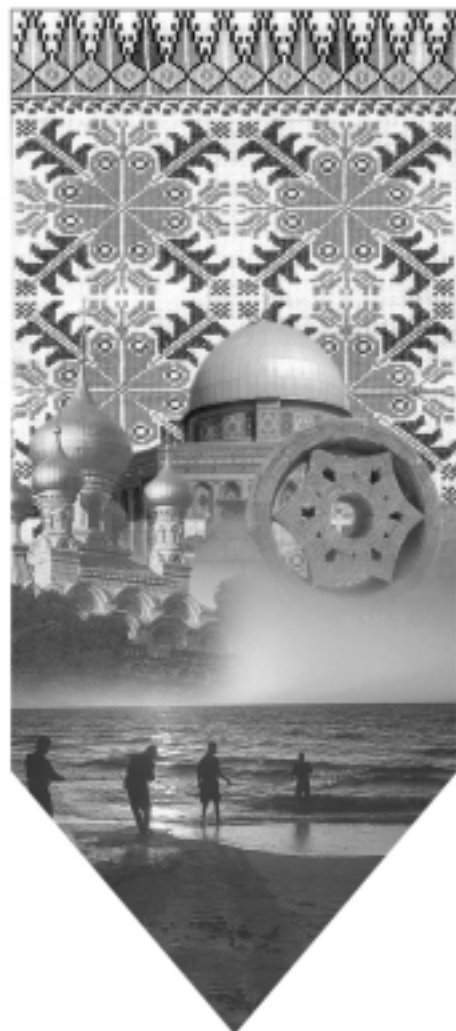


In Memoriam Professor Ibrahim Abu-Lughod

The New Palestine, The New Europe

Selected Papers from the February 2001
International Academic Conference



Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies
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Introduction

By Roger Heacock

This extraordinary collection of articles is derived from the conference held at Birzeit in February 2002 on the theme of The New Palestine, the New Europe: Emerging Models in Society and Culture. The purpose of the conference, the brainchild of the late lamented Professor Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, had been to compare and to juxtapose, to seek mutual relevance, whether positive or negative, in the experiences of these two fast-moving territories, one immense, one tiny, and both largely imaginary, since they are not states in the Westphalian sense of enjoying sovereignty behind set borders, and yet, they very much exist, and between the two of them occupy a good deal of news space. The conference was conceived before the 2000 intifada broke out, but did not finally take place until conditions of great precariousness surrounded the area the participants, after numerous incursions by the Israeli army and shortly before the invasion of the West Bank, with total reoccupation of Palestinian cities, took place.

The papers in this collection were selected from a number of contributions, because each one of them bears the unmistakable mark of originality and spontaneity of thought. Although they are informed, and even somewhat academic in presentation, they are, without exception, poetic in their reach, a pleasure follow and to absorb. Khalil Nakhleh's piece on the new mercenaries, truly fits in to immediate pre-intifada, the Oslo period, where innumerable opportunistic and greedy hands joined in plundering and sundering the newly created Palestinian National Authority, some of these hands foreign ones, but largely assisted by local and regional compradore agents, reaching so far up into the corridors of Palestinian power that they helped to discredit it before the brief Oslo window smashed shut again. Penny Johnson picks up the pieces after the Intifada had left its initial marks, and attempts to show in what ways the society, and notably the other half of the sky, was impacted by the struggle for independence, a low-intensity popular insurrection facing a high-intensity, high-tech effort to snuff it, and the hopes of Palestinians, out. Moving to the European side of the equation, Philippe Schmitter analyzes the terribly relevant question of legitimacy in relation to a phantom entity, which is all-encompassing and yet insaisissable to its people and those of the world. We on this side of the waters would do well to ponder the lessons of these reflections on legitimacy, a term which, as the author notes, becomes important only when it seems to be lacking, as it often appears to be in both entities, as they go through their growing (or is it shrinking?) pains.

So much, in this volume, for science. The second, and equally important half of the conference and the book, is devoted to art: storytelling and architecture. What strikes

one so hard immediately, is how the two (art and science) are intertwined (indeed, that, along with the importance of comparisons, was the hypothesis, amply born out, of the event's organizers). Sharif Kanaane's modern and contemporary history of storytelling in Palestine illustrates the fact, implicitly and near-explicitly, as he demonstrates the interweaving of myth and reality in the accounts of pre- and post nakba discourses, both male and female. He leaves us wanting to discover more, and better understanding the significance, and thus the urgency, of oral history in the Palestinian context, but also, given the acceleration of events (who will collect the epic millenary story of the franc before it has been euro-engulfed?) the European. Fortunately, on that side, Chris Smith, after giving years of his life to Palestinian liberation, has turned to his own people, and is now himself a storyteller. He explains how he is integrating his Near Eastern experience into his profession at home, and how he tries to deal with issues of culture clash and affinity. Interestingly enough, taking these two texts together, it would seem that Joha has temporarily deserted the east and taken up residence in the north. The finale to this volume, by Jean Harari, comes in the form of the near apocalyptic presentation of European architecture at the dawn of the millennium, with its total subjection to private interests and megalomaniac yet technocratic values. This is indeed a road for the future, independent, ingathering Palestinian polity not to travel.

The pessimistic overall tonality of the volume you have in your hands is, however, to be tempered by the palpable message of struggle and perseverance from its authors, who are clearly so fresh, so committed, and so vigorous in their pursuit of a better world that the reader knows their Euro-Palestinian values can only prevail in the end.

Chapter One

The New Mercenaries: Consolidation of an ancient model

By Khalil Nakhleh

By Way of an Introduction

This essay should be looked at in two contexts: first of all, as the continuation of a brief article I wrote in 1998 and published by Birzeit University's Development Studies Institute;¹ secondly, in that of my direct and uninterrupted personal involvement in this subject matter since 1984, where I was for nine years the Director of Programs at the Palestinian Welfare Association in Geneva, and since I returned in 1993, Consultant for the European Commission Representation, in the Education sector.

In the above-mentioned article, my focus was on the process of foreign funding, "its momentum or lack of it, and the impact it generates on Palestinian human society and culture: the linguistic landscape, the human environment, the creation of useful, or inane, knowledge and skills, etc." I argued then that "an inherent attribute of the foreign funding process is the commensurate existence of 'development brokers' ... who are here on behalf of their governments, their NGOs, their consortia, their consulting firms, their investment companies ... to put their 'expertise' to work for the benefit of the emerging Palestinian entity, while making good money in the process."

I shall here move from the general category of "development brokers" to the subset, which I am labeling "The New Mercenaries".

Setting the parameters

This is a reflection on the new and growing category of "mercenaries", which is increasingly dotting and dissecting the current Palestinian developmental landscape. Who are the new mercenaries, what are their characteristics, how do we recognize them, and what arsenal do they use? This is a localized analysis of an international phenomenon. It is an analysis of an old yet re-emerging model.

Formally and historically defined, "mercenaries" are "soldiers who receive pay for their services, especially as distinguished from soldiers who owe military service to

their nation. Historically, mercenaries were often foreigners, rather than citizens or even residents of the nation for which they fought, and the name has now come to mean only foreign auxiliaries ..." (Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia).

The "New Mercenaries", on the other hand, are those hundreds - if not more - of technical consultants who invaded this part of Palestine, or were enticed to come, since 1994, in order to put their technical experience and expertise to use in establishing the Palestinian Authority (PA) institutions, and consequently, the continuity of the peace process. The actual rise of the new mercenaries, however, as a global phenomenon, much preceded the establishment of the PA. It is accurate to say that the gradual rise of the new mercenaries, as a distinct category, came to be noticed as far back as the early sixties, with the rise of the trend, mainly in First World countries, of employing foreign aid as an instrument of foreign policy towards Third World countries. Perhaps the launching of the well-financed scheme of the American Peace Corps, as an example, was the clearest illustration of this well-structured phenomenon. However, one could argue that the individual origins of this phenomenon started in the wake of the Second World War. As a category, the new mercenaries increased their numbers remarkably with the escalating phenomenon of "destroying entire countries and rebuilding some of their parts," following the modern systems of management, governance, capital economies, representative politics, IT-based and driven systems, etc. It is fairly accurate to assert that the last thirty years witnessed the steepest escalation in this phenomenon, especially in Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Naturally with such an escalation, the sheer volume of foreign aid skyrocketed, as well as its components. The countries that were responsible for the "destroying" initiative provided, in addition to capital, a repertoire of technical expertise; hence the mushrooming numbers of the new mercenaries.

Characteristics of the New Mercenaries

As a category or as individuals, the new mercenaries are recognized by other names and acronyms. Within their own community, they are known as "consultants", "experts", "TA"[technical advisors], "expats", "internationals", etc; within the local community in which they work, however, often they are referred to as "khabir" (expert), "ajnabi" (foreign), or, simply, "Mr. X" (referring usually to their first name).

In terms of their physical demeanor, generally the new mercenaries fall in the age category, which ranges from mid- to late forties until the mid-sixties. They come generally from First World countries, particularly North America and Western Europe. Therefore, their physical looks rarely blend with those of the locals; they tend to be formally dressed, adhering, by and large, to the Western dress code (e.g., dress-up jacket and a neck tie). On the surface, the new mercenaries generally appear to be in good physical health, and well nurtured. They tend to be inclined towards doing physical activities, appreciating the good

things in life and living always in groups, rather than as isolated individuals. They are ready to explore the local natural environment, as well as cultural and religious events. Generally, they are big customers of bottled water. Since they come well equipped with the appropriate gear for such activities, they are easily recognizable and distinguishable.

The new mercenaries tend to be adept at verbal and written communication in English. Those who come from Western Europe almost always have in their linguistic repertoire, in addition to English, other main European languages, e.g., French, Italian, German, Spanish, etc. Some new mercenaries, who had the chance to provide their services to certain Arab countries, are able to conduct some verbal communication in Arabic. Some - a noted minority — make a special effort at strengthening their Arabic linguistic base, and in some cases, excel at it. It is almost certain that the new mercenaries from North America can be expected to be exclusively Anglophone. The language of the new mercenaries, however, is distinct: it is skewed towards enhancing their “mercenary” tasks (i.e., the services they are expected to provide). It is replete with “uni-dimensional terms”, which do not benefit the average person in daily communication, but which are intended to reflect the depth and breadth of the actual experience of the new mercenaries, and hence their marketability. What follows is a mere sample of these terms: annual plans, action plans, work plans, implementation plans, bridge financing, project cycle, tender dossier, project phase, direct expenditures, reimbursable expenditures, project design, implementation, monitoring, synergy, project formulation, etc. A well-experienced new mercenary spouts these terms without blinking an eye, and without any pause for reflection. Furthermore, a short-hand and quick indicator of a new mercenary with hands-on experience is how comfortable he/she is with the floating acronyms, which clutter this landscape, such as, SMEs, PMU, EIA, GIA, EIB, FDI, VET, to mention only a few.

By and large, the new mercenaries are marketed by their countries, their companies, their employers, or themselves, as “la crème de la crème” of what is available in the requested field of expertise. They are supposed to have accumulated fifteen to twenty years of actual field experience in being mercenaries in different parts of the world (which were destroyed and waiting to be rebuilt). The basic, yet untested premise, of course, is that short bits of mercenary experience in various parts of the world are on the one hand cumulative, and, on the other hand, may be generalized to other settings. With only a few notable exceptions, my personal contact and first-hand experience with many of the new mercenaries, indicate that the body of experience being marketed is generally shallow, mechanical, un-insightful, not relevant, based primarily on self-claim, and, at most, it is a paper (CV) record. Such a “field” experience can be characterized as “butterfly hopping”, ranging from “several visits”, on the one end, to a few months and a few years, in certain few cases, on the other. The calendar dates for these “hops” then are telescoped into selling statements such

as: “the consultant has worked for many years in developing countries ...”; “more than ten years of European and developing countries experience...”; “eighteen years of experience in transition and developing economies and countries ...”; “long business involvement in the Middle Eastern countries and thorough knowledge of local business practices, mentality and culture [!]”, etc. A serious content analysis of the rapidly proliferating and expanding databases of new mercenaries is certain to reveal interesting patterns and trends.

The normal “arsenal” of the new mercenaries is composed of a laptop computer (usually, state of the art), fully-charged with the latest software program, pertaining generally to project planning and design, graphics, etc. Often, this is accompanied with a deck of diskettes containing reports of relevance, easily replicated (read: plagiarized) studies; Excel sheets pertaining to previously used formulae, etc. A well-prepared and well-endowed new mercenary may also possess a digital camera, a portable cellular phone with access to the Internet and worldwide e-mail connectivity. Such an arsenal, taken collectively, is readily recognizable because it is unmatched locally, and it represents the latest technological advances on the global market.

