

Title: Nuclear Futures: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Palestine and Beyond, Roundtable Abstract

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Source: *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies*, vol. V, no. 1 (Winter 2025), pp. 23-40

Published by: *Memorial University of Newfoundland*



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Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies
E-ISSN: 2564-2154
5(1) 23-40
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2026

Nuclear Futures: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Palestine and Beyond, Roundtable Abstract

Academic Action Network for Palestine

Description

This planetary seminar was the fourth in a current series of scholarly webinars mobilized by the Awareness and Narrative Shaping group of the scholarly network, Academic Action Network for Palestine. The network's mission is to support Palestinian scholars and scholarship. Academic Action Network for Palestine hosted the global virtual platform for the roundtable discussion and debate. Hiroshima City University hosted a physical live location with several of the speakers. The international transdisciplinary scholarly journal, *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies*, is publishing the roundtable discussion and related work in this issue.

Theme: Nuclear Futures: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Palestine and Beyond

The world faces an intensifying existential tension brought on by spreading planetary racism and the proliferation of biopolitical warfare of genocidal proportions and with the imminent danger of nuclear war. The at-the-limit character of nuclear bombing latches onto the shape of racialized thinking, also existentially extreme and intense (putatively defining/separating the human from the nonhuman or more-than-human). The politics of race-making and racist thinking loves the idea of an annihilating, people-erasing bomb (to the point of pathological suicidal ideation). Following the inauguration of the nuclear racism series at Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the hands of the US in 1945, new forms are developing in the colonial 21st century, most clearly in Gaza at the hands of Israel, backed by the US. The threat of nuclear bombing of Palestine by Israel has been a significant possibility since the 1960s and under-rides, or forms the presumptive basis of, the unspoken racist contract governing the *de facto* 'right' or power of Israel to do whatever it wants before its pathologically failed sponsor-father the US. Israel's packaging of its nuclear weaponry in the form of the Samson complex in the 1960s shows the extreme, existentially intense, racist, destructive—including mass-suicidally self-destructive—truth of this way of thinking. Though Israel initiated plans in accordance with its nuclear weaponry and in line with the Samson complex ideology in the 1960s and

1970s, the fact that it is a nuclear power remains largely unacknowledged publicly, or if acknowledged, only quietly, in passing, while the US and EU continue to direct disproportionate scrutiny toward Iran, a non-nuclear state. This disparity is deeply tied to the unfinished imperial desire for planetary domination and racism, and the systemic and systematic dehumanization of the Palestinians, and, more broadly, peoples and nations in what is naturalized as ‘Global South’. The complete destruction of Gaza and the ongoing dehumanization of the Palestinians in every other part of Palestine highlights these dynamics. What is the face of nuclear futures today, at Hiroshima, at Nagasaki, in Palestine, and beyond? And how can it be confronted?

Summary

Tahrir Hamdi opened the session with a welcome and a short statement of the mission of Academic Action Network for Palestine.

Peter Trnka introduced the session with a welcome and a restatement of the theme and guiding questions, and a statement of the order of speakers and process. Trnka read a support letter from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak:

We must congratulate Keir Starmer and the 150 other states that have recognized the State of Palestine today [21 September 2025]. ... But we must also recognize that this is an overdue act of reparation: ... it was the British mandate that allowed the establishment of the state of Israel 75 years ago. We must remember the Sykes-Picot documents ... whereby on January 3, 1916 the Holy Land was the only area allowed to bear arms, by the very European nations ... involved in today’s recognition. We must place this within a broad geopolitical rhythm that has existed millennially. What the Sykes-Picot merely organized was the resettlement of the map of West Asia (Middle East) after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the conclusion of the first World War. ... We must all strive to preserve the possibilities opened by Britain, Canada, Australia, and the European nations today, recognize that it is not Palestine that wishes destruction of the state of Israel, but rather the policy of Prime Minister Netanyahu in Gaza that makes it clear that it is the other way around: in his view, Palestine must not exist for Israel to survive. We must undo this.

Trnka then distinguished, following the work of Elaine Scarry, situations of war from situations of torture, connecting events of nuclear racism and genocide such as Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Palestine under the name of torture.

Tanami Aoe greeted everyone and spoke of participating in the standing protest for Palestine at the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Dome in the Peace Memorial Park, starting in October 2023. As a researcher on Palestine, living in Hiroshima, Aoe took initiative in the protest action, together with some international graduate students. Most protesters were Japanese volunteers unaware of much concerning Palestine. As someone who’d visited Palestine several times and interviewed Palestinians for research, Aoe was one of the few familiar with the

Palestinian issue and aware of the racist dimensions. Participating in the protest for over two years generated a real sense of pain as she was aware of the locations and the geography of the West Bank and Gaza. “I am working in Hiroshima right now, but I believe I work in the same way wherever I am,” though many see special significance to being from Hiroshima. “I have recognized that the Palestinian issue is a nuclear issue but I myself have focused on how Palestinians are suffering daily ethnic cleansing and daily apartheid;” connecting the nuclear issue with the Palestinian issue was a new challenge. “Yet after several Israeli politicians from settler communities became cabinet ministers, Israel had now openly showed its possession of nuclear weapons and it even mentioned the possibility of using the nuclear bomb in Gaza.” Many people at Hiroshima are more sensitive to the nuclear issue and may become chauvinistic when it is discussed. “Israel’s attack on Iran was a diversion to continue the attack on Gaza. The attack on Iran’s nuclear reactor is tremendously problematic.”

