**Beyond Conflict: The Non-Adversarial Aspect of Yitzhak Averbuch Orpaz’s Prose Fiction**

**Abstract**

This paper explores the non-adversarial aspect of two major works by Israeli author Yitzhak Averbuch Orpaz (1921-2015): *Ants* (1968), a novella, and *Daniel’s* *Voyage* (1969), a novel. These works present possibilities for movement that evade relationships of confrontation and resolution, and whose plots stage options for escape from the oppressive apparatus and existence largely identified with the Israeli way of life. To illuminate the non-adversarial alternatives in these works, I draw on three core terms coined by French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: becoming, War Machine, and nomadism. The two works upon which this paper focuses were written and published over two years following the 1967 War. This fact enables their scrutiny in light of political issues associated with the enforcement of power and violence—such as militarism, territorial occupation, and drafting borders—with which Israeli society, politics, and literature were preoccupied at the time. Against this background, Orpaz’s works convey how Israel’s reality of incessant war and conflict defines all aspects of its citizens’ lives and permeates the most intimate interactions as well. Moreover, these works present alternative existential modes and a range of unique interactions that deviate from the binary logic characteristic of confrontational situations and breach the hierarchal and patronizing relationship between “I” and “Other.”

Commencing in the 1950s, Itzhak Averbuch Orpaz’s writing was, to some degree, detached from the stylistic, generic, and social-political mode of other writers of his generation.[[1]](#footnote-1) Orpaz, who began publishing his work a decade after authors of his “biological” generation—S. Yizhar, Binyamin Tamuz, Aharon Meged, and Moshe Shamir[[2]](#footnote-2)—strayed in his writing from the dictates of socialist realism prevalent in these writers’ work. Consequently, Orpaz is customarily associated with the later, 1960s literary generation, the “Statehood Generation,”[[3]](#footnote-3) which included authors, such as Amos Oz and A. B. Yehoshua, whose writing, like Orpaz’s, has often been described as fantastic and allegorical.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Literary criticism focused mainly on aspects of Orpaz’s literature that expropriate it from the circumstantial logic,[[5]](#footnote-5) and classified it on the continuum between the fantastic and realistic, or as moderate realism occasionally breached by way of fantastic incursions.[[6]](#footnote-6) Thematically, Orpaz’s works were understood mainly as existential allegory, which reveals the triviality and absurdity of human existence by casting protagonists striving to cope with this arbitrariness.[[7]](#footnote-7) Literary scholars inclined to explore Orpaz’s works in terms of existential thematics have largely obstructed their reading within a contemporary political context. Even in instances in which Orpaz’s writing features allusions to Israeli current affairs and politics—mainly in stories portraying situations of war and conflict—they are classified, for example, as “existential criticism against the war, which adds pointless suffering to the necessary suffering.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

There were, however, literary scholars who recognized the importance of a political reading of Orpaz’s literature and the difficulty inherent in an attempt to view the Israeli subject featured in it as representing any human being’s existential condition.[[9]](#footnote-9) The readings that pointed to these political overtones viewed Orpaz as a writer who, similar to other Statehood Generation authors, was responding in a not necessarily unrealistic manner to the political issues under critical scrutiny in 1960s Hebrew literature.[[10]](#footnote-10) While these interpretive readings demonstrated how Orpaz’s writing presents the political and social conflicts inherent in Israeli reality, they overlooked how these works also propose possibilities for changing it. This in turn, contributed further to the affixing of such readings within the oppressive and violent apparatuses of confrontation and rule that these critics themselves revealed and criticized. Through Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Felix Guattari’s (1930-1992) philosophical perspective, the close readings presented in this paper will demonstrate how Orpaz’s works offer innovative escape routes from structures of adversity and conflict and illuminate the unrealized potential for change enrooted in Israeli existence.

Common to many of the terms devised by Deleuze and Guattari is a non-adversary and anti-Fascist ethics,[[11]](#footnote-11) which is based on the neutralization of the belligerent and tyrannical dynamic by narrowing the ontological gap between “I” and “Other” (national, gendered, non-human). Although the use of these terms in literary analysis somewhat misses the mark when it comes to what the philosophers’ themselves had in mind,[[12]](#footnote-12) it allows me to see how Orpaz’s works are not satisfied with presenting a pessimistic mirror image of Israel as a sovereign entity founded upon and thriving on aggression and violence, but rather expose alternatives for existence that resist definition in terms of the binary models of conflict and struggle.