Generally, “targets” for the new mercenaries are defined externally, by their countries, companies, consortia, or funding sources. New mercenaries are never recruited at large; they are recruited to deal with a specific target, for example, educational reform, development of the national taxation system, democratic governance, public finance, rationalization of the health sector, hospital administration, water and wastewater engineering, airport terminals, road transport, seaports, etc. The pre-identified targets vary in response to the locally delineated priorities, as much as to the interest of the funding source and the feasibility of implementing those targets. Thus, funding sources try to match the appropriate new mercenary with the defined target. Experience has shown that this matching process has not been very successful, in terms of the quality of the expected output, and is very costly, which may reflect the deficient and problematic underlying assumptions of the process of recruitment, as well as the very nature of the category of the new mercenaries.

The new mercenaries receive very favorable and competitive packages of material compensations and work conditions, on the grounds that they are considered “international” experts. The monetary compensations they receive constitute, on the average, twice to four times those of equivalent “national” experts. Thus, by and large, they tend to have available cash to spend on travel, restaurants, cultural and social events, etc. Possessing the material means to explore the country and the region becomes one of the identifying characteristics of the new mercenaries. On the other hand, the new mercenaries are a key factor in inflating local prices, particularly those of the housing rental market in certain high demand locations, which placing rents beyond the reach of potential local customers.

Concluding Observations

The New Mercenaries are a rapidly emerging category of global professional hustlers, who compete via the international media to sell their “expertise” and “experience” to the highest bidder. The more successful the First World is in destroying and dismantling Third World countries and societies, and appropriating funds for the reconstruction of some of their parts, the more in demand the new mercenaries are. They roam about unhindered by national boundaries or limitations. They document and master domestic air flight patterns: which flight connects with which, which offers the better service, and which rewards with the best “frequent flyer” package. The new mercenaries are the “nomads” of globalized economies and societies, and the ubiquitous hallmark of development projects. They are transient; only a few of them experience the repetition of seasons in the same place. Thus, they rarely see the results of their work.

Notwithstanding minor individual variations, the category of the new mercenaries reveals no genuine commitment to the national ideals and aspirations of the people with whom they are supposed to work. When challenged, they express commitment to blurry and undefined “liberal” and “advanced” ideals, couched often in the context of modernity, progress, anti-corruption, transparency, the primacy and importance of civil society, democratization, the rule of law, good governance, good practice, efficiency, competence, productivity, quality, etc. Repeatedly, on the other hand, they show disgust towards what they perceive as incompetence, unreliability, laziness, dishonesty, etc, of the native population and authorities, who generally constitute their targets. Whereas their interaction with the physical space and geography of the target country is positive, their interaction with their human targets reveals a high level of paternalism, condescension, arrogance and non-candor. To protect their often-unjustified position of privilege (material and professional), they rarely reveal their true intentions and agendas to their human targets, and they become masters at camouflaging their roles. They are in a way the antithesis of what they proclaim.

Without indulging in any attempt at psychoanalysis, and in order to protect the innocent (as it were), one cannot escape the observation that certain individual members of the category of the new mercenaries have had a difficult time adapting in their own countries, and to their cultural norms and practices. They attempt to resolve their personal unsolvable problems in the Third World instead. Thus, the only way they can go unnoticed and be perceived as “normal” is to join the hordes of new mercenaries in a far away locale.

Implications for Palestinian development

This is **not** an argument against the utilization of foreign expertise, when necessary, to assist in developing Palestine. It is an argument, however, for urging Palestinians to determine the kind of expertise they need (for a specific project or a specific activity), and rejecting those who get selected by the funding source if they do not

fit, in terms of both professional expertise and credibility. Palestinian development is at a stage where it needs the assistance of international expertise, but not exclusively European or North American. To ensure the provision of this type of “earmarked”, pre-selected expertise, the Palestinian side must do the necessary homework in identifying where these skills are found; and it must insist on buying their services from the funds provided for the project in question. One clear message from all the above, then, is the absolute need for the Palestinian side to insist on scrutinizing any proposed ex-pat consultant, and to veto those unacceptable.

1. Nakhleh, Khalil, “ A critical look at foreign funding to Palestine: where is it heading?”, In *Funding Palestinian Development*, Nader Izzat, editor, Birzeit University, Development Studies Program, Planning for Development Series # 2, pp 24-31.

Chapter Two

The Search for the Social: Reflections on Gender and the Second Palestinian Intifada

By Penny Johnson

Over two months after the second Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation erupted on 28 September 2000, the Israeli Chief of Staff issued an order unusual even by the military rule of excessive force that has dictated Israel's response to Palestinian rebellion. The order banned "travel on West Bank roads by Palestinian men in private vehicles" (Harel and Hass, 2000, 3). Soldiers must return such "male only" cars to their villages or towns or origin; only if a woman passenger was available would travel be permitted.

Whether the order is in fact enforceable or not, it is first of all an exemplar of the apartheid logic of the Oslo period - certainly in Israel's application of the interim agreements but also embedded in the agreements themselves. At the heart of the interim agreements is an avoidance of the discourse of rights for a series of arrangements based not on equality, but on difference, discrimination, and unequal distribution of resources. While the Palestinian leadership believed these discriminatory arrangements were temporary — to be rectified by principled stands during final status negotiations — their effects, including the almost doubling of the Israeli settler population in the Oslo years (1993-present), are both etched on the physical and political landscape and all too clearly seen in the explosion of the second intifada. Perhaps less visible, but also important, is how these inequalities between Israel and the Palestinians, conditioned the relation among Palestinians, in particular between the emerging state and its "citizens." This is perhaps clearest in the dominance of security - largely meaning Israeli security - sometimes at the expense of human rights and the rule of law. These overarching inequalities also severely limited the constitution of Palestinian citizenship and the citizens' political, social and economic rights during the interim period. Here gender issues are a good example. For example, the 1994 Women's Charter issued by the Palestinian women's movement as the transitional period began, asserted a range of rights for women — such as freedom of movement and the right to full nationality (GUPW 1994) — that were in fact to be denied to all the population.

Apartheid and Gender

In the military order cited above, it is telling that Israel's apartheid logic finds its expression in gender. Here, gender is clearly an organizing principle of Israeli repression - the accompanying question is whether it is also an organizing principle

of Palestinian resistance. The endless death toll of young men - and male children - attests to both. Indeed, the order was an immediate subject for a joking, but meaningful response from Palestinian women activists who quipped: “at last a role for women.” While women have been active in a number of ways during the intifada - and have taken on increased burdens in care and coping in the household and wider community — their activities are both seemingly invisible to actual and virtual publics and widely seen by women leaders themselves as inadequate and marginalized.

This invisibility is exemplary of a larger absence of civil society in the present intifada. By this I do not mean that civil society organizations are completely inactive, but that their activities to date do not have a direct effect on the politics of the intifada. They are marginal, rather than constituting that “public sphere of civil society” (Calhoun 1999,14) — to use a concept of Jürgen Habermas - where public democratic and critical discourse is translated into an authority for politics. The marginalization of women and of civil society from the public and political sphere are strongly linked. As the course of the present intifada suggests, when women are absent from the public arena, most men are excluded as well.

Authoritarian Populism and Mobilizing Democratic Publics

While a number of relevant features of post-Oslo Palestinian political culture could be cited that affected participation and resistance, I will focus here on one fundamental contradiction, which is between the role of the Palestinian leadership as agents of national liberation - from which it derives its popular legitimacy — and the limited sovereignty and powers and extensive security and policing functions of the Authority in the interim period. (Hammami and Johnson 1999). I would suggest that the solution to this contradiction has tended to be a politics that could be termed “authoritarian populism” which denies specific constituencies and publics in favor of “the people.” The people or “the street” give - or potentially withhold - vital legitimacy to the government, but have weak or absent roles in political interpretation, opinion formation, or, most important, decision-making. To be sure, the vein running counter authoritarian populism — mobilizing active democratic publics — is also present in Palestine, most visibly in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but also in the presence and history of social movements, including an active and strategically minded women’s movement (Jad, Johnson and Giacaman 2000). However, the marginalization of these forces in the second intifada requires an explanation.

The second intifada underlines a sobering reality: whatever the success of the women’s movement, for example, in developing initiatives for gender equality in the Oslo period these initiatives, like most NGO or even ministerial projects that addressed social and developmental problems, were in essence sequestered from

the real locus of political power. Ironically, the women's movement began to use the fashionable discourse of "empowerment" when it was in reality losing power. The Oslo transition produced highly contradictory effects on the potential for advancing gender equality in Palestinian society. At the same time as the new realities offered the women's movement tools and resources for legal reform and lobbying initiatives, the new conditions took away some of the movement's ability to mobilize — and to represent - women in various settings and strata of society and even its claims to nationalist "authenticity."

Comparisons between the role of women in the first and second intifadas have been made elsewhere. Here, I will focus on the second intifada, and in particular on how levels, forms and sites of violence and resistance both shape gender roles and expose multiple crises in the gender roles of both women and men. My definition of violence includes the more hidden institutional violence of the interim period, as well as the violence of the uprising itself. I will identify three related crises: a crisis in masculinity, a paternity crisis, particularly in paternal roles of protection and provision for families, and a crisis in maternity, as mothers face painful contradictions in their maternal responsibilities towards children.

Attitudes of Women and Men

Do Palestinian women and men differ in their attitudes towards militarized violence as a means of Palestinian resistance? On the face of it, they do not. Reviewing data from a public opinion poll released in January 2001 by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center (JMCC), 70% of women and 74% of men approve of Palestinian military operations as a suitable response to Israeli aggression, and 48% of women and 52% of men approve of suicide operations - a gender gap of only 4%. The much larger and more significant gap is between this poll and almost any one carried out before the intifada, where at most a quarter of Palestinians approved of military operations (26% in a JMCC poll in March 1999). An ever deepening pessimism regarding the future likewise characterizes polls taken as the intifada continued.

With a slightly widening gender gap, a minority of both — 16% of women and 22% of men — see military resistance as the only path and a majority believe in a combination of popular and military struggle. This slight difference between women and men gets stronger when asked about ways to reach a mutually acceptable agreement, with 27% of women favoring negotiations only as opposed to 16% of men, 22% of women favoring confrontations only as opposed to 29% of men and 34% of women favoring a combination as opposed to 38% of men (13% of women and 15% of men thought it impossible to reach an agreement).

This difference is also reflected in support for the "peace process," itself a somewhat

slippery concept. However, women's greater support for the peace process has been consistent. In a review of polls over time, an analyst noted that "on average over three years, 73.4% of female respondents said that they support the peace process as compared with only 65% of male respondents (JMCC 2001, 27) We find roughly the same gender gap in our December poll, although support for the peace process has significantly eroded, with 50% of women supporting (or strongly supporting) the process as opposed to 42% of men. While this might be explained by a greater preference for the status quo (and thus stability) among women, also reflected in their greater choice of President Yasser Arafat as their most respected figure, it is also true that overall attitudes between women and men toward Palestinian use of militarized means of resistance are more similar than different. The assertion that "men have been constructed as naturally linked to war, women have been constructed as naturally linked to peace" (Davis 1997, 94) is perhaps truer in gender roles than in attitudes and beliefs. It is these roles that we must now examine.

Masculinity in Crisis

Men and women's differential participation in the violent confrontations of the second intifada is indeed another story — although in fact most Palestinian men over twenty-five are also not participants. The nature of the popular violent confrontations that dominated the first months of the intifada were strongly gendered and restricted by age. If war is the "most direct" site for the construction and reproduction of masculinity (Morgan in Brod and Kaufman 1994, 165), particular wars or conflicts do so in highly specific ways. In the confrontations we are examining, the high level of death and injury of Palestinian demonstrators and militants, and the location, form and consequences of confrontation expose a crisis in masculinity that deserves careful attention.

Destabilized Male Roles

The sacrifice and struggle of Palestinian young men and youths in demonstrations at Israeli checkpoints cannot be simply reduced to a crisis of masculine identity — crises in national, class and ethnic identity are deeply entwined. However, the point is in fact the opposite, the crisis in gender identities is produced by a series of related crises, both in Palestinian nationalism after Oslo on the political level, and in the multiple economic, social and humiliating effects of the Oslo apartheid system on another level. The latter, along with the long-term effects of occupation on the economy, has marginalized some groups of men from the key male role of provider and breadwinner, and thus destabilized male roles as heads of households. According to the National Poverty Report, the vast majority of the heads of poor households are both male and labor force participants -

working poor in other words (National Commission for Poverty Allevation 1998). Unemployment, underemployment and low wages mean that male breadwinners may not be able to provide adequately for their families. For many young males, entry into the labor force and establishing a secure household are difficult or even impossible challenges. At the same time, young male roles as heroes and agents of national resistance have also been destabilized by the humiliating conditions of Oslo.

In an earlier context, the historian Elizabeth Thompson described a “gender crisis” in Syria and Lebanon in the wake of the ravages of World War I and the imposition of French colonialism that is relevant to us today. Thompson cites three factors that created what she called “a crisis in paternity,” These included: “the profound dislocation suffered by family households during and after World War I, second, the creation of new, theoretically national, states; and third the imposition of French rule.” She calls the linked reactions to stress in household, community and polity a “crisis of paternity.” (Thompson 2000, 6) Palestinian dislocations at these three levels — in households coping with shocks and in community and polity living in the tension between a weakened national authority and a dominant Israeli colonialism - also produce stress in gender roles that have been highly accentuated in the current intifada.

