

**Shooting, Not Crying: Reckoning  
with Violence in *Prisoners of War,  
Homeland and Fauda***

**Omri Ben Yehuda**

**The Jew, the Arab, and Western Imagination**

Enmeshed in the most momentous political crises in its history, on the eve of a third election in a single year taking place under the threat of the coronavirus pandemic, Israel overlooked a remarkable achievement. One of the many surveys and lists offering a cultural summation of the decade, was that of *The New York Times* with its selection of best international television series (Hale 2019). It was not surprising to find the United Kingdom with six entries among the list's top ten, alongside France and Italy with one representative each. Howev-

er, Israel's appearance directly after the UK, with two entries, one of them being the prestigious newspaper's top pick, certainly defied expectations. Its Netflix thriller *Fauda* (2016-) was nominated in seventh place and its drama-thriller *Prisoners of War* (2009-2011, hereafter *POW*), which was the inspiration for the Showtime hit *Homeland* (2011-2020), headed the list.

This news attracted little attention in a land inured to frequent states of emergency. It has, however, many important ramifications: it reflects again the quality and impact of Israeli television (in the previous decade the Israeli series *BeTipul* [2005-2008] inspired a groundbreaking American adaptation [*In Treatment* 2008-2010] and sparked a complete reevaluation of the possibilities of the medium), and attests to Israel's preeminence abroad, especially in the United States and more importantly among liberal cultural forces such as *The New York Times*. The fact that almost the entire list (consisting of 30 series) was self-evidently western (apart from Canada or Australia, each with one representative, the only non-European representatives were two South Korean series, one Argentinian and one Indian), reflects both the way Israel perceives itself as an integral part of the West, and also the way the West, especially the arbiters of its liberal taste, embraces that as a given. This is highlighted by the complete absence of other entries from the Middle East and by the fact that Hebrew was the only Semitic language represented in the selected series.

It is even more thought-provoking when we consider that the two Israeli series deal specifically with Israel's conflictual relations with the Arab world, and that in both of them the relationship between Jew and Arab is unraveled intimately by means of performance, where the secular, modern and westernized Jew acts out the figure of the Muslim believer and his devotional rituals. A significant part of the second season of *POW* takes place beyond Israel's borders, in Syria, and the presence of Arabic becomes increasingly widespread as many of the figures are either Syrians or Palestinians with Israeli citizenship (who are so intimately linked to the north of the country and its continuity with Syria, depicted also by the tunnels running beneath the border) and the Israeli prisoners of war themselves who acquire fluency in the language. This trope is taken to its extreme in *Fauda*, where Arabic takes over as the predominant language in large sections of the show, half of the characters being Palestinian and the other half Jews whose native-level fluency in Arabic was acquired in the theater of *Mista'arvim*, where soldiers perform as Arabs in order to infiltrate the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza. In terms of accuracy, such complete command of the language is unattainable, but in *Fauda*, for the sake of the drama, this Jewish theater of Islam is a theater perhaps too well-performed (Ben Yehuda 2020).

Israel made its way onto The *NYT*'s list, a compilation of high quality, western and liberal but at the same time

popular culture, by impersonating Islam, the West's political and historical archenemy from the crusades, through the Ottoman Empire and right until ISIS. It is clear that the *NYT*'s Israel-centered view does not reflect the entire versatile relationship between Americans and Europeans with Muslims. It attests nonetheless to the high currency of Jews and of Zionism, even among the more liberal (and of course among many in the right as was so evident in the pro-Israeli Trump administration). Perhaps unwittingly, the Jewish-Israeli warrior provides the filter through which the West is able to access the East. Embracing the Jew as part of the Christian West is a theologically historical gesture that the *NYT*'s survey reanimates: a twofold gesture that crosses European boundaries by importing one Semite (the Jew) to the West at the expense of distancing another Semite (the Arab).

### **From Psychology to Action**

Stephen Shapiro has shown the difference between *Homeland* and its Israeli predecessor *POW* that suggests an evolutionary narrative of continuation on which I wish to elaborate and use as the basis for my discussion. Relating to the two series' narratives, Shapiro rightly observes that "if *Hatufim* (*POW*) was unusual for concentrating in its first season on the soldier's emotional state after their liberation, *Homeland* quickly moves back to the familiar geopolitical suspense [...] Whereas *Hatufim* is

committed to reiterating the stability of the Israeli state, *Homeland* highlights US institutional fragility” (Shapiro 2015, 157). Shapiro does not elaborate on this “moving back to the familiar geopolitical suspense,” but I believe he points to *Homeland’s* closer adherence to the genre of the classic thriller. Indeed, *POW* might be conceived as embracing two plot lines: the first season is dedicated to the Israeli family and familial structures (including the state which for obvious reasons is more intimately placed in relation to its citizens than in America) with a loose plot that centers on a psychological reckoning with a past that has been lost (the three soldiers spent seventeen years in captivity). On the other hand, in an abrupt change of focus, the second season brings the genre of the thriller to the fore, with many scenes filmed not only in Israel but beyond its borders in enemy territory. Nonetheless, Shapiro’s comments on *Homeland* require some qualification: although the series does indeed minimize some features, reducing the number of returnee protagonists from three to only one, and shortening the period of captivity to “only” eight years so as to intensify suspense, *Homeland* is still far from being strictly an action series. Perhaps its most conspicuous trait – and its fundamental departure from *POW* – is its focus on a heroine who is neither one of the prisoners, nor a member of their families, but rather the investigator herself. Whereas in *POW* there are three main investigators, two of whom are men and the third, Iris (Sendi Bar), an emotionally detached and single-minded femme fatale, *Home-*

*land* chooses to view the events not through the eyes of the victims but from the idiosyncratic and extraordinary perspective of a fragile woman with heightened emotional sensitivity and a sophisticated inner world, who is also a member of the establishment. Carrie's flat is the window into her entire world where objects from her work and her private life collide; portraits of Black American jazz musicians (we normally associate Islam with Arabs, but Islam is also an integral part of the Black-African world) decorate her walls alongside pictures of her targets, all of whose color and overt masculinity stand in stark contrast to her own fair-skinned and very western femininity. It is perhaps not surprising that there is not even one image of what might serve as her office at the CIA headquarters, and we learn right at the outset through the remarkable opening title sequence (that has been the focus of many studies), that terrorist or geopolitical intricacies are in fact an integral part of her upbringing. Islam and America's sense of homeland is clearly not simply a plot device, but represents rather the entire spectrum of the human experience embedded into the psyche during childhood.

