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Reaching Across No-Man's-Land The Israeli/Palestinian Conflict in Yuli Cohen-Gerstel's Film, My Terrorist

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Abstract: Predictably, Yuli Cohen-Gerstel's film *My Terrorist* was met with an uproar when it was screened on Israeli television (2002). The "bad name" Gerstel is accused of giving her country is not because she documents what the country does but because she wonders what it might do differently. Though such criticisms are harsh, they identify the dilemma Gerstel herself feels—the urgent need to find a collective way out of the self-destructive cycle of revenge that engulfs Israelis and Palestinians alike. Judging by the strategy Israel has been pursuing towards the Palestinians for many years now, the vehemence of her critics has to do with how they understand the dictates of their own survival instinct. The contentious issue is whether strongarm politics or dialogue are the way to prevent victimization on both sides. The difference between their view and hers devolves on the fact that she, unlike them, dared to trust in the human spirit. She had the courage to allow *My Terrorist* to "go into the self and expand out into the world," as Gloria Anzaldúa puts it.

Including an essay on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict as part of a commemorative occasion that honors the life work of Gloria Anzaldúa may seem an unlikely prospect at first glance as Anzaldúa's writing is so closely associated with the southern reaches of the United States' demarcation lines. But of course her work is hardly that local, that provincial or solipsistic. The awareness that went into her exploration of Mexican-American "borderlands" and her reflection on "the new mestiza" responds to a range of subaltern experiences that are global in

scope. To register this fact is to place her voice within a wider community of discourses regarding dispossession and liberation. This observation would be reason enough to frame the following discussion in an invocation of her work, except that in this instance my doing is re-enforced by a precedent.

Some ten years ago I also turned to Anzaldúa by way of introducing a Palestinian film at a film studies colloquium sponsored by Tel Aviv University. Titled "Blurred Boundaries at the End of the Millennium,"

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this colloquium focused on film theory. The "boundaries" under discussion were audio-visual, linguistic, structural, and philosophical. At issue were the discursive practices that constitute film "language" and signification. In the Israeli context, however, to me those "blurred boundaries" suggested politics as well as rhetoric. The words invoked a territorial as well as a discursive no-man's-land, a literal as well as symbolic space of encounter and conflict, much as Anzaldúa defines it. The situation seemed to call for a presentation that bridges those notions of boundaries—geopolitical and aesthetic-so as to explore the range of meanings lodged in the colloquium's title and, most importantly, in the colloquium's social and political context.

The two primary texts in which I anchored that discussion were a documentary film about the Japanese-American internment during the Second World War and a video concerning the Palestinian nakba ("catastrophe," the loss of homelands in 1947/48). Experimental in form, feminist in orientation, liberationist in sympathies, each work focuses on a collective trauma of dislocation and repression that places it in the literal and figurative territory of Anzaldúa's "borderlands." Though in each case highly crafted discursive practices call attention to the poetics of documentary, the main task of this choice of primary texts was to bring out into the open the colloquium's repressed Other—the actual, not just theoretical, meaning of liminality as it occurs in the social, political, and personal domain. At issue were the costs of the human strife that occurs when borderlands, borders, and boundaries become places of violent encounter.

Citing Anzaldúa at the start of my presentation, and linking a Palestinian film to a Japanese-American one so as to assert global interconnections, helped me introduce the volatile topic of Israeli/Palestinian "borderlands." This was a helpful strategy in Tel Aviv, where a bluntly frontal pre-

sentation can prove controversial. But the point it makes is important under any circumstances. Raising the sights beyond local anxieties and obsessions, the wisdom and luminous humanity of Anzaldúa's perspective tap our capacity for mindful empathy for the Other. Addressed to an Israeli audience, her understanding of transnational social developments, coupled with her intimacy with the raw anguish of those who inhabit the fringes of social visibility, speaks also to the lot of Israel's most immediate Others—local and exiled Palestinians. Addressed to Northamericans who are less directly impacted by the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the point still stands. At issue is, broadly, the potential of transnational thinking to loosen the claims of over-determined nationalist frameworks. The present discussion of yet another Israeli documentary, Yuli Cohen Gerstel's My Terrorist (2002) is offered in that spirit.

