The Living Body and the Corpse—: Israeli Documentary Cinema and the *Intifadah*

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Introduction: Bodies That Do Not Matter

A CONSIDERATION OF ISRAELI NARRATIVE, FICTIONAL FILMS produced since the outbreak of the al-Aqsa, or second, *Intifadah* (2000–2004)[1] reveals a perplexing phenomenon. Although the majority of Israeli filmmakers identify with the Left, which generally supports the Palestinians and opposes the injustice of the occupation, fictional films never deal with the reality of the occupation. It is denied. Further to this trend, despite the record number of terrorist attacks that took place during those years, most of these films repress the trauma of these attacks.[2] There is nothing judgmental in this last observation. On the contrary, according to trauma discourse, repression, or inherent latency, as Caruth calls it (17), is an inevitable, necessary stage in the reaction to trauma.

In Israeli narrative cinema, the trauma of the terror attack appears at most in only a few films and then as a sort of distant background to the drama.[3] In the only two films produced during these years that portray families in mourning—Nir Bergman's *Broken Wings* (2002) and Sabi Gabizon's *Nina's Tragedies* (2003), both of which met with considerable commercial success—the reason for the mourning, namely, the death of a father or of a husband, involves

displacement. In the case of *Broken Wings,* the death of the father is not an outcome of the occupation or a terror attack, but a result of a bee sting. In the case of *Nina's Tragedies,* why the husband died is of marginal importance; instead, romantic serendipity is central (a young man randomly joins the casualties department of the Israel Defense Forces and, as part of a detail entrusted with informing a widow of her fresh loss, falls in love with her). In these two cases, the arbitrariness of the circumstances (the appearance of the bee, the appearance of the young man) "replaces" the tragic arbitrariness that typifies a terror attack. In all the cases, the Israeli fictional cinematic space remains shielded against any recognition of the trauma of the terror attack and hence against its visibility. According to the mimetic paradigm approach within trauma studies, the trauma is still at the repression stage and has not reached that of post-trauma, which involves recognition that trauma has occurred.[4]

In contrast to fictional narrative cinema, Israeli documentary cinema deals with the *Intifadah* (both the occupation and the terror attacks) in an almost obsessive fashion.[5] Dozens of documentary films have been screened, particularly on the local Discovery channel, in cinematheques, and in Israeli film festivals over the past four years, and more and more such films are still being made. Dozens of the movies describe Palestinian life under the shadow of the *Intifadah* from a standpoint sympathetic to Palestinian suffering and sharply critical of the occupation (for example, Yoav Shamir's *Checkpoint* [2003] shows the routine

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played over several seasons at an army check-point near an Arab village in the occupied territories). Some fifteen films deal directly with terror attacks. These films describe Israeli life under the shadow of the attacks from a perspective sympathetic to the suffering of civilian victims of suicide bombings (for example, Orna Ben-Dor Niv's *One Widow, Twice Bereavement* [2005], which describes a group of women who have lost two close relatives—a husband and a child—in the same attack).[6] To put it another way, the two main stories told by documentary cinema, the story of Palestinian suffering and the story of Israeli suffering, are presented as detached from one another. Very few of the dozens of documentary films provide any hint from within the drama of the connection between the two faces of the *Intifadah,* the occupation and the terror, and even those few do so in only a very limited fashion (for example, Anat Halachmi's film *Channels of Rage* [2003] portrays how two Israeli rappers working in a local nightclub, one Jewish and one Arab, become ideologically distanced). In the vast majority of cases, the drama fails to strike a balance between these two objects of empathy that are so entirely different from each other. From the aspect of the corpus of documentary films compiled during those years, building empathy with Palestinians as victims of the occupation as well as empathy with the victims of terror attacks has resulted in two separate cultural edifices. In fact, the two are totally disconnected and separate subject positions. The broader subject position in which the two Israeli viewpoints (opposition to the occupation together with empathy for Palestinian suffering and opposition to suicidal terror together with empathy for the suffering of Israeli victims) exist side by side is found—not by chance, it seems—only in autobiographical films, which are few and far between (for instance, Yulie Cohen Gerstel's film *My Terrorist* [2002], which describes her struggle to free from prison the terrorist who attacked her). These autobiographical films affirm that for those who have personally experienced suffering (in the *My Terrorist* example, as a victim of a terror attack),

the position of dual identification or empathy becomes the only possible ethical way to react to reality and, accordingly, to present it as cinematic reality. From the aspect of these filmmakers, the dual subject position is part of the belated recognition that trauma has occurred. It is the only option available to stop the vicious cycle of the conflict.

This article is written from a standpoint that is closer to the victims of terrorist attacks and the subject position of "victimhood," while still taking into account the deficiency of the dual subject position (and perhaps also the tremendous difficulty involved in identifying with both sides while the struggle for the survival of both continues; that is, before it is possible to speak of the aesthetics and politics of the past or of memory).

The Body as the Battlefield

Because the trauma of terror is controlled by mechanisms of regulation, excommunication, and taboo both in public discourse and in narrative cinema, the visibility of trauma is actually the sole measure of its occurrence.[7] It is therefore no wonder that visibility is one of the main issues regarding which overt, and primarily covert, negotiations are held in public discourse about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. At its best, documentary cinema acts as an agent of this visibility. The question is, what is seen in documentary films, and what is distanced, excluded, or covered up? And what does the exclusion or, alternatively, the visibility tell us about Israeli identity that is changing amid the trauma? The visibility of the trauma seems to be, first and foremost, the visibility of the human body.[8]

The "new" war in its contemporary, multilateral, and multipolar form has been defined by various scholars, including Frey and Morris, Walzer, Baudrillard, Johnson, Kaldor, Moskos, Gray, Latham, Žižek, and Crawford as typified by radical transformations.[9] Terror, as a component of the so-called new war, should be distinguished from all other modes, whether they are different from this sort of war or in-

cluded in it (e.g., infowar, nanowar).[10] In the new war the traditional contrasts that either have been dismantled or are in crisis are terror–war, sovereign state–legitimate authority, front–home, "us"–"them," civilian–soldier, individual crime–organized crime, human system–posthuman system,[11] high tech–low tech, victim–perpetrator, defense–offense, beginning–end, victory–defeat, war–peace, and moral–immoral.

Even though these scholars have noticed the changes in the traditional ("modern") battlefield, they have missed the principal change. In the reality of terror, it is no longer a matter of territorial borders in which the army of one state fights the army of another, or of the Baudrillard-type virtual battlefield. In the new war, the human body is the battlefield.

Consideration of the human body in its changing corporeal states (as body and as corpse) is, thus, unavoidable. The human body–as–battlefield captures the transformation occurring in the emergent parameters of contemporary war. Precisely because the central change in contemporary war is the "deliberate targeting of noncombatants" (Crawford 10), an analysis of the relation between body and corpse can provide a focus for the diffuse modes of contemporary war.

Documentary cinema, which offers a counterreaction to the repression of the trauma of the terror attack and the exclusion of the abject,[12] therefore, necessarily makes the body a signifying symbol. The rendering of the tension between body and corpse in documentary cinema on the *Intifadah* "captures" the development of an unpredictable and complex pattern of contemporary war—namely, its multipolarity and crisis of binary definitions. The nature of contemporary war is more accessible to the body than to other textual components, such as emplotment or genre, for example. The nonbodily components of the text become part of the textual fabric but cannot become the main textual symbol. The capturing of the essence of the war and the possibility of symbolization result from the fact that in these films the body transcends the bodily limitations and the con-

tours of the representation of trauma and the abject, to become an indexical sign.

The relation between the body and the corpse is not a simple relation between opposites. In the new war, the fact that the body replaces space as the battlefield produces a crisis—both of the body and of the space. The crisis of the body raises questions such as, "Can there be a corpse without a body?" as occurs, in extreme cases, to victims of suicide bombings; or "Can there be a body that does not turn into a corpse?" as with a suicide terrorist after the reconstruction and recorporealization of his body via the video recordings that are broadcast after the attack.[13] The crises of the body and of space are necessarily based on the modes of visibility they involve.

