, and highlighting the fact that many chose to not remember so as to continue with their lives. This very point speaks back to Jacqueline Rose, who herself quotes the Israeli writer David Grossman: "The average Israeli, [Grossman writes…] refuses introspection, dreading the 'disconcerting and menacing emotions it might provoke': 'He dreads that they will kindle disquieting questions about the justice of his actions'" (Rose 2005, 72-73; see also Bar-On 2008, 58)[lxvi].

In the next scene, Carmi and the protagonist are in a car, somewhere in Holland, probably coming back from the airport. As they chat, Folman realizes that Carmi became rich selling falafels in Utrecht. Folman then comments: "Everyone thought you'd become a nuclear physicist. […] They [your and my family, school friends] thought that by the age of 40 you'd be nominated for a Nobel Prize". Carmi retorts, "By 20, that future was over", hence underscoring the fact that his war experience marred him in a decisive way, shattering his young adulthood dreams. He preferred to flee Israel and go live in a "freezing" country where he could sell falafels.

As the conversation continues, Carmi tells his guest that when he called Folman from the airport, he and his son had just gone out to play in the snow, and the latter had started asking question about his father's experience in the army; if he ever had shot anyone. Folman than asks: "Did you?" and Carmi answers, "I don't know", suggesting that those traumatic memories have been erased for him too. As the scene unfolds, Folman asks his host if he would mind if he sketched him and his son. Carmi answers: "Not at all. Draw as much as you like. […] It's fine as long as you draw, but don't film". Here, the director's choice of using animation instead of documentary video footage takes on its meaning:

> animation enables the film to represent the traumatic events of the past, which are too awful and shocking to be represented directly. Folman creates a distance for himself and for the viewer that makes the traumas

of the war and the massacre accessible. In other words, because of the protagonist-director's post-trauma, as well as that of at least some of the viewers who have also repressed memories of the massacre, directly approaching the trauma through traditional photographic documentary footage would have been too shocking and threatening (Yosef 2010, 321).

Indeed, as Folman himself explained in an interview, "In order to get back to being who I am, to understand myself . . . I had to be drawn, and thus find myself again, to understand who I am" (as quoted in *Ibid.*). Moreover, what the animation allows Ari Folman, as a director, to do was to mix dreams, hallucinations and personal memories not recorded in the archives with real interviews and archives documentation[lxvii]. By doing so, the director of *Bashir* could destabilize the narrative in a way in which the spectator does not recognize anymore which is the "True" story about the events.

As the two friends' conversation unfolds, sitting inside the host's house, Carmi explains how he and his brothers in arms were taken to war on what was deemed to be a "little Love Boat". The discussion then goes on,

Folman: "What do you mean, a 'Love Boat'? With Jacuzzis and bars? All of that?

Carmi: "That's how I imagined it. I later found it was just an old commando boat.

Folman: "For 18, you seemed pretty bright to me. I never took you for a fighter"

Carmi: "Frankly, it was important to me for a pretty practical reason. I felt like everyone else was screwing like rabbits and that I was the only […] nerd good at chess and math but with masculinity problems. So I had to prove everyone I was the best fighter and some big hero."

Folman: "Did you succeed?"

Carmi: "Yes surprisingly enough. I felt that I was strong and capable. Then the war started and they put us on that damned Love Boat. Then I…"

Folman: "You what?"

Carmi: "I puked like a pig and wondered what the enemy would think. I finally collapsed on deck and fell asleep. I sleep when I'm scared."

This scene effectively exposes the workings of the Israeli trope of the *Sabra*, the "Jew with muscles" who performatively realizes his manhood and becomes a man worth "screwing" through the experience of war against the "enemy". In that sense, *Waltz with Bashir* engages with the Zionist gender/identity politics in a very critical way. It shows how young intelligent men are drawn into combat to respond to socially embedded tropes of masculinity within the narration of the nation, and how they perform their subjective manliness, how they performatively become Sabras through the performance of killing and being put into a dangerous situation[lxviii]. By doing so it critically engages with the conditions of possibility for the formulation and legitimation of warring policy, hence directly engaging with the identity/foreign policy nexus with which we are concerned in the present study.

The scene also depicts how war in Israel is perceived as an almost positive event in which young men fulfill their masculinity and get to bond and party – hence the expectation of a "love boat" with "bars" and "Jacuzzis". The point here is that, even though Carmi "felt strong and capable" before going to war as he himself declares, the reality of war – symbolized by the puking and sleeping and the boat – crushed him and his manliness more than anything else[lxix]. In the movie, this theme is recurrent in Ari's interlocutors' discourse. As the interviewees talk about war and their teens, they also talk about the theme of a lost innocence, which is recurrent in veterans' discourse. It depicts what is, before all, an individual experience of maturation in which war irrupts and introduces the notion of the collective (Lautissier 2009, paragraph 23). Here, we discover that it is not only that national historical palimpsest can be the condition of warring policy, but that warring episodes (foreign policy) are central for the containment of the challenges to the hegemonic narration of the nation and its reproduction[lxx]; we can better appreciate the mutual constitution of warring foreign policy and violent cartography of Israel.