“... The attitude that we need now is not cynicism. The attitude we need now is to find the intersection between people like me, who have focused on Palestine, especially its daily registers of local society, and those who have been involved in the anti-nuclear movement in places like Hiroshima. I have come to realize this is very important.” Even within the Hiroshima anti-nuclear movement there is a narrow conservative focus in terms of the victims, but there is a movement to recognize the non-Japanese victims, including the Koreans (10% of the population in 1945). More global awareness now of the nuclear issue and its connections to colonialism and racism: the World Nuclear Victims (Survivors) Forum, 5-6 October, 2025, held at Hiroshima, considered nuclear colonialism and racism directly. While the program did not include Palestinian content, the highlight was Dene activist Leona Morgan, from the Navajo nation, shouting “Free Palestine!” to finish her speech. “Little by little we are beginning to find the intersection and to expand it by emphasizing it. That is why I have hope in my activities in Hiroshima. Every day is truly difficult, but I believe there is hope. Free Palestine!” (Photographs of the standing protest at the Dome and of the destruction in Gaza and of “The Existing Location of Palestinian Culture: Performing Art to Resist.”)

Ilan Pappé gave thanks to all for “the very important roundtable” and apologized for an upcoming power outage, hoping that, if he disappeared, he might reappear. Pappé spoke of wanting to widen the historical context, alluded to by Gayatri, namely, “the dehumanization that allows eventually the use of lethal weapons, such as nuclear weapons, but also other means of weaponry ... to massively destroy nations, communities, people’s lives, people’s infrastructure, including with consequences later on for their well-being and health and their ability to reconstruct.” The issue in the Gaza strip is not just the number of people dead, but that the material used, to build the infrastructure, when destroyed in this way, contaminates the earth, the water. The material is itself now contaminated. “I don’t know if any of you were near the Gaza strip recently but I was. I couldn’t get in but I was able to see a cloud, a huge cloud of dust

made of whatever came out of the destruction, above, that could be seen for kilometers ... It was very clear that if you were under that cloud you could hardly breathe and you could hardly concentrate on building your life even if the bombing had stopped. And as we know from this morning, the bombing has not stopped.”

“The dehumanization that enables such a magnitude of destruction that we have seen in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, but not only there, with different forms of the genocide, of the Jews in Europe, the bombing in Germany during the second world war, goes back to the colonialist era when modern weaponry was first used in order to eliminate a people in order to inflict the genocide, on the people of Africa by shipping them as slaves to North America and the Caribbean. The late Patrick Wolfe kept reminding us of the logic of the elimination of the native. The means of the elimination change over time, according to the development of world war weaponry, but the intention and the justification, the internal justification, and then the international immunity for that kind of project, are very much a part of what we see today in Gaza and very much part of the racist dehumanization that enabled the act of bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki.” Awareness of this wider context among academics, journalists, and more broadly, requires a decolonization of knowledge, “a decolonization of knowledge about Palestine, and a decolonization of knowledge about nuclear weapons, and about elimination.”

“Gayatri mentioned the recognition of Palestine. Obviously ... it was this timing that brought her to mention it. I do think it is very, very important to stress the point, even for the Japanese government, but definitely for the governments of the West and, particularly, in Europe, that what they are called upon, really, to do, historically and given their accountability for what happened in Palestine and in the Arab world, and in many cases their complicity with what happened in Gaza in the last two years, that their historical role now is not to mediate between Israel and Palestine, or to push forward for a two state solution: their historical role is to protect the state of Palestine, to protect the Palestinians from further elimination. And there is a clear list of actions that they could and should take in order to defend the Palestinians from the continued attempt to eliminate them, as a nation, a people, and a country.”

“My last point, two points, actually. Possession of nuclear weapons is a threat on world peace. There is no doubt about it. But it is also important to understand who possesses these weapons. And what is totally absent from the discussion in mainstream media, and mainstream academia, and, definitely, mainstream politics in the world, is the connection between the ideology of the current Israeli political elite, a messianic ideology, a fanatic racist ideology, and the nuclear power that Israel possesses. Not that we were able to sleep quietly when these terrible weapons were in the hands of so-called more moderate Israeli governments but that’s for the past. For the present and, very clearly for the future, at least for the near future, Israel is going to be ruled by a political elite that has ambitions, not only to expunge Palestine and its people, but to go

beyond and create a greater Israel that extends into Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, and the weaponry it will use will be used without any inhibitions.”

“My final point is that in a world where I can imagine a liberated Palestine, certain processes have to mature;” most relevant here is the global alliance that provides, cynically, immunity to Israel’s genocide, and the military industries and security industries are a major partner. These industries employ a huge number of workers in the West, who “probably, consciously and morally, could be convinced that their work, their professions, really contribute to the death and wounding and torture of others. But we have to deal with it. How do we diversify the military industries, the security industries? I am speaking from Britain, where we have this huge challenge, knowing how many people are involved in the industries that are connected to weaponry, and we would like the working class to be in solidarity with the Palestinian movement. And that is a real challenge, as they are afraid of losing their jobs. We need to have an international consultation on what should replace the military industries and I have not seen enough of that done by academia.”

