Beyond the Modern-Postmodern Struggle in Education

Toward Counter-Education and Enduring Improvisation

Ilan Gur-Ze'ev

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BEYOND THE MODERN-POSTMODERN STRUGGLE IN EDUCATION

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Beyond the Modern-Postmodern Struggle in Education

Toward Counter-Education and Eternal Improvisation

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To Alonik

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DIASPORIC PHILOSOPHY, HOMELESSNESS, AND COUNTER-EDUCATION IN CONTEXT: THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN EXAMPLE

JUSTICE AS A THREAT TO THE VERY EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL

The Israeli condition has already begun to display this hard truth: after more than a hundred years of Israeli-Palestinian coexistence the Jews cannot avoid paying in the coin of *worthy life* to safeguard their mere *existence*. In other words, even if the structure of the State of Israel survives it will endure, most probably, only in the form of Sparta of the wicked.[1] It is so painful and hard for me to face this reality, as I am as much the grandson of Keyla Goldhamer, who barely survived the 1903 *Pogrom* of Kishiniev, and whose stories and lessons are so meaningful for me until this day, as the son of Robert Wiltchick, who lost almost all his family in the Holocaust and was spared the Nazi death industry only after being thrown into the mass grave from which he literally emerged all on his own, and the son of Hanna Wiltchick, who lost her marriage to her first husband as her share in the Holocaust; all these experiences are formative for my Diasporic horizons. Yet I think all of us, even the Zionists among us, should today rethink our old conceptions about Jewish life and the Jewish mission in Israel and in the Diaspora. Perhaps a good beginning would be to rethink central conceptions such as "Diaspora", "homeland", and "homecoming". Such an elaboration presents us with nothing less than the present day Jewish *telos* and our responsibility toward its fulfillment as well as toward the overcoming of its fulfillment and of what we presently are. It is of vital importance to conceive Diasporic human possibility as rooted in Judaism only as part of richer and deeper roots of human possibilities that transcend Judaism and overcome Monotheism, Western concepts of light-truth and triumphant patriachalism, even in the form of radical feminist alternatives in the McWorld. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, to my mind, the current historical moment already enables us critically to summarize the last hundred years' attempt to turn away from the Diasporic Jewish goal by the Zionist barbarization of the Jewish Spirit within the projects of "annihilating the Diaspora", "homecoming", and "normalization".

Under current historical conditions, as Israelis, Jews are structurally almost prevented from facing the possibility of living in light of the Messianic impetus, as the world's

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[1]   Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, "Before we become Sparta in Kapotott", *Panim*, 4, (1998), pp. 73–80.

universal moral, intellectual, and creative vanguard. This special Jewish mission was made possible by the Jews' unique *homelessness*—a Diasporic existence as a realized ideal of a community that is not a collective. Diasporic life is ultimately a kind of life in which the *yahid* (individual, not found in liberal terminology) is afforded, as an ecstatic way of moral life, an existence that allows a universalistic moral *responsibility* and intellectual commitment to overcome any dogma and content with the world of "facts" and to reject the promises of mere power, glory, and pleasure. All this has changed in face of the successes of Zionist education and its political realizations.

It is no wonder that there is no Israeli Ibn Gavirol, Baruch Spinoza, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Albert Einstein, Theodor Adorno, Emmanuel Levinas, or Jacques Derrida. One can experience the immanent violence and the insipidness of Israeli life just by driving on the roads. One can meet its devoted anti-humanist values and passions by facing the unchallenged attacks on "the inefficiency and lack of patriotism of the Israeli universities".[2] Another example might be the silence of the current culture heroes and the popular satisfaction by which the cuts in funding for high culture are accompanied. Still another example could be the unchallenged crusade against the high court and the ideal of a rational, open, free, and equal public sphere. And this is before facing the brutal realities of the treatment of foreign workers, or the structural repression of the Palestinians. I write this with great pain, not because Israeli society is among the cruelest or the intellectually poorest of all societies on earth. At this very moment there are so many worse examples that the politically correct bible forbids us to address, in favor of concentrating moral, political, and armed attacks on Israeli society.

The ongoing genocide in southern Sudan, the daily Russian assaults against the Chechen people; the Beijing human-organs-industry based on taking the parts from spiritual and political dissidents before systematically killing them on a mass scale; the uprooting of the Tibetan people; the oppression of Christians and the conditions of women, homosexuals and other minorities in Saudi Arabia; or the subjugation of the Russian minority in Estonia are only a few examples of today's lack of courage and widespread dishonesty in the treatment of Israel. At the same time it is true, and one should face it, hard as it is to acknowledge, that Israel has become a space where there is less and less room for genuine creative spirit and for social justice. Israel has become the ultimate Diaspora of the Jewish Spirit. Here, more then anywhere else, there is no room for "the Jewish heart", or for Jewish intellectual independence and avant-garde creativity. It is a sad actuality, but I cannot avoid, must not avoid, facing it even if it is so hard for me to acknowledge: there is no room for a just State of Israel. St. Augustine knew this was so for all manifestations of "the earthly city".[3] In the case of Israel it has become so clear that *unreserved siding against injustice inevitably endangers the very existence of Israel*, not solely its current policies. The latest example of this is the Second Lebanese War.