Characteristics—The Attack

In her well-known book *Powers of Horror* (1982), Kristeva writes,

> [A]*bject* . . . is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses . . . The corpse . . . that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death . . . A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not *signify* death. . . . These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border . . . The corpse . . . the most sickening of wastes . . . seen without God, and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object . . . For the space that engrosses the . . . excluded, is never *one,* nor *homogeneous,* nor *totalizable,* but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic. (2–8)[14]

The first characteristic of the crisis of the body and space in a terrorist attack is pre-traumatic. The space of the attack is transparent. This is because of the invisibility of the terror-

ist's body as a terrorist's body, given that it is usually unidentifiable. My looking (as it moves, together with that of others, within the space) is powerless. It is not a gaze. There is no visualizable field. I want to break through the transparent space, locate the invisible body, turn my look into a gaze, and use this "empirical gaze" both as a means of gaining knowledge and as a tool for the embodiment of the terrorist's body. The result is that it is impossible (or at the least, highly unlikely) to interpenetrate the transparency of the space, to gaze.

The second characteristic is also pre-traumatic. The transparent space does not create distinctions or relations among points, planes, sectors, or territories. It is a space in which two sorts of spatial relations are dominant: distance/closeness and density/spaciousness between bodies. The space is constructed exclusively of bodily relations (relations between one body and another) rather than, for example, relations between a body and an object. The distance from the "invisible" dominates the interaction among the human bodies and between these natural bodies and the terrorist's artificial, cyborg-like body.

The third characteristic is connected to the moment of the trauma itself. This is the radical moment in the crisis of the body and the space: the body as anticipated corpse. In this situation, the body is consumed by the trauma that is about to occur. The body hardly exists in the present (the tragic present of "just a moment"), and it has neither past nor future. The "potential" space of the attack, being "everywhere and nowhere," negates itself: the corpse inevitably has no space.

The fourth characteristic of the body/space crisis is what happens to me as an onlooker at the moment I am confronted with the trauma of an attack—that is, when I am turned into an object by the corpse. The abject changes my perception of myself as a subject and the pattern of subject–object relations. On the one hand, the taboo against seeing the abject is an inevitable layer in the repression of the trauma of the terror attack. On the other hand, when I look at the trauma, it is actually gazing at me. It

is the one with the gaze. I am thus turned into an object. I cannot use my look to impose my power on the corpse. I cannot subordinate the extreme abject—that is, the corpse—and turn it into the object of my look. But the abject, like the mythological Medusa, does this to me. It is repelling, freezing, objectifying, abjecting. This crisis of subject–object relations is part of the versions of body and self that are unceasingly decomposed and reorganized in the face of the trauma of the terror attack.

The fifth characteristic is the short-term change in the transparent, recently traumatized space that has been transformed—that is, the instability of the process of identification. The possibility of identifying the space as a concrete place stands in painful contrast to the impossibility of identifying the dead body after the terrorist attack. The place of the attack, the skeleton of the bus, or the building that housed the pizza parlor or café takes the place, on the level of identification, of the body that cannot be identified. The familiar public space replaces the anonymous private individual, creating closeness in a place where distance is forced on us, and gives it a name (such as "the attack at the Moment Café"). The name of the place is the substitute identity because the corpse, as mentioned, does not have a space. The result is another station in the cartography of terror in the public space.[15]

The final characteristic is the long-term change in the transparent space. This is the cycle of transparency-trauma-exclusion-transparency. The cleanup of the place where the attack occurred and the almost immediate reopening of the establishment—acts that are indicative of the official Israeli reaction to trauma ("There is no trace of what happened")—make the space transparent once again. At the same time they turn the relations within it into "bodily relations," making the body of the terrorist transparent as well, turning the body of the future victim into the anticipated abject, taking away the observers' power and knowledge, objectifying them, and making the trauma invisible. The instability of these identity-oriented relations distinguishes the ter-

Photo 1: The bus after the attack, a television news report.

ror event in a process that is based cyclically on transparency-trauma-exclusion-transparency.

The Case of *No. 17* (2003)

What is unique about Israeli documentary cinema, which functions to fill in the "empty screen" of the traumatic terror attack, is that it disrupts this cyclicality by representing the tension between visibility and invisibility. At its best, this documentary cinema counteracts concealment, cover-up, sanitization, and exclusion. It not only is present in the arena of trauma, it not only grants visibility to trauma, but it also is an active participant in constructing the changing Israeli national identity.

An excellent example is David Ofek's film *No. 17,* which shows a production crew of four people, led by Ofek, who decides to search for the identity of the seventeenth fatality of a suicide attack on a bus near the Meggido Junction in northern Israel. The film documents in real time over a period of six months the search for the identity of this man, whose body was so badly mutilated he could not be forensically identified. Because no one reported him missing, he was buried in an unmarked grave. Along with the story of the search for one victim's identity, the film looks into the stories of many other people. During the course of his investigation, Ofek naturally tracks down various clues and pursues several promising leads that wind up going nowhere. When it seems that the investigation has reached a dead end, a vague lead suddenly emerges, and two witnesses

attempt to accurately describe the dead man for a sketch artist. After the sketch is made and publicized in the press, someone contacts the crew and identifies the sketch. The seventeenth victim is Eliko Timsit.

The film opens with the television news report on the blowing up of Bus 830 at the Megiddo Junction by a suicide terrorist. The opening shifts among various foci: the news-flash from the scene of the event, a map of the area, the roadside memorial to the victims, and a newspaper edition containing faces, names, and human-interest stories. So far this is a familiar iconographic method of reporting on the trauma of a terror attack. But then there is an unfamiliar act, an act of drawing closer. In contrast to this entire iconography is a visit to the heterotopia of deviance, to use Foucault's terminology from "Des Espaces Autres"—the Institute of Forensic Medicine.[16]

The crew comes to visit the institute and interviews the chief police anthropologist, Zipi Kahane, about how the unidentified body of the seventeenth victim was handled and about her personal and professional life. While they are at the institute, they find out that there has been another suicide attack on a bus, and on voice-over Ofek announces that the filming crew has decided to stay at the institute and document what happens next. While awaiting the arrival of the victims' corpses, the staff of the institute prepares their lunch. The camera documents the preparation of the meal and the conversation around the table that centers on the attack and the arrangements for dealing with it: "Den-

tists say that they're on the way; identification technicians say that they're on the way . . ."

This basic description of the opening sequence suggests the significance of the quest undertaken by this film. It is a quest for the body that is behind the corpse, of approaching the visibility of the abject. This approach is typified by the conversation with Zipi Kahane about the physical condition of this corpse-without-a-body. In response to a question from the director, Zipi answers, "In the specific case of this attack, the corpse was in very bad condition, completely charred. The only thing we were able to determine with certainty is that it was a man. After we analyzed him . . . he looked to be about forty to fifty years old . . . no jewelry remained . . . his height was about 1.7 meters. This is a very ordinary man who died a very unordinary death."[17]

The approach to the abject is also embodied in the camera's view outward through the window of the room in which the interview is held. The separate shot shows the backyard, in which rows of empty mobile beds stand, parked and waiting. It is also embodied, in a different way, in the preparation of the meal, where apparent normalcy harbors a certain unease that pervades the whole scene (a vague unease that is reminiscent of the dinner scene of the police inspector and his wife in Hitchcock's *Frenzy* [1972], for example, in which the inspector is forced to take part in a symbolic meal of the corpse of the woman whose murder he is investigating [Modleski 109]). The filming compels us to take note of the view outward from the window, emphasizing the abject link between the "external" and internal spaces of the institute. The filming of the preparations for the meal and of the meal itself, achieved with no trace of voyeurism, exposes us to another, unfamiliar boundary between the normal routine of life and terrorist attacks.

On the one hand, we are made aware of the various boundaries of the presence of the abject in the heterotopic space, the Institute of Forensic Medicine. On the other, in the context of the announcement about the decision to wait for the ambulances, the close-ups create an un-

avoidable connection between the vegetables being cut up on the plate and the future cutting up of the corpses. The aesthetic precision of the salad being cut and eaten evokes cannibalistic associations. The space of oppositions between living/inanimate and dead, between sterility and earthiness, between peeling off the skin and the flesh underneath it, and between fragment and wholeness also contributes to the situation in which the closeness to the abject becomes ambiguous. The text does not allow, however, any respite or relief from the closeness and does not allow the closeness to be shattered to provide a comfortable distance. The sense of relief that dominates the scene when the meal is over, when the unexpected closeness to the ever-changing boundaries of the abject is past, is replaced by a renewal of the closeness at the end of the scene, as we wait with the crew for the ambulance. First we see Zipi Kahane, wearing sterile clothes, gloves, and glasses with magnifying lenses. This operating room attire connotes closeness to the corpse. So does the row of mobile beds where out of habit she sits during the wait, projecting her future-immediate approach to the corpse. Second, when the camera follows her to the ambulance parking lot, we see the refrigerators next to the parking area. Third, when the ambulance arrives, we see a close-up of the place where the shapeless corpse is lying on the stretcher, and we become witnesses to the question, "Which side of the stretcher is the head on?"

