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# JANUS UNBOUND

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Edited by Peter Trnka

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Special Issue: Nuclear Futures: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki  
to Palestine and Beyond



Winter 2025

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## **Image/Sky Control—Forms of Resistance: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Palestine and Iran: Letter from the Editor-in-Chief**

Peter Trnka

Japan, Palestine, and Iran. Brute power and the status quo are the only real grounds for the possession of nuclear weapons; there are no non-voluntary policies to govern or regulate their possession or use. The *de facto* policies shown in practice, salient in extreme existential situations, indicate and exploit racist worldviews, putatively definitive of national identities.

This issue was born on the way from Palestine to Hiroshima, or perhaps the other way around. An intersection of the two, and others. Let me explain.

Fazil Moradi, who joined the *Janus Unbound* editorial board, together with Stefanie Bognitz, after they had co-edited the special issue on Anton Wilhelm Amo, invited me to Japan as he was working at Hiroshima University and wanted to introduce me to potential contributors to potential future journal issues, on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, on the nuclear disaster at Fukushima, and related matters. At the same time, I was working in the Narrative Awareness Group of Academics Act for Palestine (see my previous letter), with, among others, Tahrir Hamdi, associate editor of this journal and multiple contributor to this issue. The Narrative Awareness Group was planning a new series of global educational webinars. After discussion of various excellent ideas, Hamdi put me on the spot and asked for my suggestion. The idea: what was to become a global webinar, on ‘Nuclear Futures: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Palestine and Beyond,’ hosted virtually by the Academics Act for Palestine and locally at a campus of Hiroshima City University, and published by *Janus Unbound*, as this issue. International connections of critique and resistance; intersections of struggle; common settler, colonial, imperial histories of suffering and genocide. Creating counter-memories, with counter-archives, and counter-narratives, with the voices of the victimized, the survivors—in the case of Japan, *hibakusha*—and of the fighters, resistance soldiers, and revolutionaries.

My work in Japan, over two weeks or so in October 2025, started—started officially, or, rather, explicitly and publicly, that is, ignoring the necessary and often forgotten prerequisites for such, namely, the many informal, private conversations, letters, thoughts, etc.—with a talk I gave at Hiroshima University, titled ‘Settler-colonialism, residential schools, and negotiations with ghosts: perspectives from the north of Big Turtle Island.’ This was followed by an address, given to the Network for Education and Research on Peace and Sustain-

## Forms of Resistance

nability (NERPS), also at Hiroshima University, that prepared the ground, in a way, for the ‘Nuclear Futures’ roundtable at Hiroshima City University, and globally, by way of Academics Act for Palestine, a few days later.

The abstract for the Academics Act for Palestine global webinar on ‘Nuclear Futures’ begins as follows:

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 whole Abstract is published at the start of the ‘Nuclear Futures ... Roundtable Abstract’ in this issue. The Abstract ends by posing this question, to which all contributors were asked to respond in their addresses and conversation: “What is the face of nuclear futures today, at Hiroshima, at Nagasaki, in Palestine, and beyond? And how can it be confronted?”

The Roundtable is published in a digested form, here, in this issue, as the ‘Nuclear Futures: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Palestine and Beyond, Roundtable Abstract.’ A recording of the real-time global event is available on YouTube (see link below). The Roundtable Abstract has significant deviations from the actual event and the virtual recording, in part due to regular features of the recording/reporting process, but also because each contributor responded to the potential work following the roundtable live event in a different way. Some, Tanami Aoe and Ilan Pappé, left it at that, trusting me to transcribe their spoken remarks and reviewing my transcripts. Others, Nakamura Taira and Kaori Hatsumi, produced written variations in close parallel to their oral addresses. Tahrir Hamdi elaborated her argument. Fazil Moradi wrote a response and continuation of the inquiry piece, rather than a representation of his oral address, and substituted, for the transcription of his address in the Roundtable Abstract, a similar deviation, or resistance to reproduce in the standard way (a creation, a monstrosity, a differential with a difference, or a *différance*). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak had been invited to the event but could not attend, yet, as she wrote to me, wanted to be counted and sent a letter in support, which I quoted in part in my opening remarks at the roundtable and published in full in this issue as the lead letter. Spivak calls in that letter to remember history, specifically: “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 [England and France] ... involved in today’s recognition [of Palestine, the letter is dated xx, June 2025]. We must place this within a broad geopolitical rhythm that has existed millennially” (8). Much of what follows is an attempt

to think about what is happening today in the broad and long historical rhythms of colonial and imperial history.

I will hazard to say the Palestine-Japan intersection that was the global webinar succeeded in terms of the consolidation and multiplication of associations, friendships, and networks of resistance. In part due to revealing unacknowledged or unknown common experiences and notions. The work and address by Tanami Aoe, who hosted the local site of the roundtable through Hiroshima City University, perhaps best exemplifies the intersectional, open spirit of the whole event. Aoe, a Japanese academic who has worked extensively in Palestine, emphasizes the common, shared character of suffering and human resistance, the intersectionality of struggle. As she states, simply, “I am working in Hiroshima right now, but I believe I work in the same way wherever I am” (25). She gives an inspired, accessible description of what needs to be done: “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” (25).

Ilan Pappé apologized for an upcoming power outage, hoping that, if he disappeared, he might reappear. Pappé engaged, explicitly with Gayatri Spivak, to locate our question and issue in a broad historical context, specifically, “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” (26). He describes his personal experience of seeing Gaza covered in smoke:

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. (25-6)

And bombing has now started, a week or more in, on Iran. Pappé echoed Spivak’s call to hold England and France accountable:

[D]efinitely for the governments of the West and, particularly, in Europe, ... 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 Palestians 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. (26)

The cross-cuts, intersections, intelligent creations by way of honest discussion, that is, genuine, rare dialogue, continued in multiple, rhizomatic ways, during and after the roundtable event. Nakamura Taira, several weeks after we had met, worked and socialized together in Hiroshima, wrote, in his ‘reworking,’ or variation and change, of his roundtable address, that his:

reflections on racism and colonialism in Japan resonate with Elaine Scarry’s (2020) analysis of the genealogy of racism in the United States. Scarry traces a continuum between the atomic bombings of Japan, an act she situates within a framework of US ‘white supremacy,’ and the 2020 murder of George Floyd. In her account, racism functions by rendering certain human lives disposable or expendable. (54)

I believe, following conversation with Moradi, that this line of thought was in part a response to my presentation of Scarry’s work at the NERPS talk, at which Taira had been present (as he had been, also, in a challenging and friendly way, at my initial talk on settler-colonialism—thank you, Nakamura Taira). Kaori Hatsumi’s work, as she presented it at the roundtable, intensified the concrete sense of overlapping, international work, weaving together Hiroshima with Palestine through the intermediary of Sri Lanka:

It was Isaac, a survivor of Sri Lanka’s thirty-year civil war (1983–2009), who told me about Hisashi Inoue’s play “*Chichi to Kuraseba*,” or “Living with Father/Face of Jizo.” Hisashi Inoue (1934–2010), a leading post-war Japanese playwright, wrote this play in 1994 to tell the story of Hiroshima. Isaac declared to me that this play was a masterpiece, and that he wished a play like this could be written on Sri Lanka’s experience—a prolonged, slow-death of a civilization in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka since 1956, the worst nightmare of which occurred in 2009 in Mullivaikkal: tens of thousands of Tamil civilians were trapped in the final battle between the government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and perished.

Isaac condenses, crystallizes, and expresses in a perfect subjective-objective manner the near-universal character of the nuclear bomb victims: “*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.*”

In his complete digression, or diverted, inspired response to the situation of the intellectual encounter of the roundtable and its surrounding events, Moradi writes of “an archived interview from 16 October 1970” between “ABC News journalist Richard Carleton meeting with Ghassan Kanafani . . . at his office in Beirut” (28). Moradi zooms in on the conversational impasses, the blocs in communication (easily imaginable given long histories of imperial/state renegeing on contracts, promises, and agreements):

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. (29)

Moradi continues:

What haunts Kanafani and Frantz 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 condition of *being human* . . . 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*. (30)

The love or hospitality Moradi calls for is not possible with the brute racism fuelling the current, extreme, annihilatory theologico-political imaginary. Hamdi begins her article in the most direct, brutal, honest way:

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...) . . . Thus, we are immediately confronted by the question of who exactly is worthy of saving. According to this racialized thinking, nuclear power, then, should/must be concentrated in the hands of those who must always be saved—the human, or, if you like, the more than human, those who are always morally justified in exterminating/annihilating hundreds of thousands of useless brown, black or yellow people—those who are not worth being saved, the obviously less than human. . . (82)

The remainder, or the wrap, of this issue, in this case, intimately narratively connected to its inside, begins with Bilal Hamamra’s Letter from Palestine: “Rebranding Gazacide,” in which he writes that:

The “Gaza Riviera” project, circulated through meetings and policy conversations associated with Donald Trump, Jared Kushner, and Tony Blair, represents a colonial program that seeks to finish, by finance and spectacle, what the Zionist military devastation began, namely, the eradication and uprooting of Palestinians from Gaza, so that this Palestinian territory can be repackaged as an investment frontier. (10)

Hamamra goes on to analyze Tantura as a paradigmatic case of such rewriting of history and reality:

Tantura exposes leisure as an instrument of concealment and profit built upon atrocity: after Israel depopulated the Palestinian village of al-Tantura, its coast-

## Forms of Resistance

line was reconfigured into a beach leisure zone (Dor/Hof Dor and the adjacent Nahsholim resort landscape). Massacre is followed by engineered suppression of memory and the installation of recreational infrastructures that normalize the theft of land through pleasure. (11)

The artwork of Shereen Abed wraps or covers the whole, in a way that brings one and many, myself and all others, individual and collectivity, into blurred, reconfigured intimate tension, and all by way of bringing I and all together in the face of a bomb, or its mushroom explosion: our cover, *I am All of Them*. As Abed writes:

This work does not present a single face, but a gathering of faces—layered, crowded, and inseparable. *I Am All of Them* emerges from the idea that identity is no longer singular, and that the self can become a vessel carrying the weight, memory, and presence of many others. The head in the drawing is not a portrait in the traditional sense. It is a container. ... What appears as multiplicity is, in fact, a collective experience condensed into one body. The aggressive, restless black lines are intentional. They mirror an inner state of tension and overload, where thoughts cannot settle and memories refuse to stay still. (21)

The other artist we feature, also Palestinian, is Ayman AlAzraq, with several images from *The Lost Tapes from the People's Court—1982*, discussed in his piece “Archiving the Absent Nation,” in which he defines archive, not as “a cabinet of documents, but a mechanism of survival that quietly resists oblivion” (91). As he goes on to speculate, “[p]erhaps this is the new meaning of solidarity—to create together a space that endures even when institutions close their doors, to carry memory on our shoulders, rather than in their files, to rebuild the relationship between art and humanity, rather than art and bureaucracy” (94). AlAzraq’s intersectional forms of resistance include the Palestine–Norway Archive Unit and the *Artist to Artist* initiative, which:

is one such space, where art begins from the living body, not the white cube. It is not a grand institutional project, but a living initiative grounded in direct human connection—in the bond that forms when one artist reaches out to another, from Palestine to Norway, from Gaza to Oslo, without administrative mediation or curated rhetoric. At a time when major institutions excuse their absence with “closed programs” and “exhausted budgets,” *Artist to Artist* stands as an antidote to this cold bureaucracy, creating its own conditions for collaboration—outside the politics of selection and neutrality that treat Palestinian artists as “difficult cases.” (94)

We also have other letters, a book review, and poetry from our new Poetry Editor, Rachel Waddleton. Thank you so much Andreae Callanan for your excellent work and years of dedicated service.

## Biography

**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: "Disjoint 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 cookbook. 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.

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## Untitled

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

[The letter below is a response to an invitation from Academics Act for Palestine to Spivak to join the Nuclear Futures roundtable; see this issue.]

I will be in rural Bangladesh and rural India during that time [of the Academics Act for Palestine global webinar “Nuclear Futures: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Palestine and Beyond” of 29 October 2025]. Do mention my name, however. I want to be counted. And here's this:

-- We must congratulate Keir Starmer and the 150 other states that have recognized the State of Palestine today, of course. But we must also recognize that this is an overdue act of reparation, as Starmer himself acknowledged it was the British mandate that allowed the establishment of the state of Israel 75 years ago. We must remember the Sykes-Picot documents, easily available online, whereby, on January 3, 1916, designated the Holy Land as the only area allowed to bear arms, by the very European nations that are involved in today's recognition. We must place this within a broad geopolitical rhythm that has existed millennially. What the Sykes-Picot Agreement 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. That story of power reshuffling is broader than Israel and has not come to an end. We must all strive to preserve the possibilities opened by Britain, Canada, Australia, and the European nations today, and 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. There is of course a great deal written on specifically on the history and tradition of Palestine, but for the best impartial account we go to the work of Rashid Khalidi.<sup>1</sup>

My best,

Gayatri.

## Biography

**Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak** is a University Professor at Columbia University. She has written many books and holds honorary degrees from the Universities of Toronto, London, Rovira i Virgili, Rabindra Bharati, San Martín, St. Andrews, Chile, Vincennes-Saint-Denis, Yale, Ghana-Legon, Presidency University, and Oberlin College. Humanities for social justice is her obsession.

## Notes

1. For a quick catch-up for those who need it, I recommend Khalidi's "The Neck and the Sword."

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## Letter from Palestine: Rebranding Gaza-side

Bilal Hamamra

The “Gaza Riviera” project, circulated through meetings and policy conversations associated with Donald Trump, Jared Kushner, and Tony Blair, represents a colonial program that seeks to finish, by finance and spectacle, what the Zionist military devastation began, namely, the eradication and uprooting of Palestinians from Gaza, so that this Palestinian territory can be repackaged as an investment frontier. The American and Israeli fantasy of artificial islands, tourist districts, and industrial zones announces the dispossession of Palestinians in the seductive, colonial language of leisure, turning ethnic cleansing into an architectural mood board and forced transfer into a development pitch. A leaked document reported by *The Guardian* described the “Great Trust” (Gaza Reconstitution, Economic Acceleration and Transformation Trust), which proposed relocating Palestinians outside the enclave, through digital compensation tokens and temporary housing, thereby transforming coerced displacement into a technocratic narrative of modernization that treats an indigenous population as a removable obstacle to profit (Holmes, 2025). The BBC’s reporting that human rights experts have already condemned the trajectory as “ethnic cleansing” strips the plan of any moral cover: leisure architecture becomes a propaganda skin for displacement, selling a project of removal as development (BBC, 2025). Trump’s AI generated “Dubai style Gaza” imagery performs the same laundering through spectacle, transforming genocide produced ruins into real estate fantasy, while Palestinian survival is erased from the visual grammar of the future (Al Jazeera, 2025a).

Interpreting the war of 2023 to 2025 as an exception conceals the continuity of the ongoing Nakba, because Gaza is being reorganized through a colonial logic that treats displacement as governance and uninhabitability as strategy. Reported figures indicate that more than 70,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 2023 and that more than 1.9 million, approximately 90% of Gaza’s population, have been displaced, often repeatedly, through an enforced mobility regime that fractures community life while producing administratively manageable bodies (Reuters, 2025). The destruction of nearly 92% of housing, alongside institutions that sustain collective life, indicates a policy trajectory that manufactures emptiness, since the built environment is being dismantled in ways that obstruct and erode the possibility of collective recovery (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2025). Calls for a “second Nakba” by Israeli politicians place expulsion in the register of intention, rather than accident, with elimination op-

only articulated as a desirable outcome (Middle East Monitor, 2023). Wolfe's (2006) formulation of settler colonialism as an eliminatory logic clarifies the structural stakes, because removal and replacement require not only force, but narratives that portray disappearance as rational, inevitable, and beneficial.

Tantura exposes leisure as an instrument of concealment and profit built upon atrocity: after Israel depopulated the Palestinian village of al-Tantura, its coastline was reconfigured into a beach leisure zone (Dor/Hof Dor and the adjacent Nahsholim resort landscape). Massacre is followed by engineered suppression of memory and the installation of recreational infrastructures that normalize the theft of land through pleasure. Ilan Pappé (2006) documents that during the twenty-second and twenty-third of May, 1948, Israeli soldiers massacred more than 200 Palestinians after they had surrendered, forced survivors to dig mass graves, and then proceeded with executions, producing a landscape anchored in unacknowledged burial. Forensic Architecture (2023) details how the site was later transformed into Nahsholim Kibbutz and the Dor Beach Resort, with leisure infrastructure placed atop unmarked graves, thereby materializing erasure through construction and everyday use. The institutional pressure directed at Theodor Katz after he documented the massacre, as discussed by Pappé (2006), demonstrates that historical truth is treated as a threat to the leisure façade, while Forensic Architecture's reconstructions corroborate testimony and expose concealment as an organizing method, rather than a by-product. Tantura, therefore, functions as a warning inscribed into the land, because it demonstrates how colonial regimes produce leisure spaces that depend upon silenced graves, and because it discloses the political purpose of turning massacre sites into leisure destinations.

Ayn Hawd's transformation into "Ein Hod" shows how Israeli cultural appropriation functions as a technology of settler-colonial domination: it aestheticizes dispossession, sanctifies theft as "heritage," and erases Palestinian identity, while enforcing the denial of return. Khalidi (1992) records that in April, 1948, Israeli naval and ground brigades expelled Ayn Hawd's inhabitants, many of whom resettled nearby in Ayn Hawd al Jadida, thereby remaining close enough to see what was taken, while being excluded from re-entering. Susan Slyomovics (1998) details how Marcel Janco appropriated the architecture by transforming houses into studios and the mosque into a bar and restaurant, a refunctioning that turns sacred space into consumption and transforms dispossession into lifestyle. Slyomovics argues that the erasure of Palestinian traces was not incidental, but an artistic project, which means that culture, here, operates as a technology of disappearance that rewrites a stolen village into a cosmopolitan scene. Patrick Wolfe's (2006) eliminatory logic explains why such projects are structurally coherent: replacement requires both material seizure and representational rewriting, with leisure and art providing the soft language through which colonial domination seeks legitimacy.

Akkur exposes the weaponization of environmental discourse in the service of erasure, because the rhetoric of ecological improvement becomes a method for hiding ruins, neutralizing memory, and naturalizing theft. Irus Braverman (2009) describes how pine forests planted by the Jewish National Fund covered

the ruins of depopulated villages, including terraces, foundations, and cemeteries, thereby concealing evidence of Palestinian life under a landscape marketed as environmental achievement. Nur Masalha's (2015) concept of "memoriciding landscapes" captures the political effect: the land is redesigned to sever the displaced from place, while producing leisure sites, such as trails and picnic areas, across prohibited ruins. Oliver Holmes (2025) reports that the Riviera proposal includes eco-tourism zones and luxury villas marketed as sustainable development, which reveals how "green" language now accompanies the transformation of destruction into investment, extending the same colonial technique from forests to luxury redevelopment.