Nakamura Taira introduced his name and Japanese custom concerning names, where the first name is the family name and Taira is his individual name. He studies Japanese colonialism and peace studies. “Why do Japanese not recognize the A-Bomb attack as ... nuclear racism or colonialism?”

“1. USA’s influence; 2. Japanese inclination to mix natural and war disasters; Japanese do not want to admit ... as a loser; 4. ... Racism/colonialism has just started to be recognized in the world and Japan. 1. USA’s influence: Occupied Japan from 1945 to 1952; Japanese ruling class willingly cooperate ...; Co-operation hid ... Japanese-Empire’s responsibility of racism and colonialism; Background of Korean war from 1950; Cold war regime ...; Japan-US Security Treaty from 1951; Japanese resistance ... defeated (especially 1960); ‘Peace use of nuclear’ began; Japanese consciousness: can’t compete with USA. 2. Japanese inclination to mix natural and war disasters: [At Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima are engraved the following words, a few hundred meters from the hypocenter:] ‘Let all the souls here rest in peace. For we shall not repeat the evils;’ Who is the subject that dropped the A-bomb? No clear subject/responsibility of Japanese/Americans in USA; Same as 311 [nuclear power Fukayama] disaster. 3. Japanese do not want to admit ... as a loser: ‘Ending War,’ not ‘Losing War;’ What is a subject or individual of resistance? E.g., Japanese communist party ... oppressed and losing ... influence. 4. ...Racism/colonialism has just started to be recognized in the world and Japan: Merkmal, 2001, Durban conference; World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances; As a scholar in a Japanese university, it’s important for me to find and interpret those histories and structures of not letting us recognize it; It’s also a problem of knowledge (production); Education and media.”

Kaori Hatsumi trained in anthropology and worked in war-time Sri Lanka. Hatsumi agreed completely with Professor Nakamura's point concerning "Japanese academia, its lack of reflection on its own history of colonialism and racism." A Sri Lankan victim of civil war brought up a play on Hiroshima. "What are the faces of our nuclear futures? The world where there is no witness, no prayer, no mourning ... How can we confront (and defeat) contemporary nuclear threats? Keep telling stories, keep witnessing, keep listening: 'To Lend a Voice to Suffering is a Condition for All Truth' (Adorno)." The story the Sri Lankan victim raised: "Living with Father (*Chichi to kuraseba*, 1994)", Inoue Hishashi (1934-2010), translated by Zeljko Cipris. Author's Preface: "When I bring up the subject of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an increasing number of people say, 'It's wrong to dwell on having been victimized, because the Japanese of those days also victimized Asia.' The second part of this view is certainly accurate. The Japanese did victimize all of Asia. However, I will never accept the first part of the statement because I believe that the two atomic bombs were not merely dropped on the Japanese; they were dropped on the entire human existence. The bomb victims of that time who were burned by the infernal flames represent people throughout the modern world who cannot escape from the existence of nuclear weapons. I write as one among six billion human beings, not out of a feeling of victimization, but rather out of a conviction that it would be a greater wrong to pretend ignorance of the inferno that I know." Mitsue tries to save her father during the bombing but does not: "Mitsue: It's wrong for me to be happy. I'm a daughter who deserted her father in a sea of flames worse than hell, and ran away. Such a person has no right to be happy. Takezo [spirit of her father]: It's your task to tell about the sad things, and the happy things, that human beings have experienced. If you don't understand that, then I won't rely on a fat-headed fool like you any longer. Give me someone else instead."

In the earlier part of 2009, in the so-called fighting between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil (LTT), the Sri Lankan Option referred to indiscriminate bombing by cluster weapons, with the policy of 'leave no witness,' or, kill everyone. 1 in 4 civilians dead or disappeared, altogether 100,000 did not come out alive. "What is the face of nuclear futures today, at Hiroshima, at **Nagasaki**, in Palestine, and beyond? Nagasaki 1914. So glad we included Nagasaki. A very strong image of the Nagasaki bombing is this Atomic bomb Mary, who was brought from Italy in 1914, and who was bombed, right above, with the plutonium bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki, and buried in the rubble." Speculation that the cathedral was the target due to its symbolic power, to destroy "the prayer base." (Photograph of Atomic bomb Mary.)

Fazil Moradi "In an archived interview from 16 October 1970, we see ABC News journalist Richard Carleton meeting with Ghassan Kanafani (2024) at his office in Beirut in the afterlife of French colonialism. As the camera moves through the office, it does not encounter a neutral interior so much as a planetary scene, a space where the fiction of separation between *epistemological revolution*

and armed resistance against colonialism collapses. This is not a workspace that precedes politics; it is one already written by the Ottoman, British, French, German, and American empires. Bookshelves hold books, documents, folders, posters, newspapers, magazines, and a few bullets on display: a haunting political condition where the colonial archive and its violence are rendered inseparable. The walls, behind and on the right side of Kanafani's desk, are dense with faces of women and men that appear as repeatable epistemic resistance against colonial imperial domination, and as imagined futures. Among them are the image of a woman fighter, her weapon raised, her keffiyeh enveloping her head and neck so that only her eyes remain exposed. She is placed alongside monumental portraits of Mao Zedong, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, and Che Guevara, people whose afterlives persist as spectral inheritances. These images do not just decorate Kanafani's office; they perform human relations and modes of imagining liberation without resolving it.