Until the screening of this film, the Institute of Forensic Medicine was basically a name with no visible substance. The last shots of the scene reveal, literally as well as metaphorically, the backyard of the trauma of terror attacks. This is a world full of people (police anthropologist, dentists, identification technicians), objects (operating attire, gloves, magnifying lenses), and accommodations (stretcher, mobile bed, refrigerator for corpses), a world that brings us closer to the abject—closer, though, for the sake of distancing, for the sake of exclusion. The heterotopic space facilitates acquaintance and immediately afterward the opposite,

exclusion. This movement from acquaintance to exclusion means that the contours of acquaintance are only temporary. Their temporariness is the temporariness of the functional treatment of the corpse. After exhausting the potential for knowledge that it contains (identifying the dead; the time of death; the reason for death—the explosive materials, whether there were nails in the bomb, burning, impact, and so on), the corpse is restored to the forgetfulness of exclusion and swallowed up by it. In absurd fashion, it is precisely the giving of the name—that is, the identification, the very heart of the process of acquaintance—that becomes the beginning of the exclusion. At all times, the approach harbors the knowledge of the exclusion. The institute, as a heterotopic site, constantly embodies this duality, which has been politicized.

In the specific case of this film, the focus on the institute emphasizes the process of approaching the abject rather than the counter-process of exclusion—that is, the penetrable principle of Foucault ("Espace, Savoir et Pouvoir"), however temporary and illusory, rather than the institute's also being a Deleuzian site of control. It is precisely because the institute does not identify the seventeenth victim that the film's quest for him redefines the possible visibility. The uniqueness of Israeli documentary cinema during the second *Intifadah* in general, and in this film in particular, lies in subverting the contours of the abject as the public discourse has defined them, with the aim of approach rather than distancing, inclusion rather than exclusion. Such cinema insists on revealing the first part of the process (acquaintance) more than its politicized counter-process (exclusion), on returning to the trauma neither in its iconographic form nor by means of its exclusion. The verification of the abject and the approach to it signify, to me, a recognition not only of the emergence of contemporary, new war, including, of course, recognition of its political implications, but also of the trauma's effect on identity.

The power of the film *No. 17* stems from the fact that the search is a search for identity—not only the specific identity of this anonymous victim, but the Israeli identity. The subversive element is that the basis for dealing with identity is in the ability to approach the abject, to come closer to the trauma.

Emphasizing the approach to the abject is also essential because of the nature of the drama. Along with the subversive process of exposure to the abject, the spectator undergoes an additional process that has a calming appearance. The anonymity of the seventeenth victim reinforces, of course, the arbitrariness of the terror attack. In other words, the seventeenth victim could be—horrifyingly enough—any one of us. But as the investigation progresses, and the details of Eliko Timsit's identity are gradually revealed, he is no longer "any one of us"—that is, the future victims of the arbitrariness of terror attacks. The possibility of "it could be me" naturally loses its force. In this regard, by the end of the film, there is an unavoidable aspect of repression: "It happened to him, not to me," with its overtones of "It won't happen to me in the future, either."

A process that counteracts any aspect of calming or exclusion, including the one just discussed, is also realized at the level of the genre. In terms of genre, the film operates within two formulas: the road film and the detective thriller. Yet it establishes between them a hierarchy that is important for the spectator's standpoint on the body-corpse trauma of the terror attack. The detective thriller is, of course, based on a pattern of retardations, gaps, curiosity about the past, suspense about future events, and surprise in the face of unexpected endings. The road film is, at its best, a psycho-geographic quest.

No. 17 progresses, it appears, without debriefing and without pre-preparing the interviewees in advance. The spectator thus participates both in the authenticity of the search and, at the same time, in the question it raises. The dominant pattern in terms of spectatorship is that of the quest, not that of the detective thriller. The director seems to maintain the advantages of the detective pattern while also subordinating it, in a positive sense, to the

quest pattern, which lends spontaneity and investigative mobility. Therefore, the achievement of stability when the mystery is solved does not constitute an affirmation of the social order, as in a detective thriller. Rather, as in the road film, this achievement only raises the question anew.

The main question is not one of identification. To be sure, the challenge of identifying the victim confronts the filming crew and the police investigating crew. But amid the quest for the inner recesses of the Israeli identity or identities, the main questions are social ones, with symbolic implications: To what extent are we prepared to draw near to the corpse? To the abject? Are we willing to see it as a body? To grant it an identity? To what extent are we prepared to reexperience the trauma entailed in this "resurrection"? To what extent are we willing to be exposed to the price of the occupation and to ourselves as perpetrators (even indirectly)?[18] The difficulty does not stem from the identification process but rather from the taboo associated with it. The seventeenth victim was found, as we saw, to be Eliko Timsit, a small-time criminal from the town of Sderot in southern Israel, who was traveling to the north on Bus 830 for a vacation. His family suspected he had been involved in illegal activities and so when he disappeared they did not look for him. The film ends with the episode in which, after DNA

from the remnants of Eliko's body are matched with that of his father, his remains are exhumed from his anonymous grave and buried in a Jewish cemetery.[19]

But the anonymity in the public discourse symbolizing the taboo on the visibility of terror continues. In this regard, the choice of the road film rather than the detective thriller as the dominant genre is essential. The film does not provide the spectator with a solution that affirms the social order. It acts, as a text, against conservative and forgetful tendencies, against disavowing the occupation and repressing the trauma of suicidal attacks.

Does the (post)traumatic relationship between the body and the corpse also appear in the Palestinian texts representing attacks—in the video recordings and the film *Paradise Now* (Hany Abu-Assad, 2005), the only Palestinian film to deal with suicide bombers? If so, of what kind? The first stage of answering these questions describes the process involving the body/corpse in the videocassettes, both because of the centrality of the recordings to the Palestinian discourse on terror and because the film *Paradise Now* refers to the videocassettes. It does so in two ways: metonymically and on the plot level—the whole text is actually a dramatic extension of the videos (before/after). The following analysis therefore also serves as an analysis of the scenes within *Paradise Now* that
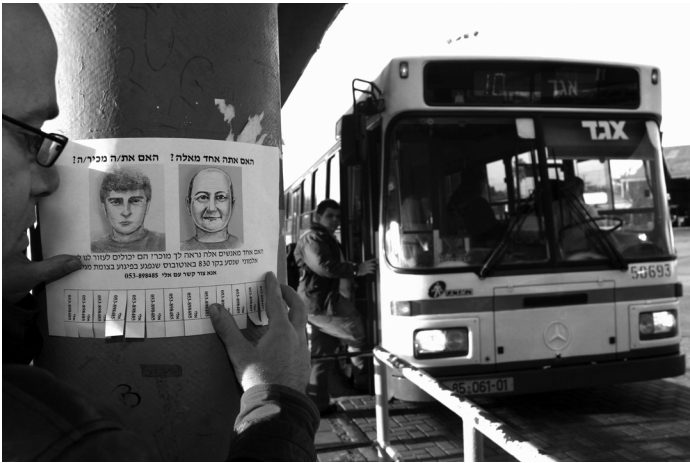

Photo 2: David Ofek, director of *No. 17* (2003), looks for the public's help with identifying the anonymous victim's sketch.

show the protagonists recording their video messages.

The Detonatorg

According to Gray, "postmodern war depends on a new level of integration between soldiers and their weapons, what are called human-machine weapons systems or . . . cyborg soldiers" (*Cyborg Citizens* 56). But the suicide terrorist is not the typical cyborg of faceless combat in the new war that occurs, as Gray describes it, across enormous distances and by remote control. The terror attack, as discussed earlier in this article, is a completely different mode of the new war. Thus, *detonatorg* (a combination of *detonator* and *organism* that does not emphasize the cybernetic organism but rather the specific, artificial nature of an organic body that is connected to a homemade bomb; that is, not the connections between brain and computer but between religious-national belief and low-tech) is a preferable term. The detonatorg becomes itself in a transformative process of immediate, alive-to-dead mutation.

