Criminalizing Pain and the Political Work of Suffering:

The Case of Palestinian 'Infiltrators'

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By analyzing the voices of colonized Palestinian men and women who managed to return to their homes following their expulsion in 1948, this study uncovers the layers of state criminality that mark the returnees as 'infiltrators' into the newly formed Israeli state. Instituting laws and policies intended to kill returnees, prevent Palestinians from returning or marginalizing them as absent, unwanted and dangerous 'others', assisted the Israeli settler colonial regime to tactically justify ongoing population transfers, occupy natives' lands and delegitimize Palestinian suffering. This paper theorizes on the political work of suffering to argue that colonial use of violence, inscription of pain, and horror create exterminable zones of life to maintain surveillance and fear of Palestinian lives and bodies. The interviewees featured in this study demonstrate a determination to defy the systems of control and eviction from their land by identifying methods of resistance in their everyday lives and realities, despite the state's efforts to criminalize any actions against the normalization of the Israeli occupation.

> We were almost home when they [the Israeli soldiers] saw us … They brought a military jeep, gathered us, drove to the Lebanon border, and threw us back across the border … After journeying all the way back home, after reaching our neighborhood and passing by my grandparents, we were caught like criminals … We suffered in silence ... We really suffered a lot on our way back, and then we were deported and thrown on the border like trash. (Um Ahmad, 81 years old)

The topic of suffering, including what the previous voice of Um Ahmad's defined as 'suffering in silence', is inextricably linked to the Palestinian context, where thousands of Palestinians have been expelled from their homes, forced to live in exile and impoverished, since the 1948 *Nakba* ('catastrophe' in Arabic). Yet a comprehensive analysis of how the structural violence, resulting in human suffering, is

transformed into a tool of colonial oppression remains to be completed. This paper seeks to analyze the political work of suffering. I consider suffering and the act of inflicting pain as an articulation and signifier of force that translates into violence inscribed on individual and collective bodies, geographies, homes and lives. The paper will examine the political work of suffering, as exemplified by Palestinian women and men who challenged eviction from their land by the Zionist entity and returned home in the aftermath of the 1948 Nakba only to be deemed criminal 'infiltrators' by the new Israeli government.

The term 'political work of suffering' intends to capture how marking pain over bodies, geographies and lives can create a space of excessive violence and 'overkilling': the constant degradation and maiming of collective identities, lives and bodies that operates in a structurally controlled and politically oppressive manner contrary to the very nature of being human and possessing rights. Franz Kafka's (1971) work, *In the penal colony* captures the sense of the machinery of violence that carries out the political work of suffering I wish to convey. The novel addresses a torture and execution machine that recursively inscribes the body with its sentenced crime: the inscription of pain on the bodies ultimately kills them: 'One has to read it a long time. You too will finally understand it clearly. Of course, it has to be a script that isn't simple. You see, it's not supposed to kill right away ...' (ibid., p. 10). This is the political work of suffering; ultimately, the system can kill, but only after rendering entire bodies, lives and spaces, with the disciplinary sentence delivered to the disposable 'other'. This political work, as I wish to argue, and its excess produces the colonized as an always already unworthy commodity, a non-human other that can be violated with impunity.

By examining the political work of suffering resulting in the displacement, uprooting, transfer, social fragmentation, poverty, starvation, physical injuries and pain, and loss as portrayed in the voices of the native population, this paper reads Palestinians' acts of return during and following the Nakba within the biopolitical and geopolitical matrix of Israel's disciplinary regime, and as counter powers against spaces and machineries of overkilling.

The focus of this paper emerged from themes that were raised in conversations and interviews conducted by four interviewers, with twenty-one interviewees, all Palestinian returnees who returned to their homes between 1949 and 1953. The interviews were conducted between November 2013 and April 2014 in various locations, including Haifa, Akka, Kafr Yasif, Qalanswa, Eilabun, Shafa Amr, Nazareth, and others. I conducted seven interviews and trained research assistants recorded the remaining fourteen. We reached the interviewees through personal and family connections: through friends, students, neighbors, colleagues, and by posting on Facebook. Themes raised by the interviewees were assessed by a team comprised of a Master's student, a PhD student in Anthropology, a journalist and a PhD student in social work, in addition to myself. The

analysis was also shared for discussion with historians, colleagues and friends working on similar issues. By borrowing meanings from Palestinians who managed to return, and juxtaposing their experiences with the regime of erasure embedded in the Zionist project, this article will carefully reveal Israeli policies, emergency rules and military regime, as—more precisely—the deprivation of thousands of Palestinians of the right to come back to their homes.

This paper will first focus on Zionist formalized ideologies of population transfer and will then move to share personal accounts of Palestinians who managed to return home. The article concludes with two primary arguments: First, I contend that enacting the legal category of 'infiltrator' is a colonial mode of legalizing population transfer, grounded in ideologies of ethnic cleansing and domination, and ensures territorial control over native land. Second, I argue that the inscription of power over Palestinians' bodies, home-spaces, homeland and lives, as exhibited in the policing, criminalization and management of returnees, can be seen as violent acts marking geographies as sites of pain and death, initiating a transformation in the historical memory of the landscape and of the Palestinian right to return. These acts enforce a vision of Palestinians who tried to return to their homes as 'born criminals' who should always be denied a voice, an identity, a right and a space to call home. Staging Palestinian returnees as 'infiltrators' and the disaster and suffering of returnees as criminality excuses the violence the Zionist state perpetrated against them, while at the same time contributing to the colonial entity's political economy of suffering. The struggle for Palestinians, against expulsion from their homes and for the return of their lands, has been rescripted and replayed time and again, over the decades. The criminalization of Palestinians and violent acts against their lives, bodies and lands—in the state's performance of the political work of suffering and as a mode of keeping Palestinians in zones of exterminability—are not limited to the period during or directly succeeding the Nakba, but continue to inscribe pain, dispossess, evict, and uproot Palestinians until this day.

Formalized Ideologies of Population Transfer

The Dispersal of Palestinians

In 1948, approximately 750,000 Palestinian Arabs—totaling more than one-half of the population—were either forcibly ejected from Palestine by Zionist forces or fled their homes to avoid further violence and maltreatment (Pappé 2004, p. 142). The exodus occurred in two waves—with wealthy and middle-class urban dwellers leaving first, followed by a Haganah-led assault campaign on the countryside which caused many rural villagers to flee (Fischbach 2003)—but the result was ultimately the same: the large-scale displacement of Palestinians from the lands that were to be reshaped into Israel.

Following this significant crisis, Palestinians' right to return was recognized by the United Nations in Resolution 194 of 1948, which stated:

> that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible. (United Nations General Assembly 1948a)

Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights similarly attests that all individuals should be allowed the basic dignity of having access to their homeland: 'Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and *to return* to his country' (United Nations General Assembly 1948b, emphasis added).