Carleton asks Kanafani: "Why won't your organization [the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] engage in peace talks with the Israelis?" Kanafani responds: "You don't mean exactly peace talks; you mean capitulation, surrendering." When Carleton asks "Why not just talk?" Kanafani replies: "*Talk to whom?*" Carleton answers: "Talk to the Israeli leaders." Kanafani responds: "That is the kind of conversation between the *sword* and the *neck*. . . . No, I haven't been, I have never seen any talk between a colonialist case and a national liberation movement," (emphasis mine). Carleton continues by asking why they should "talk to stop fighting, to stop the death and the misery, the destruction, the pain . . . of Palestinians, of Israelis, of Arabs." Kanafani replies by stressing *the death and the misery, the destruction, the pain* "of Palestinian people who are uprooted, thrown into camps, living in starvation, killed for 20 years, and forbidden even to use the name Palestinians." At this point, Carleton declares: "They are better that way than dead, though." "May be to you, but to us it is not. To us, to liberate our country, to have dignity, to have respect, to have our mere human rights is something as essential as life itself," responds Kanafani, 9 years after the release of Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*) in October 1961, which was immediately banned by the French empire.

Fanon locates his inquiry at the margins of the colonial order, as an ethical, philosophical or critical necessity, through which colonialism becomes legible or most tangible. He writes of nationalist parties, and of the colonial order, as a whole, abandoning the peasantry, leaving it with nothing "to lose and everything to gain," and of how the "starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays" (1968, 61). This realization, or "discovery," is not reducible to an attachment to violence. What is at stake is colonialism as a dehumanizing, *naked violence*. Fanon does not arrive armed with a concept to be applied to Algerian life under colonialism, nor does he impose a theoretical grid upon daily struggles for dignity against the French empire. Rather, he attends to what is already at work in those struggles. He records what the *Front de Libération Nationale* circulated through its leaflets and "what every Algerian felt at heart: *colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor*

a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence” (61, emphasis mine). Colonialism here calls for more violence, or a response in its own idiom.

Against this backdrop, Hannah Arendt’s reflections in *On Violence* (1970) produce a striking disjunction. While writing that Mahatma Gandhi’s “strategy of nonviolent resistance” would have resulted in more “massacre” and “submission” had it been directed against “Stalin’s Russia, Hitler’s Germany, even prewar Japan,” Arendt asserts that “England in India and France in Algeria had good reasons for their restraint” (53). In other words, for Arendt, who does not mention colonialism even once, nor the genocidal violence of the British and French empires, “Stalin’s Russia” and “Hitler’s Germany,” along with imperial Japan, could “only yield when confronted with greater violence,” whereas British and French colonialism are seen as human, restrained, reasonable. Arendt nonetheless turns to Fanon in a footnote, as if to justify, or delimit, her use of his text: “I am using this work [*The Wretched of the Earth*] because of its great influence on the present student generation. Fanon himself, however, is much more doubtful about violence than his admirers” (14). The footnote becomes both citation and containment, invoking Fanon only to neutralize his historic analysis of empire-building and colonialism. Instead of engaging the French empire and colonialism in Algeria, in the colony, Arendt cites “glorification of violence” in relation to her displacement of Fanon’s thinking *with* and *through what every Algerian felt at heart*.

The murder of Kanafani in 1972, the banning of Fanon’s book, and Fanon’s expulsion from France, are tangled together; they persist as traces of the colonial epistemicide, or murder of knowledge and people, a violence that has been repeated now in Gaza, in the bombing of kindergartens, schools, universities, and libraries, and in the burning of books and human life alike (Moradi 2025a).

The continuation of colonial destruction and acts of annihilation of Palestinians in Palestine is thus linked to the haunting histories of colonialism and to British, French, German, and American empire-building. What we learn from this colonialism in Palestine in the twenty-first century is not really new: it cannot be confined to the framing of an “Israel-Gaza/Palestine war” or “conflict.” We can observe that post-slavery, colonialism, and Holocaust, Germany, Britain, France, and the United States remain epistemicidal, in the sense that no one is permitted to speak *freely* against mass murder and destruction. What these states are sending to Israel is not *love* for its inhabitants or the future generations, but annihilatory technologies of destruction that sustain and extend colonialism in Palestine.

What haunts Kanafani and Fanon, and, indeed, all struggles for human dignity, or hospitality, or love, that persist in the world, as earthly, ethical responsibilities under conditions of domination? Sa‘dī Shirāzī gives this question its most critical articulation in *The Rose Garden*, where he insists that when the suffering of others no longer moves us, it is not their suffering that evaporates, but our own humanity. Hospitality, love, or ethical responsibility toward the lives of others, is thus not an added political or moral posture but the very condi-

tion of *being human* (Moradi 2025b). To think from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, from the ruined streets of Gaza, is to confront the murder of hospitality, love, or ethical responsibility, or the haunting lesson: *empire is heartless and can't be addressed as a dialogical human partner*.