Tragically, the suicide terrorist acts facelessly in what is precisely a face-to-face encounter. In an interview in Tom Roberts's film *Inside the Mind of the Suicide Bomber* (2003), Majdi Amri, who acted both as a recruiter of suicide terrorists and as a bomb engineer, effectively describes the detonatorg's anonymity in seeking to blend into the surroundings until the moment of the symbiotic realization of flesh and steel: "If the explosive belt is on the stomach, you stand so that there will be many people in front of it. If it is on the back, there should be many people behind it." What determines the position of the face (in the sense of the front of the body) is the location of the explosive belt, not the actual face of the suicide terrorist. The post-human body lacks an actual front, being oriented, robot-like, according to the human body/space that is before or behind it. The detonatorg thereby becomes, at the moment of symbiosis, hyper-lethal. The constructed ambiguous techno-bio body is annihilated. It has no existence beyond the moment of post-human symbiosis, which is, paradoxically, the moment of death.[20]

The use of the term detonatorg in the context of the suicide terrorist is meant to highlight the set of transformations involved in recorporealizing the terrorist's corpse. The widely displayed videocassette (including the one produced in *Paradise Now*) presents the suicide terrorist as a rifle-clutching fighter and not as a terrorist who conceals his explosives. The rifle that is borne overhead as part of the standard pose in these videos has the status of an extension of the body. These two elements—the overt pose of the fighter and the weapon as extension—contrast completely with the concealment of his body, that is, with his covert behavior as a suicide terrorist, and with the explosive belt that causes his annihilation, his fragmentation. In other words, the video recordings as "before" scenarios recreate an image that is the inverse of the process that is about to occur. It is not just the visibility of the living instead of the dead—the visibility of the body in a place where actually there are at most the burnt fragments of a corpse. It is also an image that is the complete contrast to the body, the anti-detonatorg, exposed and open.

As noted earlier, the corpses of *shahids* (the Arabic term for the suicide terrorists who are granted the status of martyrs after their death and who are assured a place in heaven [Israeli 74])[21] are retrospectively granted renewed visibility via videocassettes that were filmed before the attack and broadcast afterward, even though their bodies usually cannot be identified. Indeed, this is a permanent visibility. The corpse of the suicide terrorist once again becomes whole and coherent by means of the Palestinian transcendental-religious-national reconstruction: seemingly a body, not a corpse. The videocassettes, in contrast to other representations of terrorists who have committed suicide (such as the still photos in the press, graffiti drawings, posters on message boards, and so on), also function in the public discourse as a metaphor for movement, for the renewal of the Palestinian struggle. But the main power of the video recordings is in

recorporealizing the terrorist's corpse. It is a recorporealization in two senses and involves two transformations: from the mechanical-organic (the body and the explosive belt)[22] to the organic (the body, clutching a weapon), and from death to life.

Body, Corpse, Soil

The recorporealization that is an inherent part of the videocassettes and the film has a basic significance in the struggle for visibility and, concomitantly, a symbolic meaning in the struggle for the imaginary, lost soil of Palestine.[23] From the Palestinian standpoint, the discourse on the lost soil is conducted via the body that represents it. The recorporealization of the terrorist's corpse in the video, that is, the "replacement" of the corpse with a living body, signifies an ongoing claim to the soil. In this struggle for visibility, the Palestinian recorporealization stands in complete contrast to the taboo on visibility in Israeli public discourse.

In her book *The Chosen Body: Politics of the Body in Israeli Society,* Weiss asserts, "The chosen body of the fallen stands for the body social and the contours/borders of the territory. Body and territory become one . . . The land is personified, given a body, as it remembers the fallen" (122–23). But she does not distinguish between what she calls the "chosen body" (4–5)[24] and the abjected body, just as she does not distinguish in the first place between different modes of war. Weiss specifies three stages of Israeli media coverage of terror, stages that in her view characterize every war: loss and chaos, regathering, recovery (the element of chaos in the first stage of the coverage pertains only to terror). The first stage involves an emphasis on the leitmotif of the lost and un-identifiable corpses and on the disorder. In the second stage the city, like the body, returns to its normal life. Media coverage is not only informative but ritualistic and symbolic. The corpses are covered. The day after each terror attack is declared a day of commemoration as part of the ritual of regathering. The third stage of the coverage is typified by such rituals as a visit by the prime minister to the site of the attack, the lighting of candles, a demand to the Palestinian leaders that they fight the terror, and so on.

In regard to terror, this analysis is entirely at odds with the premises of this article. The loss does not involve recovery but only re-transparency. Indeed, in modern warfare the body of the warrior has tragically become a metaphor for the nation's relationship to the land. In new war, particularly in the case of terror, as argued earlier, an array of substitutions occurs: the body of the civilian replaces the body of the soldier; the body of the civilian replaces the battlefield—not the chosen body but the body that is abjected, excluded. The cultural metaphor of the body as soil, which until the *Intifadah* had typified the portrayal of Israel's wars, was dispelled; in its place a new, crisis-ridden connection with the land was formed. Public discourse has created a hierarchy in which the soldier who has been injured or killed is placed first, and the civilian who has been injured or killed is placed second.[25] Relating to the abjected body as if it were a "chosen body" in a time of terror entails hegemonization that is distorted in every regard: Zionist, Jewish, and patriarchal. Ignoring this transformation in the nature of war means ignoring the implications it has for Israelis' understanding of their identity. Understanding the crisis of space, understanding the crisis of the body, and understanding the crisis of the metaphorical connection between the body and the soil from the Israeli standpoint are linked one to the other. In this regard, even when *No. 17* performs a kind of process of resuscitation of the corpse (beginning with conjectures about occupation, character, education, mannerisms, and ethnicity so as to enable a sketch of the face), and even when the resuscitation process has a significance in terms of identity, it does not involve, in an immediate, metaphorical sense, a link to the soil. Israeli documentary cinema during these years indeed recreates a closeness to the abject and grants visibility to the trauma of terror, but it does not reestablish a metaphorical relation between the body/corpse and the soil. It thereby makes a major contribution to Israelis'

understanding of their changing identity as one that requires it be separated from the ethos linked to the soil.[26] Forced to discern the body as a battlefield and as adjacent to the (civilian) corpse means gradually losing the militaristic-metaphoric "traditional" claim to the land and undermining the attitudes regarding the struggle for the soil that guide the occupation.

Paradise Now (2005)

Paradise Now tells the story of two Palestinian childhood friends, Said (Kais Nashef) and Khaled (Ali Suliman), who are recruited by an unnamed Palestinian organization to undertake a suicide attack in Tel Aviv. The film follows them during the two days preceding the climactic deed. They are allowed to spend their last night with their families, but to ensure absolute secrecy, they are prevented from taking their leave properly. The next morning is spent in preparation for the mission—praise, shaves and haircuts, suits and ties, a ceremonial din-

ner, and a video recording. They learn how to handle, wear, and detonate explosives; how to infiltrate Israeli territory; and how to stay cool as the time for the attack approaches. Said has his doubts, thanks to Suha (Lubna Azabal), the daughter of a legendary Palestinian hero, who questions terrorist acts on both theological and practical grounds. Said falls for Suha but decides to continue. The operation falls apart, and the two friends are separated. On the second try, at the last minute, Khaled balks and prefers to stay alive, while Said perseveres. The last scene shows him sitting on a bus in Tel Aviv.

The fact that the abject is not visible is conspicuous both in *Paradise Now* and in the videocassettes recorded by suicide bombers. *Paradise Now* deals with the videocassettes and, as previously noted, uses them as a metonymy as well. The title of the film (which contradictorily acknowledges both the film *Apocalypse Now* and the Israeli left-wing political movement Peace Now)[27] is already worded as

Photo 3: Becoming a detonatorg in *Paradise Now* (2005). Courtesy of Lama Films, Tel Aviv.

an anticipatory demand for immediate, urgent realization ("now") of the recorporealization of the body versus the corpse.[28] This demand for urgency is first realized through the genre, a psycho-political thriller that develops according to the paradoxical principle of the end foretold. The end—the explosion—is not shown, even though from the beginning it is obvious that it will be carried out. This turns the film, in the language of Kristeva, into art that advocates the rejection of abjection. That is to say, the style does not channel the pain and the fear into abjection but, rather, rejects it. In Freudian parlance, it is "dependent upon a dialectic of negativity" (Kristeva 11).