In the present context, young men coming to the checkpoints — placed usually at the limits of Palestinian sovereignty — are first and foremost protesting the confined conditions of their lives and futures, whether they are unemployed workers, refugee children who have never left Gaza, or even security and police personnel who have been patrolling these borders while they cannot themselves leave them. There they confront Israeli power, which had defined them as marginal and constrained them as lesser beings. And they confront, I would argue, an absence of a national government that is theoretically present, but practically powerless and unable to lead. The political and cultural resources available to the young men in rebellion in many ways allow their resistance but not a resolution.

Rites of Passage or a Closed Circle?

Writing on the violence perpetuated on Palestinian young men by Israeli soldiers both on the street and in prisons during the first intifada, Peteet believes that “the beatings (and detentions) are framed as rites of passage that become central in the construction of an adult, gendered (male) self with critical consequences for political consciousness and agency” (Peteet 2000, 103). Young men emerge from their confrontations and ordeals with heightened “masculine and revolutionary credentials and capital, which the young man often utilizes by moving into cadre roles in political organization” (Peteet 2000, 112).

More empirical investigation is needed to contrast the “rites” of the second intifada in relation to the first, but I suggest that there are significant differences. First, there is the much greater presence of death and injury at the relatively stationary “flashpoints” where demonstrators in effect expose themselves to Israeli sniper fire. The ground of confrontation thus expresses the harshly unequal balance of power of the post-Oslo years. It is this, more than the religious cast of the intifada, which produces the emphasis on martyrdom. Although the first intifada also honored its martyrs, its images were guerrilla in character, where protestors and stone-throwers emerged from the community, hurled their messages and missiles, and then returned, living for another day. In the confrontations of the second intifada, the community is not a sustaining and protecting environment, but rather, eerily, an audience, both literally at the checkpoint and virtually through national and satellite television.

But there also may be an important difference in terms of the re-entry into the community, masculine credentials and political capital acquired, given that for most of the young demonstrators, there does not seem to be the same forward movement into cadre roles or wider community leadership. Here, the system of rule that we have termed “authoritarian populism” comes into play, a system that depends on “the people” or “the street” for legitimization, but constrains democratic politics and democratic participation. While political leaders both use and are hostage to the power of insurgent young men, young male empowerment at this point seems limited to the military sphere, fragmented, and disassociated from the community, rather than translated into political or community leadership. Because of this dynamic, I would argue that the crisis in masculinity is not resolved through popular resistance — and indeed increased militarism is perhaps the only “solution” that is offered.

Two Boys, Contradictory Symbols

It is also telling to consider the two most popular images of the second intifada. The first is well-known worldwide: a young father in Gaza futilely attempts to shelter his son, twelve-year old Mohammed Durra, as repeated Israeli fire takes his young life. Among the many ways this image, repeated in all Palestinian media, resonates is as a drastic and tragic image of a “crisis in paternity” (Thompson 2000, 284), denoting not simply a failure in paternal authority, but in paternal protection. The second image is of another slender young boy, Fares Odeh, also in Gaza, standing defiantly in front of an enormous Israeli tank, stone in hand, a picture that is ubiquitous in Palestinian shops, offices and homes. The image is even more poignant given that Fares Odeh was shot in the neck by Israeli soldiers in another demonstration ten days later and bled to death at the Karni crossing. In an examination of these “two poignant pictures [that] have dominated the visuals of Palestinians over the last three months,” Zakariyya Muhamad writes that “Mohammed Durra gave us our symbol in his death; Odeh gave us our symbol in his challenging stand” (Muhamad 2000, 10).

Z. Muhamad's view is nuanced — he notes that twelve-year old boys still conceive of war as play and refuses to call them martyrs because this assumes “the victim is aware of the meaning of war” (Muhamad 2000, 1). However, the fact that the young boy in front of the tank is in a hopeless situation is not consciously acknowledged in his analysis, or indeed in immediate popular responses. The contradictory significance of the poster begs for an exploration — a “challenging stance” to be sure, but one that seems doomed to failure, and where a highly vulnerable male child is the symbol of a national struggle. While youth - particularly the “children of stones,” were symbols of the first intifada, they tended to stand for hope in the future and a realization of independence. Here both images graphically demonstrate both Israel's brutal and unchecked power through an exposed and unprotected child and resonate with the failure of adult politics and resistance. Indeed, the symbol of Fares Odeh dissolves into Muhammed Durra - two children whose “fathers” are unable to protect them - both their actual fathers and the community and polity as well. These linked failures in protection, I suggest, produce a crisis of paternity of the first order.

Women's Activism and a Crisis in Maternity

An exploration of women's activism during the intifada could perhaps begin with women's participation in a range of informal activities, from directly assisting the shabab in demonstrations, to widespread participation in funeral marches, to support for families and the injured. Another place to begin, however, is with the mother of Fares Odeh, the boy who defied the Israeli tank. Anam Odeh, according to newspaper reports, was deeply worried about her son, who had sworn to avenge the Israeli army's killing of his cousin. His mother not only talked to Fares, but attempted to find him at the checkpoints: “I must have gone looking for him 50 times,” she told a reporter from the Washington Post. Indeed, she was such a familiar site at the Karni crossing that boys teased Fares saying “Hey, Fares, what's that SWAT team after you?” (Hockstader, 12 December 2000, 2).

In both intifadas, informal women's activism has taken the form of an extension of women's roles, particularly “mother activism,” most visible in the first intifada when older women sheltered youth and defied soldiers. In the second intifada, this “maternal” protection is almost completely inadequate and is symptomatic of a less visible “maternity crisis” that accompanies the paternity crisis described above. While media images tend to focus on mothers blessing their son's martyrdom, the case of Amna Odeh suggests that the real dilemma of mothers is much more agonizing and maternal blessings are also a way of coming to terms with terrible grief and irresolvable contradictions. Ruddick (in Meyers 1997, 589) notes that “the three interests of preservation, growth and acceptability of the child govern maternal practices in general,” and based on the present analysis one can only conclude that these interests can be in painful contradiction. Preservation may well conflict with

growth (political involvement) and most particularly with acceptance when “state” and society - or social group - honor resistance even at impossible odds. The relative powerlessness of mothers to resolve these contradictions in their own terms adds to the dilemma.

In this framework, it makes sense that one of the most sustained initiatives of the Palestinian women’s movement has been to counter allegations that Palestinian mothers are sending their children to die at the checkpoints — one of the more blatant cases of the aggressor (Israel) blaming the victims for their own deaths. In a 29 October 2000 “Appeal for the protection of Palestinian children” issued by the women’s movement, Palestinian mothers living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza addressed their “most urgent concern - the protection of our children and their right to live a life free from fear, harm and humiliation.” The letter pointed out that “[o]ur children are not dispatched to the ‘front lines,’ the points of danger and confrontation are all around them, near to their homes and schools. For most of our children, the streets of their communities are their playgrounds; we cannot protect our children with the secure facilities for play and learning that we only dream of. We also note that the Israeli army comes to Palestinian land to confront our children, not the other way around” (Women’s Affairs Technical Committee, 2000).

While many women activists also express concern that the Palestinian Authority did not take sufficient measures to prevent children from participation at checkpoints, the movement effectively organized meetings, letter-writing campaigns and a press conference featuring mothers of martyred youths to counter the deep racism in the portrayal of Palestinian mothers. Indeed, Queen Sylvia of Sweden, whose words at a New York meeting had been used in Israeli propaganda campaigns and to whom the above appeal was addressed, eventually issued both a clarification and an apology.

The Palestinian women’s movement in fact organized almost the only public demonstrations that were neither funeral marches nor militarist displays by political factions. These well-attended demonstrations, however, candlelight vigils in Ramallah and Gaza and a public demonstration in Jerusalem, received little publicity and were geographically and temporally limited. Nonetheless, the fact that men, as well as women and children, flocked to attend them signaled that much of the public needed, and mostly did not have, an address for political and community expression. Here the women’s movement served as a venue for civil society as whole, albeit in a limited form.

Strategies of Women’s Activism

Many activists in the women’s movement are deeply aware of the contrasts in women’s roles in the two Palestinian intifadas — and clearly articulate the urgent need to develop new strategies that link their gender agendas to national goals and

struggle. In a December 2000 meeting/workshop, activists gathered in Ramallah to discuss how the women's movement could integrate nationalist and feminist agendas.

A speaker having played a leading role in the first intifada termed its leadership a "civil leadership rooted in society and responsive to its needs, a framework in which women fitted and could participated." Some women, particularly PLO returnees from the General Union of Palestinian Women, contested the validity of the comparison between the two intifadas and also challenged the view of women's limited participation in the second one. In their view, the participation of women cadre in official bodies as well as women's role in "encouraging their children" to resist, were valid and important forms of participation. A related line of thought led several participants to advocate a strategy of encouraging young women to participate in checkpoint demonstrations. This argument follows logically from a view that defines the mode of nationalist participation as already given — and, I would suggest, highlights a line of thought that is a strategic dead-end for the women's movement and civil society organizations and movements.

A concept paper presented at the workshop strongly argued that nationalist and feminist issues were deeply interlinked and urged the movement not to close windows that have been opened in the transitional period where issues of women's rights, children's rights and human rights have been brought into the Palestinian arena. While the argument rang true in many ways, another leading activist reminded the audience of a central failing of much of non-governmental work during the Oslo period — the failure to recognize both that politics means power and that the absence of democracy in the Palestinian context must be addressed politically, rather than simply through NGO activity.

Indeed, as another speaker argued, the missing link between feminism and nationalism is democracy. Here, a strategic direction was outlined which countered the narrowing of women's roles not by advocating, for example, that young women take on the militarized roles of young men, but by widening the framework for participation through an alternative politics, which in this context would have many tasks. Prominent among them figures the priority of clearly addressing the needs, interests and rights of men and women - and the real crises they face in daily life in protecting and providing for their families, and in assisting their children to grow and develop in security and opportunity. These needs are strongly linked to the national aspirations of the Palestinian people - but it is up to civil society to make this link visible and a real force in politics. A citizen's campaign for international protection under the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention is one framework that could address these needs within a national framework. In the complex situation of the intifada, developing an alternative politics may sound like an overly-simplified and utopian challenge — but it is in fact an avenue for women's participation and gender equality, and indeed for democratic transformation in an independent Palestine.

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Chapter Three

What is there to Legitimize in the European Union... And how Might this be Accomplished?

Philippe C. Schmitter

Legitimacy is one of the most frequently used and misused concepts in political science. It ranks up there with ‘power’ in terms of how much it is needed, how difficult it is to define and how impossible it is to measure. Cynically, one is tempted to observe that it is precisely this ambiguity that makes it so useful to political scientists. Virtually any outcome can be “explained” (ex post) by it - especially by its absence - since no one can be sure that this might not have been the case.

For legitimacy usually enters the analytical picture when it is missing or deficient. Only when a regime or arrangement is being manifestly challenged by its citizens/ subjects/ victims/ beneficiaries do political scientists tend to invoke lack of legitimacy as a cause for the crises. When it is functioning well, legitimacy recedes into the background and persons seem to take for granted that the actions of their authorities are “proper,” “normal” or “justified”. One is reminded of the famous observation of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell, with regard to pornography: “I don’t know what it is, but I know it when I see it.” With regard to legitimacy, it would be more correct to say: “I may not be able to define (or measure) it, but I know it when it is not there.”

Now, if this is true for political - i.e. national states - that have fixed boundaries, unique identities, formal constitutions, well-established practices and sovereignty over other claimants to authority, imagine how difficult it will be to make any sense of the legitimacy of a polity that has no one of the above! The European Union (EU - and the Palestinian Authority as well, by the way) is, if nothing else, a “polity in formation.” No one believes that its borders and rules are going to remain the same for the foreseeable future. Everyone “knows” that it is not only going to enlarge to include a number of new countries, but it is also very likely to expand the scope of its activities and to modify the weights and thresholds of its decision-making system. If this were not enough, there is also the fact that the EU is an unprecedented experiment in the peaceful and voluntary creation of a large-scale polity out of previously independent ones. It is therefore, singularly difficult for its citizens/subjects/victims/beneficiaries to compare this ‘unidentified political object’ with anything they have

experienced before. No doubt, there exists a temptation to apply the standards that they are already using to evaluate their respective national authorities, but eventually they may learn to use other normative expectations with regard to EU behavior and benefits.