Tahrir Hamdi: “Thank you. ‘Tahrir’ in Arabic means liberation. As the Palestinian voice here, let me say, I hope this comes true. Let us liberate Palestine.” We have some key words: nuclear futures; Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Palestine; Beyond. And in the abstract of this planetary conference, a key question: How can it be confronted? In the Western (colonial) consciousness, it was necessary that Hiroshima and Nagasaki be atomically bombed, thus instantly killing hundreds of thousands of Japanese people (246,000): “[t]he common presumption of the efficacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was offered as a final proof of how airpower—particularly against mass civilian populations—transformed the nature of war and justified the development of American strategic doctrine and the resources devoted to the construction of the nuclear stockpile and its associated delivery systems.”¹ Here we are thrown into the debate of who is worth saving. According to this racialized thinking, nuclear power must be concentrated in the hands of those who should always be saved: Western European countries and Israel, which does have nuclear weapons, but has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); the human or, some think, the more than human, those who are always morally justified in exterminating hundreds of thousands of useless brown, black, or yellow people (those who are not worth being saved, the obviously less than human, or, to use the phrase of the Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, the “human animals”). Let’s not forget that Iran, a non-nuclear power and a NPT signatory, continues to be aggressively sanctioned by the US and Western Europe for not abiding by their strict measures.

It is ironic how “saving lives” can be used alongside “the atom bomb” or “nuclear weapons”—as Adam Miyashiro (2024) points out, this phraseology only holds true if “Japanese and Korean lives are excluded from the calculation—if, in the logic of war, only American lives matter,” as we see in today’s Western legacy media coverage, where only Israeli lives matter. We have established a direct link between the people of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Palestine—these are the less than human, or if they can be described as “human,” the descriptor “animals” must be added—those who can be disposed for the benefit of the more than human race/civilization that populates the deservedly and morally nuclear armed to the teeth Western hegemonic neo-colonial world, otherwise known as the ‘free world.’

Within the historical context of occupied Palestine, complete dehumanization of the indigenous Palestinian population has always been the case, even before the establishment of Israel in 1948. Chaim Weizmann, Israel’s first president, told Arthur Ruppin, head of the Jewish Agency’s colonization department, about Palestinians: “The British told us that there are some hundred thousand negroes [Kushim] and for those there is no value.” Netanyahu has

pitched the “battle of good versus evil” argument to American audiences in attempting to justify maintaining Western colonial planetary hegemony through the mass extermination of whole civilian populations: genocide and imposed starvation. “Peace through strength”: the right to commit genocide by highly destructive airpower with the capacity to annihilate people and buildings.

Creating peace, or pacifying? The destructive powers used against Gaza exceed those of the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Jones 2025). The “peace through strength” equation of the colonial, racist so-called “free world,” led by the US, with the settler colony of Israel its most prominent example—this Western hegemonic, racist, colonial mentality has given itself the moral right to deploy people-erasing bombs—tools of mass human destruction—against the Other. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of the dehumanized Palestinians, whose killing—by the hundreds of thousands—is still being debated on Western television in terms of “proportionality” and the so-called “Israeli response.” “Perhaps, as an academic specialized in language, discourse analysis, and literary and cultural studies, I tend to focus on the importance of how language and images are used in the media to manufacture consent, to use the words deployed by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky in their book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988).” One striking example: the term “hostage,” used to describe Israelis taken by the Palestinian Resistance on Oct. 7, 2023. These “hostages” include Israeli soldiers who’ve killed Palestinians. Palestinians, on the other hand, are “prisoners,” already guilty by mere naming—such “prisoners” include a 14-year-old boy who threw a stone at an Israeli tank and Dr. Husam Abu Safiya, a paediatrician and neonatologist, the Director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza, arrested in December, 2024, and detained without charge in Ofer Prison. Western media and some Arab media outlets deploy these terms studiously and obediently. American and European legacy media outlets focus their attention on the pictures and names of these more than human Israeli “hostages.” Meanwhile the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians genocided by the Israeli killing machine remain nameless, unidentified corpses, already shredded into tens of pieces, but our minds have learned to accept this “fact”—the less than human do not deserve to be recognized or mourned. Our consent has been manufactured to the point of the total numbification of the human psyche.

Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Palestine—but the ‘beyond’? The Global South? Populations in the Global South have long been treated as dispensable by the Western colonial hegemonic order, a supposedly democratic realm in which this “free humanity” reserves the right to exterminate and annihilate those deemed less than human, at will. The “beyond” can also mean all the people in this so-called “free world,” who oppose this hegemonic regime and have been awakened from their slumber (as a result of the Gaza genocide, perhaps) and discovered that the democracy in which they were numbed into believing is neo-colonial, hegemonic, and genocidal. In the spirit of “saving” the humanity that deserves saving, American congressmen Randy Fine and Tim Walberg, and Senator Lindsey Graham, as well as Israeli Heritage Minister Amichay Eliyahu,

have called for the nuking of Gaza. According to Adam Miyashiro, “[t]he frequency and flippancy with which politicians and pundits have entertained—and at times encouraged—the nuclear destruction of Gaza has struck a nerve in Japan, where anti-war and pro-Palestine sentiment has surged.” Nuking Gaza in the spirit of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to save Western civilization, a myth deeply penetrated into the Western psyche.