How does this foretold conclusion present itself? In the plot, the final scene opens when the two protagonists have successfully infiltrated Tel Aviv. Following a shot in which Khaled is seen crying after Said gets out of the car that brought them into the city, there is a cut. The next shot shows the inside of a crowded bus. Using a long shot, the camera finds Said sitting in the back of the bus. The sound is realistic—diegetic; that is, the sounds of the journey are audible. Most of the passengers are paratroopers, identified by the red berets they wear. Only a few women, children, and other civilians are seen.[29] The camera approaches Said. The close-up shows his face devoid of the tension that has characterized it during the hours leading up to his decision to carry out the attack. The next shot is an extreme close-up of Said's eyes. After the cut there is a shot of a white screen. Silence. The End.

From the standpoint of identifying with the victims of the attack (while keeping in mind the difficulty inherent in the dual subject position), the meaning of the last shot (the white screen) is not "going to heaven (paradise)." It rather fulfills the objective of allowing ongoing identification with Said and what he represents by abstaining from audio-visualization of the attack. In other words, if the film had shown the results of the attack, the entire film would have had a different impact, a less sympathetic one.

Not only do the genre and the closing scene establish the rejected invisibility of the abject,

but most of the textual strategy fulfills the same objective. The text constructs four dominant spectatorial strategies: voyeurism, specularization, acceptance of passing, and inaudibility. The spectator becomes a voyeur to the ceremony marking Said and Khaled's transformation into detonatorgs; the spectator becomes a participant in the intensified specular character of the fighter on the videocassettes; the spectator's look that identifies with the passengers' looks in the bus means that he or she accepts Said's passing as a detonatorg; and in contrast to the bus passengers in the extra-diegetic world, the spectator is deprived of audibility: in the last shot he or she is exposed to the silencing of the explosion.

The four strategies, as mentioned, create rejection of the abject. But they serve as spectatorial compensation for its absence, or more accurately, its negation. On the surface, the voyeurism of *Paradise Now* provides a cathartic solution to the extra-textual enigma created by the media: "Who is the suicide bomber?" The film shows the aspirants, the families, the recruit, the inner workings of the organization, the taping of the videocassette, and the protagonists' transformation into detonatorgs. The subversion embodied in the videocassette recording scene gives a sense of physicality grounded in the comic relief provided by a detailed portrayal of a series of events (the video recorder breaking down, people eating breakfast while watching Khaled, and so on). This physicality is a substitute for the absence of abjection.

The question is, does the film provide only spectatorial compensation for the absence/rejection of the abject through voyeurism and physicality, or does it also permit a physical approach to the detonatorg, that is, the body-as-anticipated-corpse? Will the text, in this sense, despite its characteristic rejection of the abject, suggest a temporary closeness to the anticipated abjection?[30]

Paradise Now depicts temporary closeness to the anticipated abjection. This particularly occurs in the scene after the failure of the first plan, when Said and Khaled are separated,

and Said, who is on the run, enters the public toilets at a food stand by the side of the road in Nablus. The scene shows him inside the small space attempting to wipe off the sweat running down his body under his suit. The camera gazes at his body and reveals what is underneath the suit: the explosives are attached to his body by thick layers of dressings and adhesive bandages. Actually, they are wound around him, except for the fuse hanging down his side. The fuse provides him the only way of ridding himself of his burden—by exploding himself. The sweat and the location make the scene the most abjective in the film. The fear of bodily transformation, of being a detonatorg, and the impossibility of reentering the pre-transformative body, is shown physically. But the film does not amplify this aspect over and above this single scene.

The editing links the scene at the cemetery where Said is lying on the ground next to his father's grave holding the fuse (he was ten when his father was murdered for collaboration) with the second meeting he had with the head of the organization, Abu-Karem (Ashraf Barhom). The symbolic act that connects the body-as-anticipated-corpse with the dead father becomes the act of deciding to explode. Therefore, in contrast to the potential abjectness of the cemetery, the scene continues the textual trend of rejecting the abjection and favoring the symbolic body as a substitute. The meeting establishes the symbolic paternal relationship as central to the Palestinian masculine heroism, having a higher value than the brotherly connection between Said and Khaled. Said confesses to Abu-Karem his motivations for being a suicide bomber: his humiliation at being the son of a collaborator, anger at the occupation for not providing his father any option other than collaboration, and life in a refugee camp.[31]

Though the confession takes place under the patronage of the symbolic father, the film abandons the mythicization that had until that point been built around the character of Abu-Karem and begins to project it onto Said. During the whole length of the confession, the discussion between the two takes place with a continuous close-up on Said. Abu-Karem is sitting with his back to the camera; there are no shot-reverse-shots. The position of the camera is not unusual. The dominant aesthetic in *Paradise Now* is that of the frontal image. The film abounds with close-ups of faces turned to the camera. They are mostly silent close-ups that encourage projection on the part of the spectator. In the case of this scene, subverting the shot-reverse-shot convention encourages the projection of Abu-Karem's mythicization on Said. The result is that the oedipal component of the conversation—like other perspectives—is dwarfed, and the transcendence of *shahidism* is intensified. That being the case, the confession is the turning point in which the film succeeds in providing a "complete" solution to the enigma of who is a suicidal terrorist (by breaking the suspense and uncovering the motivations) and supports it with the aesthetics of over-visibility (excess of close-ups).

The conclusion is that the spectator becomes a participant in a complex process of voyeurism and specularity that rejects/negates abjection and simultaneously provides compensation for this negation: personalization of the terrorist, recorporealization of the body, concreteness of physicality, temporary closeness to an abjective location and abjective fluids, and aesthetics of over-visibility. But, overall, the rejection vanquishes compensation. Because the privileged subject position á la Hany Abu-Assad is that of the *shahid*/hero and not that of the (post)traumatic subject, the victimized, the dominant tone is not one of drawing closer to the abject. In addition, the film does not give the feeling that the abject is agitating beneath the surface. At most, it is "local"; that is, it unavoidably grows out of the thematics—the preparations for death.

The privileging of the symbolic body and not of the corpse comes to its culmination during the scenes showing Said's passing. As opposed to Valerie Rohy's definition of passing as "a performance in which one presents oneself as what one is not" (219), *Paradise Now* depicts dual, unusual passing. Although the spectator

is aware of the detonatorg's secret, he or she is a nonparticipant, looking from a distance at the audiences validating Said's passing with their looks. It is a dual passing because Said presents two different identities for two different audiences in the diegetic world—to Palestinians in Nablus, Said is a young Palestinian dressed like someone on his way to a wedding; to Israelis traveling on a bus in Tel Aviv, Said is an Oriental Jew.[32] The body of the wedding participant is symbolic in the tragic sense because, after all, Suha appears in Said's world as a kind of unrealized concrete substitute for the seventy-two virgins he is promised when he reaches heaven. According to this interpretation of *Paradise Now,* the wedding-participant identity is not a deception like that of the Oriental Jew. Passing as an Oriental Jew associates Said with the lower socio-economic sector of the Israeli population, which, like Eliko Timsit, the seventeenth victim, was forced to rely on public transportation even during the *Intifadah.* Said's masquerade does not entail the tension usually associated with "real" passing (such as racial passing) that involves fraud, treason, or self-denial. It is different than real passing á la Rohy because it does not open either political or psychological space regarding the identity of the other, or the possibility of playing with identities. Said wants to be accepted as an Oriental Jew, but of course does not identify within himself as a Jew. In the duality of passing, he reveals the impossibility inherent in the Palestinian desire for a concrete, stable identity, as opposed to a transcendental one. The question is, does the technical passing, in spite of this, offer a subversive option regarding identity? Are other dual identities at work here, besides those of outward appearance? Does passing reveal the artificiality of boundaries, of separation between two peoples that so closely resemble each another in appearance? Not in the opinion of the author. In the extra-textual world, at the site of the attack, the coming together of the suicide bomber's body with the bodies of the Israeli victims is replete with the intermingling of blood. Immediately after a terror attack, it is impossible to differentiate between the corpses of the terrorist and the victims—only after the body parts have been collected by ZAKA does the process of separation begin. This means that on the level of the abject, the passing has become total. In this sense the crisis of contradictions characterizing the new war, as described in the introduction, goes beyond binarism (we–them, civilian–soldier, etc.) to a labyrinth. In the world of *Paradise Now,* as the result of the rejection of the abject, the passing does not offer subverting options regarding identity. Beyond the awareness of physical resemblance, in the reality of present Palestinian–Israeli conflict, the questions posed here are not only impossible to answer, but even impossible to ask. The film channels all possible opportunities for a subversive discussion of identities toward the longed-for journey of the *shahidic* identity.