The present destruction of Gaza supplies the precondition for the Riviera discourse, because the project depends on a population reduced to forced mobility and a territory represented as a blank slate for capital. Reuters (2025) and HRW (2024) report killing and displacement at immense scale, with more than 90% of residents forced from homes. Middle East Monitor (2023) attributes statements to Israeli officials that frame a "second Nakba" as an objective, which places demographic expulsion at the center of the political horizon rather than at its margins. Al Jazeera (2025a) shows how Trump's AI generated imagery attempts to transform this devastation into futurist seduction. BBC (2025) and HRW (2024) identify the trajectory as ethnic cleansing and forced transfer.

Blair and Kushner exemplify the global elite mediation through which eradication is translated into governance frameworks and investor presentations, as colonial violence is laundered through the language of administration, development, and business opportunity. Holmes (2025) links the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change to components of the proposal, including governance designs and industrial zone plans that exclude Palestinian self-determination, demonstrating how technocratic governance becomes a weapon against sovereignty. Achille Mbembe's (2003) necropolitics clarifies the structure, because death zones are managed as sites of accumulation and populations become variables to be removed, so that profit can be announced as peace.

Condemnation of the Riviera plan has exposed it as a colonial project of moral laundering, rather than reconstruction; major media, human rights organizations, and regional actors have described the scheme as a plan for permanent expulsion, packaged as redevelopment. *The Guardian* framed the project as an attempt to cover ethnic cleansing with hotels and beaches, while the BBC reported denunciations by diplomats and aid workers, who read the plan as permanent expulsion in the language of reconstruction (Holmes, 2025; BBC, 2025). HRW (2024) warned that forced transfer constitutes a grave crime, which places the plan in the register of prosecutable violence, rather than in the register of visionary planning. Carnegie analysts argued that the proposal misunderstands the region by mistaking elite bargains for public consent, thereby exposing its dependence on authoritarian deals, rather than legitimate political settlement (Carnegie Endowment, 2025). Reuters (2025) reported that Egypt vowed to resist resettlement schemes, which further exposes the demographic ambition embedded within the leisure narrative. TRT Arabia (2023) captures

Palestinian critique that reads the Riviera fantasy as an inversion of survival needs, because luxury developments are imagined in place of homes, hospitals, and schools, while the displaced are treated as obstacles, rather than as rights bearing subjects.

The “Gaza Riviera” project, therefore, belongs to a longer colonial archive in which massacre, expulsion, concealment, and commodification appear as interconnected techniques, rather than as isolated episodes, with Tantura, Ayn Hawd, and Akkur demonstrating how leisure, culture, and ecology are mobilized to make erasure appear normal, even admirable. The project demands rejection, not only on moral grounds, but on analytic grounds, because it attempts to transform genocide into an investment narrative and forced transfer into a lifestyle promise, while treating Palestinian absence as the condition of profitability.

## Biography

**Bilal Hamamra** has a PhD in Early Modern Drama from the University of Lancaster, UK and is currently an associate professor of English literature in the Department of English Language and Literature, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine. His research interests are in Early Modern Drama, Shakespeare, Palestinian literature, women’s writings and gender and trauma studies.

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## Letter to the Editor: ‘Something Rotten’: A Dispatch from the United States of America

Michael Broz

*“There must be something rotten in the very core of a social system which increases its wealth without diminishing its misery.”*

—Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels (1971, 1)

A specter has landed in the United States of America—that specter is fascism. President Donald Trump has made fascism socially acceptable, but it has been a festering abscess of political hatred here for a long time. The fact that he granted cis, hetero, and white people the privilege of being publicly angry about a society that holds racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and xenophobic attitudes and behaviors accountable is, in and of itself, the most appealing aspect of this president, for those who support him. Trump is creating a fascist dystopia, in which freedom of speech is reserved for white, conservative Christian Americans, while he censors and punishes everyone else who disagrees with the culture of the MAGA movement.

As a born American living in Texas who identifies as gay, is an activist for Palestinian rights, a communist, and a vocal critic of Trump, I consider that the first year of Trump's second term has been among the most disturbing periods of my life. Trump is now channeling the vitriol he directed at immigrants and focusing it on individuals believed to be enemies of the state. Lack of *habeas corpus* results in the absence of trial, judge, and attorney: the groundwork, currently being used to repress immigrants, to be redirected onto political dissidents and other "home-growns," as Trump refers to them (Mann 2025). The crushing stillness that follows each new turn in Trump's America, including now the war by executive order on Iran, is both more terrible and more audible than the language Trump uses as weaponry.

A family friend I've known for most of my life, a man with whom I grew up as an uncle, no longer speaks to me after a recent dinner party at his house. We had always been able to discuss politics, even though he did not agree with my values, but after I responded positively to his question that night—"Are you a communist?"—he removed me from social media, and we have not communicated since. That is the power of propaganda that pertains to the left. I grew up in a US public school after the Cold War. I assumed that communists

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were wrong. The anti-communist (anti-Soviet) propaganda baby boomers grew up with all but rendered the notion of communism, at best, as “sounds good on paper but doesn’t work in practice.” There is now an optics-based form of McCarthyism, resulting in the outright rejection of leftism by both major parties in the US—NYC Mayor-elect Mahmoud Mamdani and Bernie Sanders being outliers. The failure of leftism has become not only palatable to US leaders but also “common sense” (Pinsky 2025). In contrast, Mark Pinsky describes his communist cousin, Si:

The Communist Party U.S.A. had many faults—notably blind Stalinist-Soviet Union allegiance—but the 1930s party was admirably ahead of its time in militantly supporting trade unions and fighting for racial equality in the South. Thus, it is no surprise it drew Si’s allegiance as he was toggling between teaching and mechanic jobs. In 1937, like many other American communists and leftists, Si joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, to defend Spain’s Republic from Francisco Franco’s Nazi-supported, fascist Falange. Si became a political commissar; his battery was named for John Brown, the Harper’s Ferry, Va., pre-Civil War insurrectionist.

Such historically informed opinion is now almost totally absent. Now, we, in the US, seem unable to accept any shift in opinion that would make communism even partly acceptable. It is a historical farce. The US, prior to WWII, had socialist congressmen and parties that were fought by the right but were at least considered a legitimate power in themselves. As Eric Ross (2025) argues:

In the United States, we long ago chose the path of barbarism. Trump and his enablers have proven major catalysts in hastening our descent, but they are symptoms as well as causes. The compounding crises of our time, from ecological collapse to immense inequality to endless war, were clearly foreseeable aberrations. They are the logical outgrowths of a capitalist system built on violent exploitation and rooted in the constant struggle to prioritize profits over people.

The idea that communism is evil is now as ingrained in Americans as the Pledge of Allegiance. The most insidious aspect of this situation is the normalization of dismissive treatment. In addition to the job-related repercussions and social vilification that have become entrenched in Trump’s America, there are other everyday challenges to being leftist in this country. Criticism of Trump is conflated with criticism of the US and its population. Criticism is met with wholesale rejection, dismissed without being listened to (Greenhut 2025). You conceal your beliefs and avoid discussing them with neighbors or family. It’s a kind of political schizophrenia, where honesty is met with rejection and, worse, retaliation by the government, including extrajudicial measures. Receiving text messages and alerts from friends and organizations to let you know where ICE is working in the city happens daily. Regardless of your citizenship status, ICE can detain and deport you, American citizen or not. ICE often targets low-income areas, so the alerts are essential for the people in those communities, as

they are already more vulnerable than their privileged counterparts (Gamboa, 2025). As a close friend of mine, Jorge Malverde, an immigrant from Mexico, told me, “Everybody is very afraid; they hide in their homes. They just want to survive.” ICE has oppressed these immigrant communities, often located in low-income areas, with the aim of destroying community. Leftists retaliate by fortifying community, as we’ve seen in Minnesota following the murders of Renée Macklin Good and Alex Pretti.

In a horrible turn, Trump’s administration has also begun to draw from the fascist playbook to create concentration camps for immigrants, and likely other “threats to the state” (Pitzer 2024). The administration has increased its detention capacity by 91% in eleven months (Reichlin-Melnick 2026). People are being deported from these facilities at a rate 14 times higher than that of those allowed a hearing (Reichlin-Melnick). This lack of judicial oversight—straight deportation—coupled with lack of transparency about what is happening in these concentration camps means the risk is high.

The spirit ICE has brought, and its playbook, are not novel. Much of what ICE does has been taken directly from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). A concerted physical presence with propaganda has been how the state of Israel has been able to convince much of the world that any anti-Zionist sentiment is inherently anti-Semitic, crippling efforts to aid Palestine and securing US government funding for genocide. With the allegations that Jeffrey Epstein was working for Israeli intelligence, we potentially have further indication of how Israeli oppression is exported to the US and the rest of the world. Much like the IDF, we see former Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem telling us, on live television, that Alex Pretti was aggressive with a firearm against law enforcement, though video evidence is clear that the weapon was never even unholstered until an ICE agent took it away; seconds later, an ICE agent fired 7 bullets into Pretti’s back, while Pretti was lying, face down, with no weapon, on a street in Minneapolis (Gibson 2026). Axios reports that “for the second time in less than a month, President Trump’s top officials rushed to declare that a U.S. citizen killed by U.S. immigration agents was a ‘domestic terrorist’ ” (Gibson 2026).

The attacks range far beyond physical assaults by masked thugs on the streets. Consider the violence towards academics and higher education. In my home city of Dallas, high school students have been walking out of schools, during instruction, to protest ICE and the Trump Administration’s actions. Texas A&M University, the alma mater of family and friends, has removed all gender, LGBTQIA+, and women’s studies courses and programs, firing professors in some cases (Davis 2026). The focus on gender and women’s studies is a direct attack on transgender people in the US and around the world. Trump has ramped up the rhetoric, attempting to instill fear in the populace of ever having to go into the bathroom, locker room, or sports venue with a transgender person. Using words like “rape,” “unnatural,” and “transgender ideology,” Trumpism seeks to turn all those who challenge a cis and hetero normative country into supporters of sexual assault, child abuse, and unfair treatment due to biological differences. Trans men and women have been some of the most politically active and compelling forces in gender and LGBTQIA+ com-

munities. One needs only think of Marsha P. Johnson throwing the brick through the window at Stonewall, or Sylvia Rivera leading protests and suffering violence at the hands of law enforcement, all the while not giving up. The new American norm is to find fear in everything but white, male, wealthy, cis, hetero, conservative ideology. At the same time as the mouthpieces of such a 'healthy, normal America' are clearly implicated, by the Epstein files, in child trafficking and pedophilia: Trump, and many major Republican and Democratic politicians, including Elon Musk, Bill Gates, former President Bill Clinton, and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (Ubiera 2026).

I could go on and on. This is one small part of the fascist playbook in the US. Trump's administration hits the public with so many different activities and claims that it is nearly impossible to ascertain the full picture of any of it. This playbook is neither new nor novel, pulling the most effective strategies of fascist and dictatorial states into the arsenal of the most powerful government in the world. A world gone upside down: the America in which I was born is no longer. The US was transformed following the September 11, 2001 attacks. The Bush administration was responsible for laying the foundation for fascism: starting with the bipartisan Patriot Act, we surrendered our rights to the government (Lyons 2025). This history of fascism does not begin with Bush, though it certainly intensified significantly during his presidency. As Matthew Lyons (2025) writes in *New Politics*:

This era is hardly the first time that U.S. leftists have warned against the rise of a fascist state. FBI/police repression against the Black Panthers, Joe McCarthy's Cold War witch hunts, and even Franklin Roosevelt's early New Deal experiments with state-sponsored cartels—sections of the left have labeled all of these as fascist. But George W. Bush has come to embody the f-word for a whole generation of activists.

The so-called War on Terror changed a nation that had defended dissent and assembly in its civil society. The Trump administration and Republican Congress have catapulted from this groundwork.

Until there is greater resistance against this administration, among Republicans and everyone else, fascism will continue.

### Biography

**Michael Broz** is a doctoral candidate at Memorial University of Newfoundland, living in his home country of the US. He has published articles and book reviews dealing with Karl Marx, capitalism, and art. He serves as Book Review Editor and Technical Processing Editor at *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies*.

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## ***I Am All of Them***

Shereen Abed

This work does not present a single face, but a gathering of faces—layered, crowded, and inseparable. *I Am All of Them* emerges from the idea that identity is no longer singular, and that the self can become a vessel carrying the weight, memory, and presence of many others. The head in the drawing is not a portrait in the traditional sense. It is a container. Faces press against one another, overlapping, interrupting, refusing isolation. Each carries a different expression—fear, exhaustion, confusion, defiance, silence, grief—yet none exists alone. They coexist within one form, bound by a shared condition rather than individual distinction. What appears as multiplicity is, in fact, a collective experience condensed into one body. The aggressive, restless black lines are intentional. They mirror an inner state of tension and overload, where thoughts cannot settle and memories refuse to stay still.

*I Am All of Them* is not an attempt to speak on behalf of others, but an acknowledgment of being shaped by them. It is an admission that the boundary between the self and the collective has dissolved. Faces seen, voices heard, and lives encountered have fused into a single internal reality. The “I” in this work is porous, unstable, and deeply entangled with others.

This is not a depiction of specific individuals, but a visual testimony to a shared human state—where one becomes both witness and survivor at once. The head becomes a communal space, a temporary shelter for many lives, many truths. In this work, identity is no longer owned; it is carried.

Here, I do not say “I am one of them.” I say: I am all of them.

### **Biography**

**Shereen Abdel-Karim Hassanein**, born in Gaza City (1996), is an architect and visual artist. I hold a bachelor’s degree in architecture from the Islamic University of Gaza-IUG. Years ago, I began fusing architecture with art. Now I am active in visual arts. My career in art started by self-learning and many experiences in the field of architecture and arts inside my studio and through participation in some local exhibitions. My recent studies relied on research of the process of space production and spatial representation to express some societal issues, using architectural abstractions to create a dialogue between artwork and conceptual space, and to represent daily stories and events. I use many methods

and tools in my artistic practice, such as painting, sculpture, installation arts, 3D spatial rendering, in addition to producing artistic videos. My work presents the city and outer space in general as a field of artistic work and interaction, not from a formal, aesthetic or decorative perspective, but as a specific field of questioning and criticizing our society, customs and ideas with a new proposal and vision. I seek to study the state of place with the human dimension and to interact with the constructions and materials in the environment that I work on, through drawing or spatial embodiment, to represent different realities, imagined places with real memories and stories, and blur the line between "truth" and realistic simulation through the use of virtual reality. **Solo exhibitions:** *"From a needle hole"*, Shababek Contemlinkages 2022. **Group exhibitions:** *The Palestine Animated* and *For you*, Oslo 2025; *TALENT LATENT SCAN*, Tarragona 2024; *"S" Festival (/si:n/) of Video Art and Performance*, Paris; *I will write our will above the clouds*, Paris, London, Berlin 2024; *The Face of the City* Reina Sofía 2024; *Contemporary Art*, NICOLAS COMBARRO 2023; *Gaza after 15 years*, International Committee of the Red Cross 2022; Art Residency Exhibition /2022/ Shababek Contemlinkages; *Art in the Public Space*, Professional Windows 2021.

<https://www.behance.net/shereenhasanin96>.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCg1SsSolkXi1Bb5I2gkHdnA>.



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## **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.”<sup>1</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> of August. The 9<sup>th</sup> of August the bomb that was called Fat Man hit Nagasaki. Little Boy was what hit Hiroshima. Fat Man was dropped on the 9<sup>th</sup>, at 11:02 am in Nagasaki. But before that, around midnight August 8<sup>th</sup>, 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 9<sup>th</sup>, 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 Saudia 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.”

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**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).

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**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

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## Nuclear Racism: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Gaza and Iran

Peter Trnka

### Preface

This writing is based, in part, on an address given to the Network for Education and Research on Peace and Sustainability (NERPS) at Hiroshima University, which prepared the ground, in a way, for the ‘Nuclear Futures’ roundtable at Hiroshima City University a few days later (see this issue). At my first talk in Japan, also at Hiroshima University, titled ‘Settler-colonialism, residential schools, and negotiations with ghosts: perspectives from the north of Big Turtle Island,’ I had introduced myself (a necessity in political collaboration and alliance formation) through the history of my political work, from early involvement with trade union activism and strike command (Canadian Union of Educational Workers (CUEW) Local 2 at the University of Toronto, as a graduate student) to later collaboration with the Gwich’in Tribal Council in the North West Territories, with Maori scholars and tribal leaders in Aotearoa (New Zealand), and now as a member of Academics Act for Palestine.

Cosmopolitan collaborative negotiation and bilateral treaty making as a form of life. And literary sources for the way they compress life stories and political views. The same story, sometimes, in variations. One such glimpse, ghost, threshold that frames my work with the Gwich’in, and also may help in introducing the, here mutually implicated, themes of trauma, hell, point of view, and method (or way forward): Robert Alexie, then Chief of the Gwich’in Tribal Council, invited me to Inuvik to work, but my original trip had to be delayed as my host, the author, negotiator, and tribal leader, Robert Alexie, was found dead, of a gunshot wound, in his truck on the highway (I was taken to the location when I visited a few months later). The opening pages of his novel, *Porcupines and China Dolls*, describe an eerily similar scene. Prior to the first chapter, in a sort of prelude, titled ‘The Ultimate Journey to Hell,’ the novel begins: “Two hours later he stood beside the highway in the Blue Mountains like he’d done so many times before. His tall, dark figure looked foreboding against the dark clouds” (1). The prelude ends shortly after with the following:

He walked to his truck, removed the gun and loaded one bullet, then returned to the side of the highway. ...

It came to him that he’d always been alone. He’d always be alone. He then did something he’d thought about and tried before. But this time he knew he’d do it.

With no hint of hesitation he got down on one knee, put the barrel in his mouth and pushed the trigger. He watched the hammer fall and closed his eyes. He tensed and waited for the explosion. It came. He heard it: metal on metal. It was the loudest sound he'd ever heard. It shook his entire body and deafened him.

He took a deep breath, dropped the gun and exhaled. He heard it: the peace and the silence.

He waited for his ultimate journey to hell. (2)

We learn more of the nature of this hell very shortly, in the first chapter, 'Legends, Beliefs and Newcomers':

In 1921, the last of the newcomers arrived, the Treaty Party. There's a lot of controversy about what was or wasn't in the Treaty, but most are not important to this story. What is important is that the government and the People agreed that the Treaty contained a clause that states: *'His Majesty will pay the salaries of teachers to instruct the children of the "said Indians" in a manner deemed advisable by His Majesty's government.'* ...

What they didn't know when they put their 'X' on the Treaty was that the church would be given the responsibility to educate their 'said children.' ...

Soon after, the first mission boat arrived in Aberdeen, and thirty-five children were herded out of the Blue Mountains and dragged off to mission school. The closest anyone has come to it is 'hellhole,' but that's beside the point. The point is that years later, twenty-four of the thirty-five would return. More importantly, eleven wouldn't.

It had begun, but no one knew what it was. Things were beginning to change. The future was unfolding, as it should. (6-7)

So ends the first chapter.

My introduction to the roundtable presented the concluding parts only of my longer presentation at NERPS. This is an expanded and updated write-up of parts of all three addresses, together with reflections on subsequent conversations in Japan and research completed later (primarily *A-bomb Drawings by Survivors*, edited by the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and *Open Sky* by Paul Virilio).

## I. Violence and Optics

The burning hell of horror is the burning of the sky—of the world—of light.