Although *POW* admittedly devotes an unusual amount of attention to the "soldier's emotional state," *Homeland* is not entirely dissimilar in that respect. Both series play with the genres of thriller and psychological drama in very different ways. Whereas *POW*'s protagonists are victims trying to readjust to the shattered order of their

civilian families, *Homeland's* single heroine (who is both an unattached woman and a lone protagonist) is not only unique in her embodiment of a deviation from the model of the all-American family, but also an active investigator who possesses far more of the agency required for her actions, as well as a sense of accountability for them.

These tensions relating to America's perception of the Arab world and the Middle East are also evident in the Israeli case, notwithstanding its many particularities. In this article I examine the ostensibly poetic transition from psychology to action in the context of Israeli television. I suggest a historiographical wave which begins with *POW* as a representative of the end of the first decade of the millennium and concluding with *Fanda's* last season that was broadcast a decade later during an unprecedented political crisis (overlapping in its last stages with the Coronavirus pandemic). From its first season *Fanda* emerged as a groundbreaking Israeli thriller, unique in its adherence to a gripping plot that centers on action, hardly allowing any room for psychological reflection. This has important ramifications for an understanding of the latent ethos of Israeli citizenship: the diminishing space allotted to reflecting on deeds undermines the defining attribute in the representation of Israeli warriors – their conscience.

*Fanda* unfolds as a perpetual acting out of an endless cycle of revenge that shatters the possibility of any reck-

oning with historical dimensions or with accountability,<sup>1</sup> culminating in its third season in an unprecedented confrontation with Israeli violence and an admission, unselfconsciously and proudly made before an audience that included Netflix's international subscribers, that Israel's acts of aggression perpetrated against civilians are de facto war crimes. *Fauda's* first season begins as a disturbing reenactment of the aftermath of the Oslo accords and the Second Intifada when Hamas and Jihad suicide bombers wrought terror on civilian targets in Israeli cities. The first season was shot fifteen years after these events, with no historical link to them other than the constant performance of suicide bombings. This was not the case in the third season. The plot focuses on Gaza, now the main site of the active Palestinian struggle and the butt of the retaliatory rounds of violence with Israel, as evidenced also in its ongoing political crisis (a wave of Qassam rockets preceded every one of the five electoral rounds). As I will show, unlike the first season, specific historical references are incorporated into a scene that accumulates to a rare and disturbing confrontation in Israeli history with its state inflicted violence.

Raya Morag has shown that the Second Intifada's retaliatory actions conform to Robert Jay Lifton's definition of the rationale for war crimes, namely an ideology that equates resistance with acts of terror and seeks to justify almost any action, or an environment where sanctioned brutality becomes the norm (Morag 2013, 148). The



change of narrative accompanying the change of ideology between *POW* (via *Homeland*) and *Fauda* relies on events at the turn of the millennium: The Second Intifada which was gradually consumed by the attacks of 9/11 on the other side of the Atlantic (both events have many predecessors, the most crucial of which is probably the Gulf War, which also erupted just a few years after the First Intifada). It also runs parallel to Netanyahu's second and seemingly never-ending term of office starting in 2009, escalating during the term of the exclusively right-wing coalition comprising his fourth government which has now consolidated in the Netanyahu block with the ultra-orthodox parties (to gain eventually an absolute majority in the current Israeli regime). One of the most prominent catchphrases during those years (which perfectly coincided with the airing of *Fauda*) was “*mafsikim le-bitnatze!*” (no more apologizing!) which probably originated with the 2015 campaign slogan of the right-wing party “*Ha-bayit ha-yehudi*”s (The Jewish Home) – “No more apologizing: we love Israel” – that later infiltrated into all sides of the political spectrum and referred to the hypocrisy of the establishment's left wing and to a lesser degree to the liberal Right<sup>2</sup>.

### **No More Apologizing – No More Justifying**

The motto “No more apologizing!” has many parallels in the world, notably the many new right-wing regimes (in Central and Eastern Europe and in the United States)

that champion the patriotism that was allegedly lost during the long years of globalized “bon ton” and political correctness. This is a double-edged sword: it aims to abolish the diplomatic restraint of the state which, given that state apparatuses are suppressive by nature, could justifiably be understood as inherent hypocrisy,<sup>3</sup> but along the way it also dispenses with conscience and the process of self-scrutiny and accountability. The two trends collide at the point where reckoning with violence actually signifies its justification.

The justification of violence is perhaps one of the most complex and intricate psychological apparatuses of human rhetoric, literature and the arts; indeed, of human politics. It is particularly salient during a national struggle, and for this reason provides the focus of scrutiny in Hannan Hever’s many studies on Hebrew and Israeli literature throughout the Jewish struggle for self-determination, a project that was brought to fruition through the disenfranchisement of the Palestinian national struggle. Throughout the years the conscience of the Israeli warrior, which Morag also delineates as a trauma of the perpetrator, was embodied in the dictum “shooting and crying.”<sup>4</sup> The nucleus of this cultural chiasmic apprehension of the act of a justified – that is, always *justifiable* – war can be found in the early stories of S. Yizhar relating to Israel’s War of Independence of 1948 which caused the Palestinian catastrophe (the loss of the bulk of their land and population through flight or expulsion, and the

birth of the Palestinian refugee problem that persists until today). Yizhar's stories *Khirbet Khizeh* and *The Prisoner*, both published directly after the war, together with the poetry of Yehuda Amichai which is similarly concerned with the transmutation of Palestine into Israel, form the pillars of Hever's work in their exemplification of Israel's conscience and its deliberations regarding sovereignty over the country's indigenous population. Rather than engaging with the dismal situation of the Palestinians they seek to render a unified and coherent Israeli subject who embodies the events leading to the establishment of the state (Hasak-Lowy 2012, 33); these events can be traced back to the summer of 1948 when the course of the war changed from defense (and even, according to the warriors, fears for the end of the Jewish people) to attack and the adoption of an active policy of transferring populations by Mapai, the leading Jewish party of that time (Morris 2003, 442-449).

Unsurprisingly, as in *Fauda*, and to a lesser but still significant extent *POW* and *Homeland* as well, Yizhar's stories bypass any sense of time and historicity, evading thereby the standpoint of a sovereign entity accountable for its actions (Setter 2012, 48). This corresponds as well with Yizhar's acclaimed descriptions of space, reflected in his narrator's poetic and gifted rendering of the Land of Israel, which defer his historical judgement (Hever 2019, 113). As early as the 1980s the critic Uri Shoham faulted Yizhar's narrator for his excessive soul-searching and

ambivalence that are eventually resolved in the ultimate struggle – the abstract and a-historical depiction of nature (Quoted in Hever, *Ibid.*, 111-112). Thus for both Shoham and Hever, Yizhar's narrator, who is a first person witness, is a parallelized narrator, whose indecisiveness exempts him from any categorical moral imperative of resolution (*Ibid.*, 86, 111-112).