What takes place at the visible level also takes place at the auditory level. The (tress) passing creates the split inherent in the detonatorg—between the body (seemingly visible) and the (unheard) voice of the anticipated *shahid.* In contrast to the way the split is presented in the final scene, in Said's videocassette the recorporealization involves the subjectivization of the fighter through audibility. In the extra-diegetic reality, the sound of the explosion would speak in his place. In the final scene, the white screen denies the results of the attack both visibly and audibly.

The unavoidable conclusion is that *Paradise Now* does not construct the *shahidic* option as being (post)traumatic. The trauma that does take place under the surface mainly refers to the question of whether it is worthwhile for a young person to give up his life—and not if it is proper. The film presents several positions: the non-*shahidic,* Khaled's subject position: choosing life, a possible but not a proper option; the anti-*shahidic*, Suha's position: opposition to violence (this option is presented in the film only through dialogue and so lacks real power in the world of the organization and its emissaries and in the end is pushed to the sidelines); the a-*shahidic*, Khaled's mother's (Hiam Abbass) position: survival, which according to

Said is comparable to a living death. This series of contradictions leads to the proper subject position—the *shahidic*.[33]

As a psycho-political thriller, *Paradise Now* depicts a secret operation that climaxes with the detonation of a lethal time bomb and is based on suspense (failure of the first operation, the relationship with Suha, etc.). This suspense, however, is in lieu of exposure to the timer that will detonate the bomb. It is clear that if we had been exposed to the timer, if it had been Hitchcockian, it would have had to detonate the bomb—and be visible. The delays do not have anything to do with whether the bomb will explode, but relate to the question of whether Said will decide to go through with his mission. As a result, the climax is not an open question. The development of the drama from failure to success and from hesitation to decision is what determines the final cathartic tone.

In *Paradise Now,* as in Elia Suleiman's *Yadon Ilaheyya/Divine Intervention* (2002),[34] the Palestinian body bears the burden of change that befalls the subject. As described previously, this change involves objectification. Whether the objectification is real (as in *Paradise Now*—transformation into a detonatorg) or phantasmatical (as in *Divine Intervention,* where the female ninja returns to being a silhouette target), from the Palestinian standpoint, the pre-transformative body, sans objecthood, has no chance in the new war.[35] The call to "paradise now" perpetuates the suicidal relationship between objecthood and subjecthood. Analysis of the relationship between the body and the corpse therefore shows the terrible price Palestinian society pays for the place objecthood holds within the Palestinian conceptualization of subjectivity. *Paradise Now* maintains that the subject position of *shahidism*-heroism is an outgrowth of victimization resulting from the Israeli occupation. This construction does not allow the portrayal of the *shahid*-hero as a perpetrator—that is to say, a victim transformed into a hero for Palestinians while he is simultaneously a perpetrator to Israeli citizens. The rejection/negation of the abject in *Paradise Now,* the fact that it is not only invisible, but

unimagined and substituted by a disembodied spirit, above all else serves the single dimensionality of the Palestinian subject position (victim transformed to hero). The analysis of the relationship between the body and the corpse suggested here points to the price that Palestinian society also pays for denying the trauma of terror attacks. Its thanatography does not include what according to Kristeva is essential—confrontation with the abject.

Body/Corpse Ethics—Conclusion

An analysis of the relationship between the body and the corpse (approaching versus rejection of the abject) reveals, first of all, the inability of each of the films to include the dual subject position. The tragedy of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict during the second *Intifadah* does not permit—either in *No. 17* or in *Paradise Now*—fluidity of identities and identifications. Israeli documentary cinema constructs a victimized subject position and subliminally attempts to dismantle the position of the perpetrator (body-corpse-soil), and so, as previously mentioned, it is ahead of Israeli fictional cinema, which represses the position of the victim in relation to terrorist attacks while denying that the perpetrator's position is the result of the occupation. Palestinian fictional cinema, in the case of *Paradise Now* (and the videocassettes), constructs a heroic-*shahidic* subject position, which depends on a subliminal victim position (victim of the occupation), though it denies the position of the perpetrator in relation to terror attacks. The absence of a dual position is characteristic of the two films under discussion, though to the author, *Paradise Now* is the more conspicuous—both because of its rhetoric and because it obstructs all subversive options. Secondly, body/corpse negotiation attests to our willingness to accept impurity á la Mary Douglas and Kristeva; that is, to become contaminated by the corpse becomes an additional criterion of accepting the other. As the analysis here has shown, this is a crucial component for understanding the involved discourses, those that are open

to fluidity and doubling, as well as others that lack this fluidity.

Thirdly, the Israeli–Palestinian case might offer a new perspective for trauma studies at large. Current psychological-psychiatric-cultural trauma research (from Caruth to Walker) is marked by excessive emphasis on the question of memory as central to understanding and characterizing trauma (and to treating its victims). This question encompasses what this research defines as the inherent duality of the traumatic experience (two spans of time and space, two kinds of experience/awareness, two "types" of influence—on the body/on the soul, etc.). This definition harbors a predisposition and does not seek to understand trauma outside the processes of memory, while the application of the question of memory to all aspects of trauma precludes all other discussion of those aspects. Is not the fetishization of memory an outcome of a certain world order? A perspective appropriate to the post-1945 world seems particularly germane to the twentieth century, the century of the crisis of testimony. In regard to terror, the new trauma requires a different concept of the "crisis of memory." Despite the recourse to such temporal/epistemological terms as trauma and posttrauma, unknowable and belated knowing, and so on, a discussion of the substantivity of trauma must include additional dimensions outside of memory. These are primarily ontological, not epistemological, dimensions—body and corpse, body and space—and what was described in this article as the perception of time involved in the attack, the time of the body as anticipated corpse. This is the time of "one more moment" (without a past, a brief present that moves inevitably toward its end, without a future).

Giving centrality to the question of memory also leads the research to emphasize what it describes as two dichotomous paradigms (mimetic/identification/hypnotic imitation and/or antimimetic/dissociation/estrangement [Leys 299]).[36] But are these paradigms indeed dichotomous? The trauma of a terrorist attack by a suicide terrorist does not fit either of them. As the validity of this dialectic between the para-digms diminishes, "memory crisis" can no longer be the exclusive characteristic of traumatic discourse. In contrast to the trauma of modern war, in the case of terror, because of the lack of knowledge of who the attacker is and the death of the attacker (unlike in situations of ongoing captivity, for example), there can be no identification with him or hypnotic imitation. Nor, because of the sudden, arbitrary, catastrophic nature of the attack, can there be an opposite, antimimetic situation in which the traumatized subject becomes a detached observer of the event. Thus, it is impossible to apply the dialectic between the paradigms, which according to Leys is part of the history of trauma, to the trauma of a terror act committed by a suicide terrorist. In other words, this is a "double telling" in Caruth's sense (7),[37] but in a different, additional regard: not only a story of death and survival, but a story *both* of death and survival (of the victim of the attack) and of death with no pre-choice of survival (of the suicide terrorist).

The transformation needed in the current conceptualization of traumatic memory must be based on changes in the nature of subjectivity and the relationship between objecthood and subjecthood. In addition, the difficulties in containing the contradictory positions of perpetrator and victim—in the perception of the event, in the perception of death, and in the visibility and acceptance of the abject/the other—are also factors to be taken into consideration.