Consider weaponry as a (extreme, violent, limit-condition) form of *transport* (taking to a different place). Humanity's recent, one hundred years or so, history is the history of flying weaponry and self-destruction. Hiroshima/Nagasaki are the explosions of the sky ceiling; globalized reality-image command and drone bombing, today in Gaza and Iran, are total sky control.

War is, and always has been, in part, an issue of the production and reproduction of images. Today, the formal subsumption of violence by image is becoming a real subsumption. As Judith Butler writes, in *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*:

[T]he technological grasp and circulation of the visual and discursive dimensions of war ... is already an interpretative maneuver, a way of giving an account of whose life *is* a life, and whose life is effectively transformed into an instrument, a target, or a number, or is effaced with only a trace remaining or none at all. (2016, ix-xx)

Images produced to serve violence, the understanding, permission/legitimation/justification of it, and the looks of its target face, its colour and contour. (More below on the manufacture, circulation and embedding of such images.)

Racism is technologically hardwired, not only into the nuclear logic, but into the more general logic of war. The nuclear and nuclear-type (sky-disaster-earth-obliviation) are extreme forms. The colonial humiliation narratives are unapologetic, fanatical, and more and more intensively and extensively technologically inserted into the machinery of global society and, especially, the global war machine; they decide automatically, in the moment of visual identification, what is human and what is nonhuman:

[I]f certain populations—and the Palestinians are clearly prominent among them—do not count as living beings, ... if their very bodies are construed as instruments of war or pure vessels of attack, then they are already deprived of life before they are killed, transformed into inert matter or destructive instrumentalities, and so buried before they have had the chance to live, or to become worthy of destruction, paradoxically in the name of life. To kill such a person, indeed such a population, thus calls upon a racism that differentiates in advance who will count as a life, and who will not. (Butler xxix-xxx)

The automatization of the decision to kill erases the appearance of the decision and its ethical dimensions, making it appear as a moment of perceptual identification.

## II. The Racist Nuclear Imaginary

Nuclear weapons are, as Arundhati Roy has phrased, now iconically, in *The End of Imagination*, at “the very heart of whiteness” (2016, 50). By nuclear weapons, I mean to include the production and distribution of uranium and other resources for the production of nuclear weapons, as well as their possession, use, decisions for their use, the fallouts of their use, and so on. From a broader perspective still, there is the racism of the entire nuclear complex, nuclear weaponry and nuclear power, what Jessica Hurley calls the violence of the nuclear mundane: “The nuclear mundane is the slow violence of the atomic age; like all slow violences, it distributes its damage unevenly. Poor people, people of colour, Indigenous people, queer people, and women receive the least benefit from the nuclear complex and are the most exposed to its harms...” (2020, 14). The connection between colonial oppression and the damage done by nuclear radiation is summed up in the phrase ‘radioactive colonialism,’ a term “initially coined by Indigenous activist Winona LaDuke and activist Ward Churchill in 1982 to describe the disproportionate fallout on indigenous communities of the nuclear production system” (ICANW, 2021).

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The selective humanism of the white nations that possess nuclear weapons, that is, their perpetual dehumanization of others, is shown at the target stage, the mining stage, and, also, of course, at the testing stage of atomic bombs. As a report states from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICANW):

Nuclear-armed states consistently tested their weapons in spaces they wrongly deemed ‘distant’ and ‘empty’, that were away from national metropolises where decision-makers lived. This led to many nuclear nations testing their weapons in their dependent territories or colonies, in which indigenous peoples were situated with ancestral connections to their lands and waters, such as New Mexico, Nevada, the Marshall Islands, Montebello Island, Maralingu and Emu Field in Australia, Kiribati ..., Kazakhstan, Xinjiang, Algeria and French Polynesia.

With respect to the mining stage, the case is clear that “Indigenous peoples and their lands have been exploited by Western governments and corporations for nuclear weapons production” as:

70% of the world’s uranium is mined from Indigenous lands in Kazakhstan, Australia, Canada, and 15% is mined in African nations. ... These estimates change from year to year, but the general trends of uranium production and trade have largely remained the same. According to World Nuclear News, Kazakhstan was the top global producer in 2022, accounting for 43% of the world’s supply. Canada ranked second with a 15% share, followed by Namibia with 11%. (Saadia 2022)

To focus specifically on Fat Man, the bomb used to destroy Nagasaki, we know that most of its uranium came from the former Belgian colony, the Congo, and that:

The Congolese miners who worked in the Shinkolobwa mine ... were subjected to forced labour, harsh conditions, and exposure to radiation without proper protection. They were treated as disposable and expendable by the Union Minière du Haut Katanga..., the Belgian mining company that owned the mine and sold the uranium to the US and its allies. The Congolese people were not informed of the link between their uranium and the bombs that killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese citizens, nor were they compensated or acknowledged for their contribution to the Manhattan Project. (Saadia)

What applies to the mining of the resources for making the atomic bomb also applies to dealing (or, rather, not dealing, but passing off and continuing to destroy) with the waste, from nuclear production to nuclear testing and nuclear bombing. H. Saadia and others from the Princeton education project claim that “[n]uclear waste is routinely dumped on Native lands in the US and Canada, violating the 2008 UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” Though many may believe that 3 Mile Island was the worst nuclear accident in the US, in fact the “largest nuclear accident occurred in Church Rock, New Mexico in 1979 just 3 months after the more widely remembered 3 Mile Island

incident, yet it is little discussed outside of New Mexico, highlighting the colonial politics of erasure in what kinds of nuclear waste disasters are remembered” (Saadia).

It should not be surprising then that indigenous populations and people of colour have been central in nuclear disarmament movements:

...Indigenous Peoples and people of colour have ... [been] at the forefront of the nuclear disarmament movement. There is a powerful and underappreciated history of global south resistance to colonialism, militarism, and nuclear weapons. ... [T]he Bandung conference of 1955 with representatives from across Asia and Africa called for disarmament and an end to the nuclear arms race. (ICANW)

The racism operating in the acceptance of the status quo global distribution of nuclear weapons (as stated and accepted at the start of The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) is unarguable. It is made more and more explicit and unapologetic as the regimes, notably the US and Israel, holding such weapons become more fundamentalist and fanatical. The brute global distribution of power is the only ground for the possession of nuclear weapons; no non-voluntary policies to govern or regulate their possession or use exist. The patterns of nuclear weapons practice indicate and exploit racist worldviews, in line nationalist ideologies:

[N]on-white states are powerfully committed to nuclear abolition with the majority party to established regional nuclear-weapons-free zones such as Latin America in the Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967), the Pacific in the Treaty of Rarotonga (1985), South East Asia in the Treaty of Bangkok (1995), and Africa in the Treaty of Pelindaba (1996). (ICANW)

The recent behaviour of world states regarding The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), 2021, is no different: “The nuclear weapons states’... complete dismissal of the treaty and the nations of the Global South’s choice to join the treaty is indicative of the festering disharmony between the nuclear haves and have nots” and of epistemic racism (Mishra and Amir).

Nuclear warfare and domestic acts of racist torture and terrorism are identical in the way they configure violence in its relation to its de-subjectified—dehumanized—object (certainly not ‘dignified opponent’). Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the assault on George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department share three key features, according to Elaine Scarry: state violence, a defenceless opponent, and naked racism. However unjust (simply preferential of the status quo and *de facto* recognition), the distinction between state and non-state actors, in terms of legitimate versus terrorist use of violence, only state actors possess or have used nuclear weapons. There is only state nuclear terror. Most state-actor nuclear weapons possessors are white; the targets are predominantly populations of people of colour, previously discriminated against, racialized, and dehumanized.

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The key feature in the nature of the violence involved, for Scarry, a long-standing critic of the US as torturer, is not any technical feature of the weaponry, that is, its nuclear character. Rather, it is that, really or symbolically, a nuclear bomb attack means annihilation and lack of defense and resistance. This is how Scarry also begins her argument for the strong analogy between nuclear bombing in wars between nations and domestic racist terrorism by state officials, police, that is: “The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki initiated an era in which—for the first time on earth and now continuing for 7 and a 1/2 decades—humankind collectively and summarily lost the right of self-defence” (2020). Here Scarry connects her recent work on nuclear weaponry with her earlier analysis of bodies in torture:

Nuclear weapons don't ... conform to the model of war, they conform to the model of torture. ... They do not permit any right of self-defence between the two parties. They are a structure of eliminating the right of self-defence, both from foreign populations and from the home population. They are a literalization of world-destroying power. (Scarry in Gerard)

The racism of atomic-bomb targeting. We know now, Scarry goes on to state, that the US Presidents considered using nuclear weapons on the Taiwan Islands in 1954, in the Berlin crisis of 1959, thrice under Kennedy, once by Johnson against China, and by Nixon three to four times; as Scarry notes:

[a]nd it is there that the record stops, because 3 to 4 decades went by before we learned about the instances I've just named; 3 to 4 decades will again have to go by before we learn about contemplated uses by presidents after Nixon. It puts the population in the position of just having to guess what's going on, whether our executive is contemplating using nuclear weapons. (Gerard 2015)

George Bush, after 9/11, stopped at Offutt Air Force Base in Nevada, a center for land and airbased nuclear weapons. We don't know much, in short, and that's that for democratic control and oversight. Given the targeted (Japan, Taiwan, North Korea, North Vietnam, China, Iraq), the areas of testing (primarily indigenous lands), the condemned (Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea), and those permitted in silence (Israel, India, Pakistan),

[t]he obligation to 'call out racism and share the burden of dismantling white supremacy' should carry with it the obligation to recognize the racist tradition of the nuclear architecture itself (a northern hemisphere blanketed by nuclear states, a southern hemisphere blanketed by nuclear-weapons-free zone treaties) and to dismantle it begin with the 2 states that hold 93% of all the weapons. (Scarry)

Trump ordered nuclear weapons testing to resume on 30 October, 2025, “after a halt of 33 years;” he made “the surprise announcement [really?] on Truth Social while aboard his Marine One helicopter flying to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping for a trade-negotiation session in Busan, South Korea. ...

No nuclear power—other than North Korea, most recently in 2017—has carried out explosive nuclear testing in over 25 years” (Reuters 2025).

The threat or annihilation need not be nuclear. Gaza takes the situation from the intensity of a singular bomb to carpet-bombing-total-network-drone extensification: control of the sky, together with indiscriminate, annihilating destruction. As Tahrir Hamdi writes, in this issue, such a scale of destruction requires an absolute, racist imaginary: “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, according to Adam Miyashiro (2024))” (82). Necessary, that is, if one wanted to demonstrate the predominance of airpower in modern warfare and link it to the unprecedented destructive power of nuclear weaponry. The scale of the weaponry matches the scale of the existential threat, in this case, absolute, unlimited, with no end except erasure of the other. Hamdi puts the point brutally, that is, honestly: “we are immediately confronted by the question of who exactly is worthy of saving. According to this racialized thinking, nuclear power ... should ... be concentrated in the hands of those who must always be saved (Western European countries and Israel,” while, on the other hand, these self-proclaimed civilized, non-barbaric nuclear weapons hoarding nations, consider themselves “the more than human,” and, hence, as such, as those:

who are always morally justified in exterminating/annihilating 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 Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, the “human animals,” referring to the Palestinian population of Gaza and elsewhere inside and outside occupied Palestine. (82)

As Ilan Pappé makes clear in his contribution to the “Nuclear Futures” round-table (see this issue), the comparative scales of destruction in the atomic bombings in Japan and the total coverage bombing of Gaza have immediate and long-term disastrous consequences for the human populations but also the material environment in which any future populations may live and from which they may or must build their habitats. Further, the mindset, the racist imaginary which allows such acts, is familiar and traditional: colonial-settler. Pappé states:

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

## Nuclear Racism: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Gaza and Iran

project, are ... what we see today in Gaza and ... part of the racist dehumanization that enabled the act of bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (Aoe *et al* 26)

The colonial, racist, entitled, sadistic imperial attitude, but, also, now, a fanatical and politically-theological limit-kind. Pappé continues:

[W]ho possesses these weapons[?] ... [T]otally absent from ... mainstream media, and mainstream academia, and ... 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. ... For the present and ... 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. (Aoe *et al* 26-7)

The current US-Israel war on Iran and the open threats of nuclear attack only strengthen such probabilities.

The nature of the damage caused by such a scale of bombing is well-described in a report Fazil Moradi quotes, in his article in this issue, “The Earth is Closing on Us’: Predatory Empires through Japan, Palestine, and Iran,” (73) a report titled “Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki” (published in Japanese in 1979, English translation 1981):

Records on the time of the explosion vary from 8:15 to 8:18 A.M. but the official time according to Hiroshima City is 8:15 A.M. With the explosion of the atomic bomb, the epicenter [hypocentre] instantaneously reached a maximum temperature of several million degrees centigrade and an atmospheric pressure of several 100,000 bars; with the formation of a fireball, powerful heat rays and radiation were emitted in all directions within a short interval. Radiation extended not only directly from the burst point but also from the surface of the ground—from fission fragments and the residue of neutron-induced radioactive materials. The shock waves propagated by the explosion and the tremendous blast that followed almost instantaneously demolished buildings and killed many people. The survivors suffered the agonies of thermal burns and radiation exposure, whose effects were in many cases delayed.

Trump orders the war on Iran in March 2026 by executive order. The humiliation of Arabs continues with the gross manners attending the US and Israeli assassinations of their political opponents. The beyond—is it a continuation or a break? Roy argues for a contemporary break in her recent: “Iran is Not Gaza: Arundhati Roy’s Scathing Speech on the US-Israeli War on Iran. Exclusive: The award-winning Indian novelist warns that the world is on the brink of nuclear calamity and economic collapse, and laments her own government’s gutlessness” (Roy 2026):

[T]he unprovoked and illegal attack by the United States and Israel on Iran. It is, of course, a continuation of the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza. It’s the same

old genocidaires using the same old playbook. Murdering women and children. Bombing hospitals. Carpet bombing cities. And then playing victim.

But Iran is not Gaza. The theater of this new war could expand to consume the whole world. We are on the brink of nuclear calamity and economic collapse. The same country that bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki could be readying itself to bomb one of the most ancient civilizations in the world.

Continuation, or repetition, of the nuclear series, but with a difference, still yet to be decided.

The old playbook of settler-colonialism and imperialism. Moradi argues that for Empire today, the nuclear bomb threat, while not unique, has a paramount or paradigmatic power and status: “*within the global colonial theatre (knowing-how-to-see), nuclear capability functions as the spectral centre of imperial power*” (68). The victims of imperial slaying are sometimes themselves not clean, but this does nothing to excuse genocide, annihilation, and unprovoked attack. For Moradi, however dirty Israel and Iran are, each, today, the problem is larger and longer: “From the plantations of the Caribbean to the trenches of the imperial war now remembered as ‘World War I,’ the state has been a laboratory for perfecting techniques of organized destruction” (70). The explicit, unashamed, might-is-right attitude to the possession of nuclear weapons by the same states that adopt humilatingly arrogant and demeaning moralizing attitudes to their bullied opponents shows the mass hypnosis and delusion at work:

In the 21st century, the most advanced nuclear states, including the US, Russia, China, France, the UK, Pakistan, India, and Israel, stand as heirs to that imperial calculation. Each claims the mantle of legitimate sovereignty or democracy, yet all possess the most refined instruments of annihilation: the capacity to sacrifice the planet, suspending law, critical thinking, protest, and ethical or ecological responsibility. (Moradi 75)

As Hamdi shows:

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—these are those who can be disposed of, in order to enable the continuation of the more than human race/civilization, who populate the deservedly, and morally, nuclear armed-to-the-teeth Western, hegemonic, neo-colonial world, otherwise known as, the ‘free world.’ (83)

### III. True Representations of Hell

Moradi asked me to recount what I found most memorable in the atom bomb museum in Hiroshima. He told me to go early, as the busloads of schoolchildren on educational trips would be less massive early on. The crush of museum goers, even somewhat early, layers the experience with form-matter eeriness: ‘we’—more accurately, streams of panicked individuals and groupuscules—navigate the harrowing skull-corpse-remains-destruction strewn pathways as if we

are canoeing down one of Hiroshima's rivers, turned into a river of rapids filled with bomb dead. I do not read much—I've read a fair bit in preparation for this 'trip'—though the museum is filled with script. I rush, pausing at a certain photograph, a particular shroud, and stopping at the art, the art of the *hibakusha*. I stop also at one of the video installations, *hibakusha* testimonials, before leaving the exhibit space. The one book I purchase in the museum: *A-bomb Drawings by Survivors* (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum [HPMM], 2007). Bilingual, Japanese and English, the book presents many of the 3,600 drawings and paintings in the HPMM collection. It is a unique read. I learned a new discipline in reading and seeing the works in the book, one of short, patient, attentive doses, in close sequence. As I said to Moradi a few weeks later, remembering his question, the *hibakusha* art stood out for me more than anything else: each work compresses scene and history, objective information and subjective experience and values, in a richer, more complex, and truer way than any mediated representation or relic.

The final written piece in *A-bomb Drawings by Survivors* is 'History, Memory & the Legacy of *Hibakusha* Artists,' by John Dower, who was involved in the 1977 publication by "Pantheon Books of an American edition of NHK's [NHK Hiroshima Broadcasting Station] early collection of atomic-bomb drawings and paintings by *hibakusha*. The title of the Japanese version was *Gōka o Mita*. In English, this was rendered as *Unforgettable Fire*' (HPMM 167). Dower explains the force of the *hibakusha* images clearly:

[I]ndividual symbolic moments can be shared with others. This is what the *hibakusha* drawings and paintings do—more memorably, in my view, than any other way we have of trying to comprehend the true horror of war in general, and nuclear war in particular. Why are these images more powerful in their way than photographs or film footage? Because **they depict war as intimately as can be imagined.** (HPMM 168, my emphasis)

Each of the images is a world of suffering, no matter its sometimes obvious repetition of other worlds (corpses floating down the rivers, corpses in cisterns, mothers carrying dead infants, mushroom clouds, and so on). The imagined war is the true war, the war as it is expressed in its suffering expression.

#### IV. Producing Light/Image, Destroying Earth/Sky

Paul Virilio, analyzing the conquest of reality by the control and command of real time and force from the sky, claims Enola Gay fuses with Apollo 11, the explosion of the very small and the explosive exit into the very large: "As though the two most famous crews in contemporary history—that of the Enola Gay, which dropped the atomic bomb, and that of the Apollo 11 space capsule—had been the prophets of doom of humanity's unhappy future" (Virilio 139).

Disjunctive precarity of world time is the new series of the set exploding skies (Hiroshima-Nagasaki-Chernobyl-Gaza-Iran-Globe):

The *conjunctive proximity* of continental territorial development is today superseded. By the *disjunctive precariousness* of worldwide time-management practices that provoke a sort of disintegration in the socio-political organization we have inherited from past centuries. The metaphor of nuclear catastrophe and fallout is no longer a stylistic trope, but in the end an accurate enough image of the damage to human *activity* caused by this sudden implosion-explosion of computerized *interactivity* which Albert Einstein predicted in the 1950s would probably constitute a second bomb, after the purpose-built atomic one. (86)

Real subsumption of reality by the manufactured image has led to a refusal to see what is presented by media:

‘Not being able to believe your eyes’ is no longer, in fact, a sign of amazement or surprise, but rather a mark of a ‘conscientious objection’ that now objects to the hold of the objective image, of the image mediatized not only by the live or recently pre-recorded TV broadcast, but also by an excessive *mobilization of public space*. ... (Virilio 90)

Virilio’s picture of the resulting techno-cyber-virtual-bioengineered dystopia is dark and unforgiving, unrelenting and, apparently to him, unavoidable. The contemporary world is characterized by a general accident that dislocates all presence of being-here-and-now (131).