Hever finds the same gesture in Amichai, one of the champions of Israeli civic (and not nationalistic) ethos, whose use of irony deprives his speaker of the ability to comprehend reality and hence normalizes the political state of exception (185). At the end, this speaker's protest, like that of Yizhar's narrator, develops into a position of aporetic embarrassment (194). Similarly, Yael Ben-Zvi Morad discusses new Israeli films that concentrate on this shattered manhood, and points out their self-sacrificial gestures which are drawn from Israeli literature's fascination with the figure of Christ as a universal response to the traumatic reality reigning in Israel since its inception: "His morality is strengthened by the conflict he feels in the face of his own sovereignty" (Ben-Zvi Morad 2017, 236).<sup>5</sup>

The mimetic representation of a conflicted and complex conscience is therefore by no means a prerequisite for political responsibility; on the contrary, it perhaps deprives readers of any actual agency. Questions we ask ourselves could affirm our positions as much as they

could unsettle. The words of Sadia Abbas are especially illuminating here: "Self-consciousness itself is merely one more swirl in the ever-tightening gyre of reflexive sophistication, enlisted for an exemption it cannot bestow" (Abbas 2013, 185).<sup>18</sup> Contradictory as it may seem, justification is perhaps one of the first means of reaction to trauma. My argument here does not imply a value judgement of the works discussed: those of Yizhar and Amichai and the film *Waltz with Bashir* from 2008 that exhibits an unprecedented confrontation with the trauma of the perpetrator, are all, like the series under discussion in this study, very sophisticated works. But *Bashir* is a strong example of how psychology, as a mean to use excessive, deep and even esthetic speech (evident also in the use of animation), is also used in order to ease the tormented mind in a cathartic act which the genre of the thriller does not allow. In *Bashir*, one could even argue that the process of psychologization serves to displace the trauma (in this case, the Sabra and Shatila massacre) from the victim to the perpetrator.

Before returning to a more detailed discussion of these points (and especially to *Homeland* which is distinguished by the complex personality of Carrie as the series' principal narrative agent), I would like to conclude the historical discussion I attempt to delineate here, by arguing that shooting is of course still present, but now the shooters do not cry. Gil Hochberg has already noted this and has traced it to the twilight of the long decade of Netanya-

hu's administration as reflected in one of the video clips she examined that was produced by the Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation to welcome visitors to the Israeli Eurovision in 2019.<sup>6</sup> In the upbeat clip, the two television hosts sing a song about the land of milk and honey which acknowledges the occupation, and also tell several jokes that contain anti-Semitic comments indicating their awareness of unflattering stereotypes about Israel (Hochberg 2019). As with Yizhar (and many other prominent figures that Hever discusses), the sophisticated subjects are aware of the violence for which they are responsible, but whereas previously they were tormented, crying has now "been replaced with laughter: hysterical, cynical, crude, perhaps even desperate laughter" (Ibid.).

I concur with Hochberg's opinion. The period leading up to the Eurovision witnessed another significant, albeit diametrically opposed, event that captured the headlines in the Israeli media during that time: The weekly protest "The March of Return," which every Friday sent Gazans – almost all of whom domestic refugees as a result of the events of 1948 – to the border separating the Gaza strip from their forbidden homeland. These occurrences coincided with one of the most troubling days in Israel's history. On the Friday after Netta Barzilai, the Israeli delegate to the Eurovision in Lisbon, won the contest, many young Israelis, almost exclusively liberal and LGBTQ-friendly (the Eurovision is affiliated

with the LGBTQI+ community), gathered in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square to celebrate the achievement and the political message of feminism, liberty and tolerance carried by Barzilai's song. Just sixty-five kilometers to the south, on the very same Mediterranean shore and under the same jurisdiction, fifty Palestinians protesters were shot to death by the Israeli army. I suggest that this marks the point of no return on the road to a sacrifice of conscience – even one that is defeated, narcissistic, shameful or paralyzed as in Yizhar – in favor of celebration. The question which I refrain from answering at this stage – it requires perhaps a thorough study of its own that should address Israeli ethos as a Mizrahi one – is whether this shift is actually of progress, meaning of acknowledging one's actions. It is not surprising perhaps that Netanyahu's 4th administration was also a Mizrahi renaissance and the embrace of pluralism and identity politics by the state at the expense of the Universalistic-Zionist traditional ethos.<sup>7</sup>

### **Admitting Jewish Violence: Gaza and the Third Season of *Fauda***

For this reason, I wish to dwell further on *Fauda's* last season, which is the crystallization of this newly-acquired Israeli political and cultural self-understanding of violence that I attempt to delineate here, before returning to earlier manifestations of the hardened and hesitant exercises of conscience in the confrontation with

war. In *Fanda*, as a rule, one shoots, and does not cry. In the series' defining gesture, its protagonist Doron Kavillio (Lior Raz) advances with his gun poised to fire during one of the team's many incursions into enemy territory (usually civilian homes or buildings). He leads the operation, covered by other soldiers from behind as his backup, and in line with the criteria of the genre, he is caught in the aporetic moment of who will pull the trigger first. And he shoots: there is no toll kept, numerical or ethical, of the number of people he kills throughout the series. Like all members of the Israeli elite unite, he is trained not to think or feel. This suppression of thought and emotion is a recurrent leitmotif running through all four seasons, epitomized in the very brief interludes in which the characters are permitted to engage in self-reflection.<sup>8</sup>

*Fanda* acknowledges violence, it does not "apologize," and this is the source of its charm as well as its dubious ramifications. It portrays state violence as being outside the law and adheres to militia-like qualities that have, in fact, historical roots in Israeli warfare right from the outset.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand the series' cruel and direct portrayal of violence is authentic, thereby drawing a parallel between the Jewish state and Islamic organizations such as Hamas and even Isis (in the second season) – in that, it is perhaps more audacious than *POW*, and certainly more daring than *Homeland*, whose antagonists tend to be the corrupt political officials of the American government rather than Muslims – but on the other hand it



captures the lives of Israelis and Palestinians exclusively through the prism of the Schmittian dichotomy of friend and foe (Ben Yehuda 2020, 11-12).