Similarly, the irruption of the ugly images of war within the narrative structure of the film as well as in the memories of the young combatants brings an absurd dimension into the film. The memories and images of war create a rupture with the quotidian reality of the Israelis, framed through the metanarrative of the State. The

trauma caused by the exposure to violence gives an impression of lag between the time of the nation (the official history) and the time lived by the soldiers (war memories). This is highlighted in the scene in which Folman's gets his first permission to Tel Aviv. As he walks into the streets of the Israeli city, everything that happens in the background of the scene is accelerated and blurred.[lxxi] In voiceover Folman narrates:

> I remember when I was 10, there was a war going on, and everything came to a halt. All the fathers were at the front, all children sat with their mothers, closed up indoor behind closed blinds in the dark, just waiting for a plane to drop a bomb and kill them all, no one ever dream of going outside. When I went home from Lebanon for the first time in six weeks I saw that life was carrying on normally.

What the film does in this scene is highlighting what Bhabha called the "dual time of the nation", the time of the official narrative in duality with the time of the subjective experiences of the soldiers, which do not fit the official metanarrative. Here, again, it gives an interesting insight and contrasts with the importance of the official discourse to narrate events, to insert a "twist" into the play, in order to contain the subjective and violent experiences of the young soldiers.

Figure 4. Folman's first permission to Tel Aviv. Accelerated and blurry elements in the background.

To go back to the discussion between Folman and Carmi, as the scene unfolds, the latter explains that to escape reality he falls asleep and hallucinates. Then, the viewer witnesses one of Carmi's hallucinations – arguably one of the most powerful scenes in the film, that also has something to do with an Oedipal

complex. In it, Carmi is rescued from the boat and taken by a nude, hyperbolized woman – the mother or the Sphinx – swimming in the ocean and eventually taking him away from the boat. The scene reveals in a form of critique the Orientalist stigma which constructs the "West" as the object of desire as it becomes interwoven with Carmi's masculine desire to "screw" like a "rabbit" and achieve his manhood, the symbol of the *Sabra*. As Carmi explains: "Uncounscious on the deck, dreaming a woman would come, and take me for the first time..." The "West" here is important in the narrative structure because it appears as both the object of desire (the mother), and the sender/judicator (the Law of the father).

Figure 5. Carmi's hallucination on the "Love Boat". The sea and the West (*yam*) in the Israeli unconscious.

Here, I would argue that the sea plays a key role because, as Ella Shohat explains:

> The longing for another world, partially as a memory and partially as a response toward the present Levant, are emphasized through the physical closeness to the *yam* ("sea" as well as "west" in Hebrew), a recurrent image in the personal cinema. The East then, is a place of transit, while the sea connotes the West and the route back to the "civilized" world (Shohat 2010, 206).

At this point, the viewer understands why Carmi decided to move to Holland: the "image of the sea, condenses the meaning of living in transit, of dwelling in the Levant but dreaming and hoping for the 'there' beyond the sea, the West" (*Ibid.*).

The desire for the "West" is also present in one of Folman's own hallucinations in which his subconscious resurfaces. Folman recalls his helicopter arrival and landing in Beirut's airport, near Air France, TWA and British Airways jets; "I was excited like I was going on a trip abroad…excited all over". He then walks into the terminal by himself, where, he recalls, "It felt as if I was on a leisure trip, a sort of hallucination. Like standing in a terminal waiting to choose my destination. Before that 80s departures board, the choice is all mine. I see the 14:10 to London, the 15:20 to Paris, the 16:00 to New York." His subconscious is longing for the West, and longs of Western capitals until he is shaken out from his daydream, brought back into the Levant by realizing that all the planes he had seen in good shape when he landed were actually "bombed-out shells". He remembers: "Then I start to hear sounds, voices. I hear shelling in the city and the bombing by the air force. Slowly I begin to realize where I am, and I am afraid of what will happen next." His hallucination prompted by his desire to go to the "civilized" West is rapidly broken as the sounds and visions of war take him back to the "barbarian" experience of war in the Levant.

Figure 6. Folman's awaken hallucination at Beirut's airport. The harsh reality of the warring Levant wakes him up as he sees the "bombed-out shells" of commercial planes.

Similarly, the "super scene" could also be interpreted in such a manner. In fact, as Folman meets a second time with Carmi at his place in Holland, the latter

makes clear that he never was with Folman in the sea near Beirut. At this point, the spectator knows that it is Folman's unconscious that made the memory up. Further in the movie, we learn that, in fact, Folman was not in the sea but rather on a rooftop, in charge of firing the flares that provided the Christian Phalangist with light so they could effectively carry on their massacre in the refugee camps. If we heed Ella Shohat's conclusion that the sea (*yam*) symbolizes "living in transit, of dwelling in the Levant but dreaming [… for] the West", then the phantasmagorical scene in the water represents Folman's desire – and by extension, the desire of the Israelis – not to be involved with the affairs of the Levant. They see themselves as part of the West (in the water), or at least, in the process of being part of. So the scene, by taking Folman out of the water, into the narrow street of Beirut could also express the need for Israelis to come out of their "Western closet" and acknowledge their shared history and role in the affairs of the Levant, as well as their identity as – not only victims – but also victimizers.

Figure 7. Folman's "super scene" that comes back many times throughout the film. Looking at the Levant (or the Middle Eastern Muck) from the *yam*.