Laying the Conceptual Foundations: One Definition and Five Implications

First, let us try to define legitimacy in a way that is generic to allow us to apply it to the widest possible range of the polities. Legitimacy is a shared expectation among actors in an arrangement of asymmetric power such that the actions of those who rule are accepted voluntarily by those who are ruled because the latter are convinced that the actions of the former conform to pre-established norms. Put simply, legitimacy converts power into authority - *Macht into Herrschaft*- and thereby establishes simultaneously an obligation to obey and a right to rule. From this, I draw the following implications:

- 1) The basis upon which these norms are pre-established can vary from one arrangement to another - not only from one country or culture to another, but also within a single country/culture according to function or place. While it is often claimed that in the contemporary context “democracy” provides the exclusive basis for exercising authority, this denies the possibility (and obvious fact) that particular arrangements within an otherwise democratic polity can be (and often are) successfully legitimated according to other norms. It also obscures that fact that “democracy” can be defined normatively and institutionalized historically in such a different fashion that power relations that are legitimate in one democracy would be regarded as quite illegitimate in another. The “coincidence” that all of the EU members are self-proclaimed democracies, recognize each other as such and require of new members that they conform to the same institutional pattern does not *eo ipso* provide the norms for its legitimization - indeed, well-entrenched divergences among its members may actually make it more difficult.
- 2) The unit within which relations of sub- and super- ordination are being voluntarily practiced can vary in both time and space. There is a tendency in the political science literature on legitimacy to accept passively the sovereign national state as the “natural” and “exclusive” site. There is no reason why other (sub-or supra-national) polities - provided that they have sufficient autonomy in making and implementing collective decisions - cannot have their own normative basis of authority. In the case of the EU, the problem is compounded by the simultaneous need to legitimate not only what the unit should be, i.e. to define what “Europe” is, but also the regime that should govern it, i.e. what its institutions should be.

- 3) The norms must be shared by the actors, both those who rule and those who are ruled. This implies, first of all, that they must know who they are and what their respective roles are. It also implies that the exercise of authority is systemic, i.e. that it is embedded in a collectivity that is sufficiently interdependent and mutually trustful so that dispute over the validity of rules can be (and usually are) resolved by the intervention of third parties within them. Institutions such as courts specialize in this “referential” behavior, but most of the contestation over rules involves less formal interactions within civil society and between firms in which the intervention of outsiders (actual or potential) is sufficient to produce a mutually accepted outcome. The citizens/subjects/victims/beneficiaries of the EU do not yet know who they are - and not all of them are members of it and, therefore, entitled to participate in its government. Moreover, they remain anchored in relatively independent polities of varying size and power whose roles within EU institutions have yet to be established definitively. Nor have they achieved the level of social interdependence that allows them to rely on informal - “pre-political” and “extra-judicial” - means for resolving disputes legitimately.¹
- 4) The actors involved may be individuals or collectivities of various sorts. The literature conveniently makes the liberal assumption that the unique judges of legitimacy are individual human beings. This allows it to rely heavily on notions of family socialization, “moral sentiment” and personal responsibility as the sources of norms and the mechanism for their enforcement. And this in turn tends to lead one to the conclusion that it is only in polities that have previously established a high degree of cultural homogeneity - i.e. nation-states - that legitimate political authority is possible. When one introduces, however, the heterodoxical idea that most of the exchanges in modern political life are between organizations and, moreover, that these organizations share norms of prudence, legal propriety and “best practice” that transcend individual preference and even national borders, it then becomes more possible to imagine how a “non-national” and “non-state” polity such as the EU might be able to generate valid and binding decisions. This not to say that it will be easy for it to come up with such norms - given all the caveats introduced above, plus the fact that in such a “multi-layered” and “polycentric” arrangement it may be very difficult to trace the origin and responsibility for them.
- 5) The basis for voluntary conformity is presumably normative, not instrumental or strategic. In a legitimate polity, actors are free to obey decisions that they have not supported made by rulers whom they have not voted for. They also agree to do so even if it is not in their (self-assessed) interest to do so - and they are expected to continue to do so even when the effectiveness of the polity is in manifest decline. Needless to say, it will not always be easy to assess if this is the case. Rulers often can control the means of communication and distort the flow of information to make it appear as if they were following prescribed

norms; the rulers may only be pretending to comply in order to build up a reputation that they can subsequently “cash in” for material or other self-regarding purposes. Conversely, resisting specific commands - whatever the accompanying rhetoric - may have nothing to do with challenging the legitimacy of the authority that issued them, just with dispute over the performance of individual rulers or agencies. Needless to say, in the case of the EU the compelling quality of norms is even more difficult to observe. The intergovernmental nature of its key institutions virtually licenses actors to pursue national interest exclusively - or, at least, to proclaim to their citizens that they are doing so. The confidentiality of its many committees makes it almost impossible to detect when interaction produces a shared norm rather than a strategic compromise or a hegemonic victory. Add to all this the propensity for national rulers who can no longer “deliver the goods” by themselves to blame the obscure and distant processes of European integration when they have to take unpopular decisions and you have a polity that is bound to appear less legitimate than it is.

One (interim) Conclusion and Two (very important) Implications

From this conceptual analysis, I draw the following conclusion: if we are to make any sense of the present and future legitimacy of the European Union, we should reach a consensus concerning the apposite criteria - the operative norms - that actors should apply when establishing their presumably shared expectations about how its authority should be exercised.

I say, “should”, because it is abundantly clear that in the present circumstance both scholars and actors within the integration process tend to presume an isomorphism between the EU and their respective national polities. This unavoidably leads to the conclusion that the EU suffers from a “democratic deficit.”² And this, in turn, implies that the only way of filling that deficit is to insert “conventional democratic institutions” into the way the EU makes binding decisions, e.g. by asserting parliamentary sovereignty, instituting direct elections for the President of the Commission and, above all, drafting and ratifying a “federal” constitution.³ It is that interpretation that I wish to contest, although I am aware that the more that the EU uses distinctive criteria in the design and evaluation of its institutions, the more difficult it will be initially to convince its citizens that what it is doing is “really” democratic. Nevertheless, this is a political paradox that will have to be tackled - and, like many such paradoxes, it is only by learning from experience that the apparent contradiction is resolved.

I am taking two things for granted at this point: (1) that the appropriate criteria for the legitimization of the EU (whatever they may be) should be “democratic” in some fundamental/foundational sense; (2) that the individual citizen and

collectivities that are members of the EU, now and for the foreseeable future, share a “reasonable pluralism” in the interests and passions that they wish to satisfy through the integration of Europe.

Regarding these two points, the following clarification is in order:

- 1) The meaning and, hence, the institutions and values of democracy have changed radically over time. Robert Dahl has spoken of several “revolutions” in its past practice (often without its proponents being aware of these) and argued that “democracy can be independently invented and reinvented whenever appropriate conditions exist.”⁴ The European Union is an unavoidable part and parcel of these changes. Not only must it reflect transformations in the nature of actors (from individual to collective citizens) and role of the state (from redistribution to regulation) that are well underway in the domestic democracies of its member states, but it must also recognize and adapt to its uniqueness as a non-national, non-state, multi-level and polycentric polity that encompasses what is for Europe an unprecedented variety of culture, language, memories and habits and is expected to govern effectively on an unprecedented scale - all this, with very limited human and material resources.
- 2) Despite the heterogeneity of its national and sub-national components and, hence, the strong likelihood that major actors will not be “naturally” in agreement on either identical rules of the game or substantive goals, its members are “reasonably pluralistic,” i.e. the range of their differences is limited and they are pre-disposed to bargain, negotiate and deliberate until an agreement is found. To use another expression of Rawls, those who participate in the EU enjoy an “overlapping consensus.”⁵ Moreover, they understand and accept that the outcome of the process of integration will itself be pluralistic, i.e. it will protect the diversity of experiences rather than attempt to assimilate them into a single “European” culture or identity.

First implication: Based on this (interim) conclusion, I am convinced that it is neither feasible nor desirable to try to democratize the European Union *tutto e subito* — completely and immediately.⁶ Not only would the politicians not know how to do it, but there is also no compelling evidence that Europeans want it. Nothing could be more dangerous for the future of an eventual Euro-democracy than to have it thrust upon a citizenry that is not prepared to exercise its functions, and that continues to believe its interests and passions are best defended by national not supranational democracy.

Moreover, the EU at this stage in its political development neither needs, nor is prepared for a full-scale constitutionalization of its polity. The timing is simply wrong. In the absence of revolution, coup d’*état*, liberation from foreign occupation, defeat or victory in international war, armed conflict between domestic opponents,

sustained mobilization of urban populations against the *ancien régime* and/or major economic collapse, virtually none of its member states have been able to find “political opportunity space” for a major overhaul of their ruling institutions.⁷ The fact that they all (with one exception) have written constitutions and that this is a presumptive *sine qua non* for enduring democracy indicates that at some time this issue will have to be tackled - if the EU is ever to be democratized definitively - but not now.

However, as I have explored in a recent book, it may be timely to begin sooner rather than later to experiment with improvements in the quality of embryonic Euro-democracy through what I call “modest reforms” in the way citizenship, representation and decision-making are acted out within the institutions of the European Union.⁸ Even in the absence of a comprehensive, i.e. constitutional, vision of what the supra-national end-product will look like, specific and incremental steps could be taken to supplement (but not supplant) the mechanisms of accountability that presently exist within its member states. Since, as seems obvious to me, the rules and practices of an eventual Euro-democracy will have to be quite different from those existing at the national level, it is all the more imperative that Europeans act cautiously when experimenting with political arrangements whose configuration will have to be unprecedented, and whose consequences could prove to be unexpected - perhaps, even unfortunate.⁹

I will not enter into the details of the twenty-some “modest [and some not so modest] reforms” that I proposed in this book for the simple reason I am not convinced that, even in the unlikely event that all of them were to be implemented, their joint impact would succeed in legitimizing the EU. Introducing one or another of them *au fur et a mesure* might improve selected aspects of the regime’s capacity to invoke voluntary compliance, but given the “systemic” aspect that was mentioned above, one should not expect miracles - least of all *hic et nunc*. For one thing, it would take some time for any of them to produce their intended effects - especially since several of them are calibrated to take into consideration the pace and extent of eastern enlargement. All of them, despite their modesty, entail unforeseeable risks and are likely to generate unintended consequences - indeed, the entire exercise was predicated upon exploiting these political externalities to press gradually and stealthily toward further democratization.

Second implication: Marginal and attainable improvements in the legitimacy of the European Union are much more likely to come from changes in the admittedly “fuzzy” but innovative practices of **governance** than from reforms in the much more clearly delineated and conventional institutions of **government**.¹⁰ While it may have been revived by the opportunistic manipulations of the World Bank and have initially been focused in an over-optimistic fashion on improving the performance of politics in sub-Saharan Africa, use of the concept of governance has spread with astonishing rapidity and is being applied by both academics and

practitioners in a very wide range of settings - up to and including the European Union where it is about to become the subject of an official pronouncement, i.e. a "White Paper." Despite the inevitable oversell and vagueness in such a fashionable concept, there must be something to it - or it would not have met with success. I am convinced that behind all that capaciousness is a distinctive method/mechanism for resolving conflicts and solving problems that reflects some profound characteristics of the exercise of authority that are emerging in almost all contemporary societies and economies — and, not just in those that are trying to catch up to the more developed ones.

Governance is not a goal in itself, but a means for achieving a variety of goals that are chosen independently by the actors involved and affected. Pace the frequent expression, "good governance," resorting to it is no guarantee that these goals will be successfully achieved. It can produce "bads" as well as "goods." Nevertheless, it may be a more appropriate method than the more traditional ones of resorting to public coercion or relying upon private competition. Moreover, it is never applied alone, but always in conjunction with state and market mechanisms. For "governance" is not the same thing as "government," i.e. the utilization of public authority by some subset of elected or (self-) appointed actors, backed by the coercive power of the state and (sometimes) the legitimate support of the citizenry to accomplish collective goals. Nor is it just another euphemism for the "market," i.e. for turning over the distribution of scarce public goods to competition between independent capitalist producers or suppliers. It goes without saying that, if this is the case, the legitimacy of applying governance and operative norms is more elusive than that used to justify the actions of either governments or markets. It will be my purpose in the remaining portion of this essay to elaborate upon this implication by specifying what these principles and norms might be.

What is governance? It is a method/mechanism for dealing with a broad range of problems/conflicts in which actors regularly arrive at mutually satisfactory and binding decisions by negotiating and deliberating with each other and cooperating in the implementation of these decisions. Its core rests on horizontal forms of interaction between actors who have conflicting objectives, but who are sufficiently independent of each other so that neither can impose a solution on the other and yet sufficiently interdependent so that both would lose if no solution were found.¹¹ As we shall see in modern and modernizing societies the actors involved in governance are usually non-profit, semi-public and, at least semi-voluntary organizations with leaders and members; and it is the embeddedness of these organizations into something approximating a civil society that is crucial for the success of governance. These organizations do not have to be equal in their size, wealth or capability, but they have to be able to hurt or help each other mutually. Also essential is the notion of regularity. The participating organizations interact not just once to solve a single common problem, but repeatedly and predictably over a period of time so that they

learn more about each other's preferences, exchange favors, experience successive compromises to the process of governance itself. Here, the code words tend to be trust and mutual accommodation - specifically, trust and mutual accommodation between organizations that effectively represent more-or-less permanent social, cultural, economic or ideological divisions within the society. Note also that governance is not just about making decisions via deliberation, bargaining and negotiation, but also about implementing policies. Indeed, the longer and more extensively it is practiced, the more the participating organizations develop an on-going interest in this implementation process since they come to derive a good deal of their legitimacy (and material rewards) from the administration of mutually rewarding programs.