In reality, in the virtual 'disappearance' of Palestinians overnight, various Israeli laws, military orders and other restrictions prevented the majority of Palestinian people from returning home. These efforts have succeeded; by the end of 2002 Palestinians were the largest population of refugees and displaced persons in the world (BADIL 2003; Dumper 2006).

Meanwhile, Zionist forces gained the incredible resources left behind after Palestinians had been expelled. Some materials were sold for monetary gain, while other assets, such as houses and farms, were used to strategically advance the Zionist project and accommodate the mass immigration of Jewish settlers following 1948. A total of 418 villages were depopulated as a result of Zionist efforts and aggression (Khalidi 1992).[i] Forcing Palestinians from their homes was a strategic move that enabled the establishment of the Israeli state.[ii] When the armistice was signed between Zionist and Arab forces in 1949,[iii] Israel had established itself on 77 percent of the region's land area—compared to the just 6.59 percent of the land held by a small Jewish population prior to 1948 (Fischbach 2003).

Fischbach (2003) suggests that the increase of violence in the region in the 1950s and 1960s impeded the international community from demanding reparatory justice for the Palestinians either expelled from their homes or who left voluntarily to evade physical harm and were then prevented from return.[iv] International negotiations on the issue failed to even define who to consider a 'displaced person'. While the importance of ceasing inter-state conflict undoubtedly prevailed in the international community's collective conscious, this move failed to fully consider the steps Israel was taking to vilify the Palestinian community—both refugees and those who were granted citizenship after 1948—as a dangerous entity (Rouhana 2003).

Israeli Approach to 'Infiltrators'

It is important to delineate the different ways in which Israeli institutions have furthered their Zionist exclusionary and eliminatory rationale. Social and legal tools were used to inscribe pain over Palestinian bodies attempting to reenter the land and reclaim their homes. Israeli officials utilized the law to criminalize Palestinians living in their own homeland, and to sanction the use of violence against them. The state reshaped the status of Palestinians who fled in order to prevent them from returning to Israel and then confiscated their land and property through a calculated series of so-called 'emergency ordinances'. Israeli military orders and laws have been utilized as a tool to sustain the Zionist settler colonial project, by 'maximizing Israeli control of (Palestinian) land and minimizing the number of (Palestinian) people' (Khalil 2010b, p. 2).

Palestinians were expelled pursuant of the Immigration Ordinance during the period between 1948 and 1951, but expulsions also continued past these dates, and continue today. Many cases in accordance with the Immigration Ordinance were approved by Israeli courts. In April 1952, the Citizenship Law was passed, and the subject of the expulsion of 'infiltrators' was transferred to another statute: the Entry into Israel Law. According to Oren Bracha (1998), expulsions were carried out by means of the Immigration Regulations until 1952, and afterward relied on the Entry into Israel Law. Still, with respect to persons who entered prior to enactment of the Entry into Israel Law, the Immigration Regulations continued to be used (ibid., p. 350).

The term 'infiltrator' was first used in the Prevention of Infiltration (Offences and Jurisdiction) Law, 5714-1954, which was passed by the Knesset on August 16, 1954. A unique framework was introduced to expel infiltrators: the establishment of special courts. The definition of 'infiltrator' was very broad, legally defined as:

> a person who has entered Israel knowingly and unlawfully and who at any time between the 16th Kislev, 3708 (29th November 1947) and his entry was (1) a national or citizen of Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi-Arabia, Trans-Jordan, Iraq or the Yemen; or (2) a resident or visitor in one of those countries or in any part of Palestine outside Israel; or (3) a Palestinian citizen or a Palestinian resident without nationality or citizenship or whose nationality or citizenship was doubtful and who, during the said period, left his ordinary place of residence in an area which has become a part of Israel for a place outside Israel.[v]

Although this law criminalized Palestinians' attempts to return home following the conflict, an estimated 10,000–15,000 still tried to reinhabit their land each year from 1949 to 1956 (Korn 2003). During this time, approximately 5,000 Palestinians attempting to reenter their homeland and reclaim their property were victims of Israel's 'shoot to kill' mandate along the border (Morris 1999). For others, the legal ramifications of apprehension included imprisonment of up to five

years and a penalty of 5,000 pounds.[vi] Countless others were subject to harsh conditions and discrimination, some accounts of which were captured in the interviews conducted for this paper.

An example of the labeling of Palestinians as infiltrators can be seen in the case involving a number of Palestinians from the village of Majd al-Krum.[vii] Israel conquered the village on October 30, 1948, and a month later, the Israeli army expelled a number of Palestinians to Lebanon. Ten days later, on December 5, the army registered the inhabitants of the village. The individuals who were expelled were not registered. They returned a few weeks later, on December 25. In a series of two violent events in January 1949, the army expelled many of the young people in the village. In his judgment of these actions as legal, Justice Zalman Shneur Cheshin wrote:

> At a time the state was in danger, being surrounded on all sides by hostile peoples, who in the past had waged furious and brutal combat against it, harassing it everywhere, and about to swallow it live. In these frenzied times, people left and moved to the enemy's camp and later returned. Professing to be loyal citizens, they shamelessly demand rights equal to those of the country's other citizens. (ibid., p. 1392)

Israel has consistently used the rhetoric of national security in casting Palestinian refugees as violent and threatening offenders. For Palestinians, the resulting violence was devastating. As Morris asserts, Israeli authorities:

> took a defensive approach, initiating limited actions against Arab villages that the infiltrators used as bases for departure … The forces deployed along the border fired at infiltrators with intent to kill, including at Arabs who moved about close to the border on the other side. Also, a few Israeli border villages planted mines along the access roads leading to them. As a result of these actions, 2,700-5,000 Arabs were killed between 1949 and 1956, the vast majority of them between 1949 and 1951. (Morris 1993, pp. 124-135, 416 quoted in Levy 1996, p. 204)

Such wartime rhetoric, a 'defensive' approach, which asserted villages were used as 'bases', distorts the on the ground reality that most of these 'infiltrators' were merely refugees seeking to return home. Through the use of this rhetoric, the individuals killed were construed as wartime casualties, instead of as the victims of an atrocious and prolonged massacre in the effort of population transfer.

Israeli Reprisals in Response to Infiltration

The Israeli government viewed infiltration as a serious problem, and reacted to it with violence, as we see from the comments Moshe Sharett made in the Knesset in June 1949:

> Nevertheless, the government of Israel will make sure to act, in full and strict compliance with the law, in safeguarding the lines and borders and utilizing all the means to prevent infiltration without permission. Any one who tries to test the government of Israel in this matter will be punished. The security of the state will not be abandoned and the government will not be deterred from taking harsh means, if needed, to ensure it. (Bracha 1998, p. 343).