To go back to Folman's discussion with his Dutch friend, Carmi explains that the next morning after the "love boat" episode, him and his brothers-in-arms landed on a beach in the town of Sidon, where, he explains, "Out of pure fear and anxiety, we started shooting like lunatics." Folman than asks "At whom?" and Carmi answers "How do I know?" He then explains that a Mercedes appeared, and him and his mates started firing at it "like crazy", out of "uncontrollable fear". At

daybreak, the soldiers decided to move ahead and they realized what they had done: "… we could see our destruction without knowing where we were. Lying in the car… […] The bodies of a whole family."

Figure 8. Carmi and his brothers-in-arms kill an entire family and discover the horror at dawn.

Here, just like Boaz, Carmi recalls a memory where he too was a victimizer, taking part into the killing of innocents. This scene evokes the point I have made in the previous chapter; namely the tendency of Israel to engage in pre-emptive attacks legitimated through recourse to a discourse on victimhood. When commenting on OCL, Avi Shlaim wrote "The resort to brute military force is accompanied, as always, by the shrill rhetoric of victimhood and a farrago of self-pity overlaid with self-righteousness. In Hebrew this is known as the syndrome of *bokhim ve-yorim*, 'crying and shooting'" (Shlaim 2009). As we shall see, this is also expressed in the following section of the movie.

In the taxi driving to the Amsterdam airport, Folman's memories ("not a hallucination, nor my subconscious" he admits) of the very first day of the war, when together with his tank crew he entered Lebanon, come back to the fore. On this very first night in Lebanon, Folman is asked by an officer to go "dump" the dead soldiers. As his tank full of dead and wounded soldier bodies drove into the night towards the Israeli base, one of his brother-in-arms who is affected to one of the tank's machine guns starts a discussion:

> Soldier: "What should we do? Why don't you tell us what to do?"
> Folman: "Shoot."
> Soldier: "At who?"
> Folman: "How do I know? Just shoot."

Soldier: "Isn't it better to pray?"

Folman: "Then pray and shoot."

This scene, when inter-articulated/juxtaposed with Carmi's scene of his landing in Sidon, illustrates the syndrome of 'crying and shooting'. With a tank full of dead and wounded bodies, Folman's first night in Lebanon as barely 19 years old shatters his iconic vision of war as a sort of adventure or the typical American war movie[lxxii], a time to fulfill his Jewish manliness – his "sabra-ness" – and his reaction is to cry and shoot, no matter what, into the darkness of the night.

The critique of war as manhood initiation fieldtrip, is further explored in another section in which Folman discuss with his friend Ronny Dayag. As the discussion unfolds, the film casts images of Israeli soldiers having a good time on their tanks, singing "Good Morning Lebanon" and taking pictures (see figure 7) as they drive in southern Lebanon. Ronny recalls: "Crossing the border at Rosh Hanikra felt like an excursion. We took photos. We told jokes. We had time to fool around before going into action. […] The landscape was beautiful, trees all around. A few scattered houses… A really idyllic pastoral scene… The slow drive allowed us to enjoy the scenery." This narration speaks back to one of Dalia Gavriely-Nuri's articles in which she argues that Israeli political leaders use war-normalizing metaphors that draw upon the semantic fields of "sports, nature, and tourism" among others, to frame war as part of human nature and normal life (2009, 153)[lxxiii].

Figure 9. Ronny Dayag and his tank crew taking pictures in South Lebanon and the theme of "tourism" in Israeli war discourse.

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This scene engaging in the gender politics and the realization of manhood also speaks back to Benedicts Anderson's point, specifically the fact that the Israeli nation is pictured as a female but the story of the nation is "the story of male bonding" (*ahvah*) (see also Lubin 1995, 164).

Then, as the image of the movie switches to picturing an Israeli tank progressing in a narrow street of a Lebanese town trampling cars and damaging the houses, Ronny goes on and talks about the feeling of being in a tank: "A tank is a very massive enclosed vehicle. Inside the tank we were protected…". The tank in Israeli – especially the *Merkava* (chariot) – has been a symbol, not only because the Merkava is one of the best weapons produced today, but also because its image speaks back to the State of Israel. As Michael Shapiro notes, "With the industrialization of warfare, spanning the period of World War I to World War II, the tank became the signature weapon, serving not only as a warfare instrument but also, in it various versions, as nationhood icons" (2004, 176). With its "Iron Wall" foreign policy inspired by the Zionist Vladimir Jabotinsky (1937; see also Shlaim, 2000) many Israelis see the state and the IDF as a tank protecting them from outside threats, and an Arab world considered as backward and barbarous – or what Ian Lustick has come to call after the Israeli *habotz haLevanoni* (the Lebanese muck), "the Middle Eastern muck" (*habotz haMizra-Tichoni*) (Lustick 2008, 34). Hence, the tank becomes a symbol, or a metaphor of the strength and effectiveness of the Israeli state to protect its inhabitants from the "jungle" outside[lxxiv], also reproducing the myth of the frontier society I have mentioned in the second chapter.

Figure 10. Ronny's Merkava tank progressing into a narrow street of the Lebanese town, crushing cars and damaging houses.