From the outset, the series conveys a false impression of symmetry between the two groups, dissolving in effect the distinction between Israel “proper” and the territories it occupies. The parity thus created between the sides makes crossing over from the territories into Israel appear feasible to both sides. The third season goes so far as to enable the Israeli undercover unit to invade Gaza, breaking the more than ten-year old siege, which reshuffles the long policy to avoid invading Gaza’s soil and thus to practice Israeli heroism only from the air. It even allows – and this stretches credibility to its limits – the antagonist Bashir and his Hamas commando group to break the siege and enter Israel (an event last reported on in the media in 2006 with the kidnapping of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit). The billboards advertising the third season displayed the message “Welcome to Gaza,” in English with Hebrew transliteration, echoing an utterance made by Elli (Ya’akov Zada-Daniel), the senior soldier and commander of the Israeli unit in the series and the only one to have actually been in Gaza before the siege. His “welcoming” utterance was issued as a warning against entering the prohibited and dangerous territories Israelis try to avoid. Elli is also the only member of the group to suffer from panic attacks, a fact that hinders their operations. Ironically, this Hebrew inscrip-

tion recalls the anticipation preceding the Eurovision in Tel Aviv just a year previously, as many billboards welcomed the foreign delegations and tourists who entered Israel's haven of tolerance and liberal values, the first Hebrew city. In both cases, the signs presented an exotic outside, one of which wholly desirable (the utopia of Europe and Tel Aviv) and the other to be avoided (Gaza as dystopia).

The art of militia warfare was developed by the Jewish self-defense organizations in Russia, Eastern Europe and Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century and, as mentioned earlier, continued to influence the conduct of Israel's sovereign army.<sup>10</sup> The third season portrays the ultimate manifestation of the absence of self-doubt with regard to the unleashing of unrestrained violence against Palestinians, which demonstrates incontrovertibly that in the eyes of Israelis, Palestinian lives do not matter and they are not grievable.<sup>11</sup> This is already in evidence in the season's first episode when Dana (Meirav Shirom), the *shin bet* (Israel's Security Agency) female interrogator, questions a Hamas soldier who is hooked up to an infusion pump in an Israeli hospital. When he refuses to cooperate, she tampers with the pump while physically "shaking" him (a notorious torture method forbidden by the Israeli Supreme Court). He finally capitulates, revealing his identity (Khamid, born and raised in the Khan Yunis refugee camp in the Gaza strip), as his pacemaker subsides into a long monotonous beep. This

is the only scene (thirty-six minutes into the episode) in the season that refers to the refugees, a rare moment that could have become a reference for Yizhar's depiction of one of the expelled children in *Khirbet Khizab* (1949), where the narrator predicts that the boy will become a terrorist in order to avenge his people. In *Fauda*, however, this information is glossed over in a minor and brief scene between two very marginal characters. Nonetheless, this presents a completely new ethos in Israeli self-perception: it was clearly not the intention of the series' creators to arouse any form of uneasiness, never mind repulsion, in the face of Dana's behavior. On the contrary, her actions are meant to be viewed as appropriate behavior for an interrogator, implying that violence is perpetrated against Palestinians unquestioningly and with impunity. The same is true of the use of physical power against civilian women in *Fauda*'s third season, which here as well is not intended to raise viewers' eyebrows, suggesting again the dubious value Israelis attach to Palestinian lives. This is the case with Bashir's mother and sister. Bashir, who at the start of the series is a naive youth unaware that he is a tool in the hands of the Israelis, is abandoned without a second thought when they have to choose between his life and the lives of Israeli citizens. And from the moment he becomes the antagonist, the Israeli team (the heroes of the series with whom the viewers are meant to identify) torture his mother and sister by shaking and almost strangling them, although neither of them are in any way fighters.

The main scenes concerning the measure of power inflicted on civilians relate to Hilla Bashan (Marina Maximilian), the beautiful head of the Secret Service's Gaza department who becomes Doron's lover. Hilla has failed to locate the whereabouts of the Gazan arch-terrorist Hanni al-Ja'abari (Georges Iskander) who has been targeted for assassination. In the fourth episode, at minute 25, she tells Doron of the time when she worked as a young desk analyst following events in Gaza during "Protective Edge" (the military operation in the summer of 2014 known among Palestinian as the Gaza War), a rare historical detail indicating that the third season probably takes place in our present (2019-2020). Back then, she was able to trace Hanni to his villa in the Jebalia neighborhood, where he was surrounded by his five children (aged 5 to 15), two wives, other relatives and bodyguards. After Israel's Minister of Defense himself called her to confirm Hanni's location ("I suddenly realized they were really going to fire a rocket on the house, with all the wives and children and grandmothers"), the operation fails as Hanni escapes through a tunnel accompanied by seven wounded family members. Hilla rationalizes by explaining that Hanni was responsible for the murder of dozens of Israelis, and that after this operation he carried out many other bloody attacks of revenge.

This is a rare admission of immorality on the part of the IDF, a body whose superior morality has become a cliché of Israeli propaganda. However, after examining

this with J.D. Sari Bashi, it seems that *Fauda's* depiction is not only accurate but in fact complies with international law. The law has no interest in the history of the conflict and in the condition of an ongoing conflict between a state and a particular civilian population, and therefore it allows "*proportionality*," that is, it permits the killing of civilians if the operation will prevent the deaths of Israeli citizens. Nonetheless, I believe that this is a paradigmatic scene because it does not adhere to "shooting and crying." Hilla's conscience never relates the Palestinians, and the only moment she shows pain and regret – and indeed she cries – is for the Israeli victims of Hanni's acts of retribution. She can only relate to Israeli grief, which again hinders the representation of Palestinians as grievable.

The ultimate confirmation of Israel's use of unrestrained power against Palestinians occurs in the tenth episode. While the Israeli team attempts to escape from Gaza back into Israel proper, the Israeli military plans to mobilize its air-force in order to clear the area for the operation. This is the order that Hilla gives, starting at minute 21: "If you need to take out houses with people inside, kindergartens, schools, do everything that is necessary to clear the area for them." Here, it is unequivocally clear that the situation does not comply with international law, for the order almost brazenly does not accord with the principle of *proportionality*. As a Jew and an Israeli, I admit that this sentence disturbs me. I won-

der how the editors of Netflix reacted to it when this episode was broadcast worldwide.