The question remains: How can we counter/confront this Western, hegemonic, and racist mindset? How can we, as human beings, accept the notion of “saving” a supposedly superior civilization at the cost of annihilating another? How can we glorify the existence of weapons capable of eradicating entire populations in an instant? How can we justify the irrationality of permitting some countries or entities to possess nuclear weapons while denying others the same right? Racialized thinking must be exposed, unlearned, and unequivocally rejected. People across the globe must rise up, boycott the Zionist entity and protest this colonial, genocidal agenda. The Zionist state, which can only persist through the ongoing genocide and expulsion of the indigenous Palestinian people of historic Palestine, must be dismantled. Israel is not just a racist, apartheid state; it is a genocidal Zionist settler-colonial project that must be brought to an end.

In his article “Eighty Years after Hiroshima, calls to ‘Nuke Gaza’ shows how little we have learned,” Miyashiro wants remembering Hiroshima’s and Nagasaki’s victims to lead to resisting genocidal and racist ways of thinking: “remembrance without resistance is hollow. To truly honour the victims of Hiroshima is to confront the political systems that treat some lives as disposable ... to reject the dehumanisation and racial hierarchies that sustain violent military occupations—from the islands of the Pacific to Palestine.” The peoples of the world must resist—must remember and resist. The protest chant that has echoed across continents must continue to spread and grow like wildfire: **“In our thousands, in our millions, we are all Palestinians.”**

Open General Discussion

[Member of the audience]: “Genocidal perpetrators and colonial regimes tend to copy each other, including Russian and Israeli ones. [Vladimir] Putin’s regime poses a threat to both Europe and Japan. If Russia was to use a tactical nuclear weapon, such as the newly flying Chernobyl [missile], could it provoke Israeli use of nuclear weaponry against its neighbour?”

[Member of the audience]: “The Hiroshima story is a powerful reminder that the effects of war and nuclear violence last for generations. It’s important that we continue to connect this history to Palestine.”

Hamdi: A general answer to the first question. “The idea of ‘peace through strength.’ For example, Trump is going around all over the world saying ‘We have, you know, a nuclear ship right off the coast of ...’ Before he even says anything, he talks about the very idea of being able to destroy you at once, anni-

hilate you at once. And even Gaza, now, is being used as an example of what can happen to other countries in the Arab world, especially what we call the Levant. ... The warning of ... the man in charge of the US negotiation to Lebanon: ‘You see what happened in Gaza,’ yes, they do say, ‘what the US and Israel did in Gaza, we will do in Lebanon. So get to what we want immediately,’ which is, say, disarming Hezbollah. ... [T]he idea of having the kind of weapons, nuclear weapons, thermal bombs, etc., especially in the hands of the powerful nations, like the US, western Europe, Israel, is being used to threaten other nations into obeying what this hegemonic, Western hegemonic world wants. So the agenda is: whatever the US and Israel and western Europe want must happen. This is the idea of “peace”—of course, the right to destroy, annihilate, through strength, meaning: destruction, annihilation, extermination. These weapons are being used to make the rest of the world slaves, or less than that, to the hegemonic world, with the bombs that can destroy and melt people in seconds and minutes.”

Trnka: “Might I just add that for those who might still believe that there is some kind of logic to nuclear deterrence and that holding onto weapons is necessary so that worse “evil parties” might use them, I think that logic is completely out of the window. The messianism that Ilan talked about, the apocalyptic tendency, and what I referred to as the pathological nature of Trump and others party to this, it is more and more conceivable that they see the elimination of the entire earth under this scenario. There are strange science fiction ideas, but they are real, in terms of actual people on the ground in the US who want to fly off to another planet. And think they can do that. So air power is going to destroy and save us under these strange scenarios.”

Hatsumi: “I just want to answer the question, why the bombing of Nagasaki was necessary. The bombing of Hiroshima was an atomic bomb on the 6th of August. The 9th of August the bomb that was called Fat Man hit Nagasaki. Little Boy was what hit Hiroshima. Fat Man was dropped on the 9th, at 11:02 am in Nagasaki. But before that, around midnight August 8th, the Soviet Union declared war and decided to invade Manchuria. So Soviets joined this side, this hemisphere of the war. And, on the morning of the 9th, the plutonium bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. That was just to show off to the Soviet Union what amount of power that the US had. And for sure, as the question stated, to show off, to show what will happen if you resist. And Gaza will be an example. That’s what Tahrir said. ‘You want to be like Gaza, well, OK resist,’ that is what they are going to say. That’s what I fear, sorry.”