What of the formation of resistance through globalized networks, the communication of realtime events of horror and protest?

More importantly, there will always be local movement, local resistance, local knowledge, within and for the struggle for international workers’ unity and control, where ‘worker’ means living human being (living is contributing to the species being).

The work of all the people involved in thinking and writing this piece of writing and this issue of this journal indicates some of the potentials and actuals of local diffused and global resistance. We look forward to connecting in intensifying and extensifying resistance and critique, and discovering and creating new territories and modes. *From the river to the sea. From our thousands to our millions, we are all Palestinians.*

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Thank you, Fazil Moradi, for your friendship, for inviting me to Japan, and for continued collaborative work; thank you, Tahrir Hamdi, for your constant work and cutting intelligence and honest tongue; thank you, Tanami Aoe, Kaori Hatsumi, Nakamura Taira, and all the students I met in Hiroshima. For future collaborations, social solidarity, and resistance everywhere.

## Biography

**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.

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# Japan and the Blind Spot Around Nuclear Racism

Nakamura Taira

## Introduction

Japan's limited recognition of the atomic bombings as an act of nuclear racism or colonialism can be approached through four interrelated factors: the influence of the United States of America (below, US) on postwar political, educational, and cultural narratives; a distinctly Japanese tendency to conflate wartime disasters with natural disasters, which can obscure the role of human agency and power dynamics; a psychological reluctance among many Japanese people to accept the implications of being on the losing side in war; and the broader fact that, both globally and within Japan, frameworks for recognizing racism and colonialism are relatively new and not yet widely circulated. For those of us engaged in university education, Japan's historically rooted lack of recognition of racism and colonialism remains a critical concern. This issue is tied to the ways knowledge is produced and circulated, with mass media also playing a significant role in shaping public understanding.

Before analyzing these four factors, it is important to clarify my own position: I was born in Tokyo, and after graduating from university I went to Taiwan, where I researched Japanese colonial rule over the highland Indigenous peoples with a focus on Japanese colonialism and decolonization (Nakamura 2018). After subsequently teaching for four years at a university in South Korea and other places, I moved to Hiroshima, where I have now lived for a decade, and where I teach East Asian history, culture, and peace studies at Hiroshima University. My reflections on racism and colonialism in Japan resonate with Elaine Scarry's (2020) analysis of the genealogy of racism in the United States. Scarry traces a continuum between the atomic bombings of Japan, an act she situates within a framework of US "white supremacy," and the 2020 murder of George Floyd. In her account, racism functions by rendering certain human lives disposable or expendable. In the US, she argues, this logic is inseparable from the country's hegemonic nuclear order, which in turn intersects with the longer histories of Japanese imperialism and its racialized treatment of those deemed "non-Japanese."

## The Influence of the US on Japan

After the Asia-Pacific War, or World War II, Japan was occupied by the US and the Allied powers until 1952. On the same day the 1951 San Francisco

Peace Treaty was signed, Japan concluded the US–Japan Security Treaty, which, revised in 1960, remains in force today. Fearing the spread of communism, Japan aligned itself with the US and has maintained that orientation for the past eighty years. This trajectory reflects a long-standing convergence of interests between the ruling elites of both countries, during which Japan’s left-wing and anti-establishment movements have repeatedly lost ground. The US relied on Japan’s ruling class, including the emperor, as instruments of postwar governance and positioned Japan as a bulwark against communism, as became especially clear during the Korean War of the 1950s. Under strong US influence, the promotion of “peaceful” nuclear power, specifically, nuclear power plants, also became a major feature of postwar Japanese society, a development whose consequences became starkly visible on March 11, 2011, with the Fukushima nuclear explosion. In the Japanese public consciousness, many people seem to feel that Japan cannot truly stand up to the US. As of 2025, the US continues to maintain numerous military bases throughout Japan and conducts flights without restriction. Nuclear weapons have also entered Japan, with the Japanese government tacitly accepting their presence.

### **Natural / Wartime Disasters**

Because Japanese society has lived with typhoons, earthquakes and tsunamis for centuries, it is often said that there exists a certain resignation toward natural disasters. The problem, however, is a persistent tendency to conflate human-made catastrophes, including those caused by war, with natural disasters. This tendency has the troubling effect of obscuring the human agents responsible for wartime destruction. As is well known, the inscription on the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Cenotaph exemplifies this issue: “Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the evil.” Here, the subject responsible for dropping the atomic bomb is absent, and accountability dissolves into prayer. This emotional tenor of the Japanese language, along with the broader cultural disposition it reflects, inhibits a clear pursuit of wartime responsibility. The same pattern is evident in efforts to assign responsibility for the March 2011 nuclear power plant meltdown in Fukushima (cf. Sakai 2017). The liability of Tokyo Electric Power Company and the Japanese government has been effectively nullified in the courts, and citizens are being guided by the ruling elite to accept nuclear contamination as a national calamity that all must endure. The history of colonialism surrounding the Fukushima nuclear accident is beginning to be reexamined. During a recent talk at the Citizens’ Nuclear Information Center, Fukui Tomoki discussed how the colonial ruling structures surround nuclear power and the Fukushima nuclear incident in Japan.

### **The Psychological Reluctance**

In Japanese society, the prevailing view is not that Japan was “defeated” (敗戦 *haisen*) but that the war was “brought to an end” (終戦 *shūsen*). The language is consequential. Each year on August 15, Japan commemorates “the anniversary of the end of the war,” a phrasing that, linked to the second issue discussed

above, frames the war as a kind of natural disaster that has simply passed. While this can be understood as a psychological defense against violence and trauma, it nonetheless obscures a clear grasp of history. Coupled with postwar pacifism, symbolized by Article 9 of the Constitution, it has left little space for rigorous or critical examination of the military and of defeat. A further obstacle to historical clarity is the lack of recognition that Japan is, in practice, jointly shaped by the ruling elites of both Japan and the US. This dynamic makes it difficult for many Japanese to perceive the atomic bombings as acts rooted in racism or colonial power. The absence of agents of resistance is likewise tied to the fact that the Communist Party's influence has been only fleeting. One might say that a model of rational individuals acting on principle is ill-fitted to the village-like structures of Japanese society. Of course, these social and cultural patterns are products of geopolitical and historical formation; I am not proposing an essentialist account of "Japanese culture."

### **Delayed Historical Responsibility in Japan**

One important milestone in the international development of public discourse on racism and colonialism was the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa. Although the event was momentous in scope and ambition, its global influence was substantially weakened when the US and Israel staged a highly publicized walkout midway through the proceedings. Further diminishing its impact, the 9/11 attacks occurred just three days after the conference concluded, abruptly shifting the priorities of governments, media, and the public worldwide. Within this rapidly changing global environment, where new frameworks for understanding racism and colonialism were only beginning to take shape, Japan, too, found itself constrained by long-standing conceptual and political limitations. In Japan, "race" has historically been understood through a simplified, tripartite schema of "white," "yellow," and "black." This reductive framework has contributed to persistent blindness regarding other forms of structural discrimination. For example, prejudice against *Buraku* outcast communities, or anti-Asian discrimination by Japanese people themselves, has often not been recognized as racism at all (Kurokawa 2016). The underlying logic has been: "Because they are the same race, racial discrimination cannot exist." Such assumptions have long obscured the complex ways racism and coloniality operate domestically. Only in recent years, partly influenced by global movements, such as Black Lives Matter, and by increasing public debate over Japan's own colonial past, has broader awareness of racism begun to take root in Japanese society.

Japan's muted response to Israel's racist and colonial policies toward Palestinians is inseparable from the racism and colonialism that shaped the atomic bombings. Israel's system of racism and colonial domination is deeply tied to that of the US, and Japan's unwillingness, both at the governmental and university levels, to confront these issues reflects a long-standing pattern: Japan has avoided holding the US accountable for its own racism, including the racism embedded in the atomic bombings, and has instead consistently aligned itself with US imperial desires.

## Biography

**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.

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## Without a witness, prayer, or mourning

Kaori Hatsumi

What are the faces of our nuclear futures? I would say one face would be a world without a witness, prayer, or mourning. How can it be confronted? Through the act of storytelling and listening to witness testimonies. Theodor Adorno once wrote, “To lend a voice to suffering is a condition for all truth” (1973, 17-18; cf. Schick 2009). Stories can continue living beyond our physical existence and beyond borders.

It was Isaac, a survivor of Sri Lanka’s thirty-year civil war (1983–2009), who told me about Hisashi Inoue’s play “*Chichi to Kuraseba*,” or “Living with Father/Face of Jizo.” Hisashi Inoue (1934–2010), a leading post-war Japanese playwright, wrote this play in 1994 to tell the story of Hiroshima. Isaac declared to me that this play was a masterpiece, and that he wished a play like this could be written on Sri Lanka’s experience—a prolonged, slow-death of a civilization in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka since 1956, the worst nightmare of which occurred in 2009 in Mullivaikkal: tens of thousands of Tamil civilians were trapped in the final battle between the government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and perished.

Isaac read aloud the author’s preface to “Living with Father” (Inoue 2014, 472):

When I bring up the subject of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an increasing number of people say, ‘It is 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.

“You see,” Isaac said, “This gave me a whole new perspective. What happened in 2009 in Mullivaikkal was a crime against the entire human existence!” He continued reading the preface:

*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. (Italics added.)*

*Hibakushas*, or atomic bomb survivors, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki represent our contemporary existence. The Tamil victims of Mullivaikkal in 2009 in Sri Lanka—whose number amount to one hundred thousand if we add the number of those who are still missing to the dead—represent *us*. The Palestinians today represent *us* and our troubled future.

In “Living with Father,” Mitsue, a twenty-two-year-old librarian in Hiroshima and herself a *hibakusha*, is tormented by “stubborn feelings of unforgivable guilt over being alive” three years after the war. It is a sickness called “victimitis” (Inoue 496). Mitsue believes she should never be happy because, on August 6, she left her father in the rubble in order to save herself when their house caught fire.

Takezō, her father, visits her from the Shadowland to encourage her to marry a man she likes and be happy. The daughter, however, refuses to be happy. “It’s unforgivable,” Mitsue tells the father’s ghost, “that I’m alive. To have died that day in Hiroshima is natural, to have survived is unnatural. That’s why it’s strange for me to be alive” (491-2). Upon hearing her wish to join him in the Shadowland because she does not deserve to be alive, though she lacks the courage to die, Takezō admonishes his daughter (498):

TAKEZŌ (With a slap): Listen up. That time, as you were crying, didn’t you say: “It’s heartless, it’s horrible, why must we part like this?” . . . Do you remember?

MITSUME (Faintly nods): . . .

TAKEZŌ: I said in reply, “A parting like this must never happen again for the rest of eternity, because it’s too heartless.”

MITSUME (Nods): . . .

TAKEZŌ: Did you hear my last words? “Please live out my share of life, too!”

MITSUME (Nods vigorously): . . .

TAKEZŌ: That is why I am giving you life.

MITSUME: Giving me life?

TAKEZŌ: That’s right. I’m giving you life to have people remember that there were indeed tens of thousands of such heartless partings. Isn’t the library where you work also a place to tell about such things?

Like Mitsue, the librarian, left to tell stories, we are given life to tell stories of tens of thousands of such heartless partings. Isn’t the academia where we work a place to tell about such things?

I took Isaac, who came from Sri Lanka to visit me in Nagasaki, to Urakami Cathedral. It was upon this cathedral of the Urakami Christians that the hydrogen bomb exploded on August 9, 1945, three days after Hiroshima. The Urakami Christians were the descendants of those Catholics who had gone underground to practice their faith for more than two and a half centuries when Christianity was banned in Japan (1612–1873).

Two of my friends from Nagasaki joined Isaac and me to pray to *Hibaku no Maria*, the head of the wooden statue of Our Lady that also endured the bombing. *Hibaku no Maria* was found in the rubble of the cathedral. Her face

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was charred, and her famous blue glass eyes were gone. Yet, with those bare eyes, she was looking beyond the world of nuclear futures.

Seijiro, a seventy-year-old Buddhist from Nagasaki and a patriot, says to me:

It's a lie that the US targeted the city of Kokura that day. From the beginning, their target was this cathedral. The faithful of Urakami were gathering in a small chapel in the cathedral, and prayers were rising up from this place. It was a prayer that would unite Japan. The US feared the power of that unifying prayer; to destroy it, they dropped the atomic bomb.

Like *Hibaku no Maria*, the charred Mother Mary of Urakami Cathedral, there are other statues of this queen of mercy that endured the atomic bomb. *Hibaku-Maria Kannon* is one such statue.



**Figure 1:** *Hibaku-Maria Kannon* (The statue that survived both the persecution and atomic bombing.)

Courtesy: Japan 26 Martyrs Museum, Nagasaki

Eighteen-centimeters tall and made of porcelain. Made in China during the Edo Period (1603–1867). The back of the statue and the left side of its face were melted by the atomic bomb. *Hibaku* means “atomic bombed.” Kannon is the bodhisattva of compassion, and Maria-Kannon, for the Nagasaki Catholics during the ban on Christianity, was Mother Mary. The statue belonged to a Catholic in Nagasaki who inherited it from his grandfather, who kept it with him during the persecution by the Meiji Government (1868–1873). *Hibaku-Maria Kannon* is displayed at Twenty-Six Martyrs Museum in Nishizaka, Nagasaki.

## Biography

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## “The Earth is Closing on Us”: Predatory Empires Through Japan, Palestine, and Iran

Fazil Moradi

### Introduction

Reflecting on the state of the world and confronting the daily bombardment of Palestine and Palestinians, and the way the United States defends this program of colonial imperial violence in the so-called “United Nations Security Council” of former and living empires, my mother couldn’t help but speak as if every sentence were an exile turning to homelessness.

“You can’t kill someone without killing yourself,” mother said, not as a proverb, not as a warning, but as a historical colonial imperial condition remembered too long. I do not answer aloud. I think with the long lineage of thinkers who understood that every act of dehumanization boomerangs back to its author: *you can’t strip someone of their life on earth or humanity without tearing away your own, or the nation you claim to defend*. I didn’t know that even thinking and remaining silent has its own politics. It keeps one in an exile where the possibility of justice or hospitality as responsibility to wholly others is haunting.

My mother continues, as if the US were a riddle whose violence refuses critical thinking. “This America can’t sit still. It has hot chilies in its ass. It is behind all the brutalities in the world. I don’t understand, when we learned the mullahs [in Iran] were pure evil, we were left with no option but to flee and seek refuge elsewhere. We thought that was our protest and that we would return home soon. We left everything, forever. We were cut off from Iran.”

What about Palestinians? “Memory adds to the unrelieved intensity of Palestinian exile. ... Are they [forever] condemned to exile? ... Exile is a series of portraits without names, without contexts” (Said 1999, ix, 12). Or are they forever cut off from Palestine? Mahmoud Darwish writes in “Where should the birds fly after the last sky?”:

The Earth is closing on us  
pushing us through the last passage  
and we tear off our limbs to pass through.  
The Earth is squeezing us.  
I wish we were its wheat  
so we could die and live again.  
I wish the Earth was our mother  
so she’d be kind to us. (2005, 12–13)

Memories connect not only those we identify as kin or contemporaries, but anyone with a sense of justice or all ethically responsible and hospitable human beings across time and space (Moradi 2024; 2025a). Mother's question cracks the surface of the Earth. The safe country is never safe; the violent state is never elsewhere. Political violence and forced displacement do not vanish from memories, even when a person has disappeared or been erased from a nation's archive and history, removed from the land of their birth, become *exilic*. Memories endure, traveling from mother to child and beyond. Perhaps to an epistemological revolution, such as the one embodied in the *Woman. Life. Freedom* movement, seen both in Rojava in Syria and across Iran in September 2022, following the murder of Jina/Mahsa Amini (see Moradi 2023).

"Yes," I tried to continue the conversation with my mother. "America is behind the rise of the mullahs in Iran, and your displacement too. It can't be separated from the memories of your losses that never stop being lost."

Mother repeats it, as if repetition could force the Earth to echo mother's voice and force the world to hear: "We were cut off from Iran. We were cut off from Iran. Forever."

Cut off performs its own severing. Each utterance amputates what remains or what memories of violence endure—*cut off*. Mother stands in that archive of mothers who did not choose to become exile: mothers in Palestine, Sudan, parts of Ukraine; D.R. Congo, Syria, Iran, Rohingya mothers; Indigenous mothers everywhere on this planet; mothers in the Americas, and so many other parts of the human world. Every mother carries a world; every world is made portable only by being broken.

Destruction and displacement can't just be accidents of empire. Empire takes us to what Jacques Derrida understands as "dispositif de savoir-pouvoir, de pouvoir-savoir, de savoir-voir et de pouvoir-voir souverain", a dispositive, infrastructure or "a setup of knowing-power, power-to-know, knowing-how-to-see, and sovereign being-able-to-see" (Derrida 2008, 378; 2009, 282). Empire's existential condition, thus, as colonial modernity, remains tangled with the colony, both at home and elsewhere. It is a colonial order of exile and erasure, a programmatic expulsion, where departure is mandated and return rendered impossible. The exile of the "shah" of Iran did not occur in isolation but as a recursive wave within the planetary composition of colonial governance, or the circulation of bodies, regimes, and desires according to the empire's logic of manageability and survival. His "peaceful" departure was less a fall than the imperial order reinventing or translating its own face, ensuring that what departs in the name of "liberation" returns as another form of domination, or a "*native council*" (Fanon 1956, my emphasis). For Frantz Fanon, the *native council* was the colonial order of destruction of histories, memories or cultures. It may be read like the machine in Franz Kafka's (1996) *The Penal Colony*, where the machine, in performing torture or punishment, also destroys any possibility of justice. The punishment of "some as warning for others," Michel de Montaigne wrote, "is a custom of our [French] justice" (2004, 30).

In one of the first photographs, of the "Ayatollah" Khomeini, taken just before he sets foot upon Iranian soil, he can be seen holding, with his right hand,

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the left arm of one of the Air France male pilots escorting him from the French national carrier. Suspended on the aircraft's ladder, neither fully arrived nor still departed, Khomeini occupies a liminal threshold: the space between colonial empires and their colony, between the sky of France, Britain and the US and the ground of Iran. Behind him stands another mullah, and at the air-craft's door linger five more mullahs, alongside another male pilot and what appear to be male journalists or functionaries of a broader colonial imperial infrastructure. In the photograph, the site of arrival withdraws from clarity. The colony appears as if still without name or lineage. At the door of the aircraft, some, all men, fix their gaze on Khomeini, as though manifesting the promise of “return to divine happiness.” Elsewhere, a mullah's eyes drift past the visible, toward a horizon that refuses to appear, an unseen shore recalling those island prisons where the British empire once rehearsed its colonial *knowing-power*. The photographic scene folds in on itself: landing becomes exile; the colony becomes the colony once more, forever beginning.