This film is a powerful autobiographical narrative saturated with evidentiary materials, significant episodes, and substantive conversations. It is a personal film, narrated in the first person and focused on the director's wounding in a terrorist attack. That attack serves here as a vehicle for individual and national self-interrogation. The personal experience becomes, in this sense, the container of collective reflection about national agendas. The pivotal moment of Gerstel's wounding occurred in a 1978 terrorist attack in London, while she was a flight attendant for Israel's El Al airlines. Another attendant was killed in that attack, as was one of the assailants, a Palestinian. The other assailant, Fahed Mihyi, an Iragi national, was captured and sentenced to life in prison.

The film starts with the attack and Gerstel's return to Israel, arm bandaged, to be embraced on the tarmac by her family. Documented here are media reports about the attack and the director's Hebrew accented voice-over recounting that event. From here on the film traces her inward journey

from trauma, chronic fear, anger, and survivor's guilt to her growing need to understand why Fahed chose to join in such an attack. The film follows Gerstel over time, pausing to note her privileged childhood as a belonging to one of Israel's founding families and her military service as an officer in the Air Force. (Significantly, she served during Israel's spectacular hostage rescue mission to Antebe, Uganda—a moment of shining national pride—and under her uncle, Ezer Weitzman, legendary head of the Israeli Air Force.). The film contrasts those early years, when she was part of the country's elite, with the disaffection that followed. Thirteen years after her original testimony against Fahed, she initiated a correspondence with him, traveled to meet him at his prison in England, and eventually wrote his parole board to facilitate his release. This disaffection marks her own political development, including her growing unease regarding Israel's national narrative and her concomitant move towards peace activism and work on Fahed's behalf.

Gerstel is anything but starry eyed, naïve, or sentimental about conciliation and peace. As she notes on the soundtrack (with accompanying media images), Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 proved an important moment of political awakening for her. Its excess belied the national narrative on which she grew up, namely that Israel's wars are defensive, necessary for the people's survival in face of an enemy set to annihilate them. In the course of that war. Israel's sanctioning of the massacres at the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila stuns her. (Israel left the Palestinian population exposed to raging violence from right wing Lebanese falangist militias.) Her subsequent work as a human rights observer in the occupied territories revealed to her first hand the misery and degradation the occupation inflicts on her Palestinian neighbors. Meanwhile, as suicide bombings multiply inside Israel, her children learn in school, as a matter of course, how to identify bombs

and how to act if a suspicious person gets on the bus. She keeps the children at home, forbidding them to go to public places for eight months, with her camera recording their frustration. When she stages with other peace activists a South-African style "Truth and Reconciliation" hearing in a popular town square in the center of Tel Aviv, we see her facing foul-mouthed abuse from by-passing men. We also learn that she will have to be on special medication all her life. Towards the end of the film, as Gerstel is about to send Fahed's parole board a final letter supporting his release, we see her, horrified, witnessing the live broadcast of the 9/11 attacks on New York's World Trade Center, wondering yet again whether supporting Fahed is the right thing, morally and politically.

To those unfamiliar with Israeli cinema, this narrative may seem a rarity and as a personal account it is, indeed, both atypical and controversial. However, as a cinematic discourse about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict My Terrorist fits in with a rapidly growing body of films and scholarship developing on both sides of the Israeli and Palestinian divide. Each side is hungry for visibility and each craves to be understood on its own terms. Progressive, peace-oriented Israeli films are being made in evergrowing numbers. (For various reasons, including religion, the Israeli Right has not been active in this medium.) Though, unlike feature length fiction films, public screenings of these documentaries occurs mainly at festivals, cinematheques, and academic settings, they are publicly funded and screened with some regularity on a range of government and public television channels.² While Palestinian film production is not enjoying equivalent support, its films (at times made with Israeli collaboration and funding) have also been gaining critical acclaim and increasing visibility in Israel, Europe, and the United States. Focusing on the *nakba*, the occupation, and questions of identity and belonging, these fiction and documentary films are primarily liberationist in purpose.³