According to Zakbach (2013), the reprisal actions against infiltrations were intended as revenge and as a means to deter potential infiltrators, strengthen national morale, and provide the border settlements with a feeling of security. Reprisals against Palestinians living in the newly-established lands of Israel were large-scale expulsions and massacres, amounting to mass killings and cultural genocide. Some people argued that the actions were taken to prevent independent reprisal attacks. This accorded, also, with the army's demands, 'In 1954-1956, the army pressured the government to approve reprisal actions. Refraining from the actions was viewed as detrimental to the operational credibility of the army and to the morale within army units, which impatiently awaited the actions' (Cabinet Protocol from September 5, 1954 quoted in Zakbach 2013, p. 41).

According to Ben Gurion's official biographer, Micha'el Bar-Zohar, following an incident of infiltration, Ben Gurion said:

> Look at these Jews. They come from Iraq, from Kurdistan, from North Africa, and from Europe. They come from countries where they were defenseless, where it was permitted to abuse them, torture them, beat them, and brutalize them. We have become accustomed to Jews being helpless victims of the gentiles. Here we must prove to them that we are not defenseless, that we have a state and that the Jewish people has an army, which will prevent the gentiles from continuing to treat Jews ruthlessly, that a price will be paid for their lives and property. We must stand erect to inculcate them with a sense of independence and pride, we must demonstrate to them that whoever rises up against them will be punished, that they are citizens of a sovereign state which is responsible for their lives and wellbeing. (1980, pp. 400-401)

Assertions of power and proving Israel's dominance were two key factors in the brutal actions Israeli authorities employed to disallow Palestinians from returning to their homeland.

Use of the Military Regime to Prevent 'Infiltration'

Now subject to Israeli regulations and imposed military orders, Palestinian refugees—the stateless, the homeless, and by virtue of these things, the 'unwanted'—became illegal overnight. Palestinians were 'denied registration, treated as foreigners in their home country, denied reentry, deported and denied family reunification' (Khalil 2010a, p. 21). Movement from the West Bank and Gaza into Israel became near impossible. Osetzki-Lazar claims that the objectives of the military government after 1948 included deterrence of hostile

actions, such as infiltration, and prevention of a massive flow of refugees returning to live in the country (2002, p. 106). The laws imposed by the Israeli authorities were used to realize these colonial objectives, to marginalize the minority group and transform them from 'refugees', as the victims of war, into 'infiltrators', a social category that evokes perceptions of deviance and criminality (Korn 2003).

Immediately following the 1948 Nakba, Palestinian-owned homes, businesses, and farms were similarly the spot of Israeli oversight and control *vis-à-vis* the military regime, which was inherently biased against Palestinians. Daniel Oster, a member of the Ratner Commission, for example, stated in 1996 that 'Of 200,000 Arabs and members of other minority groups living in Israel, we did not find a single person who was loyal to the state. I make these comments in all seriousness and with full responsibility' (*Haaretz* 1956 quoted in Osetzki-Lazar 2002, p. 123). Assuming the guise of security and self-protection, various emergency ordinances were enacted to establish Israeli legal control over the Arab lands. Emergency Regulations (Absentees' Property) Law, 5709-1948, which was first enacted in December 1948 and later amended as Absentees Property Law, 5710-1950, facilitated the seizure of Palestinian property. According to this legislation:

> all Arab refugees who left their homes during the war, as well as Arabs who were not listed in the Registration of Inhabitants in 1948 but obtained citizenship by right of residence or who returned with permission on family reunion schemes, were declared to be 'absentees' in respect of their property in Israel, because they had been outside the country at the time the Emergency Regulations dealing with absentee property were issued in December 1948. They were classified by the ridiculous term 'resident-absentees'. The law transferred control over the property and lands of all the absentees to the custodian of absentees' property who held legal rights over thousands of plots of private land in almost every Arab village.[viii] (Korn 1995, p. 660)

Another ordinance, the Emergency Regulations (Cultivation of Waste Lands), 5709-1948, authorized the Minister of Agriculture to claim lands that had been 'abandoned', and therefore redefined as 'waste lands' (Fischbach 2003, p. 20). Once Arabs were barred from their lands, the property was then declared 'abandoned', and per the new code, eligible for seizure by the Israeli government (BADIL & COHRE 2005). As a result, over 500,000 dunums were being cultivated by Jews by 1949 (Fischbach 2003). The law assumed the guise of transferring these lands to Israeli ownership for the 'public benefit', but the only benefit was to the burgeoning state, since it created a supply of Jewish-owned farms and other important resources. Retaining Arab lands satisfied two important needs of the Zionist project: ensuring the homelessness and dispossession of Palestinian Arabs, and providing areas that could be used to accommodate the influx of Jewish residents now settling in the country. For example, of the 370 new

Jewish settlements established between 1948 and 1953, 350 were on absentee property (Peretz 1958).

Korn (2003) argues that the issue of infiltration and confiscation was first viewed as a political problem that could be solved by proper politicking and policing. In order to maintain the Jewish state, Israel promoted the belief that its Arab residents had to be expelled from the borders (Masalha 1992). An influx of Palestinians set to reclaim their homes and property 'posed a political threat on the state's sovereignty, and they threatened Jewish settlement and Jewish majority within the newly established state' (Korn 2003, p. 15). However, resistance to this law—the act of 'infiltrating' Israel's borders to return to originally Palestinian-owned villages and land—was viewed as a type of 'guerilla war' (ibid., p. 15). The infiltration phenomenon was viewed as a political problem to Israel's ongoing demographic war with the territory's Arab residents, but it was simultaneously cast as a security problem, in which the otherized Palestinians' presence was perceived as a nascent danger to the physical wellbeing of Israel's Jewish citizens.

Indeed, 'if the mere existence of Palestinians threatens the Zionist idea, then Palestinians by definition are in a constant state of resistance' (Korn 2003, p. 128).[ix] Since Palestinians' very presence— either as citizens in Israel, as residents in the West Bank, Gaza or Occupied East Jerusalem, or as refugees in UN-administered camps or adjacent Arab countries—allegedly contradicts the notion that Israel is a Jewish state, all Palestinians, despite their legal standing, are transformed into unwanted entities, enemies, terrorist 'Others' that threaten the ongoing Zionist settler colonial project.

Palestinian refugees who refused to accept the 'violence inflicted upon them' (Rouhana 2003, p. 128) by attempting to return home were transformed into enemies of the state by the zero-sum game of 'us' versus 'them' Zionist ideology. Palestinian unwillingness to accede to settler colonial modes of governance led the Israeli state to turn to criminality to further police the position of the Palestinian refugee. These individuals go from homeless to homeland threat, merely by seeking a right to return their land, home and property.