The presence of Air France, the emblem of a former colonial imperial power, with an established “custom of justice,” renders the very act of “return” already compromised, already inscribed by the imperial vision of controlling any political order in the colony with impunity. What appears as an arrival is also a repetition or a colonial *knowing-power*, *power-to-know*, *knowing-how-to-see*: the empires once again scripting who may embody Iran's “authentic sovereignty.” The photograph, then, remains as part of the visual archive of the colonial order of *knowing-how-to-see*, where the ground of the nation is never fully its own, and where every claim of independence remains shadowed by the invisible infrastructure of colonial imperialism.

Khomeini and the entire mullah assemblage soon proclaimed themselves not as emissaries of colonialism or empire who arrived in Iran on an *Air France* flight, but as devotees whose authority had been assigned by “God”: an authority no earthly being could question. In other words, the Islamic state perfected a colonial order while denouncing colonialism: rape as governance, execution as pedagogy, history as contraband, language as a crime scene. A state that imprisons those who teach Kurdish or Baluchi; a state that hangs artists in public squares with medieval choreography; a political order that Michel Foucault (1991) traced in *Discipline and Punish*, the spectacle of murder and infinite pain as political evidence of a *disciplined* “nation” or world.<sup>1</sup>

It began, my mother reminds me, with the policing of vision itself: the vision of the Islamic state in Iran as the birth of epistemicide—*murder of knowledge, archive, histories, people, culture, art or freedom* (Moradi 2025b; 2022). Women forced into the *chador*, an imposed “Islamic” dress code. Classrooms purged. Cinemas gutted. Public culture recast under the sign of obedience. The actors and singers, who once contributed to the circulation of a racial fantasy of the “Aryan race,” as Kurdish, Baluchi, Azeri, or Arabic singers or actors were excluded. Those who gave the colonized Iran its vibrant scenes of bourgeois culture were now forced into silence or infinitely displaced. Mohamed Ali Fardin (1931–2000), adored by lovers of cinema in Iran, reduced to selling carpets in Tehran, and others muted or died in exile.

In the 21st century, films, songs, and the bodies of actors or celebrities and singers or artists have been grafted onto both the Islamic state's knowing-power and what is called "social media," producing a new colonial technology of *seeing* or domination. Tehran is fashioned as the technocultural factory of Hollywood kinds of dreams, dispersing its carefully manufactured effects across a "nation" that can't claim to share histories or memories of naked violence, losses, pain, and interminable sufferings. The heirs of the wealthy dream of comfort in western European countries or north America, while children of the colonized bodies in many parts of the country dream of bread.

What remains? Ruins? A country that feels like a world rubbed almost already blank; families that read memories like fragments on scorched paper; a mother whose story keeps rewriting itself as *autobiography* of incalculable histories of colonial imperial violence (Moradi 2023). "You can't kill someone without killing yourself," mother repeats. And in mother's repetition, I hear how every organized act of destruction turns against itself; every boundary leaks; every violence haunts the hand that performs it. No sovereign escapes the shadow it casts, or the Islamic state in Iran, too, will *crumble to dust*, just as Omar Khayyam once reminded every empire and emperor.

In the silence between us, mother and me, what remains is both memories that can't be contained or narrated once and for all. As the critical writings of Ilan Pappé (2006; Chomsky and Pappé 2010; 2015) and Tahrir Hamdi (2023), both contributors to this issue, and countless others, including the academic writings of *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies*, *Journal of Palestine Studies* and *Journal of Genocide Research*, tell us, today those uncontainable memories and controlled narration are in Palestine and we are turned into yet another generation of historical witnesses of the imperial destruction of Palestinian lives and to a justice that lies beyond the controlled frames of law. Today, Palestine is, perhaps more than any other world, the place where the very possibility of meaning, for both humanity and "modernity," and its colonial imperial after-lives, must be thought. One will have to think from the bombed kindergartens, libraries and universities of Gaza, or from the long-lived groves of olive trees continually felled by state-sanctioned or armed colonial settlers.

The unyielding transfer of advanced military technologies from Germany, France, Britain, Italy, and the US to Israel, and the incalculable, ceaseless bombardment of Gaza expose not only how Palestine is produced as a historical threat to the very illusion of "the modern, modernity and modernism as exclusively 'western' inventions" (Hall 1999, 4–5), but the haunting of the transatlantic trade in humans, colonization, colonial genocides and the Holocaust. You are cultivating a *society that hates instead of nurturing love* when you calculate the ongoing of political violence in Palestine or Ukraine as *love* for a people and *hate* for another. What unfolds is not just another episode of domination but a transformation of the colonial knowing-power or the modality of colonization itself, a reconfiguration of conquest that displaces direct occupation in favour of proxy sovereignties. Afghanistan and Iraq once served as overt theatres of imperial expansion; now Israel, Ukraine, and others are mobilized as surrogate states enabling colonial knowing-power to continue staging its long fantasy of

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planetary “racial” mastery. In such a shift, democracy appears not as a flawless visage but stripped bare, reduced to body count or an advanced panopticon that regulates assembly, discussion and protests (Moradi 2025b).

The colonial custom of manufacturing chaos can’t be confined to “democratic elections” at home and military destruction and ruins elsewhere. It circulated in the colonizing slogans, such as “shock and awe,” as colonial knowing-how-to-see, that designed and regulated memory through “global media,” turning the conquest of Iraq in 2003 into a spectacle of colonial imperial vision. But who now recalls the daily bombardments and killings in Baghdad, the routine tortures and rapes in Abu Ghraib, or the released photographs in which a soldier poses with a nazi swastika painted *between his eyes?* (Moradi 2024, 66). Let alone the organization of the transatlantic trade in humans, colonialism, the Holocausts, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Marshall Islands, or the French empire’s atomic bombing testing in Algeria. These fragments return as spectres, resisting incorporation into the colonizing mottos of imperial military necessity or democratic rescue.

The bombings of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Palestine, and even Qatar expose a recursive colonial knowing-power: that “in moments of difficulty one can trust ‘the Empire’ to strike back,” to borrow from Stuart Hall (2011, 18). The imperial administration of memory in these states operates as an adjunct to the legitimization, or, rather, naturalization, of the colonial order. Already in the early 1990s, Edward Said signs this entanglement when he remarks, almost as an involuntary parenthesis, “We are at a moment in our history, as Palestinians, we are led by, [*sigh*] I don’t know, words fail me, I don’t know what we are led by, but not a bright leadership” (1996, 45:35). This will have to be extended to the predatory colonial states worldwide.

Said writes, in *After the Last Sky* (1999, ix–x), that Yasser “Arafat’s despotic Palestine Authority” banned the Arabic translations of some of his writings in the Palestinian territories. In March of the same year, when traveling to visit his son, a volunteer worker in Ramallah, Said writes, “I was treated to a vituperative attack on Arafat’s radio station, The Voice of Palestine. I was characterized as a CIA agent, an enemy of the Palestinian people, and an Orientalist!” His *sigh* exposes the instability of the very ground, discursive or otherwise, on which “leadership” seeks to found itself. Today, almost three decades after Said’s talk and encounter, we witness the sedimented effects of a long colonial work: the work of deciding which political forms shall be preserved, defended, or allowed to appear as inevitable in the so-called “Middle East,” the historical and contemporary political context of Palestine.

What can be called the “Talibanization” of the countries mentioned above has been rendered so administratively permeable that the US, Britain, Israel or NATO may strike them at will, as though “sovereignty” as “international law” were a movable supplement, granted or withdrawn according to imperial calculus. Like every empire that has come before it, the US sustains its dominion through ever advancing technologies of destruction, embodied most visibly in its vast archipelago of military bases or infrastructure stretching from Japan to Guantánamo Bay (Vine 2015; 2020). As David Vine observes:

From a hilltop at the Guantánamo Bay naval station, you can look down on a secluded part of the base bordered by the Caribbean Sea. There you'll see thick coils of razor wire, guard towers, search lights, and concrete barriers. This is the U.S. prison that has garnered so much international attention and controversy, with so many prisoners held for years without trial. (2015, 1)

The US empire's military infrastructure functions as a planetary panopticon, performing unparalleled surveillance and violence across the planet (Wilford 2024). This infrastructure of imperial violence can be summoned at will, whether as the US's Central Intelligence Agency's covert operations, as a show of military power, or as experiments with ever more shocking weapons. In the Preface to *America's Greatest Game: the CIA's Secret Arabists and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East*, Hugh Wilford writes,

This book began with two surprises, the first being that it did not already exist. From the 1953 coup that deposed the nationalist prime minister of Iran, Mohammed Mosaddeq, down to more recent reports of secret prisons, waterboarding, and drone warfare, the Central Intelligence Agency has played a defining role in the troubled relationship between the United States and the Middle East. (2013, xix)

Tested first in the 2003 conquest of Iraq, and again in April 2017, the Massive Air Ordinance Blast—also called the “Mother of All Bombs” and the most powerful “nonnuclear” weapon—was first detonated by the US in Afghanistan in 2017 (Rajah 2023, 216–67). On June 22, 2025, the imperial logic of extra-territorial dominance was further demonstrated as US “B-2 bombers” released the so-called “30,000-pound bunker busters” on uranium-enrichment facilities in Fordow, Isfahan, and Natanz in Iran (Ali 2025). Since the colonial knowing-how-to-see is at issue, these attacks were announced in advance and later made to circulate widely through the so-called “global media.”

The calculated acts of bombardment and of imagery, or colonial and colonizing “knowledge,” both linguistic and non-linguistic, that constitute the idea of the “Middle East” can't be separated, as the colonial archives or Said's *Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism* make clear. Consider, for example, how Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish languages, or Turkish came to naturalize the very name “Middle East” through literal translation, and how the academics everywhere are taking care of its survival. This linguistic adoption shaped memories and identification while showing how British, French, and American empires envisioned their own future survival as memory work. Here the very understanding of a single, solitary empire as the cause of all evil in the world is misleading. No empire exists or hunts alone; each is already the spectral trace of another, returning, repeating, contaminating the purity of any singular explanation. The *name*, which is also a *narrative* and *geographical*, itself was coined and popularized by three imperial male agents, British journalist Valentine Chirol, former British Army officer Thomas Gordon, and American admiral Alfred T. Mahan in the early 20th century, shortly before the British and French empires inscribed it onto the

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map through the Sykes–Picot Agreement of 16 May 1916 (see Crouzet 2022). The line inscribed on 16 May 1916, by Britain’s Mark Sykes and France’s François Georges-Picot endures as a sovereign boundary, dividing Iran from Iraq. Border is a manifestation of the imperial vision: “The boundaries defined by the modern system of nation-states were fundamental to European colonialism and economic expansion” (Hardt and Negri 2001, xii).

Through the making and imposition of names, narratives, and geography, a colonial memory cartography continues to define and confine what is called the “Middle East.” In other words, the empires forged in the transatlantic trade in *human(ity)s* and in colonialism continue to live on in the memories, racialized geographies, and everyday vocabularies of millions worldwide. There can be no empire or so-called modern state that does not, in the very movement of its advance, inscribe itself as the governance of memory, its transmission, interruption, and rewriting, across generations, whether in the metropole or in the colony. The empire can’t extend the welcome of a hospitality that it doesn’t have and sees as an existential threat.

In *Memoirs of a Kamikaze*, Kazuo Odachi writes, “I remember Japan gearing up for war in my childhood days. Physical training started to take precedence over academic classes in schools.... Schools were transformed into training grounds to prepare youths for battle, and bayonet training was added to Kendo practice” (2020, 12, 14). The empire needs to make itself known to its subject, the nation, and the world at large. Before defining and identifying a human collective as enemy to mobilize against, the nation itself must first be made through colonization. This political infrastructure of colonization, or knowing-power as “knowing how to cause fear, knowing how to terrorize by making known.... and so terror or terrorism as knowing-how to make fear reign” (Derrida 2009, 39), applies to any predatory imperial or militarized state, including Iran and Israel.

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In the current context of colonial knowing-power or ongoing imperial scramble for domination of the “Middle East” there are now two *armed states*: Israel and Iran. Two states whose existence is made to depend entirely on modernity’s technologies of destruction and discipline, including armed forces, police and “national media,” militarized drones, satellite imagery, armed CC-TVs, militarized walls, and methodical oppression (see Qandeel and Topak 2025). Two theological constructs built not only on sand, but on the destruction and control of knowledge and the pulverized bones of the peoples they continue to annihilate. Two ideological infrastructures of radical dehumanization: *within the global colonial theatre (knowing-how-to-see), nuclear capability functions as the spectral centre of imperial power*. Israel wields it as a silent guarantor of dominance, while Iran is aspiring to that same *anti-Earth* threshold. In Palestine, the Israeli technologies of destruction continue to annihilate with impunity. Against this, Iran positions itself as the counter-sovereign champion of Pales-tinian survival. How can a genocidal state like Iran be seen as saviour? (Moradi 2023).

The two states that made their open “war” public for some days (June “13–25,” 2025), claim direct revelation, not from empires and colonialism but from God, and the right to unleash divine violence upon each other and their neighbours at any time. These states, though appearing oppositional, are haunted by the same foundational absence: the absence of *hospitality* toward others as *justice as giving place* (Derrida 2000; Moradi 2024; 2025a; Kikuchi 2024). Structured not by absolute or conditional hospitality, but by apocalyptic fantasy that materializes as murder, rape, torture, endless destruction, and control of memory and education (Puar 2017; Shakhshari 2020).

Their killings and wars are always righteous. Their maps, always holy, to the extent that critical thinking or protest of any kind is not welcome. The law of these states is “the law of the knife,” to borrow from Frantz Fanon (2004, 232); war is the fundamental necessity through which they ceaselessly reinscribe their claim to legitimacy: “The colonizer has the right to defend itself against those they have colonized and murder with impunity.” The two states invoke the fantasy of order and safety, but also histories or memories of imperial residues of conquest, mass murder and irredeemable destruction.

In many Iranian households in *exile*, the story is told as if around an evening table, passed from one generation to the next. They speak first of August 19, 1953, when the US empire, through its CIA, removed prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh (Wilford 2013, 160–74). “Operation Ajax” was staged as “a coup,” and in its wake Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was lifted to a throne grand enough for him to call himself the “King of Kings.” His rise, however, held the shadow of his father’s fall. Reza Shah had already been forced into exile by other empires, Britain and the Soviet Union, sent first to Mauritius and then to Johannesburg, where he died of a heart attack in late July 1944 at sixty-six. Decades later, his son would meet a similar fate: pushed by the US to flee, he died of cancer in Egypt in late July 1980. In 1979, Ruhollah Khomeini flew from Paris to Tehran to claim leadership of a “revolution” that promised justice and freedom. Over 40 years, the Islamic state built a political order that prized obedience over critical thinking, encouraging mosque attendance while constraining access to critical education and advanced learning. Told as a family story, the sequence of overthrows, exiles, promises, and betrayals becomes less an abstract history than a lived inheritance, narrating both the endurance of the Islamic state and the quiet longing, in many homes, for a future that is yet to come.

If we speak of two particular states whose survival depends on modernity’s technologies of destruction, we must immediately acknowledge the traces of empires and every other state that hovers in the “margins” of that sentence. The modern state, as it crystallized after the conquest of the Americas in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, secured its authority through a double movement: it monopolized violence at home, while claiming mass murder and destruction as sovereign immunity in the colony: “one vast farmyard, one vast concentration camp;” a violence on such a scale exposes the “modern” as a euphemism for destruction and annihilation (Fanon 2004, 232). This double claim required not only armies and police, but an endless work of self justification, in which the

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state inoculates itself against the very violence it performs by naming that violence “progress,” “defence,” or “security” (see Grewal 2017; Moses 2021).

When we say *armed*, we do not simply list another institution beside the legislature and the courts. We name the spectral heart of the so-called “sovereignty,” the site where the state discloses, almost in spite of itself, that its reason for being is bound to the management of killing, murder, rape, plunder, and so forth. The police officer in the neighbourhood patrol car in Berlin, Paris, London, Tehran, and New York, the drone pilot watching pixelated figures half a world away or across the wall, as in Gaza, or the gated and controlled colonies that are hidden in the name, “West Bank,” and the spokespersons at the evening press briefings all participate in a differential economy of violence, in Washington DC, Jerusalem or Tehran. They occupy different positions, yet each wields the power to decide whose body may be exposed to the annihilatory violence of modernity and whose body must be protected at all costs. The protected body is the soldier armed with a gun and trained to kill the “enemy,” the professor of philosophy, history or anthropology trained to keep the line of “racial” difference by policing what texts to teach and what to exclude, or a journalist who is so colonized that they no longer have time to think together with others about the possible meaning of *being free*.

If we linger on only two states, Iran and Israel, we risk confining the critique to convenient exceptions, as though violence were an accidental property of a few rogue sovereignties (Derrida 2005; Chomsky 2001). Critical studies and archives of state violence demonstrate how the very invention of the predatory modern state, its king or/and president, prime minister, army, ministries, census, bureaus, bureaucrats dressed in suits and ties, railways, borders drawn by distant pens, institutions and technologies of control, was accompanied by colonial conquests and mass murder that linger (Trask 1999; Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Tinker and Freeland 2008; Bacca, Guzmán and Quigua 2023). From the plantations of the Caribbean to the trenches of the imperial war now remembered as “World War I,” the state has been a laboratory for perfecting techniques of organized destruction. To single out two examples (Israel and Iran), however egregious, without naming this wider historical and contemporary infrastructure would be to forget that the ground on which we stand is itself sedimented with the ashes of millions of human and other-than-human beings, pulverized yet insistently present, haunting.

Archives of state violence, old and ongoing, show how empires and the imperial state always keep humans, citizens or foreigners alike, at a great distance, but do not permit us the comfort of *ethical distance*, for example, from Palestine or any other people that are made target of annihilatory violence (Moradi 2024; Moradi and Bognitz 2024; Moradi 2025a; 2025b). Since empires and imperial states are indeed infrastructures of radical dehumanization, our ethical responsibility is to confront the ways we inhabit and reproduce that machine in everyday life. Each time we demand absolute safety or security, each time we accept the conflation of dissent with danger, we reinscribe the imperial attitude or memory that renders some lives disposable. In other words, the possibility of hospitable encounter between a citizen, especially one rendered a target of annihila-

tion, and a brutal imperial formation is foreclosed from the outset. Empire materializes through impenetrable layers of bureaucratic and militarized rationality that permeate education, civic life, and everyday encounters, reorganizing memory itself. Memory's institutional organization produces forms of radical dehumanization that become most legible in places such as Gaza, where state violence saturates the social field to the point that soldiers, bus drivers, librarians, even professors of philosophy, not only in Israel or Germany but in many parts of the world, find their capacity to recognize the humanity of others steadily eroded. In that loss, the imperial subject forfeits not only the other's *right to cohabit the earth* or *freedom to narrate* but also the conditions for the possibility of their own.