I maintain that the characters of both Hilla and Dana are not intended to challenge the Israeli viewer (I reserve judgement with regard to the reactions of American or European viewers). They are both beautiful, strong and assertive women whose specific brand of Israeli feminism accentuated by militarism is a source of national pride which should stand in stark contrast to the conservative environment of the Arab world.<sup>12</sup> I believe however, that this sharp shift in the paradigm, indeed in the entire ethos, is also the outcome of a deliberate confrontation with truth. *Fauda* exposes the brutal reality of Jewish sovereignty in the Middle East and eschews the apologetic (and latently islamophobic) depiction of Jews as compassionate beings who choose to go to war only when their survival is at stake.<sup>13</sup> In that, I argue that *Fauda* represents nothing less than a palpable shift in Israeli ethos of justification.<sup>14</sup>

**The Jew as European, the Warrior as Victim:** *Prisoners of War*

The view of Jewish warfare as invariably and quintessentially a defensive reaction is embedded in the representation of the Jewish warrior as a vulnerable victim rather than an active agent (like the warriors in *Fauda*). After suffering violence at the hands of their enemies during

their seventeen years in captivity, the three protagonists of *POW* return to their homeland and their vulnerability is exposed in their re-encounter with the order of civilian and domestic life and in particular the three women who await them: the two forceful wives of Nimrod (Yoram Toledano) and Uri (Ishai Golan), and the younger, fragile and traumatized sister of Amiel Ben Horin (Asi Cohen). Ben-Horin (whose name means “son of freedom”) was presumed dead in the first season where he returns only in his sister’s imagination. The English title of the series is misleading. The Hebrew *Hatufim*, does not refer to political imprisonment as the consequence of warfare between sovereign entities, but rather to the helplessness, lack of agency and female fragility of being an abductee. The Israeli perspective of the conflict with its neighbors emphasizes the fear of being infiltrated and abducted for bargaining purposes, whereas the Palestinians are always numbered in the thousands and referred to as an anonymous sum of “prisoners.” The English title therefore subverts Israeli discourse according to which Palestinians are the “prisoners of war” of a legitimate state, whereas Israeli soldiers are always “abductees” that suggests more emphatically than “captivity” the illegitimate status of the outlaw (Lapidot 2014, 157).

And indeed, I contend that *POW* is one of Israel’s most explicit representations of tormented perpetrators who perceive themselves as vulnerable and victimized.<sup>15</sup> Ex-

aming *POW* in retrospect in the light of *Fauda*'s success reveals, I believe, a paradigmatic shift in the readiness of Israelis to see themselves not only as victims but as perpetrators as well. I was not able to calculate precisely the number of scenes in *POW* in which characters are shown crying and weeping, but I suggest that this number is unprecedented in Israeli television and film. Furthermore, the first season which was devoted entirely to the psychological drama generated by the inherent tension between family and state, contains many scenes of uncontrolled crying by all three of the protagonists: Amiel's emotionally damaged sister Yael (Adi Ezroni) who is unable to confront the reality of his death; Nimrod, the tougher of the two warriors who also suffers violent PTSD attacks; and in particular the introverted Uri whose fragility resembles that of Gilad Shalit.

Because of Israel's reluctance to acknowledge ethnicity beyond the poles of the Jewish-Arab axis, it is difficult to evaluate the characters' ethnical performance. Nevertheless, highlighting the modern and the European in the characterization of the Israelis in *POW* eliminates any doubts regarding their ethnicity. In her study of the wide currency of Israeli art and television in the world during the last decades, Lee Weinberg examines the manner in which the Israeli "New Jew," secular and European, confronts the country's multi-ethnic changes. She points to *POW*'s totally European or North American production style, where characters conform in appearance and behavior to the norms of "white masculinity," even ap-



pearing foreign in the Israeli landscape (Weinberg 2016, 122). This norm is established right from the outset with the depiction of Israel's prime minister as a blond woman, echoing Angela Merkel's election to the position of leader of the free world and Hillary Clinton's office as Secretary of State, and conforming with Zionism's avant-garde championing of women leaders such as Golda Meir and Tzipi Livni (who is herself blond and was a candidate for the office during the broadcast of *POW*, but who has faded from the public eye in recent years). Blondness features conspicuously in Israeli politics thanks to Sara Netanyahu, the prime minister's wife and their two fair-haired sons.<sup>16</sup> Mrs. Netanyahu's notorious treatment of the domestic staff in the official residence always revolved around ethnic tensions with her allegedly flaunting her European background over their middle eastern origins.<sup>17</sup>

This partiality for the blond and the Nordic is not confined to the prime minister's realm. Other than Amiel Ben Horin, whose surname denotes Sephardi (but not necessarily Mizrahi, meaning, immigrant) roots, there is not a single character in the series who has Mediterranean features. Amiel's sister has Nordic looks, blue eyes and blond hair, and so do practically all the mothers in the series: the mother of Yinon (Yonatan Uziel), the blue-eyed secret service warrior who was dispatched to locate Amiel in Syria, and Yael and Amiel's own mother as well, are all of European appearance.

The symbol of home in the series is Amiel's childhood home, occupied only by his younger sister who also manages his kennel business. In the first season the empty house is permeated by Amiel's ghost, and after learning of her brother's death Yael decides to sell the house. This prompts many scenes in which cunning Mizrahi-looking real estate agents predict the demolition of the ideal single-family tiled house (roofing relates to Zionism's dissociation from the flat roofs of traditional Arab houses) to give way to the high-rise buildings of the nouveau riche. It is this demise of the dream house of the Zionist colonial imagination that *POW* unabashedly laments.

Nostalgia lies at the heart of the entire series, nurtured by the chasm created by the seventeen lost years in captivity between the present and the memory of a simpler and more innocent past. The Ashkenazi imagination and ideal of the new Jew separates the sane and moral Israel of 1948 and the brazen and avaricious Israel that replaced it after the 1967 war and the beginning of the occupation. This distinction ignores the Nakba, the occupation of Palestine in 1948, which was carried out almost entirely by Ashkenazi warriors such as Yizhar, not to be confused with the brutality of Mizrahim who joined the Israel Defense Forces mainly from 1967 onwards and in large numbers in recent years (unlike the Prime Minister Office, which was appointed so far entirely by Ashkenazim, the IDF has had four Mizrahi chiefs of staff beginning with Shaul Mofaz in 1998).<sup>18</sup>

Of the three abductees, Amiel alone subverts Ashkenazi characterization: Nimrod's surname Klein is typically Ashkenazi, and Uri's surname Zach, although Hebraized, signifies purity and whiteness. One of the most salient motifs in both seasons is the song "*Hofim*" (Shores) written by Nachum Heiman to lyrics by Natan Yonatan and popularized by Chava Alberstein, one of Israel's prominent Ashkenazi singers. It tells of a shore longing for the brook, and the seashells longing for home. The song is sung by Abdullah Ben Raschid (Yusef Sweid), a terrorist who was sent to Syria in exchange for the returnee, and now helps Amiel construct his new identity after his conversion to Islam. Now called "Yussef," Amiel is the leader of the terror group "Children of Jihad" that was responsible for his own abduction, having succeeded its previous leader Jamal (Salim Daw) after his death from cancer. While in captivity, Amiel, displaying classic symptoms of Stockholm syndrome, transferred his allegiance to Jamal who was his patron and mentor during those years. Hearing the song from Abdullah's mouth arouses in Yussef-Amiel a yearning to return home and in fact breaks down the facade of his new identity: singing it alone and in secret, he bursts into tears.