Through this structure of military, para-legal and legal surveillance, the Palestinian body is thrust into a state of securitization, dangerousness and unwantedness, by which the Israeli apparatus can oversee and control every aspect of Palestinian life. This control extends even to the most intimate moments, such as the right to return to one's home, despite having the keys in their hands. The process of return for Palestinians is painful, and the difficulty is only exacerbated by the legal discrimination Palestinians face before Israel's carefully crafted policing, bureaucracies and laws. The process of preventing Palestinians' right to return and criminalizing returnees is an ongoing Zionist effort. After confiscating Palestinian property for the state and criminalizing reentry for Palestinians, the

Israeli government has amended the law through various other military orders, expanding the definition of 'infiltrator' and thereby increasing the number of individuals who can be found guilty of such an offense, while simultaneously adding to its severity of its offense. According to the 2009 Israeli military 'Order Regarding Prevention of Infiltration' Order no. 1650, the term infiltrator is now defined as, 'a person who entered the Area unlawfully following the effective date, or a person who is present in the Area and does not lawfully hold a permit'.[x] This expanded definition encapsulates a greater number of Palestinians, including those living in areas such as Occupied East Jerusalem, where permit status can easily be revoked by Israeli officials for arbitrary reasons with essentially zero oversight (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2012).

Personal Accounts of Returnees: The Nakba and its Ruinations

> We were walking on our way back home after being in refugee camps in Lebanon—we just could not stay there, life there became very hard and scary … Us girls were put in an orphanage, where we were mistreated … We just wanted to go back home. We were walking, and my uncle was carrying my three-year-old sister. He got tired, his legs were hurting him, and the mud filled our shoes, legs and clothes. At one point, he decided to put my sister down [out of exhaustion], in the mud, and kept on walking without even looking back. I kept on walking; I was only nine or 10 years old. (Alia, 84 years old)

Alia's voice, as a marker of the silent suffering endured by Palestinians during the Nakba period, is at the forefront of my analysis of the political work of suffering. Her silenced suffering generates a powerful form of agency and resistance. In the cases of 'infiltrators', the issue of suffering amidst uprooting and social fragmentation is connected to the process of loss and return. Alia's voice, as well as the voices of other Palestinians attempting to return home, will be examined to consider not just the narration of Palestinian uprooting, but also Israel's use and abuse of Palestinian re-rooting, or what I defined as the political work of suffering.

Individual interviews not only shed light on the deep terror and fear experienced by Palestinians attempting to return, but also exhibit astonishing courage. Palestinians were forced to cross mountains and great expanses of land, in the darkness of night, hearing shooting, hiding from spotlights, even leaving relatives behind in a mess of literal and metaphoric mud—all to return home, where their mere act of return is considered a criminal offense by the Zionist state. In 'Imperial debris: reflections on ruins and ruination', Ann Stoler (2008) offers insight into the psycho-political effects of upheaval and destruction. Stoler examines 'imperial formations' rather than empire per se to register 'the ongoing quality of processes of decimation, displacement, and reclamation' (2008, p. 193). Imperial formations reveal relations of force, emphasize processes of becoming, and are defined by 'racialized relations of allocations and appropriations'

(Stoler 2008, p. 193). As the 'imperial debris' of the past saturates the political life of the present and shapes possibilities for the future, as can be seen in the destruction of the family unit made so desperate to return that it sacrifices its own children. This demonstrates that the everyday is infused with multiple temporalities and the relations of force inherent in them, which leads to various manifestations of pain, trauma and suffering.

Dislocated Families

> When I arrived home, after all the terror I went through crossing the borders alone as a young sixteen-year-old woman … my father was happy to see me but worried about my arrival. The Jews used the arrival of refugees as an excuse to demolish houses, imprison people, and gather entire families for deportation to the Lebanese border. I was fearful, injured, and happy to be home—and in the midst of this, my father took me and surrendered me to the Jewish police. He apologized, explaining that he needed to take care of the rest of the family members and save our house from demolition. (Mariam, 84 years old)

> I arrived in Qalansawa. I used the same road I always took to my father's house, but this time the road I used had become a border, and to cross this border was to 'infiltrate'. My father was happy to see me, but he took me with him, and went to inform the Israeli police that I had snuck in. As a young man, maybe eleven or twelve years old, I was shocked that simply using the same road that I had used many times before had turned me into an 'infiltrator'. My father loved us, but needed to [turn me in], to prevent [the Israelis] from putting their hands on our land, as we were farmers and losing the land could mean losing our livelihood and income. (Salim, 80 years old)

The voices above reveal another layer of pain and suffering, related to the way that geography was used to dislocate families, and to tear them apart through the establishment of arbitrary boundary lines. The fact that fathers and other family members 'surrendered' their own children created a heavy sense of helplessness and hopelessness, infused a sense of internal 'home-made' dislocation, and at the same time sustained a belief used to perpetuate the colonial project: that turning one another in was the only means of attaining protection from the Israeli forces. This willingness to give up information and family members—an offering that violates family's connectivity—in order to protect the safety and livelihood of the family unit as a whole was a major feature of Palestinian family life, not only during the initial Nakba period, but also after. Yearning to protect while injuring and violating that connectivity is a part of the Palestinian history and present that is frequently disavowed. The ripping apart of families was found not only to affect families during the Nakba, but continues to have a serious impact on families today. The present day contains untold histories and stories of fragmented families still struggling to reunify.

The Walls Have Ears: Surveillance and Suffering

Israeli power over returnees was exacerbated by the divide and rule policy (Zureik 2010): where records, the construction of differential Palestinian identities and the assignation of differentially colored identification cards created an additional layer of apprehension, surveillance and control. As Mariam explained:

> After returning back home, and after their trial to dump me on the border, my father managed to get me a permit, and then a Red ID. I was happy to get it, but I was afraid to leave my home, fearing [the Israelis] would see the ID color, know I am an infiltrator, and throw me on the border. Now, I have a blue ID, thank God. (Mariam, 84 years old)

The identity card system emerged in the testimonies of Nakba survivors and returnees as an additional tool of surveillance and control[xi] that further fragmented families and the Palestinian body politic. As Sami, a 78-year old interviewee explained, 'Each one of my brothers and sisters was given a different color identity. The color of one's ID at that time dictated whether one could leave the village, for how long, and at what time, because they had curfews. Whether I could get a job, and what kind of job I could find, all depended on the color of the ID. So we used to fight with each other about the color of the ID'.