*The illusion of trying to talk to empire*—the imperial state, citizen, or attitude—takes us to Kafka's *Before the Law*. In this parable, the villager who seeks justice encounters a gatekeeper who indefinitely postpones access to *the law*. This scene opens a broader historical condition: subjects of empire, citizens of the imperial state, are drawn into bureaucratic rituals that promise recognition yet withhold it, producing a liminal state of perpetual waiting and decay. The seeker of justice does not just die before the law; they are murdered or die within an imperial infrastructure that sustains its authority through delay, opacity, and *the deferral of hospitality* (Moradi 2025a).

To turn to Israel and Iran as two radically dehumanizing political orders, is, therefore, not to isolate monstrosity in a convenient pair, but to illuminate a way of learning in which every predatory modern state is at once colonizer and hostage of technologies of destruction. The task, then, is not to find the individual human perpetrator or to condemn uniquely, but to keep the archives of the colonial and colonizing state open (Derrida 1995; 1998; Said 2000). The colonial archives are not behind us; they inscribe us, already, in their exercise of political power, of murder, of the right to define, to identify, and to destroy.

We are now made witnesses, to what Fanon lived through and documented, “the colonial vocabulary,” naming and narrating with naked violence. The armed colonizer takes colonization “to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns [them] into ... animal[s]. In fact, the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms. ... Those hordes of vital statistics, those hysterical masses, those faces bereft of all humanity, those distended bodies which are like nothing on earth, that mob without beginning or end, those children who seem to belong to nobody” (2004, 42). There is *repertoire* for the settler imperial politician and citizen's language. The Israeli politicians' citation, “Palestinians are human animals,” is a citation of “the colonial vocabulary.” As Fanon and Aimé Césaire (2000) documented, *the colonized is not seen as a human, but is made a thing, a function, a number, a file*.

A planetary apocalypse, with the vocabularies of the last 500 years of imperial colonialism re-inscribed daily, with newer weapons, cleaner images, and deadlier silences. If industrialization went hand in hand with the march of predatory empires and the transatlantic trade in humanity, and the murder of people and cultures (Moradi 2022), the era of radical capitalism extends that logic to

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the human and other-than-human condition: citizen and alien become sites for perpetual extraction and monetization. Within such a society, one learns from the earliest years that education is less a pursuit of *ecological friendship*, or learning and well-being, than an initiation into employability, a prerequisite for livelihood and the promise of security (Moradi 2026). To navigate this order is to assent to its dehumanizing hierarchies, its relations of domination and sexual violence. To embrace its abuse of power, to obey its procedural rites. Accept that a single criticism may threaten your existence on earth.

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After almost ten months of living and research, I am learning to live and think with, and write through, the living or haunting memories and ghosts of imperial violence in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as in Minamata and Fukushima. One early evening, Peter Trnka and I walked toward the place marked and remembered as the “hypocentre,” that is, the point beneath which, some five hundred meters above ground, the first atomic bomb exploded.

Peter visited Hiroshima to share his ongoing work on the endurance of colonialism in Canada, particularly the lived memories and present-day political conditions of Indigenous peoples, and to reflect on the question of nuclear weapons with scholars and students at Hiroshima University. Together with Tanami Aoe, a colleague from Hiroshima City University, we had also organized a panel discussion, *Nuclear Futures: From Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Palestine and Beyond*, hosted by Hiroshima City University and Academics Act for Palestine. During this time, Peter and I learned that our autobiographies intersect in unexpected and moving ways. Like Tanami, both of our families had survived imperial wars, his in what is now “Eastern Europe,” and mine in what is now “west Asia.” Those colonial histories forced (or, brought) our families to seek re-fuge in Iraq. We found ourselves sharing how, even after so many decades, our mothers still speak with gratitude about the hospitality of the Iraqi people who received them. Peter told me, “My mother is suffering from dementia but she remembers that hospitality.” For an entire week, we found ourselves immersed, almost without pause, in conversations about imperial and colonial memories, the present state of the world, and the unavoidable dangers that come with the predatory states armed with nuclear weapons. These autobiographical, critical exchanges reminded us of how intimately autobiographies are woven into imperial narratives and names (see Moradi 2023).

From above the hypocentre the blast of the advanced imperial science, or atomic bomb, descended, vaporizing all it touched, erasing nearly everything within two kilometres, on August 6, 1945. Eighty years later, in October 2025, Peter and I stood upon that same ground. We lifted our eyes toward the sky that had once turned into annihilating fire, then turned to face one another.

I had a similar encounter while following the words and steps of Ariyoshi Hanako through the Peace Park in Nagasaki. A postgraduate student at the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Nagasaki University, Ariyoshi also works part-time as a guide at the Peace Education Lab Nagasaki, leading groups of

high school students who travel to Nagasaki from across Japan, walking them through what is now called the Peace Park, which stands upon the very ruins left by the plutonium bomb of August 9, 1945. Ariyoshi agreed to participate in my long-term research on the memories of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and since the Peace Education Lab program did not accommodate visitors other than students, she offered to guide both of us through the park, refusing any payment. When we reached the monument, built directly on the spot of the hypocentre, Ariyoshi turned to me and said quietly, “Look up now. Imagine the atomic bomb falling. Imagine the explosion, the blinding flash, the heat rays, the blast, the fire.”

Ariyoshi: Can you imagine?

Me: No, I can't imagine. Can you imagine?

Ariyoshi: It is difficult. Because there are three waves of damages of atomic bombing. Heat rays, blast waves and radiations. And the ground temperature at that time was 3,000 degrees to 4,000 degrees. It is too hot to imagine. And the blast wave is 440 meters per second. It is too fast to imagine. In this text inscribed on the monument it is written: “In 1945, on August 9th, one atomic bomb was dropped here, 500 meters above this monument. 73,800 people died and 76,900 people got injured. 11,500 houses and 6,800 buildings were also destroyed.”

The air held a silence that did not simply fall between Ariyoshi and me (or between Peter and me) but radiated outward, as if acknowledging the gravity of the moment and the immeasurable violence and absences it contained.

In a Report on “Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” completed in Japanese in 1979, and translated into English and published in 1981, we read:

Records on the time of the explosion vary from 8:15 to 8:18 A.M. but the official time according to Hiroshima City is 8:15 A.M. With the explosion of the atomic bomb, the epicenter [hypocentre] instantaneously reached a maximum temperature of several million degrees centigrade and an atmospheric pressure of several 100,000 bars; with the formation of a fireball, powerful heat rays and radiation were emitted in all directions within a short interval. Radiation extended not only directly from the burst point but also from the surface of the ground—from fission fragments and the residue of neutron-induced radioactive materials. The shock waves propagated by the explosion and the tremendous blast that followed almost instantaneously demolished buildings and killed many people. The survivors suffered the agonies of thermal burns and radiation exposure, whose effects were in many cases delayed. (22)

Eighty years on, I remain haunted by the sense that our understanding is still incomplete, that the predatory empires have not yet reckoned fully with either the immediate destruction or the enduring violence unleashed by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In *Records and Diaries Regarding Atomic Bomb Casualties Written by Medical Doctors and Scientists*, Nakao Maika turns to Hi-

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da Shuntarō (1917–2017), “an army medic and a bombed doctor who worked at Hiroshima Army Hospital,” who wrote:

The face is, oh, is that the face? Weirdly big face, both eyes bloated, lips puffed up by half; oh the face, any strand of hair on burned head. I caught my breath and backed away from it. What I saw was that the old cloth was the human’s undressed skin, the black water was blood. There were burned human meat blouses with dangling skin from their bodies that could not be distinguished as male, female, or soldier. (Nakao 2019, 105)

By 9 August 1945 Japan was a world in ruins: landscapes shattered, cities reduced to cinders, people suspended in the radical existential uncertainty of bare survival. The bombed-out streets, traces of imperial wars, displayed the absence of lives once lived. The war of empires continued in the bodies that starved, in the fractured families, in the haunted return of those who had survived. The violence of empire-building left only long negotiation with despair, infinite exile, homelessness, the traces and silences of those now under occupation of other empires and deprived of the *right to narrate*.

Reduced to its island borders, the Japanese Empire and emperor Hirohito were confined to “unconditional surrender” and placed under the imperial rule of the US from 1945 to 1952 (Butow 1954). In September of 1945, the General Headquarters of the supreme commander, under the authority of General Douglas MacArthur, introduced a “Press Code” and established the “Civil Censorship Detachment” that strictly controlled public discussion, prohibiting criticism of the “Allied Forces” and, in particular, suppressing any media reports, organised assembly and research, photographic or art exhibitions of the violence and effects of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It also deprived the *Hibakusha* (survivors of the atomic bombs) both of the right to medical treatment and the right to narrate their suffering and memories (Braw 1991).

After the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the US established the “Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission” (ABCC), turning the two bombed cities into laboratories for the advancement of the nuclear sciences and technologies. That is, the ABCC was instituted not to provide medical treatment needed by the survivors, but to objectify and study them. Human beings, annihilated by atomic fire, blast or radiation, were transformed into living data: “hearts, lungs, livers, eyes, brains” were airlifted across the Pacific for further study in the US. The organs of those annihilated by the atomic bomb, those denied the dignity of a “natural” death, “spent twenty-eight years as state secrets in an atomic bomb-proofed building in Washington, D.C. The first atomic bomb victim autopsy materials to leave Japan, they were the last to return” in wooden boxes in May 1973 (Lindee 1998, 376). The atomic bomb radiation led to the development of leukaemia in those affected, including pregnant mothers and their unborn (Yamazaki 1995).

If Hiroshima was the first city on earth to be destroyed with a uranium bomb, and Nagasaki with a plutonium one, then the subsequent pursuit of greater power, the testing and detonation of the first hydrogen bomb at Bikini Atoll in 1954, shows the limitless destruction at the heart of US imperial expan-

sion and preservation. In the 21st century, the most advanced nuclear states, including the US, Russia, China, France, the UK, Pakistan, India, and Israel, stand as heirs to that imperial calculation. Each claims the mantle of legitimate sovereignty or democracy, yet all possess the most refined instruments of annihilation: the capacity to sacrifice the planet, suspending law, critical thinking, protest, and ethical or ecological responsibility.

Peter and I had promised Tanami Aoe, associate professor of religion, ethnicity and “west Asian” studies at Hiroshima City University, and one of the organizers of *Hiroshima Palestine Vigil* Community, established in Hiroshima on October 13, 2023, that we would join their “Standing for Palestine” gatherings, held behind the ruins of the former Industrial Promotion Hall of Hiroshima, now memorialized as the “A-bomb Dome,” left in ruins after the US’ atomic bombing of the city on 6 August 1945. Upon our arrival on October 25, 2025 we encountered a small group, bound not by geography or politics of identification, but by a shared responsibility toward the ongoing destruction of Palestine. Engineer, journalist, historian, social scientist, philosopher, linguist, artist, fashion designer, young and old, they stood between two locations of historical importance: the “A-bomb Dome” enclosed by a fence that separates it from the city, and the monument to Tamiki Hara, the poet and critical thinker who “survived” the atomic bombing of the city.

A black marble tablet set upon the earth is inscribed with Hara’s words, in English translation:

Engraved in stone long ago  
Last in the shifting  
In the midst of a crumbling world  
The vision of one flower  
The fence had ceased to be a fence.

By twilight it had transformed into an historic altar, where fabric, words, and human breath had gathered to bear witness. A narrow strip of white cloth, carrying the bilingual plea “Free Palestine” in Arabic and English, the crescent of a painted watermelon glowing upon it like a second, defiant moon, hung on the fence. Beside it was another call, “Liberation and Peace,” stitched in English and Japanese on a broader fold of cloth. Three languages had been mobilized in protest against *the* cruellest act of political violence targeting Palestinians, more than two million people in Gaza, in the 21st century. Farther along, the message returned in a different register: orange letters on black fabric, forming again the call for freedom, draped around an emblem of peace. Between these banners hung a Palestinian flag. Then another flag, thrown across the fence, so that one half faced outward toward the world, and the other, inward, toward the “A-bomb Dome.” A last scrap of black cloth, smaller than the rest, marked with white lettering, illuminated by small violet lights: “Free Palestine.” Beneath them, scattered at the feet of the fence-turned-altar, lay posters depicting human conditions in Gaza, images that needed no translation. With a small speaker, some of the participants took turns holding the microphone, repeating in Japa-

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nese and English the refrains carried across continents: “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” and “Free, free Palestine.”

Passers-by, moving between the historical sites, heard the chorus each time they crossed the invisible line between the atomic bombings of 1945 and the destruction of Palestine in 2025. A member of the *Hiroshima Palestine Vigil*, a volunteer network connecting Hiroshima to Nagasaki, offered brochures to those who paused, containing event details and documentation of the violence in Gaza. The Nagasaki network also included people from various backgrounds, among them a retired professor of Japanese literature. They, too, gather, in Nagasaki Peace Park, approximately 100 meters from the hypocentre. When the standing concluded, we drifted together to a small space for dinner. Many had brought dishes to share. We sat around a table, exchanging names and stories, and the warmth of food passed from hand to hand. As conversation unfolded, a single thread wove quietly through the reflections of several members of the *Hiroshima Palestine Vigil*. What linked Gaza with the bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they said, was not that Gaza is another tragedy, nor even the echo of the “Middle East crisis,” but the living on of colonialism. In that moment, the table felt like an extension of the altar we had left behind, another place where memories, responsibilities, and the desire for human liberation gathered, taking us beyond the borders of Japan and the nation-state, to “a dialogic of accountability” and the possibility of “planetary human beings,” to borrow from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2013, 350). Thus, the *Hiroshima Palestine Vigil* in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and anti-war movements in Fukuoka, Tokyo and many other parts of the planet, are not just a question of the human existential condition, but of *planetary survival*.

In both the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Albert Einstein, who survived the imperial Holocaust in Europe, is remembered as tied to the birth of the nuclear age. He can also be found cited in the 1979 Report (1981, x) as having warned, “The release of atomic energy has so changed everything that our former ways of thinking have been rendered obsolete. We therefore face catastrophe unheard of in former times. If [hu]mankind is to survive, then we need a completely new way of thinking.”

After our panel discussion on Nuclear Futures at Hiroshima City University on October 29<sup>th</sup>, Peter turned to me and said, almost in disbelief, “Can you imagine? Immediately after our discussion, President Trump announced a return to testing nuclear weapons.” In an article in *The Asahi Shimbun*, Takuro Chiba and Taro Ono write that, during a meeting of the Lower House Budget Committee, Japan’s Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi, challenged the long-standing principles of “not possessing, not producing, and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons.” They cite from Takaichi’s 2024 book, *Kokuryoku Kenkyu* (A study of national power): “I resisted this wording right before the Cabinet decision.... Even if we continue to adhere to ‘not possessing’ and ‘not producing’ (nuclear weapons), the ‘not permitting the introduction’ principle is not realistic if we expect the United States to provide extended deterrence” (Chiba and Ono 2025). The haunting of memories of colonization is border-

less; it continues past violence and reinscribes earlier forms of violence: the unresolved denial of the Japanese Empire's acts of destruction and annihilation, those acts that scarred much of Asia by casting its peoples as "animals" and the empire as condemned civilizer. The empire's violence, still deferred, remains excluded from Japan's national education and public discourse, persisting as a policy, a silence, that shapes what can and cannot be said beyond Japan's "history problem" (Igarashi 2000; Hashimoto 2015; see also Nakamura Taira in this issue).

The entangled colonial memories in *The Earth is Closing on Us* speak of a planetary condition, as it is *In the Midst of a Crumbling World*, that endlessly calls, from Hiroshima, through Tamiki Hara, to Palestine, through Mahmood Darwish, and back to us, the living, in the twenty-first century, for speaking not to justify violence, but to dismantle its political sanctity. For speaking, not because we are safe, but because we resist the safety that comes at the cost of the colonial imperial organization of the annihilation of *the Palestinians* or any other human collectives anywhere on the planet.

## Biography

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I have not, until now, spoken my mother's name, Shekar Nazari, for "mother" here is meant to resonate beyond the singular, to invoke the countless mothers in the world who have been dispossessed, displaced, and violently forced to forget the very ground of their birth. As the Palestinian mother is exiled from Palestine with no promise of return, so too is my own mother deprived of returning to the place that is now only retrospectively called Iran. I remain grateful for my mother's love and the teachings she transmitted to us, her children, just as I am grateful for the love and teaching of Peter Trnka's mother, Nina Trnka (*née* Dobřickova), born in Prague. It is through the weave of their affections and lessons that Peter and I found ourselves meeting, perhaps inevitably, perhaps by chance, in Hiroshima in October 2025. My thanks extend also to Peter Trnka for his critical interest in this text and the world at large, and to all at *Janus Unbound* whose efforts made the release of this issue possible.

## Notes

1. During his visit to Iran in early September 1978, at a moment when the “uprising” was taking shape, Foucault wrote of “an absence of fear” in Iran (2005a, 257). In his writings, he insists that, at moment like this, which he articulated as “absolutely collective will,” one will have to be “present” to encounter the materialization of “ideas” that one can’t get from reading books, as at issue was “perhaps the first great insurrection against global systems, the form of revolt that is the most modern and the most insane” (2005b, 222). Almost 3 decades after Fanon’s (2004) anthropological account of how colonial apartheid worked through division of settlers from the colonized in South Africa, Foucault observed a similar colonial condition in Tehran, the capital of Iran: the wealthy lived lives entirely inaccessible to most Iranians. Almost five decades later, in 2025, that colonizing divide remains alive in Iran (2005c, 198).

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## **Manufacturing Consent for Extermination in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Palestine and Be- yond: The Genocidal Logic of “Peace through Strength”**

Tahrir Hamdi

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, according to Adam Miyashiro (2024)), given, as Daniel McIntosh (2021) writes, summarizing Tom Lewis’s views, in his *Atomic Salvation: How the A Bomb Saved the Lives of 32 Million People*, that, “[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.”

Thus, we are immediately confronted by the question of who exactly is worthy of saving. According to this racialized thinking, nuclear power, then, should/must be concentrated in the hands of those who must always be saved (Western European countries and Israel, which, incidentally, does have nuclear weapons, but has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty)—the human, or, if you like, the more than human, those who are always morally justified in exterminating/annihilating 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 Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, the “human animals,” referring to the Palestinian population of Gaza and elsewhere inside and outside occupied Palestine. On the subject of which countries have a right to possess nuclear weapons, it is important to point out here that Iran, a non-nuclear power and a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), continues to be aggressively sanctioned by the US and Western Europe for not abiding by the strict measures imposed upon it by the racist, hegemonic Western regime.

It is indeed deeply ironic how the words “saving lives” can be used in the same phrase as the atom bomb or nuclear weapons—as Miyashiro 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.

Here we can say that 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—these are those who can be disposed of, in order to enable the continuation of the more than human race/civilization, who populate 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, this kind of complete dehumanization of the Indigenous population of Palestine has always been the case, even before the establishment of Israel in 1948. Chaim Weizmann, who became Israel’s first president, told Arthur Ruppin, the ‘head of the colonization department of the Jewish Agency’ about the Palestinians: “The British told us that there are some hundred thousand negroes [Kushim] and for those there is no value” (qtd. in Masalha 6).