The series contains many subversive elements in its political representation of the conflict between Israel and the Arab world. They exist in the background and are easily missed, but it seems that the boundaries between Israel and Syria are crossed in a way that dismantles

them. The “Children of Jihad” is in fact a Palestinian terror (or resistance) group and, as in *Fauda*, the refugees are not directly mentioned but have a latent resonance. We reveal that Jamal himself, the leader of the group, is a Palestinian Israeli who was drawn almost inadvertently into the resistance, comes only at the end of the second season. The defining visual motif of the series is a picture that hangs both in Israel’s North and in Syria, depicting the shoreline of Haifa celebrated by refugees who were able to infiltrate. It is – again, almost invisibly, and unwittingly – the most powerful depiction of the Nakba on the Israeli screen, a depiction of the division of a territory that used to be continuous in *Bilad al-Sham*.<sup>19</sup> Thus it is possible that the home that is longed for in “Shores” refers to a land outside the Western-Zionist reality and imagination.

When Amiel-Yussef is required to resolve the aporia of his life and identity, he chooses to return to Israel in keeping with his Muslim identity, together with his wife Leila (Hadar Ratzon-Rotem) and their protégé Ismail, Jamal’s orphan son. When Leila tells him she cannot abandon her elderly parents and that “this is my people” (“*hada sh’abi?*”), he replies that their home – “our home” – is in Israel. Leila chooses to stay behind but he takes Ismail, who is himself a son of a Palestinian Israeli, back to Israel-Palestine with him. Ismail’s destiny seems to adhere to the classic orientalist plot, as he is redeemed from an arduous Arab existence and given the chance of a life in the modern and progressive State of Israel.

***Homeland: The Pedagogic Confrontation With the Arab***

I return now to Carrie Mathieson, to her intriguing living room which reflects the interior of a complex mind, one that encompasses Afro-American jazz as well as hints of militant Islam. The surveillance monitors that invade Sergeant Brody's home as well as Carrie's private space and the manner in which the series relates to Carries' body and mind (Bavan 2015, 149), seem to foreshadow the present period of the corona pandemic and the four walls of a forced quarantine within which this very article was written. Of the three series discussed here, *Homeland* is the one most obviously concerned with the human and psychological aspect, evidenced by its focus on a single heroine and her vast inner world. However, because she possesses full agency (unlike the protagonists of *POW*), she oscillates between the inner emotional or psychological life of the victim and the external action- and plot-based role of the perpetrator (as in *Fauda*).<sup>20</sup> As Lindsay Steenberg and Yvonne Tasker have pointed out, contrary to the conventions of the genre, Carrie is not at all the stoic investigator, but tends instead to cry, swear and burst into fits of anger (Steenberg and Tasker 2015, 129-130).<sup>21</sup> She also hints at a middle way, between the crying of *POW* and the familiarity and militia-like behavior of *Fauda*. As in *Fauda*, she disobeys her superiors without compunction, but contrary to Dana and Hilla, she is morally unimpeachable, at least in the sympathy and humanity she displays towards Muslims.

She rarely uses coercive methods in cross examination, a very prevalent feature in *Fauda* (Ben Yehuda 2020, 11), and in situations when she, unwillingly, has to do so, is evidently tormented by her conscience.

After reading the vast literature on *Homeland*, I believe that the two scenes that drew the attention of most of the critics are its title sequence and Carrie's hospitalization at the end of the first season. As Bevan argues "Carrie's mind and body humanize and literalize the war on terror" (Bevan 2015, 145), and through them government surveillance is made visible (Ibid.). I would further argue that *Homeland* displaces the violence perpetrated against the state's "obvious" targets, which are Muslims, onto the visible violence directed against Carrie and Brody, both separately and together, in a marriage between terrorism and mental illness. *Homeland* thus presents a subtle confrontation with the shooting and crying paradigm that I delineate here. I suggest that the series' participation in the "contemporary habit of writing disability as specialness" (Negra and Lagerwey 2015, 130) enables the outcast to serve as an officer of the law in complete antithesis to the essence of policing. The outcast is not the criminal but the officer. In *Homeland's* justification of violence, Carrie does not lack agency as do the soldiers of *POW* – she is responsible for and even aware of the implications of her actions – but nonetheless she, like them, is an innocent victim. In David Gramling's reading of *Homeland*, the correspon-

dence between terrorism and mental illness is conflated in Carrie's anti-terrorism activity, where she sometimes breaks the rules (as for example in being treated by her own sister rather than by a state-approved doctor), and when she fails in her performance of normative "sane" behavior, she actually succeeds in her professional investigatory intuitions (Gramling 2016, 107).

I wish to return to the opening of my argument to examine *Homeland's* relevance to the *NYT's* ranking of foreign television series. Bearing in mind that the Arab language and Islam reach the arbiters of taste in the acclaimed newspaper exclusively through Israeli productions, it is pertinent in this context to examine *Homeland's* own performance of Arabness. Given that the theatrical tools of disguise and dissimulation are the essence of the *mista'aravim* system of combat and the bedrock of Fauda's world, it is possible to delineate a parallel cultural-historical aspect to the shifts I describe here. If, in Jamal's words that became a leitmotif in the last episodes of the second season of *POW*, "the thing which makes a man's identity is his deeds," then *Homeland's* realization of the idea of the "turned" soldier is vague and incomplete because of its reluctance to actually use the Arab language. Apart from Brody reciting the first words of the *Surah al-Fatiba*, the characters of *Homeland* rarely use the language, probably because of the unfeasibility of training the actors in its intricacies. In both Israeli series the conjunction of the West and Islam is patently appar-

ent in the mere proximity between all Semitic peoples, Jews and Muslims alike, who share the Middle East in a de facto co-existence. The crucial point is that while *POW* crosses provisional boundaries, dismantling them in the process, and while *Homeland* relates to a vastly remote culture, *Fauda* does not relate to turning identities or crossing borders because its protagonists are both Jews and Arab-Muslims in the first place, defined by the historical application of the quintessentially middle eastern social term of *mista'aravim*. The concept of "turning" thus has different applications in each series and is particularly pronounced in the American one, although without the core performativity of language.