Surata Watanabe: “I apologize for the long question. As an aspiring academic and an activist, concerning resistance and activism as academics, at the heart of your talks was the problem of modernity, which is, I guarantee, what has justified the advancement of technology when the results are the mass deaths of human beings and our planet at large. It is what justified universities in being

complicit in the genocide by saying education and academics is an apolitical issue, and thus has nothing to do with genocide and apartheid. It is what allowed, and continues to allow, the settlement of colonialism and empire to be justified as a civilizing machine. We could go on. But what I found difficult is to bring critique of modernity to everyday life. How do we use our toolkit that we have gained in our academic work in the public sphere without falling into the same trap of modernity and the valuing of so-called civilization? Or should the role of academic and activist be separate?”

[Member of the audience]: “I believe it is also important to discuss the reconstruction plans Trump has been discussing for Gaza and the real estate discussion behind those inhuman killings.”

Dina Matar: “I also want the Japanese speakers to speak about silencing in Japan, and, of course, amnesia. Is this now being subverted?”

Hamdi: “To take on the first question. She says she is working in academia. What in academia is our part to play, without falling into a ‘modernity’ argument and so-called saving of civilization. I would go here with the argument of Edward Said about the oppositional intellectual and the critical consciousness. As academics it is our duty to dig deeper and not to believe in what legacy or corporate media is feeding us. We, as academics, must dig deeper, must think critically. We must be oppositional as intellectuals. In fact, the way Edward Said defines the intellectual, it is not the professor sitting in his ivory tower who is specialized in a very narrow field or discipline. No, the intellectual is the person or individual who stands with the oppressed, always on the margin, trying to understand what the real situation is, historically, ideologically etc. So, I would say, as academics we must focus on being oppositional, standing in the margins of society, and always being critical of the hegemonic order. And not to accept things as they are given to us by corporate media, legacy media, etc. And Gaza, as an example, I’ve already talked about, as in threatening others, ‘What we did in Gaza we do to you.’”

Hatsumi: “For the silencing in Japan I think Taira Nakamura should respond but I don’t see him here so I will comment on it. So for the Nobel Peace prize reception ceremony last year in Oslo, Hidankyo, the nuclear bomb *hibakusha* [victims/survivors] group received the Nobel Peace Prize. In that speech he emphasized that the Japanese government never compensated the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, never gave compensation. . . . If you went as a soldier in the Japanese imperial army during the war, your wife or your family deserve some type of compensation. But the *hibakusha*, the nuclear bomb victims, have never received compensation. And that is probably one of the reasons that this Japanese government, under US influence, silenced the victims, who were never really given voice. I hear many stories from the *hibakusha* themselves, that they were never really encouraged to talk. Especially in the field of education.

If they were teachers, they were discouraged to talk about the experience. So, on these certain narratives—as Japan as the victim of the A bomb...—there is a huge silencing in effect, still, here, I think.”

Joyce Justine Namutebi Nakayenga, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Hiroshima University: “Thank you so much for your insightful presentations. I was wondering what can other professions do to move forward, to bring peace to the world? As the previous speaker said, in war, in Palestine, for example, when the walls are being built, the walls are actually toxic to the individuals there. So how can other professions help, in assisting with that?”

Trnka: “Ilan mentioned the way in which the struggle is badly conceived in terms of just ethnic transnational terms. It is an international, human, and working-class struggle. Realizing the people who work on different aspects of the war machine and bringing that to people’s attention. For example, we were discussing, earlier, Fat Man, the bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki. Congolese miners were involved in building that, and suffered greatly from that, though they had no idea, really, what their work was about. So raising critical consciousness, not only in academia, universities, schools, and so on, but among workers involved in these mass industries, so that they know what they are actually doing, because I don’t think any of them would continue to do it if they were aware.”

Pappé: “Thank you all for your comments. Just a comment about modernism, or modernization. I think that the question was very much in place, the connection between decolonizing our understanding of what modernism is, and what modernization is, is very much linked to our discussion, in various ways. One is the fact that there is a dominant narrative of what is modernization, and what is modernism, that is produced by the West, in which, actually, Israel and the project of Israel, is regarded as part of the enlightenment and progress, and the Palestinian resistance, to it, is part of the anti-modernist forces. Which, of course, is all very false and does not relate to the reality on the ground, but it is a very powerful narrative that provided immunity for Israel for many, many years. And also provides immunity for the military industry and the nuclear industry. Because, according to that distorted view of modernism, that equates modernism with Western civilization, and European, especially Eurocentric, views of what is civilization and what isn’t civilization; nuclear weapons in the hands of the US and Israel is part of progress, nuclear weapons in the hands of Iran or Saudi Arabia is a part of anti-progress. All that has to be challenged. And, of course, we don’t have the power to challenge it from above, but we have the power to challenge this as scholars. And we should insist on it. That is one aspect.”

“And the other one, very quickly, is that a way of looking forward—and I talk about West Asia, but not only about West Asia—looking forward, the ten-

dency, still, is to look to the supermarket of European ideas as the only shop where you can buy a reasonable and credible solution for the future. And that has proven to be a very wrong attitude. We need to go back to the past, to the legacies, to the heritage. For example, in West Asia, the pre-colonial, pre-Zionist period, find there the political and cultural and social structures that are the only ones that will enable genuine coexistence and reconciliation. Thank you.”