As the above indicates, the social needs that give rise to such films are not symmetrical. For Palestinians, the existential burden is their place as denizens of Anzaldúa's borderlands, literally and metaphorically. Their life is, as she puts it, an open wound, "una herida abierta where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again." For Israelis, the existential burden concerns the fact that such borderlands are of their own making; the space of radical non-belonging is one they themselves demarcated to enforce states of exile and decimation. "Borders," Anzaldúa notes, "are set up...to distinguish us from them." A border "is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary." It is a site of abjection, a place that insists on a separateness that denies some people their very humanity. "The prohibited and the forbidden are its inhabitants. Los Atravesados live here: the squinteyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half breed, the half dead." Borderlands are, then, the dumping ground for all that threatens a society's image of itself as wholesome, stable, and capable.

In passages such as the one quoted above, facts and feeling meet. The sensory images are powerful—the wounds that won't heal, the lesions that grate against one another, the scabs that hemorrhage...Intrusive Spanish words challenges the implied Northamerican reader; they displace the hegemonic English-speaking voice, situating the normally unheard voice of the Latino Other as a normative presence. (Significantly, the reader is challenged but not disabled. The text provides translations and contextual clarification that facilitate the decoding.) Most obviously, the inventory of suffering that unfolds here builds up a distressing momentum as it melds biological and behavioral states considered socially diseased or deviant and therefore quarantined in those borderlands. Discursive form, then, combines with substance to make meaning. Crossing the boundaries of language, grammar, and normative subject matter, Anzaldúa takes us into the no-man's zone of not belonging. The formation of her discourse, itself, delineates a social-political world made up of extended communities of suffering, but it also affirms their capacity for regeneration. Drawing audiences towards a shared experience, it opens up a space for receptiveness to one's own *atravesados*, however they are defined.

It is this space that My Terrorist, together with a range of other Israeli and Palestinian films, inhabits. Focusing on one woman's experience as a terror attack victim, and on her relationship with one particular atravesado—"her" terrorist—it pries loose interrelated concerns regarding the impact of such massively gratuitous violence, the politics of exclusion and repression that give rise to it, the nature and consequences of the Zionist project, and the meaning of patriotism. Most importantly, the film questions the apparent necessity for enmity between Palestinians and Israeli Jews and the cycle of revenge and hate that proceeds from that enmity. In critiquing one of the nation's axiomatic orthodoxies—the solipsistic investment in one's own victimization, in one's own imperatives of survival and, hence, blindness to others'-the film participates in a larger Israeli (and Jewish) debate about the costs of survival. Tucked into this debate are questions about measures of suffering, the efficacy of retribution, the imperative of communal cohesion, and the meaning of personal and collective dignity. Included here are also concerns about the world the next generation is growing into (including the director's own daughters!) and about ways Israel's traumatic experience of terrorism participates in related global developments that extend to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 and beyond them.

In opening up these sensitive questions My Terrorist aligns itself with other Israeli documentaries that focus on Israel's own atravesados. Taken in aggregate, these films protest the occupation of Palestinian lands (beyond the 1967 "green line" border) and the separation wall being built to defend Israel but also destroy adjacent Palestinian land ownership. They document the destruction of Palestinian homes and the uprooting of olive groves, they question human rights abuses, worry about intra-Israeli ethnic inequalities, critique nationalism and militarism, and interrogate constructions of class, gender, sexuality, religion, and "color" (or "race"). As a group, this body of films is a cultural voice of Israeli activists and liberals striving to reconfigure the meaning of "borderlands" and human rights both within the country and beyond it.