2   Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, "The Catch of Limor Livnat", *Ma'ariv,* 13.1.2002, p. 6.
3   St Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, translated by Henry Bettenson, London: Penguin Books, 1984, pp. 593–597.

Israel, as a normal state that is committed to its security and sovereignty, had to adopt terrible means to ensure not only social and economic stability on its northern border but its very existence, in light of the explicit Iranian-Hizbullah commitment to annihilate the Jewish state on religious grounds. So Israel had to respond in a harsh manner to the consistent unprovoked missile attacks on its northern cities while being condemned by world media and public opinion for a "disproportionate" reaction. The postcolonialists see Israeli policies in this respect (insisting on Lebanese sovereignty and its responsibility to ensure no private army will bombard Israeli cities at will) as another manifestation of its immanent brutal colonialist existence. On the one hand these are unjustified denunciations, based on misinformation, pragmatic interests in the Arab world, founded, reflecting and realizing the old and the New Antisemitism. On the other hand, Israel did commit terrible acts, so many terrible deeds, during that war, some by mistake, some intentionally. Given the military methods of the Hizbullah militia, which systematically uses villages in southern Lebanon not only to hide but actually to launch missiles against Israel, the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) was faced by dilemmas such as the following: identifying a present-moment launch of a Katyusha or a Zelzal II toward an Israeli city from the roof of a house in a southern Lebanese village, *should it bomb the house and save the Israeli victims while killing at an instant an entire Lebanese family (even if the mostly Shiite population of southern Lebanon normally enthusiastically welcomes the Hizbullah militia on its terrain) or should the Israeli army be morally committed to avoid any killing of Arab civilians, even at the cost of its own civilians' lives?* Is it morally right to discriminate against innocent Israeli civilians in favor of Lebanese civilians? In such instances should we morally go into the question of proportionality, namely what number of innocent Lebanese civilians killed justifies the prevention of the killing of innocent Israeli civilians? And so on. Should we, when faced with such dilemmas, go into questions such as the amount of unlimited cooperation and support by the civilian Shiite population in southern Lebanon for Hizbullah as a partial criterion for a decision on the immediate question of firing or not firing on a civilian house and its inhabitants to prevent the killing of Israeli civilian population targeted by a terrorist organization that uses civilian installations and ground for attacking the Israeli civilian population? Should moral considerations impel us to consider questions of the degree of separation and the measure of responsibility between Hizbullah and the southern Lebanese farmers, who in many respects are part of the Hizbullah organization, and sometimes also of its military organization and operations, taking part in the military attacks against the Israeli civilian population across the border? Even if the answer is affirmative, how do you actually reduce the degree of cooperation with a terrorist organization to degrees of responsibility, and how do you reduce the degree of responsibility to a specific order to the pilot in the warplane who needs to know if he should bomb the house or abort the attack? Such moral dilemmas were *not an exception* but the general rule in the practice of the military operations in the Second Lebanese War (August 2006). And the Second Lebanese War, how unfortunate, is only a microscopic example for the very existence of Israel in the region as a moral dilemma.

As anti-determinists, we should understand the present historical moment as *open*, since inevitably it also contains the possibility of a radical shift toward a more humane, rational, and moral existence in Israel, as well as in Palestine. Referring to the most recent example of the Second Lebanese War we might ask: why should we not be optimistic as to the possibility of an imminent peace treaty between Israel and Lebanon, if there are no fundamental border disputes between the two countries, joint economic interests can lead to cooperation and mutual prosperity, and a broad consensus in Israel (which includes even the extreme political right) favors cooperation and peace with Lebanon? Why should not the interests of post-Fordist economy, if not a humanistic vision of mutual respect and cooperation, lead us to a better future of creativity, prosperity and peaceful coexistence, stronger and more relevant than the fanatic religious and ethnocentric agendas? Addressing such a question beckons us into world politics, the interests of emerging regional powers such as Iran, and the specifics of Lebanese cultural and political realities. These might show us that in effect Lebanon is not a state in the modern sense of the word. But we will not go there. Instead, let us elaborate more on some central trends in Israeli reality.