Surveillance over what is done, spoken of and discussed invaded the very private spheres of families and friends, affected intimate social relations, and even dictated internal familial discussions. Since these interviews were conducted with relatives, friends, neighbors and others encountered through a close network, it was easier to hear their narratives and to listen to the hardships they shared. Yet, one main theme that kept emerging throughout the interviews, even with very close family relatives, was the need to keep all the information collected unnamed and unattached to a specific person, family or even location. The phrase '*el hitan ilha dinein*', that is, 'the walls have ears', loomed over all the interviews collected for this study. The paranoia and fear of being identified as carriers of Red IDs (meaning that they were considered illegal in the country at one point) or 'infiltrators', scared the interviewees:

> In 1952, I was in Haifa, in my parent's house. A policeman came in and told me that I was needed for an investigation at the police station. My entire family became very scared, and I feared they would throw me to the border and shoot me there. We were all at home—even the neighbors, Um Farid and Abu Farid—came to us, all wondering, why did they call me? What do they want? What did I do? I was home all day, and didn't once move, so why? Fear held us all in a state of terror for three days. My father started asking whether someone had given false information, whether he had fought with someone from our community and they had wanted revenge. So many bad thoughts—it was suggested that if they wanted me out of Haifa, I would have no other choice but to go; I

>couldn't risk endangering my brothers and sister. (Mariam, 84 years old)

The extreme paranoia expressed by Mariam permeated the interviews. This was not always due to direct threats, as the one facing Mariam and her family, but simply the belief that authorities were watching, waiting to determine that a law had been broken so that they could eliminate more Palestinians from the land. As Fanon writes:

>The colonial subject is constantly on his guard: Confused by the myriad signs of the colonial world he never knows whether he is out of line. Confronted with a world configured by the colonizer, the colonized subject is always presumed guilty. The colonized does not accept his guilt, but rather considers it a kind of curse, a sword of Damocles. (Fanon 1965, p. 16)

The testimonies exhibit the 'sword of Damocles' hanging above each Palestinian, constantly forced to protect his or herself from the violence of the settler colonial state. In another testimony, Salim's brother Muhannad recalled talking with his relatives during a security check by Israeli soldiers. The soldiers were heckling various members of the town and body searching pedestrians. He had stood there, chatting with his relatives. A week later, he was called to the police station where the police asked him why was he telling his relatives '*uskut*'—that is 'be silent' or 'be quiet'. He explained:

>We were all young men standing beside each other, watching the soldiers humiliating another young man from Taybeh [a Palestinian city]. I stood there with my cousins and did not say a word. But the police called me in for an interrogation, asking me why I was telling my cousin '*uskut*'. Uskut was the brand name of cigarettes we smoked. They accused me of hiding something, they accused us of planning terrorism against them … This incident scared us all. It reminded us that they are after us. Believe me, I vomited so much that year. I felt that they were listening to what my intestines were feeling.

The invasion of surveillance into intimate spaces—the domestic home, the body and the psyche—perpetuated feelings of fear and anxiety, creating a severe sense of paranoia. This invasion has become part of the daily imagination of Palestinians, giving even more power to the Zionists, who can control whether or not Palestinians feel at ease. The political work of such agonies facilitates the further domination of Palestinians.

Utmost fear is also apparent in two other Palestinian narratives presented briefly below: one from a woman from Haifa and the other from a man from the Triangle area. The first narrative is from a woman who, at 16, snuck back into Palestine, walking from Lebanon to Haifa to return home. Her uncle had given her some money to take to his sister, who lived in Haifa alone without her mother, brother, or extended family. The young woman was afraid to carry the money,

but was also too timid to refuse her uncle's request. She decided to hide the money in her dress and, being a dressmaker, managed to shorten the hem and conceal the money in the bottom of the skirt. The second narrative is of a young man who was around 12-years-old when his mother and family were left alone in Tulkarem. He needed to get money from his father, who had stayed on a farm in the Triangle area, which meant crossing a border that separated these territories. The young man managed to sneak back and obtain some money from his father. He then went to a man in Taybeh who helped his father hide the money in the bottom of his shoes. The boy managed to sneak money back to his family, and would repeat this process several times.

Both the young woman and the boy in the narratives described above were called in for investigation by Israeli authorities two to three years after their return. Each was asked about the money, the amount, who gave it to them, and why they had need of it. Salim, the young man, explained:

> I told them the truth. I explained that we were starving after living through great hardship. My mother was struggling to feed the five of us, and I had no other choice but to come back to the farm and ask my father to support us. I was imprisoned for a week but then they released me. After this incident, my family became more anxious, more fearful, and we decided we did not want to have anything to do with politics. We needed to live without fear.

Such narratives reveal not only the depth of colonial surveillance on the Palestinian people—knowing that they hid money and in these incredibly discrete locations and having the thoroughness to call them in for interrogation years after the event—but also the ways in which such depth of surveillance infiltrated the psyches of Palestinians who returned. By instilling fear in the colonized, they effectively stifled resistance—as in the boy's words, 'we did not want to have anything more to do with politics'.

Daya'a—Loss and Numbness

> How did I feel myself? I did not feel myself, for no one protected us …. I walked alone, infiltrated alone, just to reach my father, get money, and take it back to my mother. But all that time I knew very well: we were sold, they sold us, the Arabs sold us, and we sold ourselves … we sold each other. (Salim, 80 years old)

Salim's voice, like the ordeals of other Palestinian returnees, portrays a sense of loss and unprotectedness, as Fanon described it 'liquidation of its systems of reference' in which the 'social panorama is destructured' (1968 p. 38, 34). The complete loss of direction, the razing of his social context, left Salim with a sense of betrayal, mistrust and despair, plagued by traumatic violence. When the fabric of one's existence has been shaken, revealing in its stead the fragility and contingency of the social, skepticism begins to govern one's

relationship to the world, an 'ecology of fear in everyday life' results (Das 2007, p. 9).

The confused sense of fear and loss, paired with an insistence on reaching home, is apparent in Inas' story, a young woman who, at the age of 20, a mother of two children and pregnant with another, found herself displaced in Lebanon. She articulated the following: 'On a personal level … we were lost, afraid, after all they did in Deir Yassin … We felt total abandonment … not knowing where we were going, what we were doing'. Inas' effective disorientation and sense of abandonment was apparent in her everyday life, embedded in severe rupture and uncertainty. Her words remind us of Erica Caple James who uses a Haitian term in common parlance to describe this affective orientation of survivors to traumatic violence: *ensekirite*, or 'insecurity' (2008, p. 136). In James' Haitian context, *ensekirite* signals the 'routinization of ontological ruptures in everyday life'. The Palestinians cited above reflect what James terms, after Anthony Giddens, 'ontological insecurity', a lack of confidence or trust in one's social world and place within it (ibid., p. 138). Das calls this a feeling of 'being betrayed by the everyday' (Das 2007, p. 9).

Inas' everyday betrayal is also heard in the following:

> I had my child in Beirut alone, not knowing whether or not my husband had been killed ... my sister in law also had her child away. We took her to Batron, and she had her baby there. I had my baby daughter in Beirut. It was very hard. I was alone, not knowing if my husband was dead or alive. After learning that my brother died, I also learned that my parents had been displaced, and lived under olive trees crying. The nurses told me to leave my baby daughter in the hospital, but I refused. I preferred death to leaving my baby alone.