In this connection it is important to remember that all cultural voices, including the documentary genre, are discursive artifacts. Just as Anzaldúa's prose exceeds the requirements of plain reportage, the documentary genre does not simply "show us life." It does not simply document the way things "really are." Though documentary films use actuality as their raw material and therefore derive their authority from their privileged relation to that actuality, ultimately they are only constructed re-presentations. Images are selected, cropped, framed, or angled. They are distanced or drawn near, sutured seamlessly or edited with obtrusive disruption. They are inflected by lenses, filters, and colors; captured by gliding, a state-of-the-art camera, from a stationary tripod, or by a small hand-held machine; overlaid with music, voice-overs, and ambient sounds. So, for example, the fleeting intrusion of Gerstel's husband into a few frames as a cropped body segment or as a brief voice-off signals his minimal role in this film. The film is not about him or the marriage. In contrast, footage of her painting a banister at home or of her daughters at a dance recital is intentional even if digressive. The images are well framed and functional, providing the film with tropes of future hope and speaking to its ongoing concern about their fulfillment.

Given the documentary genre's emphasis on its "truth effect," recognition of such casting of meanings is important precisely because the genre aims to obscure it. More often than not, the questions it raises concern bias and honesty: Was something important left out? Were certain facts distorted? Does a certain informant lie? Did things really look as depicted? Justified though such questions are, they worry about factual evidence, not the medium's essential and inevitable remove from actuality. At issue in such questions are the "truth claims" of documentary, rooted in our inclination to accept uncritically the products of the photographic apparatus.⁶ The "talking heads," the eye-witness reports, the inclusion of written and photo documents, the records of location and objects, the dates, the statistics, the manipulation of the sound-track, the splicing of news reportage and other external footage, and much more all strive to create the semblance of reality we have learned to accept as reality. Even the by now redundant use of black and white film stock as a gesture of authenticity rooted in the "cottage industry" origin of the genre, is a poetic device.

Thus, though any discussion of human rights, borderlands, and applied social theory necessarily makes factual knowledge a paramount commitment, the conditions of its reporting are implicated in doubt. As viewers, we find ourselves torn between these contradictory states of cognition (factual claims versus discursive ones), whether we know it or not; and yet, uncomfortable though it is, we must resist the seduction of the documentary genre's "truth claims." After all, they are only "claims." Assuming we agree that knowledge is paramount, we still need to think carefully not

only about *what* we know but about *how* we get to know it. "Poetics," after all, transform substance. Aspiring to the sublime, they turn documentary films into something other, perhaps greater, than a mere record of facts. They create their own "truth"—a truth of feeling born from praxis

That a rhetorical, "poetic" inflection is inevitable is evident across the spectrum of Israeli and Palestinian documentaries. Some, especially Israeli ones, are intensely personal accounts, often delivered in the first person. My Terrorist fits in with this group, as do films by Michal Aviad, Dan Katzir, and others. Even when a director suppresses the human perspective emotions seethe. This is evident in Amos Gitai's "Bayit" ("House," a political "biography" of a house through several generation of owners), Michelle Biton's Mur ("Wall," which records segments of the separation wall, standing or being built), or the mockconfessionals of Avi Mugrabi. Similarly, in Palestinian Hani Abu Asad's Ford Transit passion seeps through its episodic structure and the ironic dialectic it sets up between evidentiary documentation and "planted" testimony. Like Gitai's, Biton's, and Mugrabi's films, this work is restrained, skeptical about humanism. A more bitter articulation of such hobbling can be seen in Emily Jacir's video, Crossing Surda, (a record of going to and from work) (2003), filmed surreptitiously by a camera hidden in a hand-held bag as she crossed a checkpoint on foot. Lasting some 15 minutes, this video merely records what it can capture through a small opening in the bag-mostly feet, asphalt, and the sound of shoes crunching, interminably it seems, on asphalt or gravel.