In an interview with the American broadcaster ABC News in 2025, Benjamin Netanyahu pitched the “battle of good versus evil” argument to American audiences, to supposedly justify the mass extermination of whole civilian populations and maintain Western colonial planetary hegemony through genocide, including imposed starvation—that is, the intentional withholding of food and water from a civilian population—what is now being termed, euphemistically, “peace through strength,” or, the right to commit genocide (creating peace or pacifying?), through strength, or, highly destructive airpower with the capacity to instantly annihilate both people and buildings, above and beyond the destructive power used in the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. In fact, speaking to Owen Jones in June 2025, the international affairs expert, Emeritus Professor Paul Rogers from the University of Bradford, had this to say about the total devastation of Gaza by Israel, using the most lethal assemblage of American weapons:

If you look at the total tonnage of weapons dropped, mainly bombs but missiles and tens of thousands of artillery shells, you get a total of something like 70,000 tonnes of explosives. Back in the Cold War days, we used to say a kilotonne is equivalent to a thousand tonnes of TNT. We are now using explosives that are much more powerful than TNT. But if we do use that figure—[70 kilotonnes of weapons dropped across Gaza](#)—Hiroshima was about 12 kilotonnes, so we are talking about the equivalent of six Hiroshimas... but because these bombs drop individually, they are spread much more, so you get an extraordinary level of devastation. It’s certainly more than Dresden, certainly more than the other 2,000 bomber raids in the Second World War.

And all of this serves to uphold the “peace through strength” equation of the colonial, racist so-called “free world,” led by the US, with the settler colony of Israel as 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 hun-

dreds 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 essential 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 is the term “hostage” to describe any, and all, Israelis who were taken by the Palestinian Resistance on October 7, 2023. These “hostages” could very well be, and many are, Israeli soldiers, who have already killed Palestinians by sniping at them across the border. On the other hand, Palestinians are “prisoners,” already guilty by mere naming—such a “prisoner” could be a 14-year-old boy who threw a stone at an Israeli tank, or Dr. Husam Abu Safiya, a paediatrician and neonatologist, the Director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza, who was arrested by Israeli forces in December, 2024, and detained without charge in Ofer Prison. Western media, and even some Arab media outlets, deploy these terms studiously and obediently, as prescribed by the Israeli genocidal regime. American and European legacy media outlets focus their attention on the pictures and names of these more than human Israeli “hostages.” On the CNN website a few days ago, all the reader had to do was tick on an Israeli “hostage” picture and read the whole life story of that Israeli “hostage,” his/her favorite food, book, love life, etc. . . . Meanwhile, the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians genocided by the Israeli killing machine remain nameless, unidentified corpses that have already been 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.

In the above discussion, I touched upon the relationship between Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Palestine—but have yet to address the “beyond” in the title of this roundtable discussion. Can the beyond refer to the Global South? I believe it can, because populations in the Global South have long been treated as dispensable by the Western colonial hegemonic order—comprising the US, Western Europe, and Israel. These powers have already anointed themselves as the “free world,” a supposedly democratic realm in which this “free humanity” reserves the right to exterminate and annihilate those deemed less than human, at will. However, I will go one step further and say that 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, which has been live-streamed to the rest of the world on social media outlets) and discovered that the democracy in which they were numbed into believing is nothing more than a neo-colonial hegemonic genocidal order. In the spirit of “saving” the humanity that deserves saving, American congressmen, such as Randy Fine and Tim Walberg, Senator Lindsey Graham and Israeli Heritage Minister Amichay Eliyahu have all called for the nuking of Gaza (Miyashiro). According to 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 A-bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for example, is presented within the context of saving Western civilization, a myth that has deeply penetrated the Western psyche with the help of various institutions (academic and otherwise) and Western legacy media.

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? This 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 titled “Eighty Years after Hiroshima, calls to ‘Nuke Gaza’ shows how little we have learned,” Miyashiro does not see the rationality behind simply remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki’s victims without resisting this genocidal and racist way of thinking. He writes:

remembrance without resistance is hollow. To truly honour the victims of Hiroshima is to confront the political systems that treat some lives as disposable. It is 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.”**

## Biography

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.

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Rachel Waddleton



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## **HOLDING ON TO LAST YEAR'S BLOOMS WILL NOT FILL YOUR GARDEN**

there is something about when a flower dies  
vibrant and beautiful, lilacs and whites  
We try to hold onto it for all time  
fading and greyish, gravity it fights

i've tried all the tricks to make the blooms last  
time will move and take everything with it  
i cannot stop natural life's forecast  
to the present moment we must submit

but remind us of fleeting moments  
sit in the melancholy of the Earth  
part of life is to be disappointed  
the flower that dies will soon be rebirthed

do not try to hold onto blooms who wilt  
in these sacred moments, Earth's magic spilt

## **Biography**

Rachel Waddleton is a student at Memorial University, with prospects to graduate in Spring 2026 with majors in both English and Philosophy and then continue her studies in Philosophy. She has been writing creatively her whole life, and has been involved with various music events around St. John's and surrounding area for 10+ years. In the fall of 2025, she was awarded the R. S. "Jimmy" James and Marion Jean James Memorial Scholarship in English for her performance in advanced creative writing in poetry at MUN. The scholarship is awarded to a student with the highest mark in a course that promotes and enhances the study of poetry. She is extremely grateful for the opportunity to now be involved with Janus Unbound and looks forward to discovering the ways she can help contribute to the journal as Poetry Editor, grow as a writer, and connect with other creatives in the city and beyond.

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## YOU NEVER EXPECT IT

march crept upon the earth  
woken one morning to warm air  
sunshine, warm on face,  
rejuvenate  
like it's the first time.

emerging into fresh air;  
it smells like  
linens on the line  
built up from winter's  
stale closet

coming alive again,  
colour comes  
back to cheeks and chest  
this happens every year  
and yet  
always unexpected,  
like the first time he makes you cry.

give grace and understanding  
i am still growing  
like the lupins

## YOU NEVER EXPECT IT

wild, deepening roots  
they still die every year  
and come back more beautiful

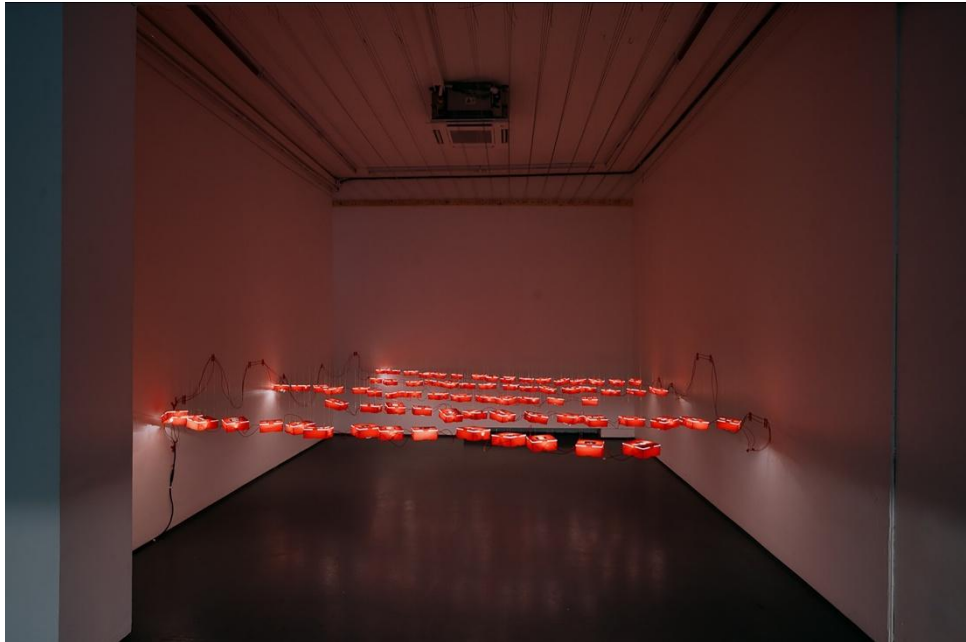
forgive me for when  
i become silent in the cold  
the lupins in March are  
but stems

### **Biography**

Rachel Waddleton is a student at Memorial University, with prospects to graduate in Spring 2026 with majors in both English and Philosophy and then continue her studies in Philosophy. She has been writing creatively her whole life, and has been involved with various music events around St. John's and surrounding area for 10+ years. In the fall of 2025, she was awarded the R. S. "Jimmy" James and Marion Jean James Memorial Scholarship in English for her performance in advanced creative writing in poetry at MUN. The scholarship is awarded to a student with the highest mark in a course that promotes and enhances the study of poetry. She is extremely grateful for the opportunity to now be involved with Janus Unbound and looks forward to discovering the ways she can help contribute to the journal as Poetry Editor, grow as a writer, and connect with other creatives in the city and beyond.

## Archiving the Absent Nation

Ayman AlAzraq



*Figure 1: The Lost Tapes of a People's Tribunal: Hanging Memories, Ayman AlAzraq*

### Introduction

Every Palestinian archive is an attempt to build an alternative homeland within memory. The archive is not merely a cabinet of documents, but a mechanism of survival that quietly resists oblivion. When we open it, we do not simply read history; we touch a pulse that has not stopped beating since the Nakba. In every preserved photograph or piece of paper lies an attempt to redefine Palestinian existence, in a world reluctant to acknowledge what it has lost. From this awareness emerged the Palestine–Norway Archive Unit, not as an institutional archive but as a bridge between memory and exile, a poetic and artistic space asking a painful, yet straightforward, question: who writes history, and who is erased from its lines? In a time when the dream has shifted from establishing a state to recovering its meaning, memory has become the new battlefield. Once, the rifle symbolized identity; today, the document replaced it.

## Archiving the Absent Nation

We live a painful paradox: we possess museums and archives preserving Palestinian history, yet we remain without a state to protect or speak for it.

It is a strange existential condition—to live more in the archive than on the land, to safeguard the past while the present is being erased before our eyes. Parts of the homeland are demolished, others are stolen or trapped behind a wall or the sea; the land itself is fragmented, as memory is fragmented, as if Palestine has ceased to be a place and become a series of pauses between two cities that never meet.

Yet the archive is not a graveyard of memory; it is a new form of resistance, giving history a human breath when geography is suffocated, turning documents into testimony of what remains of meaning when landmarks are stripped away.

Every preserved image and every recorded voice is part of another geography—one that cannot be bombed or divided. The archive becomes the body of a torn homeland, carrying its memory, when it is forgotten, and guarding its language, when it is besieged.

Here begins the fundamental question: is returning to the archive an act of resistance or an act of longing? Do we return because we seek a time that was clearer and less broken, or because we are trying to create a new project through which we reclaim our identity—not only as Palestinians, but as beings searching for meaning in this world? Is the archive an escape from reality, or the only reality possible when reality itself is denied to you? Perhaps it is both.

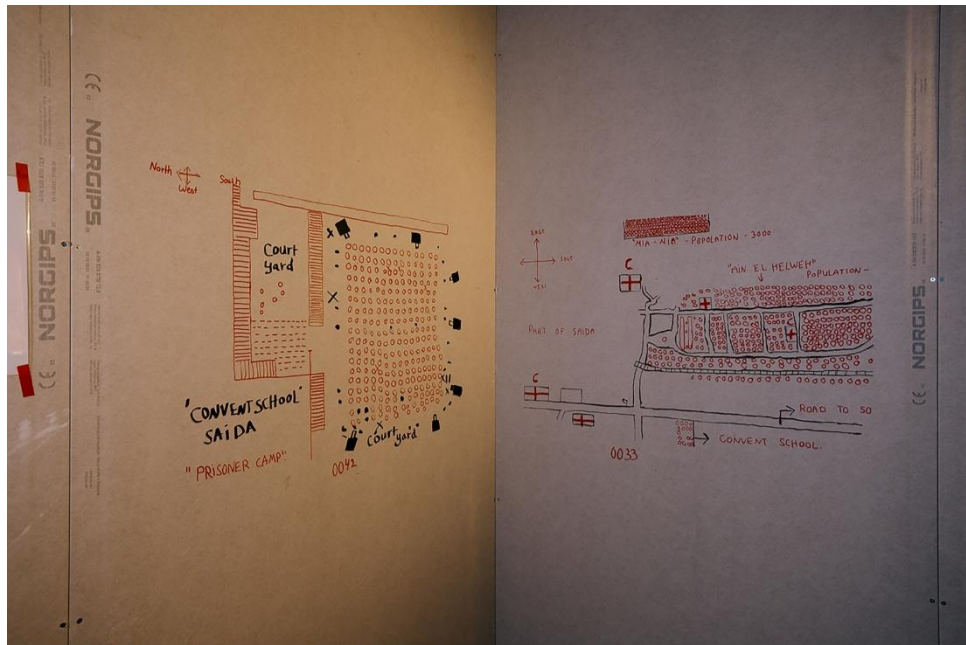


Figure 2: Map of Convent School Saida, from *The Lost Tapes of the People's Tribunal*—1982, Ayman AlAzraq

Every return to the archive is also an attempt to build the present from fragments of the past. Every inquiry into memory is, at its core, a search for a future not yet born. It is not a return to the past but a circling of time, where the past becomes material for reimagining what could be, and memory transforms, from nostalgia into a tool for thinking about the world.

The Palestinian archive is a mirror that both reveals and preserves the wound. It is not merely a system of preservation but an ethical apparatus resisting erasure and false representation. In his historic testimony on the Sabra and Shatila massacre at Oslo in 1982, Mahmoud Darwish said: “I am now both witness and victim, but until recently, my image was that of the killer. Zionism has monopolized tears and suffering to the extent that the very existence of the Palestinian as a victim has become a violation of its sacred temple.” In this passage lies the dilemma of the Palestinian condition: to be a victim forbidden to grieve, to be asked to prove innocence before being allowed to tell one’s story. Thus, the Palestinian archive becomes a tool for reclaiming the right to sorrow in a time when others decide who may suffer and who may not.

Every document recovered is an act of soft resistance, a practice against forgetfulness and the monopolization of human pain.

In 2023, I exhibited my artwork *The Lost Tapes from the People’s Tribunal—1982*, which revisited the Sabra and Shatila massacre through public sessions held in Oslo and testimonies from Norwegian doctors and nurses. Yet official cultural institutions remain silent. No one from the National Museum of Norway attended the exhibition, and no discussion was initiated. That silence was not neutrality but a continuation of violence through polite means—a form of institutional erasure where political refusal is replaced by academic silence.



Figure 3: Testimony, from *The Lost Tapes of the Peoples' Tribunal—1982*, Ayman AlAzraq

The same museum that owns a traditional Palestinian dress, yet refuses to display it, proudly exhibited works by Israeli artist Noa Eshkol, describing her as “born in Israel in 1924”—twenty-four years before Israel’s establishment. This was not a historical slip but a rewriting of history. When the text was later amended to “Palestine under British Mandate” without apology, the silence itself became a language of complicity.

The claim of neutrality is merely a form of bias. A museum that chooses silence before truth participates in the catastrophe within culture. In such cases, silence is not absence but a decision—a decision to take part in symbolic erasure.

Against this silence that seeks to freeze Palestinian memory within closed institutions, smaller and more honest spaces are born. The *Artist to Artist* initiative is one such space, where art begins from the living body, not the white cube. It is not a grand institutional project, but a living initiative grounded in direct human connection—in the bond that forms when one artist reaches out to another, from Palestine to Norway, from Gaza to Oslo, without administrative mediation or curated rhetoric. At a time when major institutions excuse their absence with “closed programs” and “exhausted budgets,” *Artist to Artist* stands as an antidote to this cold bureaucracy, creating its own conditions for collaboration—outside the politics of selection and neutrality that treat Palestinian artists as “difficult cases.” In every letter sent from Gaza, in every meeting through a small screen, art becomes a form of survival. The initiative offers no grand financial support, but something far more precious: mutual recognition, shared reflection, and the ability to work beyond the logic of restriction.

Perhaps this is the new meaning of solidarity—to create together a space that endures even when institutions close their doors, to carry memory on our shoulders, rather than in their files, to rebuild the relationship between art and humanity, rather than art and bureaucracy. In this way, for every museum that erases or contains the Palestinian narrative, artists stand—individually and collectively—to rewrite it, driven by a simple yet stubborn faith: that memory needs no entry permit, and that Palestine can be told from anywhere, even through the small screen that connects one artist to another.

Darwish’s saying: “Until recently, my image was that of the killer”—decades later, that same image continues to reappear in new forms. The Palestinian is still received as a “case” requiring explanation, a voice to be tamed before being heard. Even institutions that claim solidarity often practice this symbolic domestication—inviting the Palestinian artist to be “moderate,” to avoid disturbing the Western narrative of justice and freedom. When the artist expresses full solidarity with Gaza or speaks in anger, he is labeled radical and excluded from the very exhibitions that claim to represent him. Thus, the Palestinian artist becomes perpetually accused of his own existence, expected to justify his humanity before being allowed to speak. But art does not apologize. It is the space where the Palestinian speaks without permission, reshaping his image beyond suspicion. Every artwork is a redefinition of presence, a constant challenge to the idea that others know Palestine better than its people.

The Palestinian archive is not a single entity but a network of ongoing attempts to repair memory. Every artist or researcher working within it opens a new wound in the structure of forgetting and turns it into knowledge. At the Palestinian Museum, Curator Dr. Nadi Abu Sadaa presented her project on “The Arab Exhibition in Madate Jerusalem Before the Nakba,” a visual study reconstructing a forgotten cultural event held in Jerusalem in 1933. His work was not merely historical recovery but a revival of a moment when Palestinians were active in shaping Arab modernity before their narrative was interrupted. Through photographs, correspondence, and posters, Badwan breathed life into a time before collapse, suggesting that memory is not only what survives destruction but also the light that precedes it.

On another front, Mohanad Yaqubi works with the lost Palestinian cinema archive—looted and destroyed after the 1982 invasion of Beirut. Through his films, such as *Off Frame*, Yaqubi transforms the absence of film material into an aesthetic event in itself, reconstructing memory not from images but from their traces, from their absences, from what remains unseen. His work suggests that Palestinian cinema does not end when the reel ends; it begins when we start searching for it.

Similarly, Kamal Aljafari excavates the Israeli archive itself, using images filmed from the perspective of power and rearranging them through montage and disappearance to create what he calls “an archive breathing under surveillance.” In works like *Recollection* and *The Stranger*, absence becomes a new form of presence, and the archive a space for rewriting the image from within.



Figure 4: Untitled, from *The Lost Tapes of the People's Tribunal*—1982, Ayman AlAzaq

Though their methods differ, these practices share one question: how can art restore the pulse of history? How can we preserve what was lost without

turning it into a museum of nostalgia? These are not projects of documentation but acts of continuous writing within the body of memory—writing that never ends because it feeds on the silence it seeks to break.

In a world where geography fragments and faces are erased, memory itself has become a new form of exile. Yet within this exile, another homeland is born—one without maps or flags, whose borders are built on care, attention, and awareness. The archive, in this sense, is a temporary homeland—not because it replaces the land, but because it is the only place where we can rename ourselves. Every document preserved is a promise of return; every recorded voice is an attempt to postpone disappearance. To preserve is to believe that someone will one day read, that someone will open the archive and find us there—still speaking.