> We felt humiliated and lost … We all slept in one room, about 70 people, in one room in Rmesh, Lebanon. The Druze helped us get in [back home] after we paid them money, a Lira for each one of us. I was crying, holding one baby, the other two being carried by other people, and it was night-time—too dark, I feared to lose my children. I was afraid, tired, starved. The kids were crying from starvation … We will never forget what happened to us all our life … It was a very big disaster … It is hard to imagine what happened to us … We did not want to be where we were, as if we were flying. Half of our men were imprisoned, some were dead … When I remember, all my body shivers. Just think how many years Israel occupied. When I remember my brother, his death … When I feel what I went through, I barely feel ... I get tired when I think about all this, and my brother … to this day, I feel the hardship …(Inas, 84 years old)

Inas' sense of humiliation and fear while attempting to return home is located in an intense sense of needing to repair the ruptured past and present, as portrayed in her words, 'as if we were flying'. Her everyday survival, located in the shadow of uncertainty, is an act of

resistance when confronted with so much loss. As Das describes it, Inas resists by 'reinhabiting the space of devastation *again*' (2007, p. 217, emphasis in original). Her loss, therefore, does not persist as a ghostly disturbance, nor is it incorporated or overcome, but rather, the space of loss is reinhabited with the everyday. Das' reflections on reinhabiting the spaces of devastation also discuss continuing on with everyday life and of how violent events reach out into the everyday. Das writes 'the making of the self was located, not in the shadow of some ghostly past, but in the context of making the everyday inhabitable' (2007, p. 216). The process of living-on becomes an act of resistance. As Deleuze writes, it is the valiant project of 'living with what would otherwise be unendurable' (1995, p. 113).

Inas rented a donkey for three liras to carry her children while she walked on her feet, carrying her newborn baby. But as she walked with a group of 70 people, she was slowed down by the donkey and she feared she would lose the group. She explained:

> I decided to leave the donkey, fearing I would lose the group. My cousin could not walk back as fast as others walked, and she lost the group. Her brother started screaming, calling her name; he didn't care whether the Jews might hear him, he just wanted to find his sister …. I was afraid to lose the group, I dragged the baby on the floor, and helped the two others to walk faster by holding their hands.

Thus, with all the fear, pain, and terror of losing track of the group, losing her children, or being detected by the Israelis, Inas innovated a way to survive. She left the donkey, wrapped her baby child very well to protect her from harm, and dragged her while holding onto the hand of the other little ones, just to make sure her children would reach home with her. Her experience echoes David Eng and David Kazanjian's observations about the ability of loss to contain creative qualities: 'Loss is inseparable from what remains, for what is lost is known only by what remains of it, by how these remains are produced, read, and sustained' (2003, p. 2). Inas' actions produced and created new modes of survivability to keep her family intact.

> After we crossed the border, we walked … reached Hurfesh, slept in Hurfesh, but, the woman there did not want to give us water, and we were very thirsty, very starving. Then, one woman in our group broke the well, and gave us water to drink … I do not know how we did it … how we left, how we walked to Lebanon, and how we retuned back … *Sadmeh* [trauma] … I walked from Eilabun to Lebanon, without even feeling it.

Inas' description of her trauma, of their starvation and thirstiness, was bigger than she could comprehend. Her only way to convey what she experienced was through the sense of a lack of feeling.

In *On the postcolony*, Achille Mbembe writes, 'to colonize is to put to work the two-faceted movement of destroying and creating, creating

by destroying, creating destruction and destroying the creation, creating to create, and destroying to destroy' (2001, p. 189). Such acts constitute the colonizer as a subject of absolute arbitrary freedom, pure existence, defined by the antithesis it conjures: the absolute negation of the colonized. The power to create through destruction, to 'summon this nothing'—the colonized—'into existence', forms the very being of the colonizer, who is generated through the annihilation of the Other (ibid., p. 188). This experience of negation characterizes the psychic and physical suffering of the colonized in everyday life.

Borderscape and Ruinations

I want to stage the juxtaposition between a temporal and psychological analysis. It is during the time of hearing stories about killing, abandonments and massacres, when staying at home, leaving home and coming and going, that multiple temporalities co-existed in the psyches of Palestinians who were lost for direction. The working of suffering, as apparent in the mere confusion and feeling abandoned and lost, is also what prompted some of the displaced Palestinians to look for possible alternatives to contain their crisis. Under such conditions, the continuous disorder became order, and returnees needed to disappear from the violent acts of the colonizer. Their inexpressible and unclear status situated them in a silent, absent, but present condition, as Salim explained:

> I used to sneak back and forth [across the border], trying to help my mother by securing our daily food and safety. What I witnessed is unspeakable as I passed. I even walked on the corpses of refugees, walked over them, as if accepting the fact that they sold us, only wanting to make sure my brothers, sisters, and mother were not starving, and were warm, and safe … Yes … I walked on corpses, maybe of relatives, maybe even my own uncle. (Salim, 80 years old)

The image of walking on corpses brings us to a discussion of the connection between bodies and borders. Salim's anecdote dramatizes what Perera (2008) terms 'borderscape', an intermingling of the dead and the alive which questions whether that dead body, dead time and dead space, carry different ontologies of living and dying. The pain expressed in many voices was connected to the reality of the biopolitical order of the Zionist state producing new borders, even necropolitical borders, in the homeland and home space. Palestinian bodies, dead and alive, needed to be invisible, to generate new modalities for living inside and outside the homeland.

> I sold all my gold, to treat her, and help her stay with us, and when we reached home, she died. Her death added further pain to our hardships when infiltrating back, while knowing that no one is interested in protecting us, the opposite. (Naela, 84 years old)

Marked by severe despair, Naela's narrative, as well as Salim's, show the conviction that Palestinians were not perceived as 'human' subjects. Their outlawed bodies, the violent branding of their lives as 'infiltrators', isolated them, but also made them, like their homes and homeland, penetrable.

> We left Haifa, all of us in that … *Shakhtoura*, a very small boat, filled with fearful families, children, and women holding on to their children, vomiting in the boat, vomiting on each other. (Mariam, 84 years old)

As Mariam explains, the '*Shakhtoura*' sailed to secure Palestinian life, but also created a new, unwanted and coercive space, a space with no space, a no-place, that carries, as Perera (2006) explains, 'bodies of evidence' that speak to the hardships and pains associated with trying to survive and live in the ruins of the home/land.

In discussing violence, Stoler turns to the concept of 'ruination' as 'a corrosive process that weighs on the future and shapes the present' (2008, p. 194). Ruination is an active process of violence that infuses both the psycho-social and material dynamics of everyday life. Moreover, imperial formations and the processes of ruination inherent in them are defined by and continue to energize racialized hierarchies. This is evident in the organization of Israeli life, wherein Jewish life supersedes Palestinian Arabs' right to life and land. Fanon's seminal work on the colonial condition in Algeria provides a compelling illustration of these dynamics (see Fanon 1967 and 2008).