First-person documentaries such as *My Terrorist* contrast with this minimalist work precisely because first-person accounts allow great latitude to the personal voice. *My Terrorist* does include substantial documentary materials—archival footage, media reports, family records, and the like—

materials that have become the hallmark of compilation documentaries. Such materials insist on their function as testimonials to truth; their task is to verify authorial claims. Further, their function within the compilation structure is to dramatize the construction of knowledge as a shared undertaking that draws viewers into the process of making sense of the assemblage. And yet, at the same time, the first-person voice cannot help but call attention to its subjectivity. Unlike the impersonal "voice of God" device so popular in earlier documentaries, where the voice-over emanates from sources unknown, first person accounts locate the commentary in an identifiable person and, thus, in a recognizable subjectivity. It is a device appropriate for conveying Gerstel's moral and political journey and for setting a tone of empathetic receptivity towards that story.

This tone is important, given the film's controversial topic. The question it raises most explicitly is, Can one forgive one's attacker? All other questions fan out from this one. It is the key question raised to Gerstel early on in the film, in footage from the widely viewed television talk show Po Politica, known for its argumentative roundtable exchanges on controversial topics. On this occasion the needling moderator (Dan Margalit) paired her with a grieving mother, Yaffa Elharrar, who had lost her daughter to a terrorist attack. Later on, when she travels for another meeting with Elharrar, Elharrar asks this question again. On both occasions Gerstel's answer is a firm "yes," despite substantial public censure. She does not like her assailant, she explains. She has no positive feelings for him, but she can forgive him.

The harder question remains implicit: Are there times when one should reject the values embodied in one's family and community, the values that animate the collective "I"? Much of the film struggles with this question, and though Gerstel never answers it directly her deeds say "yes." For-

giveness is easy; it is a personal choice. Loyalty, however, is not a private matter; there is always the other side that can be hurt by one's choices. Whatever the moral grounds for turning one's back on the collective body, such action is experienced as a betrayal, often by both sides. The film's first person account allows this film to pry loose these questions in the context of explicit subjectivity. At issue are personal struggles and personal answers, though clearly they are posed as topics for reflection by viewers. Probing the horrific impact of terrorism on its victims, the film nonetheless foregrounds also the conditions that unleash it—the political context out of which it erupts and the needs it articulates.

Especially since Israel's acquisition of new Palestinian territories in the war of 1967, such a double perspective finds itself entangled in a reconsideration of Zionism and patriotism, and Gerstel's subsequent film, Zion My Love (2004) goes further in that direction. Here the director's relation to Fahed and the occupation is the primary focus; her uneasy relation to Zionism remains implicit and unresolved. Indeed, it is at such uncertain moment that the allusions and tropes of poetic narration assist her. In one sequence, for example, we see Gerstel's family and friends on a trip, gazing at an open expanse of wilderness while lyrical music, unmistakably coded as "Israeli," plays on the soundtrack. This is over-determined footage, eliciting nostalgia for a simpler, more naïve era, when myths seemed true and ideals were not contested. The hilly panorama it records is bare, elemental. Deforested, unpopulated, it invokes the fantasy of a virgin land awaiting "redemption." It is a sequence that taps Israelis' reflex responses to Zionist cultural codes, where both the tiyul (hike) as a ritual of land reclamation and the songs of Moledet (birth-land) serve as a medium for nationalist inspiration that affirms the "rightness" of land ownership.⁸

A similar mix of yearning and ques-

tioning is also lodged in another sequence—one that addresses Gerstel's dream of becoming an officer, which she was by 1974. Spliced into the film is archival footage of female officers smartly parading during Israel's Independence Day parade, keeping pace with a song closely associated with the 1948 war (Israel's "good" war of Independence) and the period of optimism and nation building that followed it. The song ("Hayom Akhot...") is well known. It is a man's marching song addressing a woman at the home front. As it sings of a necessary absence and hints at an unknown beyond, it calls forth the spirit of courage, optimism, and collective sacrifice that characterized the war era of the state's founding. Ironically, this familiar footage (it has been recycled many times) acquires complexity because its visuals empower women, albeit within a highly militarized context, while its lyrics render them passive. Its role in the film is to account for Gerstel's wish to become an officer, but it also fulfills an iconic function in its invocation of an earlier, supposedly purer and better, period in Israel's military history.