When even for a moment, or to a certain degree, the direct threat to the very existence of Israel decreases (in the spaces where it is actualized) the plurality, openness, creativity and pragmatism of the McWorld have the upper hand. Yet in Israel the world of Jihad threatens not only beyond the border: it is a vital part of the constitution of the new Israeliness. In face of partial, deep post-idealist and anti-ethnocentristic-oriented tendencies most major politically organized powers in Israel manifest stronger ethnocentrism and weakening of democratic and liberal values, with very little interest in education for a mature humanistic, reflective, moral, coexistence. The rival groups and the separatist agendas are, as in Lebanon, and unlike the dominant tendencies in Palestinian society, which is speeding toward a fundamentalist consensus under the guidance of the Hamas educational-political leadership, unable to come up with a consensus about "the common good". They are certainly incapable of agreeing on a specific educational program aimed at a worthier reality. In face of this we may ask: *What has gone wrong with the State of Israel?* To answer this question we should return to the Zionist constitutive idea of "homecoming".

WHAT HAS GONE WRONG WITH ISRAEL?

The Zionist negation of Diaspora is a turn away from Jewish moral destiny. History corrects this deviation not without inflicting such enormous loss and suffering, which includes a threat to the soul and physical existence not only of the largest Jewish collective in the world but also—as September 11 manifested so clearly—of the entire world.

A century on, Zionist education has lost its naivety, and its optimism is doomed. In retrospect it has become clear to me that from its very beginning Zionist education failed in its major mission: to give birth to a durable grand truth and to its master-signifiers. Its genealogy shows that it was never equipped with the "right" violence, nor was it ready to be inhuman to the degree that would vouchsafe Jabotinsky's dream of

"*geza gaon venadiv veachzar*", or a genuine realization of the myth of the *Sabra*, who, like the *Sabra* fruit, would be "coarse" on the outside yet "sweet, soft, and moral" in his innerness. Promising spiritual and moral Zionist alternatives, such as the project of Ahad Ha'am, were pushed aside, even if today some are still being followed in Israeli reality. The violence of Zionist normalizing education did not contain an enduring birth-giving vitality: it was not strong enough to actualize its constitutive idea, the idea of "the new Jew"; it was not effective enough to purify the Israeli, the *Sabra*, of the Ghetto mentality. It was not sufficiently potent to constitute a non-patronizing Jewish generosity that would extend its hand to the Arab world. Nor was it at peace with itself about conquering Palestinian space in a relentless storm that would erect Jabotinski's "Iron wall" against Arab fear, hatred, and violence.

Today it is actually impossible for disillusioned educators to look into the pupils' eyes and honestly say: "I promise you, dear children, soon it will be so much better". Secular mothers and fathers are unable to extract *meaning* from the fears and suffering of their children. Many of them are rethinking even the standard answer they have given themselves and their children in the last two years: "If only we harden our hearts and be more brutal and apply less moral restraints, we will win after all, and you, my child, will have a safe future in Israel". The Israeli formal and informal humanist educational apparatuses face rapid degradation. In today's Israel, in face of the spirit of global capitalism on the one hand, and of the Israeli-Palestinian violence on the other, the prospects are gloomy for an effective recruitment of the soul for protecting, cultivating, and enhancing at all costs the ideals and practices of secular humanistic-oriented Zionism.[4] Postmodern post-Zionists and humanistic-oriented anti-Zionists alike are united in their understanding that there are no prospects for a democratic reality in Israel.[5] Some are close to revealing the bitter truth that the prospects for a Palestinian democracy (in a future liberated greater Palestine or in any other format) are much worse. The two strongest, spiritual and politically growing rival forces are the projects of establishing a Jewish Spartanic-oriented theocracy on the one hand, and an Islamist militaristic theocracy on the other. Even if the Israeli middle class is still stronger than its enemies, and is not as racist as its victims and rivals claims it is, it is rapidly losing its fragile liberal tier, its vitality, its self-confidence, its life-impulse, and surely its Jewish heart. In face of this dynamic actuality I must say: *Can't you see that the time has come in Israel for a counter-education that will prepare for a self-initiated Jewish displacement and for a Diasporic way of life?*

TOWARD SELF-INITIATED ISRAELI DISPLACEMENT

In its narrower sense Diasporic education should prepare our children for worthy life in *eternal exile*. Counter-education should provide Israeli youth with tools that will enable them to avoid being pushed to the economic, social, and cultural margins of the techno-scientific and capitalist arenas to which their self-initiated displace-

4   Uri Ram, The *Globalization of Israel,* Tel Aviv: Resling pub. 2005.
5   Uri Ram, *The Time of the Post*, Tel Aviv: Resling Pub. 2006.

ment will impel them. It should facilitate the second Israeli exodus, to take them into homelessness as their home, to the possibility of finding home everywhere, to life as ecstatic, unsecured, open, creative, moral, life-loving citizens of the world. Linguistic competence, intellectual and artistic creativity, improvising sensitivity and competence, and courageous border-crossing of existential, cultural, and philosophical differences become central to such counter-education. Unlearning hegemonic education becomes of vital importance here.