Examining histories that 'open to differential futures' can help to expound the suffering experienced when living outside of the homeland, as well as the yearning to return rightfully. These affective relationships with space constitute the everyday emotional and political reality of Palestinians. Mariam, a refugee whose compelling story of loss and pain earlier in this analysis, describes her suffering and her agony while being away from her home and family in Haifa:

> I used to look at our situation—whether in the refugee camp in Syria, in Yarmouk, standing in line to get some food, in the village where our relatives could not feed my three children, or in Beirut—and told myself, I am going back to Haifa … I am not a refugee, I have a home, I miss my mother, my brothers, I am going to Haifa.

When asked how she determined the manner by which to return, she explained:

> I was so determined, reached out to so many people, and learned that there was a woman from Shafa Amr that could help me. My neighbor helped me find her; she was from the Silba'a family. She used to help sneak people back, and I promised myself to make it back, even if living in a tent in Haifa, but never to live in tents away from home. While on my way back, I learned that our house in Haifa was demolished. I cried a lot that day, then announced to

everyone: 'I will go back home, to Haifa … with or without our house, I am going home'.

Although her homeland was forever altered after 1948, and her physical home in Haifa destroyed by Zionist forces, Mariam refused to view Palestine as a finished history, but rather as a still-important space where she could belong and make a future. In living in and with her ruins—the ruins of her known land, of her childhood home, of her now disjointed family—Mariam denied becoming an unrecognized victim of the past, and of the colonial process.

Asking how 'people live in and with ruins' (Fanon 1967), both as a material and social force and a sustained political project that is still unfolding, is critical to understanding a 'history of the present'. As processes of 'ongoing ruination', imperial projects materially and socially shape the present. Ruination is:

> an act perpetrated, a condition to which one is subject, and a cause of loss. These three senses may overlap in effect but they are not the same. Each has its own temporality. Each identifies different durations and moments of exposure to a range of violences and degradations that may be immediate or delayed, subcutaneous or visible, prolonged or instant, diffuse or direct. (Fanon, 1967, p. 195-196)

The experience of 'infiltrating' to return home leaves an intractable impression on its survivors, impacting them well beyond the time they attempted to cross the border. As Um Mahmoud, from Nazareth, explained:

> I was on the border, trying to cross with my six children, but the little one started crying—he was about four months old—and I was already on the border, and was not ready to go back [to the refugee camp where some of the displaced Palestinians resided]. Even when they were shooting at us, and using their spotlights to track us, I was determined to go back home … At home we had everything—food, beds, my relatives, our clothes … Nothing is missing in our home, so why should I be a refugee when my house is a walking distance? Yes, a long walk, but closer to me than being a refugee.
>
> We were all walking fast, in the dark, determined to reach home … My youngest son kept on crying and I was worried that they would catch us and shoot us—they had shot many relatives of mine on the border. But the other five children were tired, and I needed to cross the border, so I wrapped the baby in all the blankets I carried, and left him between the big leaves of a small cactus tree, as no one would touch him there, and took the rest of the children and started running, trying to hide from [Israeli] spotlights, and protect the children from their constant shooting. We walked for a long time without a word … with silence and fear … extreme fear that muted our voices … and managed to cross the border. But my heart was with the baby. I asked the kids to wait for me, because once the sound of shooting stopped I wanted to go back get my baby. I

> made it, I found him, he was sleeping. I walked back with him, and crossed the border extremely exhausted, shivering, but content to have made it. We arrived home, all of us … I was so proud of myself. I think this experience made my children extremely attached to me, made them love me more than any child could love a mother. To this day, I am everything in their life. (Um Mahmoud, 89 years old)

The long-standing impact of the courage Um Mahmoud had in her perseverance to return home, not only alone but also with her children, bonded the family together, and furthered their attachment and support to each other.

Eliminatory Logic and Biopolitics

> On our way from Lebanon, there is a place called Wadi El Habis, or Ras el Habis. We washed our faces and drank some water there, and I was carrying my brother Nimer on my shoulders. At one point, we saw that someone had left his son, I guess because he was afraid: he left his son, he could not carry his son anymore ... So, my father took that little boy and put him on our horse, and after a while, he saw the father, screamed at him for leaving his son, and gave him the little boy back. (Amineh, 81 years old)

> In Beint Jbeil … we lived, with so much poverty. It was a hard period, as on our way from Nazareth to Lebanon, we faced horrors. Families were displaced, walking without knowing where to go and what to do, unable to carry their little children. I spent the entire week carrying the children of other people … Many children were walking alone, parents were unable to track their children, [it was a] very painful scene … I could not stay in Beint Jbeil, I only stayed one week. I heard bad news from Palestine, saw the agonies and hardships facing refugees and decided to cross back to Palestine, with Naser, Hsein Khamees and others—maybe 30 to start, but only 6-7 people managed to walk fast enough to cross the hills and the mountains … We did not walk … we were running, scared, fearing noise, fearing meeting people, running, until we reached El Reini (a village inside present day Israel). In El Reini someone offered to hide us in his house for two days. My parents were still in Nazareth because someone told them that I had been killed on the borders. When I arrived back home, I learned that even the guy who digs graves had told my parents that he had dug my grave and buried me with his own hands, just to take some money. So my parents were wearing black and mourning my loss, despite the fact that I was still alive … I had a very sweet mother, loving, caring, very emotional, and I was so worried to tell her [that I was still alive]. I stayed at the neighbors' house for two days not knowing how to meet her … When she saw me, she fainted. When she woke up from her faint, she could not stop kissing me … could not stop crying and kissing me. (Abu Nayef, 86 years old)

Going from port to port, from one village to the other, from one city to the next searching for a place to live, planning to return back home, this is the life of the displaced refugee. These stories of journeys suggest that children, old and young, women and men, were walking

in a state of loss, with an unknown destiny, but with a clear determination to return home. Their tragic journeys were faced with the Israeli government's penal acts, lies, haunting/surveillance policies and the denial of their rights to come back home. These series of penal processes and politics suggest that we must understand Palestinians' disasters as structural, and as embedded in Zionist biopolitical ideological economies. The pain emanating from such agonies persisted, as survivors struggled to keep their ordeals in secret, knowing that their loved ones were being killed, and realizing that some family members were lost to an unknown destiny.

The inscription of pain over Palestinian bodies and lives, with the use of colonial legal and extra-legal means, redefined settlers in relation to Palestinians' history, mobility and ownership of land and resources.