Those differences are crucial for an understanding of Israel's position between the United States and the Orient, for they also relate to the basic distinction between the psychologically inverted discourse and the performative acting out of trauma characteristic of the thriller genre. Unlike Doron, whose own father was a proud Iraqi Jew and whose mother tongue is consequently Arabic, and unlike the *mista'aravi* soldiers who are always part of the world they politically infiltrate (and hence, do not really infiltrate it culturally!), Carrie is not only the young neurotic western woman a la Ally McBeal, but also a teacher of English to Arab immigrants. In the first episode of the second season, we see Carrie after having left the CIA, standing in a classroom in front of a white board on which many words in Arabic letters are writ-



ten, implying that this English course is intended for Arab-speaking pupils. The series later came under fire for its orientalist approach arising from an incident during the shooting of the fifth season in Berlin. The series' prop and art teams recruited some local refugee street artists to write graffiti in Arabic. The second episode of the season was aired with tags reading, in Arabic, “# Black Lives Matter,” “*Homeland* (al Watan) is watermelon,” and “This show does not represent the views of the artists” (Ibid., 109-110).<sup>45</sup> The cultural blindness shown here, typical of any privileged position, is overwhelming, exposing the creators' ignorance of the Arabic script of their own creation and their complete lack of interest in discovering its content. But above all, it reveals the absurd cultural positioning of *Homeland* and its Israeli predecessor and successor vis-a-vis the Arab world: the former is alien and distant and the two latter series are almost an integral part of it.

All three series have the same interest in addressing what is perceived as a totally monstrous other: The Muslim resistance terror fighter, and in *Homeland* and *Fauda* this extends to the suicide bomber as well. But if Arabic is itself a conduit for the expression of a traumatic and repressed self, in *Fauda* this is taken to the extreme by the fluency of its Israeli characters and the predominance of Arabic in the series.<sup>22</sup> Hence, although *Homeland* projects a mature subject with agency who is accountable for her actions, it involves what Homi Bhabha articu-

lated as a “pedagogic imperative” which is how national sovereignty consolidates itself through history and the tradition of signifiers that are projected onto the people. Conversely, *Fauda*, albeit without any self-reflexivity, conforms more to what Bhabha dubs the “performative,” more suggestive of an incoherent acting-out that destabilizes symbols of national imperatives in the interests of cultural difference. Nonetheless, although Weinberg suggests that *Homeland* discharges the identity crisis depicted in *POW* (P. 123) I still believe that Islam maintains a powerful presence also in *Homeland*, not only in Brody’s traumatic acting-out, but also latently in the figure of the Jew, Carrie’s mentor Saul, who recites the Jewish requiem (the Kaddish) for all the Muslim and non-Muslim dead in the series. Although doomed to ignorance and the monologism of English, and despite being far less performative than *Fauda* and *POW*, *Homeland* does produce moments that unsettle the “pedagogic.” This, however, does not change the fact that the show displaces the object of violence from Islam onto Carrie’s tormented body which appeases Islam’s subversive political potential while focusing on the dedicated and creative mind of the outcast. In that, it incorporates Islam and terror into the decent Protestant values of mainstream America.

### **The Next Decade: Postscript**

In 2020 Gideon Raff, the principal creator of *POW* and co-creator of *Homeland* embarked on another American production with the Netflix series *The Spy*. This series

tackles a specific Israeli historical and national episode: the recruitment of Eli Cohen, a Jew of Egyptian-Syrian descent, into the ranks of the Shin Beit in order to carry out extensive espionage on the Syrian elite just prior to the 1967 War. This is a twofold and inverse gesture, for Cohen's metamorphosis into Camel Amin al-Tabeth is in fact a return to his origins. Cohen is unarguably an indigenous Arab. Unlike the crew of *Fauda*, he belongs to the first generation of Mizrahi immigrants whose native knowledge of Arabic made them tremendously valuable to the security forces. By casting almost exclusively Israeli or American Jewish actors, Raff's production completely discards the Arabic, French and Hebrew from Cohen's story, subscribing thereby to the orientalist Hollywood approach whereby Israeli actors also portray exotic Middle Eastern Arabs in exclusively English renditions. A further twist is the casting of a British-Jew (Sacha Baron Cohen) in the role of Eli Cohen. Muslims, it seems, will never play Jews, not to mention ordinary white Americans (in *Homeland*, however, there are many Muslim Americans who play Muslim Americans). The pedagogic act in the Netflix production is blatantly obvious when compared with the Israeli Public Broadcaster's production of the same year: a documentary on Cohen, *Lokhem 566* (Combatant 566), in which Arabic and French are richly represented, both audibly in speech and visually in Cohen's many letters and telegrams.

Nonetheless, *The Spy*, like *POW*, contains a strange subversive moment: all the Syrian scenes (which were filmed in Morocco) are colorful, corresponding to the

luxurious and lavish lifestyle that al-Tabeth (now with a fashionable mustache) led in Damascus, while the scenes in Tel Aviv and its surrounding areas (filmed in Hungary) are filtered through various shades of grey. It projects something about the essence not only of the abandoned Arab world but on the state of Israel itself, painful, grey, alienated from the viewer, and East-European. In *Lokhem 566*, Cohen's wife recalls his elation on his return from his long sojourns in Syria, as if this attests to his pride and integrity. Indeed, in his trial – also completely missing from the Netflix plot, in contrast to the documentary which focuses mainly on the trial and its records that reveal much about the Zionist project – Cohen pleaded innocence on the grounds that he was not a traitor but an emissary. The Syrians rejected this plea, and, in the words of the then Syrian president Amin al-Hafiz in his decision to decline a request of pardon: “*bādhā wahidun tabammara alā qawmihī*” (this is an Arab who turned against his own people). Yes, turning always implies two directions and indeed, the limits of one's imagined homeland. Cohen's tormented figure represents a divide that is at the core of Semitism and its colonial tragedy, the shattered homelands – always in plurals – of Jews and of Arabs.

**NOTES:**

1. I believe it is important to give a voice to a Palestinian critic as well (in this case the author is himself Gazan). Thus, Abusalama's sharp criticism claims: "Not in even one scene do they show any respect for the Palestinian resistance to Israeli apartheid" (Abusalama 2020).

2. It is important to note that the paradigmatic shift I am delineating works indeed in tandem with Netanyahu's extended term of office, but the historical break between Israel's old and allegedly pure, sanctified and naïve past, and its blunt ruthless current approach to its own violence (which might be understood as an almost nihilistic state of repression) can be traced to the globalized political environment that preceded it. In the context of the conflict with the Palestinians, Ehud Barak's administration might serve as a better point for periodization, as it sealed the Israeli narrative declaring that the Palestinians do not seek peace after rejecting Barak's proposals at the Camp David Summit of 2000. Indeed, the many studies I have read refer to the Second Intifada which erupted at that time. This historical discourse is beyond the scope of this study, but may contribute another angle to its argument.

3. The state is the only body permitted to legitimately enact physical violence within a certain territory (Weber 1994, 310-311).