Several other moments highlight the imperatives of belonging. One particularly compelling sequence has the camera "travelling" through the neighborhood in which Gerstel grew up, Tzahala—a suburb populated by Israel's top military leaders, where each street is named for a Biblical commander. As the camera travels along Israel Defense forces Street. Gerstel's voice-over identifies the houses flanking her parents': Moshe Dayan's home, Yitzhak Rabin's, Ariel Sharon's, and her charismatic uncle's, Ezer Weitzman, who later became President of Israel. The gardens are lovely, welltended, watered. The list of neighbors is the 'who is who" of Israel's birth in fire. It shares with Anzaldúa's inventory of the los atravesados the rhetorical force of an accumulating mass, except that, this time, in stark contrast, it registers well being—the well being that emanates from Israel's adulation of military might. That Gerstel also includes in the film documentation of her great-great grandfather's immigration from Algeria to Palestine some 150 years earlier, before even the first *aliah* wave of European immigrants, makes the political path the film documents her taking all the more powerful. The point in all this is not to boast about lineage—"a tribe," one critic calls it⁹—but to register the conviction she needed to defy such formative influences on her identity.

This struggle to put aside the claims of the "tribe" gets registered in the film's commitment to plain talk. Its low production values and the sense it creates that it is a first film foreground the struggle of production and, thus, embody also Gerstel's struggle to give language to the inchoate emotions and aspirations that animate the film's core. This struggle is accentuated by the fact that My Terrorist is a compilation documentary that uses heterogeneous footage derives from newscasts an a range of other public sources as well as interviews and home movies. While the effect is rough, not sleek, this treatment foregrounds exploration. The explicit visibility of the process of piecing the film from its diverse segments stresses the process of composing and, so, produces a meta-narrative about the quest for understanding that is the director's most compelling investment. As Stewart Klawans writes in his review of this film, "The picture seems so raw that you might imagine she learned to use a video camera solely to tell this story. Personal, but never self indulgent, compelling and compulsive in equal measure, My Terrorist is a rarity, a necessary film." 10 The compulsion which propels this quest is crucial to the film's concern with forgiving a terrorist and the underlying process of repudiating the claims of one's heritage.

This concern is dangerous in any culture. Predictably, *My Terrorist* was met with an uproar when it was screened on Israeli television (2002). "The film suffocates in

ideology," wrote one critic, 11 while another adds, "Even as here, at home, where Israeli civilians and soldiers are murdered and slaughtered on a daily basis, some two dozen Israeli films are floating around the world, giving the country a bad name." 12 But what is this "bad name"? The film has very little footage of Palestinians, and that footage is mostly badly lit and murky. Fahed is shown only once, in a photo taken from a British newspaper reporting on the attack. All in all the reality that spurs Gerstel's development is not seen; it exists only as an allusion. We don't even find out why Fahed, an Iraqi, got involved in Palestinian terrorism. Indeed, Israel's borderlands are safely out of range for Israeli civilians, much as Anzaldúa's are for most Northamericans. The "bad name" Gerstel is accused of giving her country is not because she documents what the country does but because she wonders what it might do differently.

Though criticisms such as the ones cited above are harsh, they identify the dilemma Gerstel herself feels—the urgent need to find a collective way out of the self-destructive cycle of revenge that engulfs Israelis and Palestinians alike. In this connection the interview she includes with Ha'aret journalist Gideon Levi, an outspoken critic of Israel's policies towards Palestinian civilians, is particularly helpful. Inserted towards the end of the film, after the 9/11 attacks, it provides a measure of clarity. Responding to Gerstel's echoing prevailing Israeli anxiety about victimization. Levi notes that, in fact it is the Palestinians, not the Jews, who are the victims on a large scale. Gerstel inclines to agree with him, and registers her awareness that Fahed can be considered a freedom fighter. not a terrorist. However, she also notes that after the collapse of the twin towers her understanding of who is the "real" victim changed. "I feel," she says, "that I am acting against my own survival instinct." Judging by the strategy Israel has been pursuing towards the Palestinians for many years now, the vehemence of her critics has to do with how they understand the dictates of their own survival instinct. The contentious issue is whether strong-arm politics or dialogue are the way to prevent victimization on both sides. The difference between their view and hers devolves on the fact that she, unlike them, dared to trust in the human spirit. She had the courage to allow *My Terrorist* to "go into the self and expand out into the world," as Anzaldúa puts it.