Finally, the film conveys the individual experiences of Israeli soldiers during the First Lebanon War. On a different level, it revisits the historical memory of the event and it revisits the national and international perception of the Sabra and Chatila massacre. One of the best examples of the fact the *Bashir* aims to denaturalize the metanarrative of the Israeli state is by making allusions to the Nazis extermination camps. In fact, the connection with the camps is made when Folman talks with Ori. It also comes back in visual effects, when the journalist Ron Ben-Yishai talks about his memories of the massacre. The images of the film (see figure 9) confront the memories of the massacre in Lebanon with the Warsaw ghetto by a process of "intericonicity" (Lautissier 2009, paragraph 38), which is also a form of intertextuality[lxxv].

Figure 11. Intericonicity: The child of Sabra and Chatila and the child from the Warsaw ghetto.

While some, such as Raz Yosef (2010), have argued that by doing so, Folman attempts to clear any ethical Israeli responsibility in the massacre and argue that he too was a victim by referring to the discussion with Ori, when the latter says:

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"Your interest in the massacre developed long before it happened. [… it] stems from another massacre. Your interest in the camps is actually about the other camps." Yet, the movie director himself never confirms this assertion, neither in the movie nor in any interview; it seems like the question is left open for a national debate.

By casting the Palestinian into the position of the Warsaw ghetto Jewish child, the film acknowledges both Palestinian and Jews to be victims, which is something that has been absent in the Zionist narrative. It also implies Folman's realization of some of the possible ramification of his own participation in the Israeli warring policy. Any Israeli watching *Bashir* discovers inthis scene the reality of victimization and his own potential for violence (Shohat 2010, 198). The scene echoes Primo Levi's – the Jewish Italian writer and survivor of Birkenau – quote that "Everybody is somebody's Jew. And today the Palestinians are the Jews of the Israelis" (as quoted in Acocella 2002). It also speaks back to this metanarrative that presents the intolerable perspective for an Israeli to be in the position of the victimizer given the place of the Warsaw ghetto and the Nazi camps within their history.

Ari Folman's movie is clearly meant to explore those repressed traumatic events from the First Lebanon War, which do not fit in and disturb the metanarrative. In fact, because they destabilize the hegemonic Israeli ideology, these memories in which Israeli soldiers have been traumatized or acted as victimizer, have been denied entry into the national narrative (Yosef 2010, 314-316):

> Drawn away from the continuities of national history, [*Waltz with Bashir*] enter an ambiguous world … signified by the displacements and repetitions that characterize dreams and fantasies [… and it] points both to the need to remember and the difficulty of remembering and representing one of the most traumatic wars in history of the State of Israel (Yosef 2010, 315).

Folman's search within time demonstrates the nation's search, at that time, for a new memory with which to stabilize the national narrative. *Bashir* is the product of a desire to bring a critical perspective on the history of a conflict, of a traumatic event and the memories that it generates. It is at the crossroad between the

collective and individual memories and takes agency into bringing to the fore what Folman, as director, calls the "chronology of the massacre" (Kaganski 2008) and the process that leads to mass political violence, regardless of the historical context (Lautissier 2009, paragraph 32).

Conclusion

In conclusion, from an epistemological perspective, *Bashir*, by drawing on both genres of documentary and fiction, summons the narration (Folman), the testimony (his friends), the expert (the journalist and the psychologist) and the archives (documentary images). In that sense, it reunites the conditions to historicise, and becomes in itself a form of archive taking part in this very process of writing a new narration of the nation. In fact, what the film allows the spectator to see is the process that links, through animation, an erased memory that does not resolve itself to the official history and its archives, but to a reconstructed and figurated history – a national palimpsest.

By bringing back to the fore the repressed traumatic events in which Israeli soldiers take the position of the victimizer - events that have been denied entry into the official Israeli narration of the nation - the non-linear narrative structure of films demonstrates the destabilizing influence of the time-image on the movement-image. It does so by effecting "a past that begins with the present moment and works backward in order to uncover the many pasts that may, or may not necessarily be true" (Martin Jones 2006, 28; see also Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 262).

It also demonstrates the renegotiation of national identity at a time of crisis and transformation of national identity that was the First Lebanon War. The film reflects upon the process of de-/re- stabilization of national identity, and the extent to which the major voice in Israeli identity discourse retains its hegemony, or is fractured by the new histories entering the national one (Martin-Jones 2006, 37). In fact, what *Bashir* demonstrates is that the Israeli identity is always in negotiation with fragments of its multiple *histories*, un-foretold narrations where Israeli subjectivity comes face to face with its own strangeness. In Deleuze's words, what the movie conveys is that "I is another". In a manner reminiscent of

Kristeva's psychoanalytical subject, the film pictures an Israeli identity whose presence is always co-present with the past. Fragments of recollections, memories and subconscious hallucinations are brought forth as Folman revisits the past through the interviews. *Bashir* presents how Folman – and through him the Israeli subject – articulates his mode of being in relation to the "West", the military and the Israeli state's institutions, the violent practices that the latter engage in and the narrative of others like him and himself.

The time-image – multiple, jumbled and discontinuous – narrative structure of the film allows for the reappearance of previously occluded war histories that threaten the national narrative that today's Israeli leaders use to legitimize their warring policy. In doing so, it illustrates how the dominant narration of the nation (the past) is reproduced through the pedagogical tool of cultural governance that represents foreign policy in order to resemble the dominant view of the present as it supposedly is (Martin Jones 2006, 70). In that sense, the film provides a critique of recent warring episodes such as OCL. Most of all, it shows how, as Michael Shapiro beautifully has put it, war or political violence cannot be "an effective instrument of justice or even account settling […] Bullets, like words, usually miss their targets. They are fired with little provocation, and the results cannot be recruited unambiguously into a coherent narrative, heroic or otherwise" (Shapiro 2004, 16).