4. I cannot suggest a genealogy of this term, but in Cinema Studies it was prevalent especially with the eighties and the aftermath of the First Lebanon War (which was readdressed

later in the first decade of the new millennium in many anti-militaristic works, such as *Waltz with Bashir*). Ella Shohat's classical study of Israeli Cinema refer many times to the paradigm of "shoot and cry," and points out also to "displacing the political issue onto a psychologized, anthropocentric plane" (Shohat 2010, 235-236). In literature, it was probably David Grossman's novel *To the End of the Land*, which was published the same year Bashir was out, and is perhaps the most important work of this wave which *POW* represents in television. The First Lebanon War and the wave that reflects it at the end of the first decade of the millennia (unlike the second which concerns me here), was also discussed by Yaron Peleg and Yael Munk, but although they focused on anti-militarism, they were less concerned with the Palestinians and the way Israel reckons with its offences. See their contribution to S. Harris, Rachel and Omer-Sherman, Ranen (eds., 2013). *Narratives of Dissent: War in Contemporary Israeli Arts and Culture*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press. A study of the first decade of the millennium in Israeli cinema is Utin (2017), which outlines mainly how many films of that time looked away almost wittingly from any kind of deliberations with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

5. The figure of Christ was and still is a point of reference to the Jewish Revival, from the work of Yiddish writer Shalom Ash, to Aaron Abraham Kabak's Hebrew novel *On the Narrow Path* (1936), to Israeli poetry of the sixties and seventies and right up to Amos Oz's novel *Judas* (2014). See for example Kartun-Bloom, Ruth (2009). *Hirburim 'al psikhoteologia be-shirat Natan Zach*, Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad.

6. For the video clip: <https://twitter.com/kaneurovision/status/1126743674816270336>

7. There are many aspects to this renaissance, but perhaps the two most important examples are Eva Illouz's series of long essays about the Mizrahi struggle in the *Haaretz* weekend supplement, which evoked again the pioneering struggle made by the Democratic-Mizrahi Coalition (*ba-keshet*), and the appointment of Miri (Siboni) Regev as Minister of Culture (ushered in a provocative picture of the minister on the front of the "7 Leilot" weekend magazine of Yediot Aharonot [March 10, 2016], accompanied by three black panthers as a form of reclaiming, or appropriating, the "Black Panthers" movement of the seventies, with the title "A Cultural War? This Is the War of Mizrahi Independence!"). For a survey of this "Mizrahi Decade" see Ilias, Ines (2020). "*Eikh mashpi'ah ba-mavabhkha ha-mizrahit shel be-'asor ba-holef 'al ha-bevra ha-yisraelit?*" *Haaretz*, 16 January.

8. Perhaps the most memorable scene takes place in the first season, when during the violent interrogation of the Sheikh, the troop's woman fighter Nurit (Rona-Li Shimon) breaks down and rushes out weeping, only to be admonished by Avihai (Boaz Conforti), the team's sniper, who reminds her that they are trained to act like dogs and to focus only on their mission.

9. See the work of Uri S. Cohen, discussed in Ben Yehuda, 2020, 12.

10. See again the work of S. Cohen.

11. The classical study of the way lives are rendered grievable according to framing by coverages in the media, was made in Butler (2009). Butler also traces that framing as facilitating the use of violence, that is, initiating death easily in the first place.

12. It is important to note that a different interpretation of Hilla is possible: I contend she is not a villain, but Doron does leave her after she lies to him and their superiors (all because of her obsession with Hanni). Again, if there is criticism of her character, it is connected more to her ruthless ambition than to her attitude to the population of Gaza, but at the very end of the series a doubtful reading of her conduct is allowed. It is also worth noting that at the end of the third season crying does find its place when Doron and other members of the troop weep after the death of Avihai, their co-combatant. It is nonetheless very marginal when viewed in the totality of *Fauda's* four seasons. I thank Elad Lapidot of the University of Lille for drawing my attention to this.

13. This approach latently captures an Israeli, and in many respects western view, whereby Muslims themselves do not value their own lives, an attitude encapsulated in Golda Meir's address to the Arabs: "We can forgive you for killing our sons but we will never forgive you for making us kill yours." Today Palestinians continue to be blamed for using civilians and often their own children as "human shields" in order to deter the "moral" army from attacking them. It is remarkable that in the first season of *Fauda*, the Israeli side also partakes in this performance of the "human shield" (Ben Yehuda 2020, 5).



14. Just recently a thorough research was published on the shift I outline here, but from the perspective of the Israeli army, its generals, and habitus. Yagil Levy's thesis inquires the way Israeli society succumbs to what he calls "the militarization paradox," according to which the more a society addresses issues of human rights, the more it also lavishly acknowledges its violence. Like most scholars, Levy's periodization sees in the Second Intifada the beginning of that trend, but at the same time, he also points out to the decisive change between soldiers of that period who were more restrained, and those who, almost twenty years later, were enlisted as snipers in the March of Return (strangely he avoids mentioning the name of the protests) and boasted on their killings (Levy 2023, 235). His analysis also focuses on the ethnic difference between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and it is worth mentioning his observation of a "bad bereavement," by those who proudly applaud the sacrifice of their children for the homeland (356). In that, he mentions Miriam Peretz who lost two of her sons in battle and became a cultural figure in Israel (and also a candidate in the last presidential elections). Levy does not mention that, but it seems that Peretz was never ever captured crying in Israeli media which makes her indeed the epitome of that change in Israeli culture.

15 Morag does not relate to the series, which adheres to her thesis of the trauma of the perpetrator a historical sense as well, as the series was broadcast right after the huge success of *Waltz with Bashir* which is the paradigmatic case of "trauma of the perpetrator."

16 On his wife's sixtieth birthday (in November 2018), the Prime Minister recounted proudly the meeting they both had

with Pope John Paul the Second who was Polish and mistook Mrs. Netanyahu for one of his people because of her European looks.

17. She was twice convicted by court on charges relating to these incidents, but according to the media coverage she allegedly always flaunts her European manners to her employees, even specifying that she and her family drink milk packed in cartons and not plastic bags which are still commonly used in households in Israel.

18. On the tensions between 1948 and 1967, and how the latter enables the relinquishing of any form of accountability for the former, see Shenhav 2012. See also Ben Yehuda 2018.

19. Such subversive moments are also salient in the American production. It is mesmerizing to see at the beginning of *Homeland's* second season that the arch-villain Abu-Nazir, who operates from Iraq and is a member of al-Qaida, is in fact a Palestinian refugee (something that is mentioned in passing). See also Gramling's discussion of drone attacks on Gaza in the series *Rubicon* (2010) in Gramling 2016, 105.

20. For the dismantling of these binaries in the character of Brody as well, see Zanger (2015, 736).

21. See also Negra and Lagerwey 2015, 129-130.

22. On the use of Arabic in *Fauda* see Ben Yehuda 2020, 2, 8.

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