Tragically, as this deconstruction of the "classic" paradigm of trauma studies shows, terror attacks to a large extent force Israeli society and Palestinian society to sink into a trauma without cure, with no transition to the posttraumatic stage. Within the reality of ongoing exposure to trauma, Israeli documentary cinema in the period of the *al-Aqsa Intifadah* has been able to show what has not been seen in public discourse or the fictional narrative cinema. The public space as a psychological space becomes a tragic participant in a gradual process of menticide[38] that is imposed on the citizens of Israel by the continuous occupation and by the terror organizations. Repression, invisibility, and

exclusion become substantive to menticide. In complete contrast, documentary cinema relates to the body and the corpse anew as a defining power. This renewed interpretation is a basic component of the changing Israeli identity. The contours of the approach to the abject should be defined not by the inevitable repression of the trauma by the psychopolitics of the public space and not by the ultra-Orthodox functionality of the "return of the repressed" according to ZAKA.[39] The approach to the abject does not mean "death infecting life," that is, ultra-religious-motivated conceptions of "pure" or "impure," "prohibition" and "sin," and so on, but the opposite. The approach is "death affecting life." Documentary cinema recreates the awareness that the "new" Israeli self (which has been reconstructed by the terror) is a vagrant in the zone between the hysterical body that does not "speak" because of the taboo imposed on such speech in the public discourse and the abject, silent body/corpse. Moreover, as the film *No. 17* demonstrated through its director's docu-activism, this cinema is reconstructing the new Israeli identity, devoid of the traditional claim to the land, and is in the midst of becoming open to the other. Tragically, a reunderstanding of death is needed for this purpose. As the book of the prophet Nahum (3:3) states, "a multitude of slain, and a great heap of corpses, and there is no end to the bodies."

NOTES

1. This article focuses on the years 2002–04, which were the peak years of the *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in regard to terrorist attacks. The use of the term "terrorist" to describe suicide bombers of civilians is morally loaded. As hopefully will be demonstrated in this article, this use is part and parcel of foregrounding a two-sided position that does justice to the complexity of the political (and discursive) conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. According to data from B'tselem ("Statistics"), the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, there were 137 suicide bombings during the second *Intifadah*. The number of Israeli civilians killed in the attacks by suicide terrorists came to 635, 110 of them children. The data are from the period of 29 September 2000–15 September 2004.

2. This article deals with the most common form of terrorist attack—namely, one carried out by a suicide terrorist acting alone, entering Israel from the occupied territories in disguise, wearing an explosive belt or carrying a booby-trapped parcel, and choosing a crowded urban setting for his attack.

3. See, for example, Yeud Levanon's *Islands on the Shore* (2003) or Eytan Fox's *Walk on Water* (2004).

4. See also Hartman; Hacking, "Trauma"; Hacking, "Memory Sciences"; and Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart.

5. Among the important films that deal with the terrorist attacks are the following: *Closed, Closed, Closure* (Ram Loevy, 2002); *My Terrorist* (Yuli Gerstel-Cohen, 2002); *In the Name of God: Scenes from the Extreme* (Dan Setton and Tor Ben-Mayor, 2003); *Life for Land* (Tamar Wishnitzer-Haviv, 2003); *The Skies Are Closer in Homesh* (Manora Hazani-Katzover, 2003); *Putting the Roof Aright* (Michael Lev Tov, 2003); *Channels of Rage* (Anat Halachmi, 2003); *Beyond the Dark Mountains* (Tzach Nussbaum, 2004); *Lullaby* (Adi Arbel, 2004); *Arna's Children* (Juliano Mer Khamis and Danniel Danniel, 2004); *Blues by the Beach* (Joshua Fauden and Pavela Fleischer, 2004); *True Kindness ("Hessed shel Emet")* (Nitza Gonen, 2004); and *One Widow, Twice Bereavement* (Orna Ben-Dor Niv, 2005).

6. The film *Lullaby* presents the personal testimonies of eleven Palestinian and Israeli mothers who lost their children during the *Intifadah*. The film is unusual in the cooperation surrounding the tragedy. Motherhood becomes the central subject position.

7. On the changes that have occurred in the television coverage of the terrorist attacks in Israel, see Tamar Liebes.

8. For a discussion of the relation between the visible and the audible in this context, see my article, Morag.

9. This article demurs from the wide use of the term "postmodern war" in this context, both because it is a term much abused intellectually and because postmodernism, á la Lyotardian tradition, for example, assumes areferentiality, whereas exactly the opposite is assumed. Contemporary war appears to be a transition stage or a clash between the wars that characterized the twentieth century up to the 1990s and those that so far have characterized the twenty-first. Apart

from the varieties of their definitions, all the authors mentioned here note that conventional/traditional/modern war has entered a new epoch. Thanks go to Philip Rosen for drawing the author's attention to the need to rethink the definition of postmodernism in this context.

10. Most of the researchers discussed here are unexceptional in that they do not distinguish between terror as a mode and other modes of "new" war. The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder*'s redefinition of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) makes no distinction between modern war and new war and only counts terror among the "traumatic events" (463–68).

11. Gray (*Cyborg Citizen*) basically defines the cyborg as "a self-regulating organism that combines the natural and artificial together in one system" (2). Like all the writers on postmodern war, Gray does not relate to terrorism in this context but mainly to "smart war," the infowar or nanowar of the future.

12. Because every terrorist attack creates an abject, it should be emphasized that the terrorist attack constructs a special relation between repression and exclusion. Repression, of course, is not conscious, whereas exclusion is.

In almost absurd fashion, repression of the trauma and exclusion of the abject are inextricably bound up with a different return of the repressed to the center of public discourse concerned with terror, the *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) Jew. In 1995 the ZAKA Rescue and Recovery Organization was established (the Hebrew acronym stands for "Identification of Disaster Victims"). It is well known to the Israeli government as a voluntary organization for the collection and removal of corpses, which strictly preserves the honor of the dead and brings them to Jewish burial. ZAKA members, who are part of the separatist, anti-Zionist *haredi* minority in Israeli society, have become, as a result of their role after terrorist attacks, an inseparable part of the rescue and security forces of the State of Israel. A discussion of this "return of the repressed," with its pre- or anti-Zionist nature, is beyond the scope of the present article. In terms of visibility, ZAKA operatives are part of the mainstream iconography of the terrorist attacks.

13. The suicide-bomber video recordings that were broadcast after terrorist attacks on Israel's Channel 1 television during 2002–04 were presented in almost uniform, standard format: the suicide bomber faces the camera in military attire and brandishes his rifle, wearing a headband that identifies him with his organization. He gives his name and place of birth and makes a speech largely based on the Koran that he holds in his other hand (or that he points to). The text of the speech has already been prepared and is not improvised, and it is brief: "I, so-and-so, from such-and-such organization, take revenge for such and such . . ." Sometimes the videos contain enlarged photographs of *shahids* being held by young people during demonstrations. Instruction videos for suicide bombers disseminated by the Hezbullah during this period also include photographs of the mothers in their mourning, holding stills of their sons. Apart from the onetime broadcast on the foreign channels immediately after an attack, the bombers' videos have a long broadcast life on the Islamic channels.

I thank Oded Granot, principal Arab affairs analyst for Israeli TV Channel 1, for his help on this topic.

14. In the description of the characteristics of the crisis, following Kristeva's style, "I" and not "one" is used in order to emphasize in the most intimate manner the possibility of any and all Israeli citizens being the victim of a terrorist attack.

15. This cartography has at least two aspects. For one thing, the city map of Jerusalem, for example, is "marked" according to the places where terrorist attacks have occurred. The attacks have fostered a remapping that has become part of the local language. The second aspect is related not to the stationary space but instead to the mobile one. The buses that are "designated" for attacks mark the mobile urban space and cause its boundaries to be "fluid," rapidly changing ones.

16. See also Vivian Sobchack (283–300).

17. The translation is the author's.

18. See Borer (1101–02). Discussing the taxonomy is beyond the scope of this article.

19. Eliko is an Oriental Jew from what in Israel is called a development town in the south, the most underdeveloped part of the country. Although the targets of suicide bombing attacks are arbitrary (any Israeli is a potential victim), there is evidence that most victims of attacks on buses and in open markets are Israelis from the lower socioeconomic classes (many of them Oriental Jews, and some foreign workers) who do not own cars and therefore use public transportation.