The fact that governance arrangements are typically thought to be "second-best solutions" is a serious impediment to their legitimization. If states and markets worked well - and worked well together - there would be no need for governance. It only emerges as an attractive option when there are manifest state- and/or market failures. It is almost never the initially preferred way of dealing with problems or resolving conflicts. States and markets are much more visible and better-justified ways of dealing with social conflicts and economic allocations. Preference for one or the other has changed over time and across issues following what Albert Hirschman has identified as a cycle of "shifting involvements" between public and private goods. Actors, however, are familiar with both and will "naturally" gravitate towards one of them when they are in trouble. Governance arrangements tend to be much less obvious and much more specific in nature. To form one successfully requires a good deal of "local knowledge" about those affected and, not infrequently, the presence of an outside agent to pay for initial costs and to provide reassurance - even coercive backing - in order to overcome the rational tendency not to contribute. As we shall see, this almost always involves some favorable treatment from public authorities as well as (semi-) voluntary contributions from private individuals or firms. What is novel about the present epoch is that support for governance arrangements has increasingly been coming from private and not just public actors and from trans- and supra-national sources, and not just from national and sub-national ones. The European Union has been among the most active and innovative producers of such arrangements.

Whether the EU has been as successful in convincing its own citizens that these arrangements are legitimate exercises of its authority is not clear, although one should note the impressive extent to which member states and mass publics have consented to the "authoritative allocations" of its myriad committees and the decisions of its Court of Justice. It is certainly premature to claim that the EU is a "producer" rather than a "consumer" of legitimacy - depending heavily as it does on the borrowed authority of its member governments. As David Beetham and Christopher Lord have argued so persuasively, it is the interaction between the different levels of

aggregation and identity that reciprocally justifies the process of European integration.¹² In such a complex and still contingent polity, it becomes rather difficult to discern who is loaning and who is borrowing legitimacy - and for what purpose.

Moreover, much of what is happening within the EU is more the result of expediency, pragmatic tinkering, the press of time, the diffusion of “best practice,” ad hoc and even ad hominem solutions than of shared principles and explicit design. My (untested) presumption is that, if the EU were to elaborate and defend such principles and then design its arrangements of governance accordingly, it would improve their legitimacy.

Endnotes

1. Although it would be more accurate to stress that these “other” arrangements based on expertise, legality, personal reputation or just plain effectiveness are themselves embedded in a more encompassing framework of national democratic institutions that, at least potentially, have the power to amend or overrule whatever decisions are made by non-democratic means. These include contextual agencies, oversight boards, judicial review, and so forth.

2. The evidence usually adduced to “prove” the existence of this deficit is far from convincing (to me). Most of the items cited (e.g. decline in voter turnout in Euro-elections, increasingly unfavorable attitudes towards EU institutions, rising difficulty in ratifying treaties by national referendum, increase in electoral support for extreme nationalist parties) are either also true with regard to “domestic” democratic practices or only indirectly related to European integration. In short, it is quite possible that the alleged “democracy deficit” is as much or more national than supra-national.

3. In other words I agree with William Nelson’s observation that institutions that “look” most democratic in one context, i.e. the national, may not be appropriate at all in different settings, for example the supra-national. Introducing direct elections for the Euro-parliament is one good illustration of this. Those whose principal formula for democratizing the EU is to increase the powers of that body should reflect on the consequences of this proposal when there are no corresponding parties, constituencies or even consistent platforms at the European level.

4. *On Democracy* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1998), p.9.

5. The Treaty of Amsterdam has formalized these common principles (even if they remain rather abstract): liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and rule of law. Member states found (anonymously) in violation of these vague criteria can be suspended from membership. More recently a detailed “Bill of Rights” has been drafted and accepted at the Nice summit, although it was not made legally binding

6. What I mean by “interim” is that, in the long run, the EU might well acquire the properties of a state and even of a nation - in which case, the deployment of conventional institutions of representation and decision-making and standard notions of citizenship might become much more desirable. For the foreseeable future, however, i.e., the next twenty to twenty-five years, the problem will be to protect and enhance the legitimacy of political institutions that do not have these properties - and that means relying upon novel arrangements and novel norms to justify them.

7. I can only think of one clear case: Switzerland in the early 1870’s. It would be interesting to explore this exception, although the fact that this country had a “one-party-dominant-system”

(*Freisinnige/Radical*) at the time must have been an important factor - and not one that can be repeated at the EU-level.

8. *How to Democratize the European Union ... and Why Bother?* (Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

9. At this point, I have to enter (briefly) the “essentially contested” field of defining what I believe should be the apposite criteria in the case of the EU. Elsewhere, with Terry Carl, I have defined democracy in its most generic terms as “a political system in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public domain by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their representatives.” Note that this definition is not based on any specific institutions or practices in “really-existing” or “self-proclaimed” democracies, and is not restricted to any popular level of aggregation. It is not “procedural” but “processual” nor is it “substantive” in presuming either what the issues are that citizens will hold their rulers accountable for or what results the rulers will have to produce in order to satisfy citizen’s expectations. It avoids any presumption about the level or type of participation on the part of citizens - just that whatever it is it should be equally available to these citizens qua citizens. It does not even stipulate that everyone has the right to participate in all decisions that affect him/her. It focuses on the classical questions: *quis custodiet ipsos custodiet?* and answers: “the citizens through some form of collective action by their representatives”.

10. In their otherwise very instructive book, David Beetham and Christopher Lord do presume that the grounds for legitimizing the EU will be “conventional” i.e. similar to if not identical with the norms that justify authority in national polities, despite the fact that they are sensitive to the different nature of the emerging Euro-polity: *Legitimacy and the European Union* (London: Longman, 1998). See also the edited volume by Thomas Banchoff and Mitchell P. Smith with the same title, *Legitimacy and the European Union* (London: Routledge, 1999) where the treatment is even more “conventional”.

11. One frequently encounters in the literature that focuses on national or sub-national “governance” the concept of **network** being issued to refer to these stable patterns of horizontal interaction between mutually respecting actors. As long as one keeps in mind that with modern means of communication, participants in a network may not even know each other - and certainly never have met face-to-face, then it seems appropriate to extend it to cover transnational and even more global arrangements.

12. *Op.Cit.*, fn.10.

Chapter Four

Half a Century of Palestinian Folk Narratives

By Sharif Kanaana

Introduction

Palestinians in particular, and Middle Eastern peoples in general, have always had a large number of folk narratives. We should remember that the earliest settled agricultural communities in the world appeared in the Fertile Crescent about twelve thousand years ago. The first high civilizations, with large urban areas, emerged around the big rivers of the Middle East about six thousand years ago. Thus many towns and villages in the Middle East have experienced 10 to 12 thousand years of uninterrupted settled habitation. Many of the stories and legends that prevailed in the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley are still preserved in the rich folklore of the Middle East. The same is true of legends, beliefs, and superstitions that descended from other ancient peoples such as the Phoenicians, Canaanites, Philistines and ancient Hebrews. The Arab wave in the 7th Century A.D. added elements from ancient Arabia and arabized what was already there, rather than displacing it. The fact that the Arabic language has not changed significantly over the last two thousand years could not but have helped in the accumulation of a huge quantity of oral traditions.

Because of its unique place in the hearts of people, Palestine has always had a very rich narrative folklore. In addition to what prevailed in the neighboring areas, it was the birthplace of Judaism and Christianity, and for the last thirteen centuries has been home to all three monotheistic religions. A great deal of historical and religious narrative material about prophets, saints, holy men and sacred places has thus accumulated. A wide variety of folk narrative genres circulate among Palestinians today and form their favorite means for expressing their views, ideas, and concerns. Anyone foreign to Middle Eastern Arab-Moslem culture, would be surprised by how often the people of the region resort to proverbs, sayings, short quotes, a line of pre-Islamic poetry, a verse from the Koran, or a short traditional fable to make an important point in their conversations. Such an observer would also be hard put to follow the conversation even if he/she understood the literal meaning of every Arabic word in the conversation. I am, of course, aware that the same would be true to some extent, of all cultures, but in the case of the Arabic language the problem would not only be because of the subtle shades and

connotations of the words, but because many words or phrases actually stand for a story which the parties to the conversation share. Such unspoken stories are meaningful not in and of themselves, but because they refer to the context in which they supposedly took place, maybe a couple of thousand years ago, or during an unspecified moment “once upon a time” (“fi yaum min al-ayam”: “on a day among the days”). Still such a story is not meaningful unless the listener realizes that the context that existed once upon a time is similar to a present situation in some way and can serve as a metaphor for it. Thus, the present issue with which we are concerned and which is new and therefore ambiguous and confusing can actually be understood by being mapped against the experiences and the context referred to in the narrative, and from that a conclusion can, and is expected to be, drawn by the listener, similar to that already drawn by the speaker who mentioned the word or the phrase in the first place. Being a Palestinian Arab myself, I can make my point only by telling a story.

Let us imagine the following picture: *A foreigner who has studied Arabic for several years and who has achieved a good level of comprehension of spoken Arabic comes to Ramallah to do fieldwork for his PhD in anthropology or any other field in the social sciences. The young social scientist is standing on the sidewalk waiting for a taxi. Two Palestinians are standing near by, talking. One of them is overheard saying, “They say that Powell is coming to the area tomorrow and is going to try to re-convene talks between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators. What do you think, Mahmoud?” Mahmoud says, “You want to know what I think, Sa’id? I think the snake will never forget its tail!” Sa’id nods approvingly and adds: “I think you are right!” Meanwhile a taxi stops, and our social scientist friend gets in the taxi feeling frustrated and confused for not understanding what the snake had to do with Powell’s visit or the peace talks and what Sa’id and Mahmoud thought about the situation. It comes to his mind to ask his cab driver what Mahmoud and Sa’id could have meant by that conversation. He repeats their exchange to the driver. To his great surprise and further frustration, the driver answers: “Yes, I agree with them!” The young social scientist almost shouts at the driver, “But what is it that you agree with them on?” “Oh, says the driver, I agree that Powell is not going to get the Israelis and the Palestinians to reach any peaceful agreement, and the only solution is going to be war. It is a struggle for existence, either us or them.” “Wait a minute, says the social scientist, what are you talking about? Where did you get all that nonsense? All I heard was that the snake will not forget its tail!” “Yes, I know, says the driver, but if the Israelis continue to behave like the snake, of course the Palestinians are going to try to do to the Israelis what the shepherd wanted to do to the snake.” The young social scientist starts to get excited. “But where did the shepherd come from? No one mentioned any shepherd, and Powell possibly never saw a sheep or a goat in his whole life!” Now the driver starts to get mad at the social scientist and shouts back at him, “Well how come you are so ignorant?”*

Where have you been all your life? Haven't you heard the story of the shepherd and the snake? Everyone knows it. Even little kids know it!" The Young social scientist explains that he is a foreigner and does not know the stories which most Palestinians know, and asks the driver to tell him the story and the driver tells him the following story: "Once there was this shepherd who went out with his herd of goats every morning to the fields next to the village, and while the goats were grazing peacefully, the shepherd sat on a pile of rocks and played beautiful music on his flute, and everyday a snake came, listened and danced to the music. One day the shepherd got ill and sent his young son in his place to herd the goats, and the boy came and sat on the same rock pile. The snake waited and waited and the music did not come, and the snake came out of the rock pile to find out what was happening. The boy was scared of the snake, grabbed a stone and hit the snake with it, and the snake attacked the boy and bit him and went back to hide in the rock pile, but the boy grabbed the tail of the snake and kept pulling until he broke off the snake's tail. The boy then died of the snakebite and the snake survived but without a tail. Some time later the shepherd came back to the same spot and sat on the same rock pile, and the tailless snake came out and proposed to the shepherd that they make peace and go back to the good old days, when they were friends, and he played the flute and she danced. But the shepherd said: forget it, we can never be friends again, because I can never forget my son and you will never forget your tail!" The driver then adds: "So, how could the Israelis and the Palestinians ever make peace and be friends again?" The young social scientist looks at the native driver with an amused but patronizing way and says: "Ok, that is easy to understand, but you could have explained that idea to me in few sentences without having to tell me that whole silly story!" At that time they were about to reach their final destination, and the driver says: "Well, I am afraid if I tell you the truth you may get mad." The young social scientist assures the driver that he will not get mad, and pays him a generous tip ahead of time. The driver says: "Well, I needed to go through all that explanation because you are ignorant! Had you been smart and well informed like Sa'id, all I would have needed to tell you is one phrase: "The snake will never forget its tail."