Notes: Chapter 4

[lvi] For interesting alternative ways of conceptualizing community see Blanchot 1988; Heidegger, 1962; and Nancy 1991, 2000.

[lvii] This concept comes from Michel Foucault : "Michel Foucault has called 'heterotopia,' a place of otherness from which one can gain an appreciation of the normalizing practices of the dominant, institutionalized, covenanted spaces" (Shapiro 2004, 67).

[lviii] While some may wonder why I chose to use a film that is about the 1982 First Lebabon War to challenge assumptions about OCL, there are many reasons that explain that choice. First, it is for practical reasons; OCL bein too recent to have any Israeli cinematic production produced on it. Second, the *Bashir* was released on the same year OCL begun (2008). Thirdly, as we shall see later in this paper, the film is not only about the Lebanese war. The director himself also made the point about OCL in interviews. When asked by a journalist, "The headlines coming out of Gaza have lent added relevance to your new film, 'Waltz With

Bashir,' which uses the unlikely form of animation to piece together a nuanced account of your experiences in the 1982 Lebanon War", Folman answered: "It will always be up-to-date because something will always happen again" (Salomon 2009). In another interview, when asked "The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is, still, clearly a relevant issue. Do you feel you made your statement?" the director answered: "It doesn't really matter what you know, or you don't know. What matters is NOW you know. Now it's in your common memory. It refers to other genocides or mass murders that you've heard of that could've been prevented or stopped. At least you are aware of it" (Ciarrocchi 2008).

[lix] It should be noted that a film is rarely a clear homogeneous "movement-image" or "time-image". It is more helpful to see the two concepts as the two ends of a spectrum upon which a film is never completely one or the other. As Martin-Jones argues (2006, 5), most "time-image" films are " *'caught in the act' of becoming movement-images*. It is a question of degree as to exactly what state they are 'caught' in.*" Hence, *Bashir* could be considered as time-image *in the process* (or structuration) of becoming movement-image.

[lx] As Anna Powell succinctly puts it: Ghosts conflate past and present as they linger their own present, refusing to let it be past. They compel present-day characters to abandon contemporaneity and to experience the history of others by enforced overlay... Tension is experienced as an unbearable dilation of time, whereas shock intensively collapses a temporal force felt like a physical blow" (as quoted in Martin-Jones 2006, 69).

[lxi] As Stam *et al.* noted, the process of repetition is important in creating what Bellour has called "textual volume",

> "the process of repetition whereby the filmic discourse advances thanks to differential increments which repeat codical elements so as to generate both continuity (and thus comprehension) and discontinuity (and thus interest). Repetition for Bellour 'saturates' narrative space and operates at both macro and micro levels. Through systems of alternation [...], smaller unites become mobilized as part of the larger unit of the narrative achieving its resolution. On the macro level, we find a similar play of difference and identity in terms of the interplay of entire segments (1992, 57).

[lxii] I would argue that Ari Folman also confirmed this point. In fact, an interview, when the interviewer made the comment: "Everything in the movie seams to be built around this magnificent night scene, on the beach, where we see flares falling on Beirut...", he answered "At the studio, we would call it the 'super scene'. In fact, it structures the film, we come back to this 'super scene' many times. [...] The 'super scene' had to have a significant emotional impact for the spectator, just as it is important for the main character of the film" (Rivaud 2008, my translation).

[lxiii] In the words of Deleuze "we no longer know what is imaginary or real, physical or mental in the situation, not because they are confused, but because we do not have to know and there is no longer even a place from which to ask" (as quoted in Martin-Jones 2006, 61).

[lxiv] This is better explained Pierre Nora's work on history and memory when he writes:

> Memory is life, always embodied in living societies… History, on the other hand is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is always a phenomenon of the present… History is a representation of the past… [it] calls for analysis and critical discourse. Memory situates remembrance in a sacred context… Memory is rooted in concrete: in space, in gesture, image, and object. History dwells exclusively on temporal continuities, on changes in things and in the relations among things. Memory is absolute, while history is always relative (As quote in Yosef 2010, 315).

[lxv] In an interview Folman corrobored this argument. When the interviewer commented that: "The film can be described as the Israeli "Slaughterhouse-Five", Folman answered "Yes, more than anything else, I see it as an antiwar movie." Still in the same interview, Folman was then asked "Do you find that talk is more effective in matters of war and diplomacy?" he then answered "Yes. I think you should always ask yourself: has everything been done to prevent the conflict? Talk, don't shoot. Talk" (Salomon 2009).

[lxvi] In his recent social psychology work where he present results from interviews with Israeli soldiers implicated in the supression of the *Intifada*, Dan Bar-On writes that

> For some of the soldiers involved in its suppression, the *Intifada* created moral problems. That is, it presented not only an inherent, physical threat, but also a psychological threat to the Israeli-Jewish monolithic self. In our interview with Shimon, a reserve officer who told of being exposed to "possible imminent massacre" in Gaza, he reported danger of "psychic death" being worse than physical death. His experience indicates the inner cracks in the monolithic construction of his Israeli identity, as a result of his military service" (Bar-On 2008, 58).