Moradi: What we are facing is, again, the illusion of empire-building through colonization. And the difficulty is that we cannot truly speak *to* empires. Empires are not simply human actors. It is like approaching the Dutch West India Company and saying, “Please stop enslaving people, or trading in enslaved people.” The profound challenge is that there is, in truth, no one there to speak with. Everyone acts enslaved before the grand imperial vision of the enslaving Company.

In our time, Trump’s, or politicians’ media performance is an extreme form of colonization. If we want to understand how American empire operates, we will not learn this from contemporary media, nor from many of today’s universities, which, especially over the last two years, have become radically implicated in the destruction of Palestine. We once hoped that the university could be a site of possibility, that education itself could be a place of hope. Yet education tied to a politics of language has always been a fundamental instrument of empire-building and colonization.

When we study philosophy, anthropology, or the social sciences, why are we not reading literature from every part of the world? Why are we not taught how the Enlightenment was born through the movement of knowledge from elsewhere? Colonization takes place within universities across western Europe, and the world at large. I say this as someone who is a child of two countries in that part of the world and their elsewhere. You are shaped in a way that fosters an absolute disregard for others, other ways of learning and inhabiting the planet.

Today, many so-called professors, philosophers among them, and even artists and musicians, cannot be spoken to about Palestinian life. About the fact that it *is* human life: that Palestinians are human beings, that they love their children, that they enjoy cooking, that they have neighborhoods, that they write poetry, that they paint.

And so, to be inspired by James Baldwin: how do we make love into a popular movement? How do we rethink the very idea of the imperial state? Love and hospitality, as foundational principles of civilization, are not accepted by the imperial imagination. How, then, might we begin to think alongside Baldwin, Edward Said and others?

The challenge is immense, incalculable, as long as there is an imperial state, as long as there is a state at all. Empires never show themselves plainly. Empire is not Trump. Empire is not the King of England.

Hamdi: “Decolonize our universities, to begin with. In the Arab world, we teach, we have departments of English language and literature that teach, strictly English and American literature. Begin by decolonizing our education system. This is where you begin, because you need to build/construct awareness. And if you don’t decolonize there will never be this kind of awareness that can bring about change. And decolonize the world as well. A Palestine, for me, I think, for so many people now, is a symbol of that kind of decolonizing the world, really; not just liberating Palestine, but decolonizing the world, including the Global North, not only the Global South.”

Trnka: “[P]erhaps that’s the perfect place to end. Thank you so much to all the speakers and to all those who came, both on-line and physically. Please let this not be an end but a true beginning, to something completely different.”

Biography

Tanami Aoe is an Associate Professor at the Department of International Studies, Hiroshima City University. She is currently engaged in the research project “Reconstructing Citizenship through Cultural Activities: A Case Study in Israeli Arab Society.”

Tahrir Hamdi is a professor of decolonial and resistance literature and theory, currently the Rector at Arab Open University in Jordan, and an associate editor at *Janus Unbound*. Her book, *Imagining Palestine: Cultures of Exile and National Identity*, was published by Bloomsbury in 2023, and her co-edited book, *Ghassan Kanafani: Selected Political Writings*, with Louis Brehony, by Pluto in 2024.

Kaori Hatsumi is an anthropologist whose research encompasses colonialism and neoliberalism within Japanese academia. She currently leads a research project, entitled “Sri Lanka’s civil war and Japan’s development-craze: An ethnography of illness and environment, response and regeneration” (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) 24K00192).

Fazil Moradi is a Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and Visiting Researcher at Hiroshima University; Senior Research Associate in the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre, University of Johannesburg; Associate Researcher at the Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences; and Affiliated Scholar at the Centre for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes against Humanity, CUNY, New York. Dr Moradi was a Writing Fellow and Visiting Associate Professor at the Johannesburg Institute University for Advanced Study (2021–2024); Researcher at Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and the University of Halle, and has collaborated with medical scientists at the University of Gothenburg. His current research is supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

and the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education.

Ilan Pappé is a historian and a professor at the University of Exeter and the director of the European Centre for Palestine Studies. He is also an associate editor of *Janus Unbound*.

Nakamura (family name) Taira (individual name) is now teaching at the Humanities program, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hiroshima University since 2016. Born in Tokyo, Japan, lived in several places in Japan and also Taiwan, USA, Korea and Aotearoa NZ.

Peter Trnka, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Memorial University, and editor-in-chief of *Janus Unbound*, has published on figures such as Canguilhem, Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Gramsci, and Marx, and on topics such as rights, communism, criticism, revolution, justice, and time. A recent publication: "Dis-joint and Multiply: Deleuze and Negri on time" (in *Deleuze and Time*, ed. D. Smith & R. Luzecky, 2023). He also has creative works, poetry, and a cook-book. Employment as a teaching assistant at a National Institutes of Mental Health institute for youth in Virginia, as well as his work as a grievance officer, financial officer, president, and chief negotiator (twice during two strikes) at the Canadian Union for Educational Workers, Local 2 in Toronto were formative of his intellectual habits. He has three children, Alexandra, Nicolas, and Lily; lives in Holyrood, Newfoundland; and manages a bar in St. John's called Spirit.

Notes

1. Daniel McIntosh's summary (2021) of Tom Lewis' *Atomic Salvation: How the A Bomb Saved 32 Million People*.

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