### Biography

**Ayman AlAzraq** is a filmmaker, photographer, and mixed-media artist. His short film *The Passport* has screened at the National Museum of Cinema (Turin), Cologne International Video Art Festival, and elsewhere. His work includes *Oslo Syndrome* (Autumn Exhibition, Oslo; Dubai International Film Festival; London Palestinian Film Festival), the collaborative installation WALL-1, and the documentary *Into My Lungs* (Kunstneres Hus, 2022). His mixed-media installation *The Lost Tapes of a People's Tribunal 1982* was exhibited at Fotogalleriet (2023/24). In 2023, he launched the Artist to Artist Project, a digital residency supporting Gazan artists, culminating in the exhibition *For You* at Tenthaus and Podium. He has also exhibited at Nitja Center for Contemporary Art and Rogaland Kunstsenter.

## **Face of the City and FROM THE HOLE OF A NEEDLE / 2002**

Shereen Abed

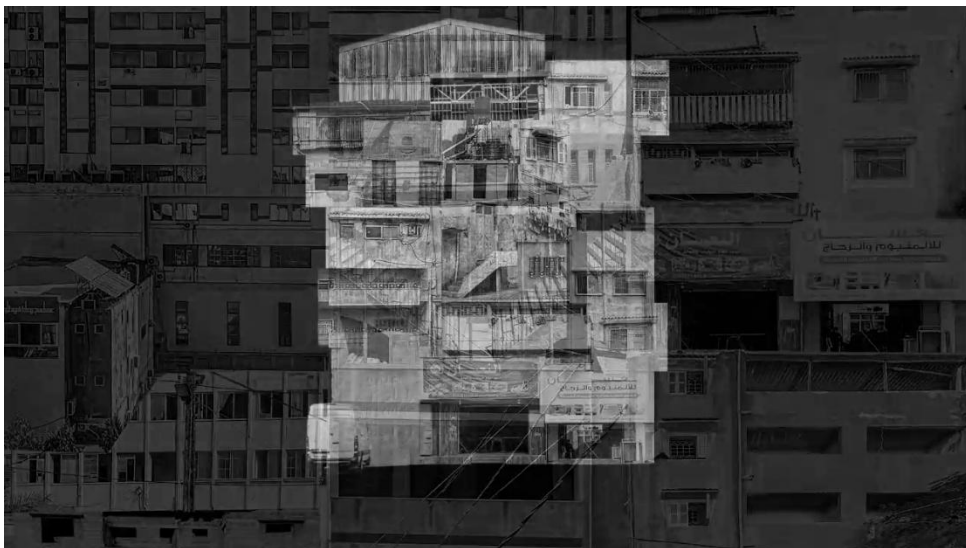


This work adopts architecture as its primary language of expression, not as a building, but as an injured body and a fractured memory under the weight of war. The architectural space here is not neutral; the collapsed walls, exposed layers, and broken ceilings transform into psychological sections, revealing what once lay hidden beneath an illusion of stability. Each architectural level appears as a stage of conflict, as if the structure erodes from within, before collapsing physically.

The composition relies on the overlap between the destroyed, tangible structure and translucent narrative drawings, where repeated faces emerge like a collective specter, appearing and disappearing within the walls. These faces do not belong to a single individual, but represent a burdened consciousness, accumulated memory, and the psychological pressure of living within a continuous state of war. Architecture becomes a vessel for suppressed voices, and silence here is not emptiness, but a heavy presence. The light entering through irregular openings does not function as salvation, but, rather, exposes the traces of destruction and reinforces the fragility of the space. There is no clear boundary between inside and outside; war has penetrated everything, and the architectural

*Face of the City and FROM THE HOLE OF THE NEEDLE*

shell has lost its capacity to protect. This exposure mirrors a similar psychological condition, where the body and memory are no longer able to shield themselves. The work's approach is based on dismantling architecture and visually reconstructing it as an emotional state, where structural details turn into signs, and cracks become narrative lines. Architecture here is not a backdrop to conflict, but the conflict itself: a space suspended between what once was, what has collapsed, and what remains trapped in memory, bearing witness to a war that does not only destroy stone, but reshapes the psyche and consciousness.





*Face of the City* is an ongoing visual and spatial project that investigates the fragility of memory within Gaza's constantly changing urban landscape. Rooted in the idea that activating images resists erasure, the project questions the past and future of place through the present, producing narrative images and large scale collages that document and reinterpret specific architectural scenes. Architecture is treated as a living archive, where form, memory, and lived experience accumulate over time. The work draws on layered materials including photo-graphic documentation, residents' testimonies, collected ambient sounds, and fragments of personal and collective memory. These elements construct a mul-ti-temporal conceptual space in which buildings appear as stratified layers of time, allowing the viewer to move between past, present, and imagined futures. Developed through close observation and documentation, the project bears witness to streets, homes, mosques, universities, workplaces, and everyday urb-an spaces—many of which have since been destroyed or concealed during the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza—leaving images as the last remaining tra-ces.

Through fragmented panoramic collages, Gaza emerges as a dense, puzzle like, urban fabric, where heritage buildings are obscured by improvised modern structures, and rooftops, alleys, signage, and construction remnants intertwine. Oscillating between realism and fiction, 'Face of the City' reveals a sociological geography shaped by unpredictability and spatial encroachment. Ultimately, the project is not about concrete, alone, but about lives, memories, and belonging, asserting remembrance as an act of resistance against disappearance.





*FROM THE HOLE OF A NEEDLE /2022* is a personal cinematic and spatial project with a collective resonance, emerging from an inability to pinpoint a clear beginning—neither a first moment of awareness nor a single origin of the story. Instead, it unfolds as an accumulation of scenes that have relentlessly shaped daily life in Gaza City. These scenes, suspended between satire and harsh realism, expose social conditions that have persisted and repeated for more than fifteen years, becoming inseparable from the city’s physical and psychological reality. The work transforms individual memories of suffering into a shared archive, where the public space becomes a stage for blocked paths, deferred wishes, suspended lives, and survival stretched across time.

The project reconstructs fragments of Gaza’s urban environment through digitization, 3D modeling, and virtual reality, creating immersive environments that allow the viewer to move sensorially within these spaces. Through VR, soundscapes, material textures, and spatial sequences, the viewer is placed inside the scene (rather than positioned as an external observer), experiencing proximity to the architecture, the atmosphere, and the emotional weight embedded within it. These virtual environments continue to expand conceptually, mirroring the ongoing blockade and its impact on the natural and built landscape. The Needle’s Hole thus becomes an attempt to imagine how the present scene exists and persists—an embodied encounter with a city where space, memory, sound, and human presence converge into a shared, enduring convention.

## Biography

**Shereen Abdel-Karim Hassanein**, born in Gaza City (1996), is an architect and visual artist. She holds a bachelor’s degree in architecture from the Islamic University of Gaza- IUG. Years ago, I began fusing architecture with art. Now

I am active in visual arts. My career in the arts started by self-learning and many experiences in the field of architecture and arts inside my studio and through participation in some local exhibitions. My recent studies relied on research of the process of space production and spatial representation to express some societal issues, using architectural abstractions to create a dialogue between artwork and conceptual space, and to represent daily stories and events. I focus on many methods and tools in my artistic practice, such as painting, sculpture, installation arts, 3D spatial rendering, in addition to producing artistic videos. My work presents the city and outer space in general as a field of artistic work and interaction, not from a formal, aesthetic or decorative perspective, but as a specific field of questioning and criticizing our society, customs and ideas with a new proposal and vision. I seek to study the state of place with the human dimension and to interact with the constructions and materials in the environment that I work on through drawing or spatial embodiment to represent different realities, imagined places with real memories and stories, and blur the line between "truth" and realistic simulation through the use of virtual reality.

**Solo exhibitions:** *From a needle hole*, Shababek Contemplinkages 2022. **Group exhibitions:** *The Palestine Animated* and *For you*, Oslo 2025; *TALENT LATENT SCAN*, Tarragona 2024; *"S" Festival (/si:n/) of Video Art and Performance*, Paris; *I will write our will above the clouds*, Paris, London, Berlin 2024; *The Face of the City* Reina Sofia 2024; *Contemporary Art*, NICOLAS COMBARRO 2023; *Gaza after 15 years*, International Committee of the Red Cross 2022; Art Residency Exhibition /2022/ Shababek Contemplinkages; *Art in the Public Space*, Professional Windows 2021.

<https://www.behance.net/shereenhasanin96>.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCg1SsSolkXi1Bb5I2gkHdnA>.



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## **Review of *Israel on the Brink: And the Eight Revolutions that Could Lead to Decolonization and Coexistence* by Ilan Pappé**

Richard Curtis

Pappé, Ilan. *Israel on the Brink: And the Eight Revolutions That Could Lead to Decolonization and Coexistence*. (Boston: Beacon Press), 216 pages.

This is an unusual book. It is both pessimistic and hopeful. The details of the colonial violence are not as widely known as they should be, and those details do not, on their own, generate much reason for optimism. And, the book was written to offer a vision of a better future. It is fiction and non-fiction. It is about the past and the future. Ilan Pappé is a widely respected historian and associate editor of this journal. The book summarizes the relevant history in a highly readable way, and it ends with an imagined diary about the future that could be. Elements of it are utopian, yet detailed. The changes Pappé sees as possible, especially projected out to 2048, have an idealistic feel, though the on the ground specifics, in the diary, are compelling. Reading the book fills one with despair and hope. The history has so much suffering and so much anti-Arab racism that it is hard to see any way out as possible, and yet, by the end, one has a feeling that this really could work.

*Israel on the Brink* stays grounded in reality—it is written by a historian. If—and it's a big if—the eight mini revolutions Pappé discusses were to transpire, one can see how Israel and Palestine could be transformed. Palestine is a place of incredible natural and human resource. Pappé sees the latter as especially vital and potentially transformative. The idea to keep in mind is that almost no one thought South Africa could be transformed in the time frame in which Apartheid, there, was ended. I was involved with the Shanty Town that was constructed on the campus of the University of Colorado, Boulder, at that time. There was a sense that change was in the air and we were participating in that in our own small way. But I don't think anyone involved thought Apartheid there would end as soon as it did.

Still, *Israel on the Brink*? He can't be serious? But he is. For the purposes of seeing a possible transition we are reminded the current situation has a beginning in 1967: "The entirety of historical Palestine was now under Israeli control, as were more than one and a half million Palestinians" (5). Obviously, the history is much longer, but it was not until 1967 that Israel was seen formally as an occupying power.

Pappé is a well-known advocate of the Single-State Solution. The political reality Israel has created is a single state rendering the Two-State Solution a fantastical option. Pappé (13) quotes surveys from December 2022 that show only about a third of Palestinians and about a third of Israelis favor a Two-State Solution.

Pappé identifies eight cracks in Israel's existence. First, the ongoing and deepening friction between religious and secular Jews in Israel. Second, BDS: "But it seems only a matter of time before the actions of [global] civil society in boycotting Israeli products and pushing their institutions to divest from Israel will compel governments to adopt sanctions on Israel" (23). In a sign of how fast this is happening, consider two recent examples. First, there is this report from Israel:

In February 2025, the Association of University Heads in Israel released a report warning of a dramatic increase in boycott activity, documenting a 66% rise in 'incidents'—including suspended partnerships, canceled conferences, rescinded invitations, grant refusals, and journal editors declining to publish Israeli scholarship—between October 2024 and February 2025 compared with the previous year, with US cases doubling. (Rosen, 92)

And, on December 4, 2025: "Public broadcasters in Ireland, Slovenia, the Netherlands and Spain said ... they will boycott the 2026 Eurovision Song Contest, after the European Broadcasting Union refused to hold a vote on whether to exclude Israel" (Democracy Now!).

The third crack is that more and more Jews around the world, but especially in the US, are growing critical of, or out-right rejecting, Zionism, causing an unprecedented generational divide. Fourth, Israel's economic situation is becoming desperate. The gap between rich and poor is growing, as is long-term unemployment; social mobility is down and over 20% of Israelis live in poverty (30). In 2024, the poverty rate in the US was 10.6%, for perspective (USA-Facts.org). Fifth, incompetent military: "On social media, you might have encountered the joke that the IDF is unused to fighting anyone who actually fights back" (31). The point is, "[t]hey are not trained for war but for policing, while the air force is treated as Israel's main offensive power" (31). Sixth, Israel has politicized its civil service, leading to corruption and a basic failure of the state to do what states normally do (from infrastructure to emergency planning and military planning). Seventh, the Palestinians are a generally young population, full of energy and ideas, which suggests to Pappé that a new movement is possible. But we are cautioned, "[c]ollapse is not always followed by a better alternative" (35). Eighth, and finally, the environmental conditions have been exacerbated by the failure of the state, which can only add to the other social frictions.

*Israel is on the Brink*. The other side is what is possible.

The next section of the book is an extended discussion of the past and the possibilities for Palestinian resistance. There are problem areas and reasons for optimism. Palestinian factions do not organize together. The various attempts

at peace have been a failure. The Palestinian Authority [PA] functions as an advocate of Apartheid and not the people. And yet, the factions may be brought together, the PA can be replaced (Pappé is pessimistic about reforming it), there are historical and newer think tanks working on various ideas for the future, there is a vibrant youth movement, and an astounding history of resistance.

Pappé discusses ways in which justice might be pursued. Here the historian reminds us that this is not a new idea and processes need not be invented from scratch. There have been attempts at Transitional Justice with varying degrees of success around the world in recent history, in South Africa, for example. Victims need to feel heard and respected, perpetrators must be held to account, and, somehow, there must be admission of crimes and acceptance of apologies to be able to move forward (65). More specifically, Pappé mentions this process must include “the three A’s.” First, Acknowledgement. The major one, here, is ending Nakba denial in Israel and acknowledging that it is, at present, ongoing. Second, Accountability. Accountability can come in the form of financial and material support for the absorption of returning refugees, reconstructing urban spaces, offering compensation for the victims and survivors, and investing in other restorative work. Third, Acceptance. Here, Pappé has in mind Palestinians accepting large numbers of Jews amongst them. This can only happen alongside something like a Truth Commission. And, curiously, there is some history, here, from which Pappé gleans some optimism. There are neighborhoods where Palestinians and Jews live alongside each other. Pappé sees this real-world experience, of living with and knowing The Other, as providing a helpful model of co-existence.

“The Way Forward,” as this section is called, also includes discussion of the Right of Return, and the future of settlements. Both would seem to be massive problems, admitting of no easy solutions. And while the solutions Pappé discusses are not easy, they turn out to be much easier than one might first assume. This comes out in the details, of what settlement was built on or near what village. And, it turns out, that, while some villages have been totally destroyed and covered over, others can be revived. Settlements would have to be reimagined and re-worked. Settlers would have to move. And, we are reminded, Israel has experience with this from its pull back from Gaza. What seem insurmountable obstacles in the popular press, turn out to be hurdles to overcome.

Reconnecting Palestine to its historical ties in the area of the Mashreq, the eastern Mediterranean, is an unexpected and fascinating detail. Palestine had a long history with the area, one that has been fractured and must be repaired for economic development to really take off. The Zionists wanted to recreate the look and feel of Europe and ignore this history. Pappé is especially critical of the effort to plant pine trees in a climate where they do not belong and now have become vulnerable to fire. Peppered throughout this discussion are many curious details of the ways in which Palestine is culturally Arabic but much broader than that because of Ottoman history.

One of the complicated factors is the debate over what is Judaism and what are Jews. To liberal Judaism (such as members of the Reform Movement), Judaism is a religion. Jews are those people who practice the Jewish religion. Jews

are not a culture (Jews come from many cultures), not a people (Jews come from many peoples around the world), not a civilization (again, many of them, not one), nor an ethnic group (though Ashkenazi Jews do have a shared history that makes them an ethnic group). The larger point here is that Judaism is a global religion, and, culturally, people feel attached to different elements of Jewish cultural history around the world. This contradicts the Zionist claim that Jews are a single people in need of a homeland (how the Reform Movement lived with this contradiction is a curious bit of history on its own and beyond our scope here). And it leaves Pappé optimistic about developing non-Zionist and non-religious Jewish identities.

The future Israel/Palestine will have a place for Jews as a religious group, as it will have a place for Muslims as a religious group, alongside Druze, Bedouin, and Christians. It will be a place where Jewish cultural variety can flourish. And importantly, a place where Palestinians are Arabs once more. The undoing of anti-Arab bigotry is a major challenge for the future, we are reminded at various places in the text.

The last chapter of *Israel is on the Brink* is a work of fiction. The last nonfiction chapter is called “Can We Redefine Politics?” It left me wondering about the role of oil. Pappé doesn’t mention this, but if in the next couple of decades, the world did, meaningfully, move beyond oil, that would presumably make the oil states in the Middle East largely irrelevant. In that situation, would the US empire need the “unsinkable aircraft carrier” called Israel? The larger point of this chapter is the need for socialism, even while Pappé presumes the value of democracy and liberalism (in the form of social liberalism). This leads him to a curious place, where he affirms the Left as a solution, but then he mentions an embarrassingly racist policy position the French Communist Party [CPF] had in 1981(145) and implies that nothing has changed (146). But, in fact, the CPF repudiated those policies, starting as early as 1987 (see Parsons). I also found Pappé’s reliance on a book called *Wrong Turnings* unhelpful, as it conflates Liberal and Left (see Goldsmith).

The last line of the book, in the final, utopic fictional chapter, is the last line of an imagined diary, written between 2027 and 2048, and it reads, “May the next year be the first boring year in the history of Palestine” (182). The inverse of the famous Chinese proverb or curse, “May you live in interesting times.” It made me think of the Pesach Seder and its “Next year in Jerusalem,” to which we could add, “for the first time without soldiers in the streets.” It is a glorious vision. What sells it is the details, however imaginary they may be. Pappé offers us a nearly year by year account, written by an imagined academic, and at times political insider, of the way this change could unfold. This future starts with a fourth Lebanon War in 2027. Then comes a reformed and renewed PLO, many negotiations, and a fifth *Intifada* in 2031. The US elects leadership critical of the Apartheid system, followed by the British, both after 2032. There is a Palestinian revolution in 2040, followed by the formation of a Restorative Justice Committee, a renamed National Assembly, and more. I think, because it is so specific in these imagined details, the account has a feeling of reality to it. I suppose this is true of any good work of imagined futurism. Even in the imagined

future, it seems the US plays the vital role. Once support for Zionism collapses in the US, change is really possible.

Pappé reminds us, over and over, that change is not necessarily for the good. For good change, people will have to organize, so that 2049 may, actually, turn out to be the most boring year in Palestinian history. *Insha' Allab / Im yirtzeb Hashem.*

## Biography

Dr. **Richard Curtis** is a retired Philosophy instructor from the Seattle area. His research focuses on the nature of religion as an evolved human phenomenon.

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Errata *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies* 4.2

- p. 21 Change “(Barari Yacoub)” to “(Barari and Yacoub)”
- p. 22 Change “(Barari Yacoub)” to “(Barari and Yacoub)”
- p. 22 Change “(Awwad Toyama)” to “(Awwad and Toyama)”
- p. 67 Change “Referenc” to “References”
- p. 141 Change “bet ter” to “better”
- p. 144 Change “Vulnerability in Resistance” to “*Vulnerability in Resistance*”

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