[lxvii] As the director himself admitted in an interview when asked why he chose to use animation, "It gave me the liberty, as a cineaste, to tell a story. I could talk about war, memories, lost memory, the unconscious, dreams, and nightmares. I could touch to all of those dimensions in my story" (Haudebourg, 2008; my translation). In another interview, Folman put it similarly:

> Animation gave me freedom to go from one dimension to another. There are a lot of fragile borders between reality and dreams and sub-conscience. If you draw, it's easy to go from one dimension to another. For me, freedom in filmmaking is the most essential thing. It was the only way to do it. Everything was an interpretation. My finished job was when I completed the film – everything else is up to you. I am really tolerant to any kind of interpretation people give to the film, because it's up to them now (Ciarrocchi 2008).

[lxviii] This argument reverberates with the movie director's own experience. In an interview, when asked how old he was when he entered the army, he answered "I was seventeen and a half years of age. […] I was not meant to be an elite soldier,

a true fighter. I stayed in the army during four years for very banal reasons, I wanted to be a man! …" (Frois 2008, my translation)

lxix This is also corroborated by the movie director himself in an interview with a journalist. For instance, when asked "is there anything you want Americans, in particular, to take away from the film?", Folman answered:

> Just to let you know that wars, they have no glory, no glamour. Don't believe *Platoon* and Oliver Stone films. And wars have no bravery and brotherhood of man. It's totally bullshit. It's all a useless idea. It's a cliché. […] It's nothing more than that. It's like, those people with big egos, behind desks, sending other people, very young people, to die for the cause of nothing - this is what war is, there's nothing more to it. So I tried to put that in my film (Keefe 2009).

lxx For instance, Hegel saw war as a necessity and "organically linked to other aspects of civic, national, and international life. [… war is] a necessity because its form of negation helps to maintain the ethical life of the individual and the state" (Shapiro 1997a, 41-42).

lxxi This scene also highlights the futility of the 1982 and subsequent wars in which Israel participated. Folman recalls the 1973 war – when Israel's existence was arguably at stakes – and he recounts, "I remember when I was 10, there was a war going on, and everything came to a halt. All the fathers were at the front, all children sat with their mothers, closed up indoor behind closed blinds in the dark, just waiting for a plane to drop a bomb and kill them all, no one ever dream of going outside. When I went home from Lebanon for the first time in six weeks I saw that life was carrying on normally…". Highlighting that the Lebanon war had something with the previous ones. It was a war, not of "necessity" – central to the discourse of "just war" in Israel – but a war of choice. This point also reverberates with our analysis of OCL in the previous chapter.

lxxii Here, I draw from Folman's interviews. See previous note.

lxxiii This argument speaks back to Ariel Sharon's response to a journalist. When the later asked about the recurrent use of military operation in foreign policy of Israel, Sharon responded "A normal people does not ask questions like 'will we always live by the sword', the sword is part of life" (as quoted in Reinhart 2005, 189).

lxxiv This is also something that is carried by the recent Israeli movie *Lebanon* in which almost all the action of the film is seen from within a tank that operates in South Lebanon in 1982.

lxxv Here, the initial image (of the Warsaw ghetto) does not entirely disappear under the new one (Sabra and Chatila). It is most of the time present and highlighted by loopback mechanism of association, or hybridization.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that it is not possible to explain Israel's warring foreign policy towards the Palestinians such as *Operation Cast Lead* (2008) solely by reference to the objective threat – the handmade rockets – said to be located in Gaza (or the Occupied Territories). Instead, I contend that the "how possible" of Israeli violent foreign policy can only be fully understood by a careful consideration of: 1) the modes of representation of the Zionist ideology (its myths, symbols, and language) and 2) the discourses, through which Arabs, Palestinians, Gazans, and even Hamas are interpreted by Israelis as "existential threat", or even biopolitical threat ("cancer", "demographic problem") – in other words as a demonized and inassimilable 'Other'.

The object of this thesis is neither to propound that Hamas' rockets were a benign threat nor to assert that the Israeli officials self-conscisously and wilfully constructed a threat where none should have been perceived; of course the rockets falling on Southern Israel are real. Rather, the purpose is to demonstrate how the events leading to OCL were contingent on a mode of discursive interpretation that discredited other options (for instance extending the ceasefire, which had been very effective in keeping the rockets from falling on Israel, or negotiating) and made possible, legitimate and acceptable others, which were extremely violent and – to the eyes of many – disproportionate.

After presenting in a first chapter the main tenets of the framework I have used for this present study – namely Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) – I explored in the second chapter the historical and social construction of Israeli political identity; i.e. the Zionist metanarrative. What I hope to have demonstrated in this chapter is that the "Arab" and later the "Palestinian" did not became this demonized and inassimilable Other *because* of the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the 1948 War. Instead, there was already an Orientalist and racist discourse embedded within the Zionist one, which inscribed itself in what Aziza Khazzoom has called a "long chain of Orientalism". Victimized by

the modern European nation-state discourse (based on ethnicity, blood, and race), the Zionist discourse reproduced the violent and exclusionary ontology of its victimizers and posited as its object of desire precisely what it was denied by the latter. A particular interest in this chapter was directed to the discursive processes in Israeli historical discourse that have silenced the voices of multiples Others (Arab-Jews, Palestinians and Holocaust survivors).