It is important, indeed very important, to stress this: the self-initiated displacement of the Jews from Israel is a dialectical project. On the one hand, in order to secure "effectiveness" in terms of changing the fate of the Israelis as doomed victimizers, there is a need for an institutionalized, collective, counter-educational effort. The Israeli self-initiated evacuation of Israel is conditioned by many levels and dimensions of successful violent distorting, manipulative politics, and normalizing education, which will make possible productivity, consensus, concerted effort, and relative stability, or peace. On the other hand, genuine Diasporic philosophy is never to be reduced to any kind of collectivism, and as a counter-education it cannot avoid being nothing more than an open possibility *for the individual*, solely for the individual and by the individual. Diasporic nomadism is open always only for an individual as an erotic, creative improviser, in the sense of the one who gives birth to and is enabled by *tefilat hayahid* (the individual-improvised prayer, as against the institutional prayer of the collective, the *minyan*). This openness is a possibility whose realization is to be struggled for every moment anew and is never a secured "home". It is an invitation to a never guaranteed but always dangerous and costly possibility.

Diasporic philosophy is relevant for counter-education in current Israel as a dangerous attempt at creative improvisation with the Other and the given "facts". It is of vital importance for the enhancement of new beginnings that are also unpredicted and never controlled responses to the present possibilities and "calls of the moment". At the same time, however, it is part of reclaiming, negatively, the lost intimacy with the cosmos, with the law, and with tradition and togetherness. In other words, it is not one of the conflicting alternatives. It is other, it is *essentially different* from the various attempts to transcend all versions of normalizing education, cultural politics, and other manifestations of imposed "consensus".

As a genuine dialectical realization of Diasporic philosophy, counter-education in Israel cannot become instrumentalized, cannot become a collective self-imposed mass immigration, as so many of my postcolonialist friends would like me to suggest. It is not solely a moral-political concrete dilemma facing us nowadays; it is fundamentally a philosophical and existential antinomy. Ultimately, it begins and ends in and by the individual, who is willing to overcome his or her self and to open the gates to the nomadic existence of a brave lover of Life and creativity. But as a historical, political, and collective project, the self-initiated new exodus, which gives a new meaning to the Exodus from Egypt to Israel and to the subsequent exiles of Jews to the Diaspora, is very hard for another reason. There is no way to guarantee a deluxe exile: discrimination, marginalization, and victimization await the exiled Israeli Jews. The postcolonialist New Antisemitism most probably will not be content with the destruction of Israel

as a victory of its coalition with the world of Jihad. Already now the postcolonialist "anti-Israeliness" goes down to the roots of criticizing the essentials and the telos of Western culture and monotheism. Following here the young Marx, and today's postcolonialist heroes such as Chaves and Ahmadinejad, the Jewish return to its Diasporic existence and cosmopolitan nomadism will probably face fresh forms of exile as well as young, postcolonialist, forms of discrimination and exclusion, if postcolonialism is to maintain its consistency.

THE EXODUS FROM ISRAEL AND FROM JUDAISM TO DIASPORIC WANDERING

The new exodus is from Israel and the Zionist nation-building project as a present-day "Egypt" as a home. It is an exodus from a distorted concept of Diasporic life, from the concept of "Egypt" in the form of all versions of "homecoming" and a monotheistic way, to rebuild or go back to the Garden of Eden. It is an exodus to "Zion"; not in the sense of a national sovereignty imposed on a certain territory violently controlled, but to the infinity of the entire world of human existence and transcendence as the genuine "Zion". This too is only to be transcended into an ecstatic, totalistic, creative, existence within which Diaspora signifies the abyss of existence, meaninglessness, suffering, and the presence of the absence of God as a transcending impetus. The Jews at this historical moment are given this actual present as a tragic *universal mission*, which is fundamentally religious and cosmopolitan, in a Spiritless post-modern world. Individuals of all nations must be invited to join this anti-religious, anti-collectivist telos of overcoming Judaism and monotheism in all its forms, in order to preserve and struggle for the realization of the essence of its creative truth.

The condemnation and oppression of the Jews might increase under the new historical conditions in two levels: **1**. As an assault against the Jews in the traditional sense. Here it is worth mentioning the present prosperity of the publication of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in places such as Japan, Venezuela, Pakistan and Egypt. The last-named recently opened its new national library with a central display of this ultimate modern antisemitic piece, while simultaneously prohibiting the screening in Egypt of films such as *Schindler's List*. **2**. As an assault against the new Diasporic human, the cosmopolitan nomad of our generation that will be both homeless and at home everywhere, even in the infinite dimensions and levels of existence in McWorld, cyberspace—in other words in the new historical era wherein he will exile. As a Diasporic who is not at home in the current historical moment, yet takes responsibility, he or she will most probably be attacked by traditional humanists and patriots, by fundamentalists, by postcolonialists, and surely by the logic of the system. Diasporics not welcomed. They are the ultimate Other, they are "the Jews" of the postmodern era. They, the Diasporic humans who challenge both "colonialist" and "postcolonialist" dogmas and their respective violences, are the ones to be redeemed, emancipated or destroyed, even before the total purification of Palestine of all Jewish presence and forms of Israeliness.