This parable leads me to emit a hypothesis, which I cannot elaborate here as much as I would have liked to, namely that people of the Middle Eastern Arab-Muslim civilization use folk narratives for communicating among themselves more than the people of any other culture. One reason which encourages and facilitates that method of communication is the great depth and richness of the standardized, unspoken, assumed cultural heritage shared among the people of this culture.

I am not talking riddles. I am simply suggesting that people of every civilization share a large store of cultural items, and that most of what is in that store is not conscious or explicit, but is available and usable unconsciously as given truths.

Thus if we were to think of a culture as an iceberg, with the assumed, shared, unconscious culture as the part under water, and the conscious explicit part of the culture as the tip of the iceberg, then I am suggesting here that the unseen part of Middle Eastern culture is larger, both in absolute and relative terms, than is the unseen part of other cultures.

I have already mentioned three of the ideas on which I base this statement and which I cannot elaborate here. These are: first of all, the uninterrupted settled life in the Middle East with its high civilizations for the last twelve thousand years in the same geographical location; secondly, the accumulated traditions from the three monotheistic religions; and thirdly, the persistence of the classical Arabic language, virtually unchanged for more than two thousand years. A fourth fact is the nature of the Muslim religion. Since the majority of the Arab people are Muslims and Arabic speakers, with a high degree of interconnection between language and religion, a large portion of the Arabic culture became standardized, unified, and implicitly assumed to be true.

Islam is based on two unchangeable, immutable Arabic texts, the Koran and the Hadith or Sayings of the Prophet. Likewise, pre-Islamic poetry is taught to children from grade school up, and most Muslim Arabs memorize all or large parts of all three texts. Again, what I am saying is that Middle Eastern people more than any other people in the world are like an old couple who have been married for a long time, and each knows what the other is going to say before she or he says it.

We move now to our main topic: Palestinian narratives. Most of the Palestinians have been dispersed in small communities all over the world, but mainly in the Arab countries, since 1948. The total number of Palestinians at the present time is estimated at around eight million people. They are divided almost equally between their homeland in historical Palestine, and the diaspora.

The conditions under which both groups have lived and the circumstances to which they have been subjected have always been reflected in the types of narratives they tell. To document all the narratives told by Palestinians in all their communities since the beginning of what they call “Al Nakba” (the disaster) would take several volumes and a lot more research than I have done or will ever be able to do. I will, however attempt to give a broad overview of the Palestinian narrative tradition during the last half-century. To simplify things I will treat Palestinians as if they consisted of only two more-or-less homogenous groups: Palestinians living in their homeland in historical or mandate Palestine, and refugees or Palestinians in the diaspora. The whole period covered in this paper will be treated here as consisting of three broad and vaguely distinguishable stages in terms of the types of narratives, namely the traditional stage, the stage of dispersal and loss of homeland, and finally the stage of regrouping and re-emergence of Palestinian nationalism.

Traditional Palestinian Narratives

By traditional Palestinian narratives I mean the types of narratives told by Palestinians when they lived for a long period of time up to 1948, the beginning of the nakba, in a more or less stable, homogeneous, settled, peasant society. This tradition is known to us from at least three different sources. One source is oral history recorded during the last fifty years and in particular during the last 20 years from Palestinian men and women who were old enough in 1948 to know much of the traditional folklore. A second source is the folklore literature published by a large number of European orientalists who did their research in the "Holy Land", especially during the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century. The third source is the folklore record collected by native Palestinian folklorists who were trained by, and worked with, European orientalists starting around 1920 and whose works are preserved in several books and a large number of articles published mainly in English, German, and French.

It is universally true that the types of narratives popular among women in a society differ, to some degree, from those popular among men in the same society. This division is naturally stronger in societies where there is a strict separation and division of labor between the sexes. Such division is strongly pronounced among Arab-Islamic peoples, including Palestinians. It was stricter in the past but is still very much in existence today. Thus, as expected, we find that traditional Palestinian narrative genres were divided according to gender. In general women's narratives were associated with fiction and imagination, and men's with truth and believability. Women generally appropriated the folktale, which is similar to the fairy tale in Europe, and almost all the tales found in the Grimm Brothers' collection have their counterparts among Palestinian women's narratives. Tellers and audiences alike usually recognized such narratives as fictitious products of the imagination. The tales were usually told in the evening in the women's quarters, within the context of the extended family, often joined by women and children from other neighboring and related extended families. Men did not usually attend these sessions; they had their own section of the house, for their own all male gatherings. Folktales told by women usually dealt with issues that occupied the minds and hearts of Arab-Muslim women. They gave a picture of the world as seen by womenfolk living in extended families in peasant, agricultural, Middle Eastern, Muslim, Arab society. They dealt mainly with issues of reproduction, children, food, marriage, inheritance, and, in general, the internal affairs of the extended family, specifically related to the lives of women. The struggles between co-wives and between the children of different co-wives, and the whole institution of polygyny played an important role in such tales.

The men of the family, with their male guests, usually gathered in a separate part of the house called the “diwan” to drink black coffee, exchange news and views, and tell stories. Men never told the same fairy tales or “old wives’ tales” in the diwan as women did in the “harem” section of the house; to participate in the women’s sessions and to tell, or even listen to the fairy tales was considered unmanly. Men had their own narrative genres. These were generally associated with truth and believability, at least from the viewpoint of those who told them, listened to them, or transmitted them. The most popular narrative genres for men were the “sira,” or epic story, and the legend. The siras or folk-epics consist of highly colored, somewhat rambling but skillfully structured semi-musical panoramas. They usually tell of heroic feats, escapades, bizarre landscapes, long lasting love affairs, dire sacrifices, and supernatural forces. These epics were composed during the mamluk period, that is, sometime between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. A type of story related to the sira and which could be seen as a mini-sira is the “Bedouin story.” Bedouin stories are usually much shorter, less ornate and less sophisticated, and more crudely structured stories, that tell mainly of blood feuds, honor feuds, long-lasting love affairs, and revenge and counter revenge among the chiefly families of different Bedouin tribes.

A wide variety of legends were also told by Palestinian men in the diwan. These included religious stories about prophets, saints, holy men’s tombs, shrines and sanctuaries. In addition, there were legends that gave interpretations of the names of local sites: caves, wells, hills, ruins, and springs, or interpretations of family names and nicknames. Many of the religious legends were shared by Moslems, Christians and Jews, at least until 1948.

The Disruption of 1948

Folk narratives, like all genres of folklore in all cultures of the world, never stood completely still; they always changed and evolved. Both the rate and the direction of the change varied from time to time within the same cultures. Slowly unfolding cumulative change took place during periods of continuity and stability. Dramatic and radical changes took place at times of wars, invasions, and socio-cultural and political upheavals. Great changes in culture and lifestyle in the Middle East as a whole began with the increase of European intervention in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire towards the end of the nineteenth century. Palestine, for religious, strategic, and economic reasons, was of greater interest to Europeans than other parts of the Middle East, and, consequently, was exposed to an earlier and stronger dose of European influence. This resulted in a faster rate of change in the culture and lifestyle of Palestinians, but did not cause a sudden or radical disruption of the Palestinian society.

The great rupture in Palestinian life, culture, and type of narration- to get back

to our main topic- came in 1948, the year of the nakba, when the newly established State of Israel captured about 80% of the land, destroyed around 450 towns and villages, and turned their inhabitants into refugees. The rupture became more thorough in the year of al-naqsa (“the calamity”) in 1967 when Israel occupied the rest of the Palestinian lands and turned more Palestinians into refugees. What is of particular interest to us here is the rupture and dislocation in Palestinian folk narratives that accompanied the overall rupture of Palestinian culture and society.

Palestinians did not of course stop telling stories in 1948, but many changes occurred in the types of narratives they told and their habits of narration. These changes may be summarized in the following broad trends: traditional narrative genres ceased to be used, totally or partially. The genres associated with truth and believability, that is, men’s genres, went out of use much faster than did genres associated with fiction and imagination, i.e. women’s genres.

Strong politicization of folk narratives occurred after ’48 and two types of narratives took the place of traditional types. One type consisted of narratives of war and loss of homeland. The other came later and was connected with the immediate political situation under Israeli occupation. The new narrative types are less sharply divided by gender and more by age, than traditional narrative types. Let us now elaborate these broad trends a little further.

Contemporary women’s genres

The folktale or fairytale that was exclusively the domain of women has survived but is much less vigorous than it once was. The traditional folktales are now more often heard among women in refugee camps than among Palestinian women who stayed in their original hometowns and villages. Two possible explanations for the survival of folktales come to mind. One is that folktales are told within the context of the extended family and deal with the concerns of women within the family. The extended family, despite all the disruption and destruction that happened to Palestinian society, or maybe because of it, has managed to stay very much intact, and among Palestinian refugees has actually become stronger. Several studies have shown that solidarity within the extended family has become the most important survival strategy for Palestinian refugees. Another possible reason for the survival of traditional folktales is that such tales are fictitious and imaginary and connected with basic human needs and desires and not highly influenced by immediate changes in the society as a whole.

There are, on the other hand, factors that militated against the persistence of traditional folktales. One of these is the invasion of Palestinian homes by modern mass media, especially the recent proliferation of Arab satellite TV stations,

with their serialized soap operas from Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and several Gulf States. These soap operas tend to occupy the same contexts and settings previously occupied by the traditional folktale. A related factor is the invasion of all Middle Eastern cultures by Western (American and European) standards and values, which have made Middle Eastern people, including Palestinians, look at everything native, local, or traditional, as being by definition backward, and therefore inferior and undesirable.

In addition to the surviving traditional folktales, women, when they get together in refugee camps, tell many stories about the 1948 war and about the good old days in the lost country. They do not usually tell long, highly structured stories but rather anecdotes from their personal lives and the lives of members of their families, illustrating the destruction, dispersion, injustices, and oppression that fell upon their people. A favorite theme in such stories deals with the separation of family members during their escape from the original hometown or village, the search for the lost members- often young children - and the reunion in the land of refuge. There are usually differences among these narratives according to the age, education, and political orientation of the female narrators, but they are all told in the style and structure of the women's traditional folktales.

Men's genres

When we turn to the traditional narratives that were told by men, such as epics, romances, and historical, topographical, and religious legends, we find that these have been weakened and then ceased to be used quite early after the 1948 Catastrophe. Their place as men's narratives was taken by stories about the war and the lost country. We can speculate as to reasons for the fast rate of this change. One cause may lie in the fact that the traditional men's narratives were mostly connected with the immediate environment and geography of the place. They were thus strongly influenced by the physical dispersion of the people and the rupture in the Palestinian society. Men, on the other hand, being the ones more concerned with war and politics (this is close to being a universal pattern) found any narratives not connected with the war, conflict, the dispersion, the nakba and the continuing struggle for what was lost, to be totally irrelevant and meaningless under the circumstances.

The traditional men's narratives were replaced immediately after the war by new narratives, again associated with truth and believability, namely, stories of war and the loss of the homeland. The new type of narrative emerged among Palestinian men everywhere, but prevailed more among refugees than among those who stayed in their homeland. Palestinian women after the nakba also, as was mentioned before, told stories about the war and the loss of the homeland, but men's stories were significantly different from those of women. Men's stories

were told more in the style of the epic than the folktale, dealing thus with battles, resistance, and heroism. Rather than personal family anecdotes they were “national stories” covering the whole Palestinian question, complete, coherent, and chronologically ordered.

Political legends and political jokes emerged at two different stages of the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation of the Palestinian lands not occupied in 1948, namely Gaza and the West Bank, which were occupied in 1967. Political legends - to be distinguished from the previously mentioned traditional legends - started to become popular in the early 1970s. Political jokes, on the other hand, made their presence strongly felt only at the beginning of the first intifada in late 1987. Both genres have persisted, with some fluctuations, until the present. The emergence and persistence of the two genres are connected with the resurgence of Palestinian nationalism, and with the political developments that accompanied this resurgence since the 1970s.

The 1967 war weakened the grip of the Arab regimes on the PLO, strengthened it, and unified the Palestinians everywhere around it. The fedayin (singular: fedayi, an Arabic term which combines the meanings of ‘martyr’ and ‘freedom fighter’) started to carry out military operations against Israelis. Such exploits by the fedayin, real or imaginary, and regardless of what others may have thought of them, supplied Palestinians everywhere with materials for legends of adventure and heroism. Some were highly exaggerated, and some were wishful, but all had some seeds of truth. Legends expressing the wishes, hopes, aspirations, fears and anxieties of Palestinians, since they began in the early 1970s, through the first intifada, the “peace process,” the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and, finally, the Al-Aqsa or second intifada, still proceeding at the time of this writing, have fluctuated in their frequency and popularity. However, the production of such legends has never ceased since the early 1970s.