In the third chapter, I have effectuated a textual analysis of nine Israeli official documents produced during OCL. What the analysis showed is that Israeli officials drew on the demonized and barbarian characters of "them", Palestinian Other, as well as highlighting the "Western", "democratic" and inevitably "moral" character of "Us", the Israelis. To this purpose, what was particularly salient to the case under study was the politics of victimization, which constantly seam to reassert Israel's higher moral ground and legitimize any military action, regardless of the number of civilian casualties that ensue from it. What my analysis has shown is that the use of rhetorical and illocutionary strategies such as reversal of blame, elimination of agency (thanks to deontic modal and passive syntax for instance) and the recourse to intertextuality with the discourse of the "war on terror" as well as sovereignty proved to be particularly useful semantic and semiotic resources for the Israeli government in legitimizing its actions and delegitimizing and dehumanizing its opponents. Moreover, as the Israeli decision-makers narrated and imposed their narration of the events that constituted OCL, they also reproduced the Israeli political identity (a narration of the nation) and the Other's. To that end, this chapter underlines how Israel's foreign policy and its political identity are mutually constitutive.

Finally, in the fourth chapter of the present thesis, I have transferred my analytical gaze from the official texts genre to the popular cultural representation genre by taking as site of inquiry the Israeli film text *Waltz with Bashir* (Folman, 2008). In this last chapter, I have argued that *Bashir* provides a different narration of the nation in times of crisis and war – thanks to a Deleuzian "time-image" narrative structure as well as reference of intertextuality to key historical moments

of the Jewish-Israeli past. By positing the lived experience and hallucinations of young Israeli soldiers who participated in warring episodes *against* the official narration of the nation, the film exposes two distinctive and less visited dimensions of the narrative: first, it questions the tropes of masculinity, courage, victimhood and morality of the young *Sabras* fighting for the country and second, puts the Palestinians in the position of the victim; something that Israeli officials do not seem able to do and which is a necessary and logical step towards the resolution of the conflict and reconciliation. At a minimum then, the film destabilizes the Israeli metanarrative that legitimates the killing of the demonized 'Other'; it resists the militarization and securitization practices of the State that lead to the formulation of war-as-policy. I have also pointed out that *Bashir*, just like Walter Benjamin, is concerned with the ways in which the events of the past are reinterpreted, erased or rewritten (palimpsest) to fit the metanarrative of the Israeli state and its tropes. The film shows that the past is indeed an active process carried onto the present; a fact that allows for changing the present conflict by returning to an alternative narration of the Jewish historical past. One can do so by paying attention to the events that the Israeli Zionist historical narrative systematically denies or purposefully forgets.

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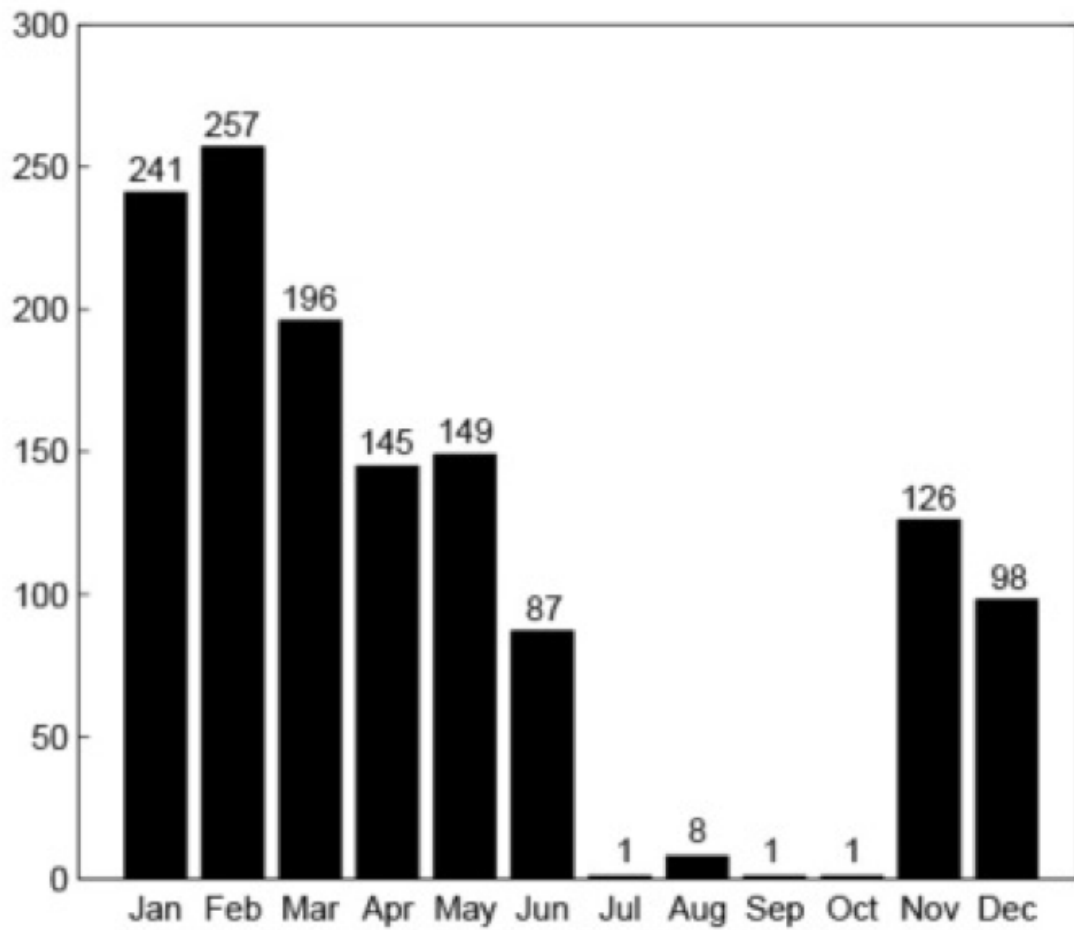
Annexes