The evacuation of all our "homes" and territory of Israel is in a certain sense a victory of the Palestinian narrative and the postcolonialist agenda in more general terms.

As such it is only part of the future suffering which awaits the Israelis in their future fields of exile. Growing antisemitism impatiently awaits its new stage of development. But traditional and New Antisemitism is only part of the suffering that a self-initiated displacement might bring about. It might create new forms of suffering in light of individual evacuation of all kinds of "homes", by individuals of various nations, cultures, and faiths, who decide to struggle for their edification and *Love* as the impetus for rhizomatic creation and worthier intersubjectivity. Humans of all walks of life might meet, as Diasporic persons who have overcome monotheism, if they are genuinely to meet as creative nomads who take a different approach to responsibility, meaning, togetherness, creativity and self.[6] As Diasporic individuals they will have to overcome even the progressive idea of the Jewish *minyan*: in face of the absence of God, of the absence of a temple constituted by a self-evident dogma, and in the absence of a relevant, binding *Halacha* as a manifestation of laws interpreting-directing all walks and levels of life, they create a new kind of togetherness by repositioning themselves toward **the totally other** in face of the historical moment and relevant traditions.

Their prayer is *avodat kodesh*, whose essence is not its fulfillment but the possibility of the individual's being transcended by it: the essence of the prayer is the possibility of prayer. This kind of prayer, this *tefilat hayahid* (the individual's prayer—not determined by any text or conventional code of the community), invites a different concept of responding to a Diasporic existence and a different kind of *togetherness* with the world and with the Other. It is a precondition of philosophical life as presented by Plato and a precondition for a non-ethnocentrist community. As partners in such a community of individual de-territorialists, humans might meet each other in the presence of the absence of the otherness of **the totally other**.

The two kinds of prayer represent the two opposing conceptions of Diaspora and "homecoming". The conventional, institutionalized, collective prayer in the *minyan* in the form of *tefilat harabim* maintains a positive "homecoming" attitude. It is very much connected to the attitude to the law. Genuine Diasporic humans do not disregard the law and the importance of tradition. The other kind of prayer, *tefilat hayahid*, is fundamentally spontaneous and improvisational, of the kind that pre-assumes Life as an unbridgeable creative abyss. The law and the improvisation, *tefelat harabim* and *tefilat hayahid*, have their depths and heights and are very much connected. There is no meaningful improvisation and creativity without responsibility, tradition and laws. Traditional Judaism emphasized the importance of the Law yet maintained the tension between the *Halacha*, *tefilat hayahid*, and freedom of interpretation, as a manifestation of responsible improvisation and Diasporic Life. Diasporic life in a post-modern condition might be called to continue the Diasporic freedom of *the responsible improviser* as a Diasporic human. This, however, is far less than a satisfactory precondition for genuine Diasporic life since in Judaism this freedom of interpretation, nomadism

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6   Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, "Critical theory and critical pedagogy today", in: Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (ed.), *Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy Today—Toward a New Critical Language in Education*, Haifa: Faculty of Education, University of Haifa, 2005, pp. 7–34.

and improvisation was fertilized and enabled by the uncompromising *commitment* to religious law, the *Halacha* and the Jewish tradition even if as an object of alterity and edification. This fruitful tension constituted, enabled, and activated the Jewish concept of law as a relevant, religious director, to live in all its aspects, levels and dimensions. It was certainly a constitutive element for the fruitful tension between the Jewish law and the living art of interpretation for Diasporic moral avant-gardism. But how is this kind of Diaspora, nomadic life and eternal-improviser possible in a postmodern era? How is such a rich dialectics of commitment and improvisation possible in face of the absence not only of God and Godly truths, but in face of the absence of *Torah* and *Halacha*? How possible might become responsible improvisation and Diasporic life, or genuine responsibility as such, in face of the absence of monotheism and the exile of the concept of *Halacha*, in face of multi and hyper presence of rival infinities, conflicting gods, bibles, codes, laws, temples, quests, emancipatory projects, pleasures and Diasporic alternatives?

In Judaism both tendencies are free of any optimism about "homecoming" or "bridging narratives", and as such it manifests genuine religiosity much more than normally permitted by institutionalized Diasporic sensibility in institutionalized monotheistic religions. As such, Diasporic individuals become a community of creative, solidarian, humans, who create in the infinity of the present moment ever new, yet connected, responding, and dialogical, possibilities.