20. Most scholars point to the entry of women into combat roles as a key characteristic of new war. According to Spivak, "Suicide bombing . . . is a purposive self-annihilation, a confrontation between oneself and oneself—the extreme end of autoeroticism, killing oneself as other, in the process killing others. It is when one sees oneself as an object, capable of destruction, in a world of objects, so that the destruction of others is indistinguishable from the destruction of the self" (95).

21. According to Israeli, *shahid* can have three different meanings: a martyr who died for the sake of Allah, the fallen in the *jihad,* or a Muslim who experienced suffering before a tragic death. Despite the various nuances attached to each meaning, all are based on a religious concept involving death while performing a worthy act recommended by the faith. The Holy Book of Islam, in fact, attests to such a death, even if the use of the term *shahid* often refers

there to a "witness" of all sorts (74). See also the on-going debate on the "culture of martyrdom" in Dolnik, "Critical Commentary," and in Kimhi and Even.

22. In this regard, the terrorist who wears the invisible explosive belt on his body is more the "perfect" detonatorg than the one who carries a booby-trapped parcel. Early in September 2004 at the Erez Junction, the terrorist Muhammad Manasi was caught before carrying out a suicide bombing he had planned. He was wearing underpants into which plastic explosives were stitched, and a triggering device was implanted in his wristwatch (*Haaretz* daily, 26 Sept. 2004). So far this is the most extreme example encountered of a total detonatorg, beginning with the destruction of sexuality. In this case the integration between the body and the explosive substance takes on clear symbolic meanings, which reinforce the meaning of the entire process—both self-annihilation and recorporealization.

23. A different approach is proposed here from that of most scholars who deal with the issue, who see the videocassettes as a merely institutional response or as "suicide notes," a sort of testament that plays an educational role for the suicide terrorists of the future (e.g., Israeli 73).

24. "This masculine, Jewish, Ashkenazi, perfect, and wholesome trope is what I call . . . the chosen body. . . . Since the early days of nation-building (the 1900s through the 1940's), the Israeli/Zionist body has been regulated to form a 'new person'" (4–5).

25. See, for example, an article by then Knesset member Yossi Sarid, titled "Death That Hurts More," which was published in the *Haaretz* daily in June 2004, after the death of thirteen soldiers in the Gaza Strip. The author wrote,

> When soldiers are killed, it's an earthquake; when civilians are killed there is much less emotion . . . civilians here, without uniforms, are human dust . . . by definition soldiers are not murdered (unless they are victims of a terrorist attack in a bus or restaurant) . . . presenting them as soldiers who were killed as terror victims harms their memory. Soldiers are killed as fighters on the battlefield . . . soldiers are also symbols of the state, and when a soldier is harmed the symbol is harmed too. (author's translation)

26. Among the films mentioned, only one, *The Skies Are Closer in Homesh,* the family video by Manora Hazani-Katzover (daughter of Benny Katzover, one of the founders of Gush Emunim and a leader of the settlement movement in the occupied territories), recreates the link to the soil. Filmed in two settlements in the northern West Bank where terrorist attacks had occurred, it is clearly an almost didactic, right-wing film. The sites of the filming and the ideology of the spokeswoman alter, of course, a considerable part of the basic assumptions on which this article is based.

The approach to trauma and to the abject is different in this context.

27. The reference here is to Francis Ford Coppola's well-known film and to the name of the Israeli extra-parliamentary movement whose agenda is "swaying popular opinion and convincing the Israeli government of the need and possibility for achieving a just peace and an historic conciliation with the Palestinian people and neighboring Arab countries; this in exchange for a territorial settlement based on the formula of 'land for peace.'" (http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=43). Suleiman's *Divine Intervention* also alludes to the movement in an ironic manner: the marksmen practicing on the silhouette target of the Palestinian woman are all wearing Peace Now tee shirts.

28. Because of the limited scope of this article, the discussion of *Paradise Now* cannot relate to such topics as the controversy generated by its 2006 nomination for an Academy Award in the Best Foreign Film category or the question of how it was received by various audiences. Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi's *Landscape in Mist: Space and Memory in Palestinian Cinema* was published as this article was being completed.

29. Here it should be noted that this would be a very rare sight in Israel. Such a large group of paratroopers would almost never, if at all, be traveling together on public transportation; they would usually travel on army buses. From this aspect, it is clear that Abu-Assad's choice in the matter is an attempt to place the scene in the traditional, modern war, against a regular army, and not relate it to terror against civilians.

30. In Kristevian parlance, closeness to someone who is a deject:

> An exile that asks, "where?" [because] the one by whom the abject exists is thus a deject who places (himself), separates (himself), situates (himself), and therefore strays . . . For the space that engrosses the deject, the excluded, is never one, nor homogeneous, nor totalizable, but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic. The deject never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines—for they are constituted of a non-object, the abject—constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh . . . the deject is in short a stray. (8)

31. Baudrillard points to the motivations of suicide bombers as being personal and carried out in broad daylight in response to the humiliations they have experienced:

> It is a misunderstanding to see in the terrorist act purely destructive logic. It seems to me that their own deaths cannot be separated from their act (it is

precisely this connection that makes it a symbolic act) and it is not at all the impersonal elimination of the other. Everything resides in the defiance and the duel, in a dual, personal relation with the adverse power. Since it is the one that humiliates, it is the one that must be humiliated—and not simply exterminated. It must be made to lose face. This is never gained by mere force or by the suppression of the other. The other must be targeted and hurt in the full light of the adversarial struggle. ("L'Esprit du Terrorism" 412)

For discussions regarding the typology of suicide terrorists in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, see for instance Kimhi and Even; Pedahzur; and Dolnik. Said typifies the prototype of both the "exploited" and the "avenger."

32. In the Israeli film *Fictitious Marriage* (Haim Bouzaglo 1989), made at the height of the first *Intifadah,* the protagonist is an Oriental Jew who impersonates a Palestinian Arab, a passing in which the ultimate test is terror.

33. According to Baudrillard,

Thus, here, everything is played out on death, not only because of the brutal irruption of death *live,* in real time, but because of the irruption of a "more than real" death: the symbolic and sacrificial death. This is the absolute event that does not tolerate any appeal. Such is the spirit of terrorism . . . The terrorist's hypothesis is that the system itself will commit suicide in response to multiple challenges posed in terms of death and suicide, for neither the system nor its power can escape the symbolic obligation. ("L'Esprit du Terrorism" 408–09)

34. The final scene depicts the fantasy of the protagonist, in which his girlfriend peels herself off the silhouette target that Israeli marksmen are using for practice, transforms into a female ninja, and kills them all except for the commander, after which she rejoins the target.

35. Hany Abu-Assad's present film is not satisfied, as was his earlier docudrama *Ford Transit* (2002), with showing the horrors of the occupation through a closed space that must be breached again and again. In *Paradise Now* as well, the protagonists are symbolically tied to space (and to the subjugation symbolized by traffic) through their profession as car mechanics. Hany Abu-Assad, however, is not discussing ways (circumventing/bypassing) to change space, as he did in *Ford Transit,* but (direct) ways to change the body— not through a journey that repeats itself, but through a journey from which there is no return.

36. According to Leys,

From the turn of the century to the present there has been a continual oscillation between [the two theories], indeed that the interpenetration of one by the other or alternatively the collapse of one into the other has been recurrent and unstoppable . . . The concept of trauma has been structured historically in such a way as simultaneously to invite resolution in favor of one pole or the other of the mimetic/antimimetic dichotomy and to resist and ultimately to defeat all such attempts at resolution. (299)

37. "Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it? At the core . . . is . . . a kind of double telling, the oscillation between *a crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life:* between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival." (emphases in the original)

38. "The systematic effort to undermine and destroy a person's values and beliefs, as by the use of prolonged interrogations, drugs, torture, etc., and to induce radically different ideas." (*Webster's* 896).

39. The documentary film by Nitza Gonen, *True Kindness,* shown on Israeli television primetime after four years of the *Intifadah,* is probably the first film to be made about ZAKA. Because of its close focus on the work of the ZAKA people, the film reveals abject dimensions that normally are hidden from view, such as, for example, their "work tools": the plastic bags that are used for the corpses as opposed to those used for collecting body parts, the "scraper" and the ways of using it (scraping things from walls), and so on. Their experiences at the sites of terrorist attacks are also described in detail, which is exceptional in the discourse. However, this extreme and exceptional focus on the abject is anchored in contexts of Halakhic repression.

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