Resorting to jokes as expressive means came about a decade after the emergence of legends, but when they did, the number of jokes far exceeded the number of legends, especially during the period between the two intifadas, which was roughly the last decade of the twentieth century. At the risk of making too facile a generalization, we may notice that legends tend to prevail more when either hopes and expectations or anxieties and frustrations reach their highest peaks. Jokes, on the other hand, prevail when the situation is past the state of panic, and the problems do not involve the dangers of collective survival or death. Jokes seem to be more suited for the expression of ridicule, hatred, or hostility whether towards enemies or towards one’s own leaders or competing groups within one’s own camp. For self-criticism, for social criticism, and for social control, the joke seems definitely to be a better tool.

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Chapter Five

Storytelling and Stereotyping: Part of the Problem?

By Chris Smith

The first time that the Hoja visited Baghdad, he felt overwhelmed by the huge crowds of people in the streets. It was the biggest place he had ever seen, and he was confused. "I wonder how people manage to keep track of themselves in a place like this", he wondered. "I must remember myself well, otherwise I might get lost." Soon the Hoja felt tired, so he went off to a hostel to take some rest and lay down on his allotted mattress. He wanted to have a siesta, but was worried how he would find himself again when he woke up. He decided to ask the advice of the man on the mattress next to his, who was a bit of a joker. "Simple", said the joker, "Tie this red scarf to your leg, and when you wake up, look for the man with the red scarf tied to his leg. That will be you!"

"Good idea", said the Hoja, and went to sleep with the scarf tied to his ankle.

A while later Hoja woke up and started looking for the scarf. He found it tied to the leg of the joker. "Yes, that must be me", he thought. Then he felt an attack of panic and started pummeling the man: "Wake up, wake up! Something has happened! Your idea was no good!" The man asked what the trouble was, and the Hoja pointed to the scarf: "I can tell by the scarf that you are me. But if you are me, then who - for the love of goodness - am I?"

While the last few decades has seen the decline of the telling of traditional tales in Palestine, there has been a parallel revival in interest in storytelling in several western countries. For example in England the last two decades has seen a revival in both professional storytelling (performance telling in theatres, schools, festivals, museums, libraries as so forth) and in telling in informal settings (story circles, story clubs, informal settings at home and in the community). In 1975 there were perhaps 3 professional storytellers working in England, and a couple of story circles (where participants tell each other tales) connected to the Sufi movement of Idries Shah. Today the UK Directory of Storytellers lists several hundred professional tellers and more than 150 story clubs of various kinds.

There are many forces behind this revival. In case researchers should be interested in pursuing this matter, I propose the following (non-inclusive) list:

1. Children's literature;
2. The work of academic folklorists, mythologists and anthropologists
3. Psychoanalysts (stories as psychological maps);
4. Alternative spiritualities (stories as sources of wisdom);
5. Theatre and theatre in education, with a tradition of work with mythic material (especially the Greeks);
6. An ongoing tradition of informal storytelling in the community;
7. The folk music movement and its connections with folktales;
8. Mass media as a promoter of traditional stories.

There is a corresponding diversity in the ways in which stories are used and valued. One approach has been the use of traditional tales as a tool in multicultural education, a way of learning about other cultures and their traditions. This article describes one such initiative, at the British Museum in London.

Edward Said, in his seminal work, *Orientalism*, has argued that the erotic, exotic and violent images of the Orient have dominated Western imagination since colonial times, and that those images were based on Westerners' need to justify and explain their own identity and "civilizing mission". Today in the West the Arabs are systematically stereotyped by the news and entertainment media. Bloodthirsty dictators, religious fanatics, irrational terrorists, stupid, lazy millionaires: these images jump out of our Hollywood epics and our daily tabloids. Our Christmas programs are festooned with bloodthirsty sheikhs and harem dancers. In a country where Afro-Caribbean and Asian stereotyping is now quite closely monitored, the Arabs are still fair game for the racist.

Are the new storytellers part of the problem, or part of the solution? How can educators work with Arab stories in a way that broadens understanding and does not reinforce these stereotypes? The question is especially relevant, given that *The One Thousand and One Nights* is, in reality, full of exotic, erotic and violent stories! This article will describe struggles with this issue during a recent project with the British Museum.

The Project *Arab Cultures, Arab Cultures, Young Worlds*

I am a storyteller with a special interest in Arab folklore, having lived and worked in the Middle East for fifteen years before moving to the UK a few years ago. Last year I started work with the British Museum Education Department, for their Arab world program. One of the aims of the project was been to promote knowledge and understanding about the Arab World, with story making and storytelling as one of the project streams. The experience has provided a good opportunity to reflect on issues around stereotyping and story, some of which I'll set out in this article.

In April 2000, I was finishing off a session telling and discussing Arab folktales with a class of fifth-graders. The class had been attentive and responsive, and I felt we were having good discussions about the Arab traditions and customs. At the end of the last story, a boy asked: “those robbers in the story ...were they the Arabs?” I explained that - no - all the characters were Arabs - it was an Arab story. Inside I felt a sense of failure. In spite of the stories and discussion, the boy still identified the bloodthirsty robbers in the story as the Arabs.

As part of the project I had run a number of workshops with UK children on knowledge and understanding of Arab culture. The results had suggested that the strongest association with the idea of “Arabs” was that of characters from Disney’s *Aladdin*, and in particular with the forty thieves. It seemed that this boy had been unable to drop the preconception when offered a story including Arabs in a wide range of roles.

The project, entitled “Arab Cultures, Young Worlds”, was centered around an exhibition in the Museum featuring creative responses of British young people to objects from the Arab world, including calligraphy, tiles, sculpture, painting, and drawing. My job, as a storyteller, was to run creative story making workshops with the schools involved, creating fictional stories around objects from the Arab world. Some of these were to be included in the exhibition. A second role, once the exhibition was open, was to run storytelling sessions for visiting school parties, telling traditional talks from the Arab world.

The main challenge for me in the project was to explore how storytelling and story making could contribute to understanding and respect for another culture, and avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes. Workshops held at the start of the project suggested that young people’s knowledge of the Arab world was very limited and dominated in particular by characters from *Aladdin*, and from computer games.

Story making around objects from the Arab world provided another way of exploring associations with that region. Working with three classes we produced a collection of about 50 entertaining tales straight out of the *One Thousand and One Nights* tradition, featuring magic, intrigue and a fair amount of bloodthirsty violence. Here are a few examples:

Mask

The mask is made from ironed taffeta and comes from Palestine. It is probably about 500 years old. A woman - probably as young as 13 - would have worn this. It is a mask where only the eyes can be seen and possibly the mouth. When a young girl is 13 she is considered old enough to marry - her parents would marry her off and she would become part of the man and his household. She would wear the mask in order for other men to respect the fact that she is married, and of course they are

not to get physically involved with her. The girl will only have eyes for her husband. The following myth is associated with such masks:

Once, a girl called Niba was told not to look at a prince whom she desired so much, because he was married to a princess called Landora. Landora was arrogant and didn't make the prince happy. He loved Niba, and so they ran away together into the desert. The God Condor punished Niba by barring up her face with a metal mask, so she would not be attractive to the prince, and so the prince left her.

Large Inlaid Box

This box belonged to an Arabian prince who was very fond of war. Once he was captured by the Crusaders of Richard the Lionhearted, and his eyes were gouged out during torture. The prince escaped and became known as the mad prince.

In revenge for his torture, he ordered that all the prisoners his army ever captured should have their eyes pulled out and put in the box. The Prince would choose different eyes every day and put them in his eye sockets, and pretend he could see.

The Prince is the origin of the story of the emperor's new clothes: *a man once sold him rags, saying they were the most beautiful clothes. If anyone told the King they were rags he would pull their eyes out. The Prince was married but ended up executing his wife who opposed his cruelty. She had a lot of common sense.*

Large Wicker Basket

When the basket was opened a female Genie would come floating out of it. She wore silks of purple and blue. Her shoes were like slippers with long, curled toes. She was blonde, with her hair tied in a bun, with a blue and purple silk veil hanging over her face. She had a mole on her top lip. There were soft chairs on the outer part of the basket, and on the chairs there were beautiful silk cushions. The place was aromatic with steam rising from the ground. Inside the air would be dreamy. The room was spacious with long beautiful curtains hanging over concealed windows. The Genie and her basket are probably about 1000 years old. It was probably found in a cave with hidden treasure. It most probably carried a curse.

Some of the stories were included in the exhibition, and feedback suggests that visitors enjoyed them. They provided a stimulating way of looking at the objects on display. Unfortunately there was not much time for further work with the classes involved. Had there been, I would have liked to take the work further, examining, in more depth, the stereotypes which came up, and then offering some alternative narratives, based on accurate information about the current Arab world and its history, using these new images in further creative work.

Storytelling Sessions

The next issue I faced in the project was that of the storytelling sessions themselves, and then the problematic of dealing with the issue of stereotyping in traditional Arab tales. During the preparatory stage, I had the opportunity to interview some Arab visitors to Britain. In the interviews I asked the following question: “If you were to try to explain the way of life in your county to people in Britain who knew nothing of the Arab world, what would you choose to describe?” The question proved stimulating and fruitful, providing a list of positive aspects of life that they said they would wish to highlight. The interviewees were very conscious of the stereotyping of Arabs in British society, and strongly supported the idea of promoting a deeper understanding of Arab life and culture.

Issues highlighted included, for example:

1. Generosity and hospitality
2. Community and neighborhood relations
3. Courage and intelligence
4. Humor
5. Religion and belief in God’s will
6. Community response to death
7. Family support and guidance of children
8. Tradition of pilgrimage and fasting
9. Concern for the poor

The following is an interview conducted in this series, with young Arab women visiting London. The answers are direct quotations, but on the part of various respondents:

Q.: If English people ask you to explain what life is like in your country, what stories would you tell them?

Just like the English, Arabs and Muslims want to live a happy life - the main difference is that, for us, before we act, we try to think about not just what we want, but what God would want. Social connections in our countries are very strong. If my neighbors are poor then I'm ready not to eat meat in order to help them. We have a special feast ('Aid Al-Adha) where we donate to the poor. When someone dies the community works to support the grieving family. For three days the mourning family does nothing and friends, neighbors and relatives organize everything. For three days the community visits and sits in solidarity with the grieving family. During adolescence, the family plays a big role in educating and caring for the child, guiding choices of friends and social life. In particular girls are cared for as they are respected and considered holy as well as vulnerable. The family helps prepare the adolescent for marriage. When the husband dies, the wife will go through a long period of mourning.

She continues to have an important role within her wider family helping with children and grandchildren and may not marry again. I wish that our schools could be more like the English schools. In my country the schools are more oriented towards memory, but the students are not well supported to think for themselves. I also wish that in our country we could enjoy equality before the law like in England. In my country there is one law for the rulers and another for the people.

These interviews gave me some ideas to use when selecting and preparing the stories to tell, allowing me to choose stories that illustrated some of the positive qualities mentioned. My intention was to use the stories as triggers for discussions where we could explore the messages within the stories and what they told us about the culture they came from. The tellings themselves were well attended, involving lively discussion of themes and issues. However, it is perhaps difficult to judge to what extent they did contribute to promoting knowledge and understanding of Arab culture. No doubt the stories were offered in an exciting and stimulating environment (inside a Bedouin tent) and that students enjoyed them, connecting with the themes and images in a strong way. They also had the chance to see Arab instruments and hear them played. So there was, at minimum, a chance for visitors to enjoy and celebrate folktales and music from the Arab and Islamic worlds. Beyond that, some teachers reported that after the workshops students had spent the rest of the week discussing and re-discussing the stories, providing a potential teaching opportunity for follow-up in the school.

Perhaps, in future work, it would be useful to produce a teachers' pack of suggested follow-up activities for going more deeply into the issues raised. In particular I feel some resource packs providing information about modern life in the Arab world would be valuable to develop, in the spirit of combating parochialism and prejudice.

The Sprawling City and the Gloomy Sparks of Architecture

By Jean Harari

It is difficult, almost foolish, to talk about urban development and architecture in Palestine, full as it is of the sound and fury of a violent war being waged against a popular uprising, the expansion of illegal, militarized settlements over stolen land, the progressive imposition of a territorial conception going well beyond what it is widely considered to be a new form of apartheid. Architecture and town planning are supremely a matter of peace and the spirit of cooperation. It is obvious that a people, a nation need peace and a minimum of prosperity, not only to plan and build their own space, but also to think about it, to project new perspectives onto it, and to plan a long-term, viable future.

True, there is such a thing as war architecture and urban planning; in fact, we are here surrounded by it in the shape of the occupiers' settlements, usually built on hilltops as forbidding fortresses, surrounded by barbed wire and wide rocky spaces, around which olive trees, extant buildings and all crops have been destroyed, scorched-earth style. The threatened conqueror is the specialist in war architecture and urban planning, but the latter does not have the long-term attributes of peacetime urbanism, since it adopts the spatial form of conquest and domination. These are by definition temporary processes. The Occupied Palestinian Territories are subject to this type of urban and suburban planning, which is in turn subject to strategic and belligerent interests. In this respect, the Palestinian model is explicitly not Palestinian, since a large portion of the modern component within it, except for that which is permitted in specified Bantustans, is intended to marginalize, displace and replace them with a new people of usually foreign immigrants.