Necropolitics

State violence, militarized control and the policing of home-spaces, borders and boundaries, as scoped by the topic of illegal infiltration, are spaces of terror marking Palestinians' past and present, family, community, bodies and lives. Juridco-political formations of punishment and control, attempting to regulate Palestinian spaces and transform them into the borders of the Israeli state, added to the punitive measure of preventing the return home and inscribed injustice and terror over bodies and lives. These formations created territorial spaces that produced the unwanted 'infiltrator', spread terror among the community, generated severe mistrust among members of the same family, and propagated various technologies of surveillance and fear through the military to further its regime of control. Necropolitics, as Mbembe (2003) explains, is the contemporary form of subjugating life to the power of death. Mbembe's analysis proposes that sovereign power—in our case the state of Israel—exercises its power through the organization of life and death. I build on Mbembe's theorization to argue that the bodies and lives of Palestinian returnees, the so called infiltrators, through their acts of resistance and yearning to come back home, not only mark bio-power, but the order of life and death, biopolitics and necropolitics. State violence, in this case-study, exercised the right to kill by preventing returnees from crossing 'borders', fragmenting families and infiltrating the very intimate connections and trust relations at a family's nucleus. Both the fight against state terror, in its anatamo-politics of the individual body, the family and community body, and the biopolitics of the racialized eviction of Palestinians, through disciplinary measure of expulsion, amalgamation, cooptation and erasure, are simultaneously biopolitical and necropolitical (Foucault 2003; Mbembe 2003; Perera 2006).

By criminalizing attempts to return home, Israel achieved sovereignty. It is through exercising the right to kill, evict, displace and inscribe pain on the personal, familial and political body of Palestinians that Israel formed its necropolitical regime. Securitized justifications and

religio-nationalist claims underpin its necro-power, activating the 'right to kill'. Israel's systematic laws and policies that decided who could come into 'the country' and who would be left homeless and uncounted constitute a crime against humanity. These sovereign assertions of borders created a spatial and psychological siege that kept bodies, families and lives in an unending state of suspension.

The production of Palestinians and their suffering as enemies, as born criminals, enables the exercise of a necropolitical regime that renders Palestinians, outside and inside the borders, always exposed to death. As survivors from the policing of the borders reported, they knew that the act of returning home might be penalized with death. But more disturbingly, there remains the question of what happened to those that we could not speak to? What happened to those that tried to come home, but never made it?

The biopolitical regime orchestrated by the Israeli state assigned Palestinians the status of 'savages' and framed the relations between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis within the racialized relations of colonialism (Mbembe 2003). The biopolitical regime imposed on Palestinian returnees erased Palestinian suffering from history in order to allow the colonizer's story to prevail. This necropolitical past informs the present, recurring through the continuous regime of control. Temporalizing the past as present, occludes the untold stories of necropolitics, as that past never ended.

The Palestinian context requires that we consider the political work not only of the known suffering, but also the silenced pain. Settler's power that exceeds the existing law of citizens is what terrorized Palestinian returnees from even telling their stories today, after over 65 years. The story of Palestinian suffering endangers the degree of humanity allotted to the Palestinian who speaks of it if that person is still living beneath the laws of the colonial state. Palestinian returnees, or the so-called 'infiltrators', are hence established as non-humans, allowed to exist under the condition of remaining silent. And, even if recognizably human, Palestinians in Israel remain savages, defined as 'born criminals', and are bound to be punished for crimes against the Jewishness of the state. For Palestinian refugees in settler colonial Israel who managed to return home and resist their elimination, the threat of erasure is ever-present.

The study of Palestinian returnees opens new border zones to examine the workings of suffering within settler colonial Israel. The political work of suffering, situated between the administration and inscription of pain, and the mode of maintaining and policing its continuity, required the production of a systematic, ideologically racially driven regime of control. Such political work, when accomplished through a biopolitical, geopolitical and collective punitive disciplinary regime, retains the superiority of the colonizers, and hosts an unending possibility of violence that deploys the disposable colonized in a constant state of dangerous otherness. The

political disavowal of Palestinian's suffering, and thus, their humanity, urge us to debunk and challenge the settler colonial necropolitical regime that performs a slow, bold and racialized elimination not only of a people and their land, but also of their trauma.

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Notes

[i] The precise number of Palestinian villages depopulated during the Nakba varies by source, dependent on the study's scope and consideration for what constitutes a depopulated village or locality. For example, an author could determine that an area previously considered one village was indeed the site of two separate villages (see Palestinian Return Center 2011). Such discrepancies help explain Morris' (1989) finding that 369 Palestinian villages were depopulated during the Nakba. Khalidi (1992), in his immense study even excludes Arab villages or towns in which part or all of the population remained and localities on which no physical structures or boundaries had existed (often Bedouin villages). Alternatively, Abu Sitta in his 2000 study asserts an aggregate total of 531 villages, towns, cities and—distinctively among the other researchers—tribal lands were depopulated between 1947 and 1950.

[ii] Comments by Zionist leaders demonstrate that efforts to displace Palestinians and criminalize their return were part of a planned and executed Zionist agenda. The sixth Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin spoke publically regarding his policy, based on 'liberating' the land for the Jewish people (Neff 1994).

[iii] According to the insight of Rony Gabbay (1959 cited in Sayigh 2012), Palestinian representatives through the Arab Higher Committee were

excluded, despite their attempts to participate, from attending the armistice negotiations.

[iv] Gabbay's (1959) account questions the extent to which the international powers participating in the negotiations truly pressed Israel to accept the Palestinian right to return. They agreed with Israel's view that the Zionist forces were not responsible for the 'exodus' of people and were aware of the prospective benefit to Israel's formation as a Jewish state if 'unburdened' by the presence of a large non-Jewish minority.

[v] This definition, and the law in its entirety, can be accessed in English at http://www.israellawresourcecenter.org/emergencyregs/fulltext/preventioninfiltrationlaw.htm

[vi] This is according to Section 2 of the Prevention of Infiltration (Offences and Jurisdiction) Law. According to following sections, there are conditions—such as 'infiltrating' after deportation or 'infiltrating' while carrying a weapon—that incurred greater prison sentences and financial penalties.

[vii] The judgment in HCJ 125/51 *Muhammad Ali Hasin et al. v. Minister of the Interior*, P.D. 5 1386, describes at length the expulsions, murders and house demolitions carried out by the Israeli army. The court determined that army officers lied in court and discounted their testimony. Despite this, the court ruled in favor of the parties supporting the army's actions. The judgment is, for the most part, nonsensical.

[viii] To read the law in full in English, visit:
http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/E0B719E95E3B494885256F9A005AB90A

[ix] Meir Har-Zion was a soldier from Unit 101 and is considered an Israeli hero. His diaries reveal the cold murders of Palestinians he committed. In the link below there is a quote in which he describes the killing of a Bedouin man, who was a happenstance bystander in the moment of his murder by Har-Zion. In Har-Zion's perception, the Palestinians were security threats 'by nature'. See Tarabut 2014.

[x] The full text of Order no. 1650 can be accessed in English at http://www.hamoked.org.il/items/112301_eng.pdf

[xi] See Tawil-Souri 2010, for more information.

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