Diasporic life is made possible by Being as Diasporic *becoming*. Being is ontologically exiled of itself, and human beings are never genuinely "at home" with their telos, with their essence, with the truth of Being. Most philosophical, religious, and political projects are "homecoming" *calls* that enable humans to forget their exile, sometimes by becoming devotees of false, collective, dogmatic, domesticating versions of Diasporic philosophy, and sometime by forgetting their forgetfulness of Diasporic existence. In epistemology it is signified by the unbridgeable abyss between a question and "its" answer, by the unbridgeable abyss between concepts and things, language and world. In ethics it is represented by the infinite gap between the *ethical I* and the *moral I*. But Diasporic existence is to be reduced neither to an epistemological challenge nor to a question concerning the possibility of ethics in a postmodern world. Being as Diasporic becoming makes possible philosophical discourse—it is not one of its manifestations. It allows and conditions human existence and its moral essence. Diasporic individuals are made possible, not threatened, by unending displacements and boundless manifestations of creationism and clashes with the imperatives of the law and the "facts" of the historical moment. It is here that *redemption and Diasporic existence meet*. But "why should they do so?" one might ask. "Why should a bodily, psychologically, morally, aesthetically, and intellectually productive and prosperous, fully domesticated person respond to such *a call* for transformation that might entail loss of security and pleasurable self-forgetfulness?"

At another level one might articulate this question differently: "Why should the Israeli people go into a self-initiated displacement as long as militarily, economically, technologically and socially they are not yet defeated by the Palestinian violence and by the world's disgust, and morally they are not overcome; and the New Antisemitism

of the postcolonialists and the disciples of the world of Jihad only awaits their self-imposed exile only to oppress them morally (as eternal, unredeemed victimizers[7]) and politically in ways currently prevented by the very existence of the State of Israel?"

Still, it seems to me that history insists already now on self-initiated displacement as a nomadic way of life for the better-off Israelis who can afford to flee, accompanied by big capital and relevant education for the McWorld. One of the most astonishing experiences in the last war was the sense of insistence on staying in Israel and willingness to fight for it even in light of the fragmentation and privatization processes. There is still room for illusion that somehow things will take a turn for the better and "we" will not have to evacuate "our home". Its justification is ultimately grounded not in practical individual or collective gains and losses. It is here that the Jewish Diasporic idea and its moral vanguard telos oppose Zionist education and clash with the reality of Israel as the Sparta of the wicked. Worthy life, or transcending mere life as the aim of life as a Jewish telos, is what is here at stake. This is the impetus of Diasporic life as an imperative.

COUNTER-EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF DIASPORIC PHILOSOPHY

Counter-education in light of Diasporic philosophy should not be limited to the preparation of self-initiated evacuation of Israelis from Israel. In its broader and deeper sense it is not an exclusive Jewish mission. It should become a universal alternative for individuals, always and only individuals, that is existential, philosophical, aesthetic, moral, and political in its realization. As such it should overcome the Christian claim to realize the Messianic essence of Judaism. It should disprove Christianity and all other forms of monotheism by realizing among the nations the idea of Diaspora, or the presence of the absence of the redeemer, as an infinite, negative, Utopia: an endless moral, creative, philosophical way of life beyond immanence and transcendence, in a Godless, unredeemable, "holy" cosmos.

Such a counter-education is part and parcel of an attempt to transcend monotheism, not Judaism exclusively. Monotheism in all its manifestations, even in the form of humanism: to transcend the quest for the appropriate, unquestionable, static, "meaning", collectivism, and an orderly, rationalized, consensual "home". It is a preparation for homelessness as a manifestation of ecstatic love of life, of creative meaning formations, of courageous intellectual life against the conventional manifestation of solidarity and truth, and of a dialogical relation with the otherness of the Other, even in face of his insistence on being part of the "we" against "them". As the realization of the Jewish ideal of Diasporic life it is an affirmation of the danger and happiness of endless new human possibilities in face of infinite responsibility regarding injustice, regarding ongoing fabrication by the system of truths, dreams, quests, and even of the self. It should prepare humans, all humans, for *tefilat hayahid*, in a Godless world as partners in a transformed *minyan*— to meet the world as creative, moral nomads, as truly religious human beings, who are liberated: exiled lovers of Life, displaced from

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7   Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *Edward Said as an Educator* (forthcoming).

any dogmatic passions, ideals, and practices of a certain "religion" as their "homeland". This means that this counter-education should also prepare Diasporic life for those people, like myself, who insist on living in Israel at all costs, even as it becomes before my eyes a Zionist Sparta of the wicked. This means that the interconnectedness between *Gola* and *Geula* (Diaspora and redemption) should offer a very specific, concrete, and detailed counter-education in current Israel, for preparing not only the exodus from Zionism and the State of Israel but, what is even more important, *the possibility of Diasporic life in Israel itself.*

DIASPORIC LIFE IN ISRAEL

As the unification of an ongoing moral struggle for the realization of the essence of Judaism, and transcending it into a universal alternative human existence, and as a courageous, creative, Love, such a counter-education might open the gate to new possibilities to challenge concrete existential, moral, psychological, economic, and political manifestations of the present Israeli condition. It might edify, even in face of the exile of Spirit in a post-modern world, the old-new Jewish mission by overcoming it and realizing it as *a universal human telos*. It does not search for redemption as transcendence into the lost Garden of Eden or the establishment of an earthly positive utopia such as a strong, prosperous state. It is a telos which challenges the institutionalized and instrumentalized monotheistic religiousness, on the one hand, and the reified "secular" symbolic and non-symbolic commodities and passions of the post-modern culture industry on the other.