This brief foreword was a necessary one, because it shown that Europe, going through its own architectural and town planning crisis, is not dealing with the same types of dilemmas as those which beset Palestine. It might nonetheless be interesting to see what is perhaps awaiting the Palestinians, the day they achieve self-determination on their own land. Furthermore, we live in the same world, and mutual influences, particularly between the southern and northern lands surrounding the Mediterranean, have always and will continue in future to express themselves on all of the shores of the inner sea.

There is no reason for optimism, if we consider the situation in which architecture finds itself today in Europe. It is still going through a long crisis which began some fifty years ago, after the second World War. Beginning at that time, European cities began to spread and continued to do so, over ever-larger territories, absorbing more and more rural lands,

expanding ever outward from the limits which had been clearly delineated and respected during the period of generalized industrialization in the nineteenth century. There was a short pause after the oil crisis of the mid-nineteen seventies, but the spread continued thereafter, surging beyond what had before been the suburbs of all of the major cities. The phenomenon affected the western European countries as a whole, although particular and characteristic variations in rhythms and patterns were to be found across borders. Such variations were linked to such national factors as urban control, housing policies, the structure of landed property, types and plans with regard to infrastructure and transport systems, planning traditions, questions of scale, and so on.

Everywhere, despite the general phenomenon of urban decline in western Europe, the phenomenon of urban spread was pervasive. Rural and natural spaces were transformed and conquered by the city. Urban growth was not unprecedented, it must be stressed. But what differentiated this last half-century was that it took place without giving rise to the creation and incorporation of new cities or urban nuclei. Both the British and the French tried, unsuccessfully, to stem the tide with their “new town” strategy. Urban extension over the past half century has taken on the form of a series of sprawling extensions, very different from the suburban spread which had characterized the previous hundred years of European urban history.

The main features of this new urban development is: low building (and therefore demographic) density; the waste of land; the exclusive domination of the single family detached house; the limitlessness of territorial organization and its lack of either centrality or hierarchy; the unchallenged overuse of the individual car; the growing extension and complexity of the road network; the radical separation between housing, work and commercial districts, and its attendant specialization of space and zoning.

Consequences of such urban extension are evident: social segregation, a considerable loss of time and energy in daily commuting; air pollution and the destruction of natural and agricultural landscapes; enormous financial costs in terms of technical infrastructures and public amenities; the very poor environmental and architectural quality of the settlements.

A number of reasons help to explain this situation of spatial dispersion and disorder. But in order to understand it properly, one must identify its roots within the local and national circumstances that give it its particular shape. The major cause of the continuous urban sprawling in Europe does not lie in the ideological refusal of the city and its way of life, the dream of a come back to a natural home life, the mobility or the fascination for immaterial networks. The main reason is the incapacity of the capitalist economic system, involved in a liberal and highly competitive confrontation, to cope with and to solve permanently, the housing problem of the major part of the population in a dense urban context.

In Europe this crucial issue was raised at least as of 1850, and never truly solved, except for short times and in limited areas. Beginning with the dreadful and notorious living and housing conditions of the industrial workers (as described by Emile Zola

and Charles Dickens, for example) and in particular of the poorest and lowest social classes, the housing problem became, with the growing importance of the middle classes, the concern of most members of the society.

The capitalist economic system, based on an extensive free market and liberal competition, is intrinsically incapable of resolving this problem by itself. This is because strong and continuous public intervention has been proven necessary to impose aesthetic, moral, logical, as well as economic order to urban planning. After the first philanthropic attempts of the last decade of the nineteenth century all attempts at imposing such order were abandoned. For obvious social and political reasons related to the bourgeois respect of private property, the first condition of an urban solution of the mass housing problem was never confronted, that is to say land control and management.

Instead, social segregation took shape in urban space, and was soon theorized and codified by the concept of “zoning” with its attendant laws, based on the ideological pretext of rationalizing the fabric of urban life and work. The result of this approach, far from transforming cities into perfect mechanical clockworks, was on the contrary the generation of increasing difficulties, unexpected problems in areas such as transport and traffic, territorial relationships and distribution systems. In France as in many other European countries, the deliberate public policy of social segregation of urban space led, during the nineteen sixties and -seventies, to the emergence of huge districts replete with social housing, completely separated and isolated from the previous urban structure.

In the process, city planners broke with the historical process of urban growth. No more streets and blocks, no more lots and tenements; courtyards and interior gardens disappeared, to be replaced by green and black (or asphalted) open spaces. These were so extended that they reversed the normal ration between public spaces and privately appropriated ones. In these areas, unbuilt land constitutes about 75% to 85% of the area, with only 15% to 25% built land. This may appear to constitute progress, but it is not. Rather, it adds up to one of the great swindles of the modern doctrine of urban planning. We cannot here relate in detail the tragic consequences of this development. Suffice it to say that all of the processes of collective and individual appropriation of urban spaces were perverted. Transformations and evolutions became traumatic. Densification and differentiation were no longer possible. Then, with the social crisis, accompanied by structural unemployment, which began in the middle of the seventies, these districts became clearly new ghettos where migrant families and unemployed workers were relegated. Since then, violent and unpredictable riots occur from time to time.

A quarter century of what is called “la politique de la cité” (referring to the French term for these massive cinder-block ghettoized suburbs) have not succeeded in solving the social problem or the urban crisis of these new suburbs. During the subsequent period, in which we still find ourselves, a new trend of urban development was promoted. It results from the revised approach to the central question of mass housing. Public authorities and states, almost everywhere in Europe, try to delegate responsibilities in this field, in line with the general trend towards privatization, and

liberalization throughout the global economy. Public and social housing are nowadays too expensive and unprofitable as investments. The private sector is encouraged to cope with the issue. Stemming from the same logic, and since the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, an overwhelming proportion of residential building is dedicated to single family, owner occupied houses, isolated on a lot, forming part of a suburban estate and, of course, ever further from the city center. This type of housing is enormously profitable, from the point of view of those who offer it.

All of the necessary means are deployed to make this transfer of responsibilities from the public to the private sector possible: relaxing urban regulation, granting low-interest loans and credit facilities, creating the necessary road and infrastructure access in advance of the building of new settlements. The result of this massive public and private turn to single family occupation, which implies exclusive ownership, is part of a social and economical strategy leading to the breaking up of spatial and collective relationships. After hundreds of years of the quasi-organic development of cities in Europe, it means the end of the diversity and polarity that dense urban forms and patterns generate and organize.

It is not easy to identify and measure all the consequences of such a radical shift. Every aspect of social life and the overall environmental context are strongly affected. Even in the framework of the liberal ideas and the unfettered economy that currently prevails in Europe, the situation is worrying enough to alarm the European Union. At the latest by the time of the Rio "Earth" conference in 1992, the problems generated by the sprawling cities have been clearly identified, solutions to them defined as a central object of concern. New concepts, such as sustainable development and sustainable cities have been elaborated to counteract the danger of the unfettered expansion of this new type of urbanization.

The European Commission likewise took a stand in defense of the compact city, mixed land uses, 'densified' building in town centers, residential suburbs and industrial wastelands, limited residential extension, the re-conquest of public spaces. It gave priority to urban development around the main points and networks of existing public transport. This proposed approach to urban development has been called the 'Rhineland model', in contrast to the North American model of the fragmented city. In order to be realized, this process implies a drastic cutback in daily individual car travel between home and workplace, a general decrease of mobility and a large set of measures of environmental protection. It would be an understatement to say that we are far from that goal. The fact of the matter is, while objectives have been defined, strategies have yet to be mapped out. But at the very least, the consciousness exists, and has been translated into concepts.

How have these developments affected architecture? Through the process described above, which results in the progressive disappearance of historical and sedimentary towns, at least as living and dynamic urban forms, architecture has surely been weakened. It is, in the contemporary era, intimately linked to the culture and fabric of the city, as well as to the idea of place as the result of human collective history and activity.

Architecture has been playing a strange and paradoxical part in this vanishing urban enterprise. On the one hand it is, in its true sense, missing from the massive and ordinary production of the sprawling suburbia. More or less industrialized ready-made products are built here, not only for houses but also for industrial plants, office headquarters and commercial centers. On the other hand, however, spectacular and extraordinary architectural events are organized, to overcompensate as it were. They are pure theatrical production, serving only mediatic and commercial purposes, to gain popular assent and to market and advertise the goods. Giant multinationals are investing in architecture at strategic points around the globe. They commission buildings, often dedicated to 'culture', most notably art museums. These are or become contemporary monuments. They are huge, perhaps huger than ever, out of scale with the urban setting, so as to signify the recovered power of the worldwide free market and liberal society.

For particular historical and cultural reasons linked to its highly centralized structure, the French state itself has become involved in these more typically private projects that are intruding in the public sphere. France in this respect is certainly an anachronistic exception. Its record in this regard has been rather unconvincing. Be that as it may, Europe in general has been the theater, over the past decade, for some amazing experiments, conceived by world-famous architects, many of them European. The most astonishing is surely the Bilbao Guggenheim museum, in the Spanish Basque country. It is the work of Frank Gehry, the in-house architect of the Disney corporation. The building in question is now considered the leading example of a new strategy of urban regeneration based on the peppering of cities with iconic and tourist attractions. It will be soon be followed by some clones, the impact of which will progressively decline, leaving these futuristic dinosaurs in place. Another example is 'Euralille', a giant commercial and business center doubling up as a place for congresses, conferences and exhibitions. It was designed by the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, who aggressively propounds 'bigness', or the idea that "big is beautiful." By flaunting this motto, however, he is automatically consigning to utter neglect the most elementary concern for building durability (not to speak of permanence), as well as essential details in execution and the notion of practical use. As for the French National Library in Paris on the banks of the Seine, designed by Dominique Perrault, it is almost unanimously considered one of the most expensive failures of contemporary architecture. One should point also to the disastrous London Millennium center, by the ecologically minded (sic!) British architect, Richard Rogers.

Another interesting case is the rebuilding of the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, largely designed by the Italian humanist architect Renzo Piano, on behalf of the German firm Debis, a subsidiary of Daimler Benz.

This project is an emblematic example of private urban development within one of the most symbolic historical centers of the old continent. It looks urban enough, very dense with high towers and compact blocks around courtyards and mixed uses,

including a big commercial center, shops along the streets, leisure equipment and so on. But the whole is dominated by the soaring skyscrapers of Debis headquarters and has almost no relationship either with the surrounding neighborhoods, or with the low, horizontal urban form, scattered with gardens and parks, which is distinctive of Berlin. Despite all appearances, the concern in this case was mainly to reach highly speculative financial aims in a very sensitive context, so as to underline the heavy ideological responsibilities and decisive influence of mediatic architects with respect to the present international cultural scene.

In this regard, the aesthetic, the commercial, the post-urbanistic are as ever linked to contemporary politics. An illustration of this fact can be found in an event that took place in Jerusalem, in front of the wall of Buraq, the so-called Western or Wailing Wall, in May 2000. On that day, the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas (designer, as we have seen, of the Guggenheim in Bilbao) was awarded the Pritzker prize, a would-be architectural Nobel. It had been established in 1979 by the Pritzker family of Chicago, owners of the Hyatt hotel chain. Ceremonies were on this occasion organized in and around the Jerusalem archeological digs in the Old City, with the active support of the Israeli government. Thomas Pritzker himself, president of the Hyatt foundation and creator of his prize, supported the Israeli stance regarding these very controversial digs. As for the architect Koolhaas, he may not be interested in such archeological and historical disputes, but he is surely aware of their significance to the Middle East conflict. By participating in the ceremony, he heavily politicized and thus discredited the very idea of the prize. In his acceptance speech, he explained his vision of the present and future of architecture. I paraphrase it here, only because I have translated it back from the French.

Our client, he said, is no longer the state, but those individuals possessed of daring ambitions that we architects support without reservation. The system is definitely the market economy. We work now in a post-ideological era and, because of lack of support, we have given up the city and other more general issues. The themes we invent and promote are our own mythologies, our specialties. We do not hold forth on such issues as territorial organization, human settlement or coexistence. In the best case our work is to seek and brilliantly exploit a set of singular conditions. Koolhaas went on to state that, unless we break the traditional linkage between architecture and every other known field, from most political to the most practical, and free ourselves from this endless obsession of speculating about new, urgent and immediate problems such as like poverty or the disappearance of nature, architecture may not reach the year 2050.

This is a vision of the architect as an apolitical, asocial being, incapable of speculating professionally about the pressing dilemmas of humankind because, like any other craftsman, he or she depends on the munificence of the businessmen and the 'needs' of the 'free' market. Combined with the blind subservience to racist and imperial designs over territory and people struggling for their independence and dignity, it certainly sums up the state of the art today, which I would describe as I have noted in my title, as gloomy sparks, illuminating nothing.