Figure 1. Number of Rockets fired on Israel from Gaza by month in 2008 (Intelligence and Terrorism Information 2008, 10)

IN DIASPORA

From Late Eighteenth to Late-Nineteenth Century

German Christians   French Christians

↓   ↓

From Late-Nineteenth Century to Mid-Twentieth Century

German Jews   French Jews

↓   ↓

East European Jews   Jews of Arab Lands
("Ostjuden")   ("Oriental," "Eastern" Jews)
(in Eastern Europe)   (in Arab Lands)

                                  ↓

                                  Arabs
                                  (In Arab Lands)

IN ISRAEL

From Early-Twentieth Century to Present
(Critical Period, Early Statehood, 1950s)

East European Jews
("Ashkenazim")

Jews from Arab Lands
("Orientals," "Mizrahim")
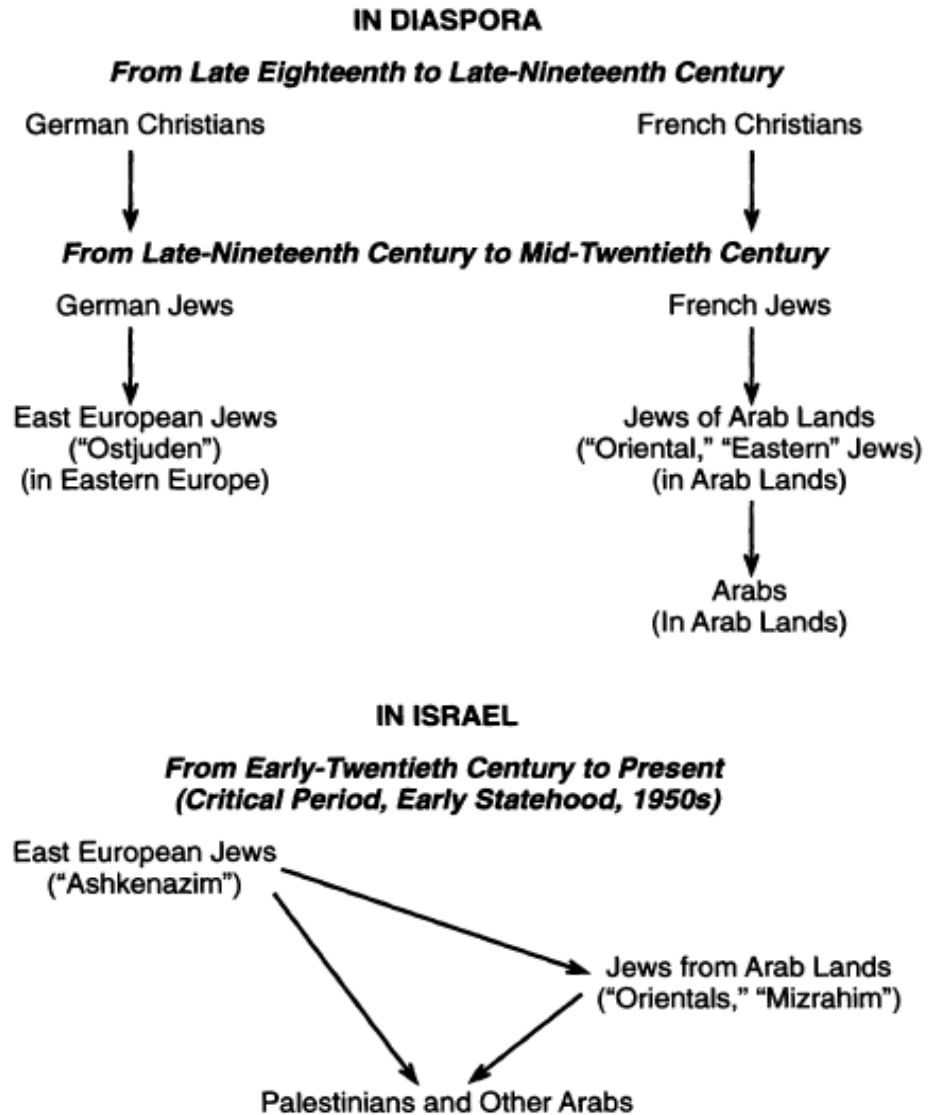
Palestinians and Other Arabs

Figure 2. "Intercommunal Orientalization in Post-Enlightenment Jewish History, and Approximate Timing of the most Intense Periods of Orientalization" (Khazzoom 2003, 490)

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