Notes:

- 1. The two films discussed were Mona Hatoum's *Measures of Distance* (1988) and Rea *Tajiri's History and Memory* (1991). Linda Dittmar, "Traces of a Fractured Self; Exile and Reconstitution in Recent Films and Videos." *Kolnoa; Studies in Cinema and Television* (Tel Aviv University), Section D no.1, 1998, pp.149-169
- 2. Fictive Looks On Israeli Cinema. Eds. Nurit Gertz, Orly Lubin, and Judd Ne'eman. Ramat Aviv (Israel): Open University Press 1998. In her book, Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation, Ella Shohat argues that Israeli public funding for progressive pro-peace films is a gesture that in actuality resists change (Austin: University of Texas Press 1989). Nadim Ruhana and Arij Saba'a similarly critique Israel's academic Left peace discourse as a mark of privilege when not backed by activism. In "Power, the Space of Tolerance, and the Condition of Privilege," in Knowledge and Silence: On Mechanisms of Denial and Repossession in Israeli Cinema, Eds. Hanna Herzog and Kineret Lahad. Tel Aviv: Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2006, pp.62-74.
- 3. See especially Michael Renov, "Towards a Poetics of Documentary." *Theorizing Documentary.* Ed. Michael Renov. New York: Routledge, 1993. Pp.12-26. Bill Nichols. *Representing Reality.* Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1991. Dai Vaughan, *For Documentary; Twelve Essays.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- 4. Landscape in Mist; Space and Memory in Palestinian Cinema. Eds. Nurith Gertz and

- George Khleifi. Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers and the Open University, 2006.
- 5. Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands/La Frontera: the New Mestiza.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, p.3.
- 6. "Show Us Life." Towards a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary Ed. Tom Waugh. Metuchen NJ Y London: Scarecrow Press, 1984.
- 7. The emphasis here is on the *effect* of truth, its *impression*, not its actuality. Similarly, "truth claims" concern a rhetorical stance that represents itself *as* conveying truth. It is widely understood in documentary studies (Nichols, Renov, et al.) that neither effects nor claims can be conflated with actual truth.
- 8. Gilmore, Leigh. "Placing Truth: confession, Gender, and Autobiographical Authority." *Autobiography and Postmodernism*. Eds. Kathleen Ashley, L. Gilmore & G. Peters. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994. Audrey Lavasseur. "Film and Video Self-Biographies." Biography, Winter 2000. Also Michael Renov. New Subjectivities: Documentary and Self-Representation in the Post-Verite Age." In Feminism and Documentary. Eds. Diane Waldman & J. Walker. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, pp.84-94.
- 9. Meron Benvenisti comments on the concept of *moledet* in *Conflicts and Contradictions*. New York: Villard Books, 1986. See also Orit Ben-David's "*Tiyul* (Hike) as an Act of Consecration of Space." *Grasping Land; Space and Place in Contemporary Israeli Discourse and Experience*. Eds. Eyal Ben-Ari and Yoram Bil. Albany: SUNY Press, 1997.
- 10. Tikva Levi, "About Fear and Security" (Hebrew). In *Kema; Middle East Gate to Israel*. http://www.kedma.co.il/opinion/opinion-file/TikvaLevio40303.htm
- 11. Stewart Klawans, "Badlands: *The Holy Land. My Terrorist. The cuckoo. Madame Sata.*" The *Nation*. August 4/11, 2003. Pp.44-45.
- 12. Ariana Melamed. "With All Due Respect, You Exaggerated a Little" (Hebrew). Yediot Ahronot. 12.19.2002.