It should not be satisfied by introducing quests and tools for unveiling the manipulations of normalizing education, of the structural injustice of global capitalism on the one hand, and Israeli and Palestinian nationalism on the other. It should not limit itself to criticizing instrumental rationality and the reduction of the human subject from some-one to some-thing. In the present moment, under any conditions, it must open the gates of love and affirmation, of creativity and responsibility, in face of the omnipotence of the current production of meaninglessness (which appears as truth, as desired objects of consumption and representation, or as hopelessness). It must enhance the possibilities for improvising in the totality of the moment without abandoning historical consciousness, without disregarding the Other's unfinished saying/need, without abandoning the utopian quest for creating new concepts, possibilities, and wanderings. As such, counter-education becomes a potential "redemptive" element even under almost impossible philosophical, cultural, and political conditions.

By transcending the truth of Judaism it becomes relevant for all homeless humans: for all truly religious humanists, who affirm Life, Love, creativity, the danger of unending self de-territorialization, and moral responsibility for the otherness of the Other and for the otherness within the self.

In current Israel, counter-education of this kind might culminate into a bridge for Jews and Palestinians. They might enter a non-violent dialogue only as partners in worthy suffering and love of Life, as homeless, as Diasporic persons, who are commit-

ted to overcome all versions of ethnocentrism and all projects of "homecoming", at all levels and dimensions of life. *A new way is opened for rebuilding "Yavne".*

Building the "New Yavne" is inescapably contradictory: to be true to itself it cannot be restricted to any specific place, mission or memory. It must be universal, and be realized in all dimensions and levels of human life. As such not only might it be realized even without the evacuation of Israel: it can never be reduced to mere geographic displacement. It must transform itself into a universal nomadic, creative, everlasting, way of life, without a *Torah* or a sacred truth but Love in the totality of every moment, which contains infinite possibilities in the infinite *terra* that is not merely the "innerness" of the individual, or the "exterior reality". It is the nowhere space, the *Utopia*, the space that is not "in between" the "I" and the Other, "innerness" and "external reality", "true meaning" and "meaninglessness". It is this special mode of creative self-constitution that makes possible a non-"linear" focused, instrumental, gaze, hearing, production, and representation. It offers a different existence, an erotic self-constitution that is also a totalistic, holistic, ecstatic, manifestation of the world. Only within the framework of a transcending Diasporic philosophy can one enter this ever-unfinished, creative, effort at dialogical self-constitution with the otherness of the Other and with the infinite richness of the cosmos as a worthy Diaspora. But such an Odyssey cannot take place outside a *form*, disregarding what Judaism calls *Halacha*. The tension between *Halacha* and *tefilat hayahid* or between the *Ethical I* and the *Moral I* is not solved by Diasporic philosophy and counter-education. In Israel all we can do today is nothing more then address it with no "solutions", "recommendations" or "relevant curriculum".

As a *negative utopia*[8] for and of Diasporic humans it fosters a genuine new partnership between "Israelis" and "Palestinians". Both are called upon. They are called upon to overcome the violence of the power-relations within which, and by whose productive manipulations, their collective identities have been violently reproduced by normalizing education in the last hundred years. They are called upon to overcome the negation of the Other, the commitment to destroy, exile, or re-educate "them". As Diasporic persons, as individuals who are responsible for the Other, Israelis and Palestinians are called upon to enter this dialogic, dangerous, totalistic way of life and transcend both Palestinian national identity and Israeliness, Islam and institutionalized Judaism, narcissism and self forgetfulness. But will they respond before it is too late?

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8   Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *The Frankfurt School and the History of Pessimism*, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1996, p. 147.

CRITICAL THEORY, CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
AND DIASPORA TODAY

Critical Pedagogy faces today a very strange situation. While being positioned in a seemingly comfortable position and warmly received by so many liberals, post-coloni-alists, multi-culturalists, postmodernists, and feminists (to name only few of the long list of its adorers), it is being domesticated, appeased, or even castrated by the present order of things. It became too successful, under different titles, while under the flag of Critical Pedagogy it became domesticated, disoriented, or dogmatized. Today it has become difficult to speak of "Critical Pedagogy"; it is quite ambitious even to ar-ticulate the essential elements common to the various and conflicting pedagogies that propagate themselves under the banner of "Critical Pedagogy".

Critical Pedagogy was constituted on the central concepts of Critical theory and on the material, social, and cultural conditions that enabled the critical Utopia. It was part of a rich Western tradition, not just a sign of a dramatic crisis in modern thought and reality. If in classical times the whole was conceived as prior to the parts, and harmony preceded differences and otherness, the imperial Roman era already acknowledged the turn away from the wholeness of the cosmos. Stoa and Gnosis represented it in rich, different, ways. For Gnosis *Being is temporary*; not eternal. *Being is essentially split* and antagonistic to itself. The temporary of Being and its infinite not-identical-with-itself is acknowledged also by St. Augustine in the tenth book of his *Confessions* as well as in the first Letter to Thessalonians in the New Testament. Without abandoning truth, it faced the retreat of classical togetherness of humans and the wholeness of the cosmos, as well as the priority and supremacy of the whole over its individual parts. Cosmic intimacy and unproblematic self-evidence were replaced by alienation; alienation between the parts and the whole, and alienation within the individual himself. Medieval Christianity offered an alternative—via the "home-re-turning" project. With the assistance of dogma and well kept walls between classes in society, and between Christian Jewish sacred truth and existence, it maintained a fairly stable illusion of coherent, steady, relations between the intellect, moral faculty and the aesthetical dimensions of life, and the body. This relative stability was per-ceived as part of a redeemed, yet fragile and threatened whole: between the Christian, the world, the Other, and knowledge about worthy knowledge. This stable hierarchy, which divided Spirit and body, supra-human and worldly-life, was never genuinely harmonious, stable, coherent, or wholly penetrating. In actuality it did not safely protect the hegemonic social order and its realms of self-evidence: it was actually

questioned time and again by rebellious poor farmers, well-educated heretics, witches, madmen, children, women, Jews, and other Others. And yet, it enjoyed relative success in hiding its *immanent violence*, which offered, aside from inequality (after death), suffering, ignorance, and effective silencing of the free spirit. At this price, however, it offered *meaning* to the given reality and *hope* for transcendence. The demolition of the medieval Western Christian world was brought about by the strengthening and universalization of two versions of its arch-rival: the alliance of classical Greek thought and Judaism. Herman Cohen emphasized the *universal realization of Judaism as the expression of the critical spirit and humanism*[1]—Karl Marx[2] emphasized the *universal realization of Judaism as manifested by the logic and practice of capitalism.*[3] The medieval Christian world could not very long resist such united, erotic, transcending powers.

The medieval order could not sustain durable resistance to the new philosophical and scientific revolutionary developments,[4] or to the economic, social, technological, and national challenges imposed by the spirit of capitalism. In modernity the critical project was aimed at a positive mission: reestablishing the world as a "home"; *offering a "home returning" project for humans, back to a (pre)meaningful wholeness* enhanced by rational, solidarian, dialogical, individuals. Within the framework of Enlightenment individuals committed themselves to re-constitute the Garden of Eden on earth via critical thinking and collective rational-political praxis. The Critical Theory thinkers of the Frankfurt School were faced with the problematic of the unattainable metaphysical assumptions for this mission. They also acknowledged the new, irrelevant, social conditions for the realization of the Enlightenment's educational project—and along with Heidegger and existentialism, they not only refused any metaphysic, they further developed a *Diasporic philosophy*—one that addressed humans' ontological *Diasporic existence*. They responded to the human condition as "being-thrown-into-the-world", meaninglessness, and omnipotent-cannibalistic-violence that enhances "culture" and "progress" only as new forms of nihilistic negation of love of Life in its wholeness.

For late Adorno and Horkheimer, this was the beginning of a new, vivid, thinking, not the end of their utopian undertaking. Even if they were not aware of it, we can still identify in their later work that the dissolution of the promise of modernity became, actually, a gate for a new beginning. Earthly, Diasporic, life disconnected from the Exile-Redemption narrative, became an entry for a renewed, negative, ecstatic, intimacy with the world. Out of awareness of the existential situatedness as *being-thrown-into-the-world* they articulated a concept of *living-toward-the-not-yet-in-*

1   Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*, translated by Simon Kaplan, New York: F. Unger Publications, 1972.

2   Karl Marx, *Zur Judenfrage*, Berlin: Rowohlt, 1919.

3   Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, "The university, the eternal-improviser, and the possibility of meaning in a post-modern era", in Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (ed.), *The End of Israeli Academia?* Haifa: The Faculty of Education, University of Haifa—*Iyyunim Bachinuch*, 2005, pp. 256–299.

4   Max Horkheimer, "Bedrohungen der Freiheit", *Gesammelte Schriften* VIII., Frankfurt a.Main 1985, p. 276.