**The Ant(i) War Machine: *Ants***

First published in 1968,[[13]](#footnote-13) the novella, *Ants*, portrays Jacob and Rachel, an Israeli couple, on the brink of divorce. As a final attempt to save his marriage, Jacob, a builder by trade, decides to build a new house. Yet, in the early planning stages, Jacob discovers that ants have begun to invade the couple’s old apartment. As the ants gnaw through the apartment walls they become a frightful foe, and Jacob is forced to fight them in what becomes a real battle. The couple, however, does not present a unified front. Suspecting that Rachel has made a secret pact with the ants, Jacob’s objective is not only to annihilate them, but to subjugate and control Rachel as well. But as the ants’ invasion surges, Rachel and Jacob grow closer, both captivated by the ants’ unique charm. This enchantment ensues both in their gradual disconnection from the world and liberation from the human way of life.

The tendency to categorize Orpaz as an author of nonrealistic fiction led to reading the novella as a surrealist allegory illuminating a consciousness of existential issues not necessarily associated with Israeli reality.[[14]](#footnote-14) Other interpretations saw the couple’s struggle against the ants as an allegory for the conflict with the Arab enemy who threatens to destroy and annihilate the Israeli home,[[15]](#footnote-15) and the disintegrating apartment as symbolizing the disintegration of Israeli society,[[16]](#footnote-16) which is continually faces existential terror and a constant state of war.[[17]](#footnote-17) Despite different emphases, these readings all tend to endow the ants with allegorical or symbolic status, and thereby view them as an overt signifier for a hidden and highly meaningful signified. My reading will demonstrate that the novella deals with issues related to conflict and territorial rule associated with contemporary Israeli reality. However, by employing Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts, such as “nomadic War Machine” and “becoming,” I will argue that the ants’ status is neither allegorical nor symbolic, and nor do they represent anything beyond their existence. To some degree, this constitutes a response to Orpaz’s own suggestion regarding how to read the novella: “As excessive, mad, and carnivalesque the fantastic sally may be, it depends on you, the reader, and your choices. You can read it as reality if that appeals to you.”[[18]](#footnote-18)

My reading, which waives the ants’ allegorical aspect and the tendency to perceive them as symbol or metaphor, positions at its epicenter an option for escape from adversarial situations, aggression, and fighting facilitated by the interaction that the characters forge with the ants. This escape from both the territorial drama of the house’s construction and the obsessive desire to safeguard its borders—which are described as a necessity: “to stay in the room all the time, with my eyes on the wall and my hands on my tools” (130)—enables Jacob and Rachel to replace their desire for territorialization, ownership, and control with a breaching of boundaries and liberation from the territorial claims of the sovereign position.

In the State of Israel’s geopolitical history , the border constituted a constant focal point of anxiety and duality. The purpose of the political territory’s border was to facilitate the geographic delineation of the sovereign’s lands. This delimitation was repeatedly threatened by both internal and external forces aspiring to undermine the stability of the border and breach it.[[19]](#footnote-19) Sociologist Adriana Kemp refers to Israel’s obsessive conduct regarding its borders as the “no-border syndrome.” This syndrome, Kemp argues, is the product of a polarized perception, which recognizes the existence of the current borders and strives to stabilize them,[[20]](#footnote-20) and at the same time, has difficulty in seeing them as the “final word.”[[21]](#footnote-21) The State of Israel, Kemp explains, was determined to seal its borders by all means at its disposal. The borders’ stabilization was contingent, therefore, on the consolidation of the national identity of the “new Israeli,” who was obliged to demonstrate absolute loyalty in safeguarding the border while maintaining a sense of unwavering longing for the spaces beyond its formal lines.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Jacob’s rapidly increasing anxiety in face of the threat posed by the ants to his home’s borders is, to a large extent, correlated with the aforementioned border obsession and the Israeli sovereign’s anxiety given the post-statehood “border wars” it conducted. It seems, then, that Jacob, the “new Israeli,” represents the political motivation and determination to define and affix stable borders that will protect his domestic territory against what is perceived as a threat, and that will afford him indisputable control over, and even expansion of, this territory. Jacob’s plan to build a new house, “half on the hillside and half on the sea” (177), parallels the expanding borders of the State of Israel after the 1967 War;[[23]](#footnote-23) and the “glass dome” destined to crown it as hinting at the vision of a reunified Jerusalem, an outcome of this war.

1. **On Ants and War Machines**

According to Deleuze and Guattari’s “Nomadology Treatise,” it was nomads who invented the War Machine. The nomadic War Machine served two main purposes: the first, survival, which is contingent on the ability to maintain diffuse movement in space; and the second, war. Although war itself is not a default *modus operandi* for the nomadic War Machine, it becomes its objective only when encountering a permanent settlement—city or state—that restricts or constitutes an obstacle to the nomads’ propagation in space.[[24]](#footnote-24) In contrast, the State seeks to gain control over the nomadic War Machine and subjugate it for its own purposes. This seizing of power enables the State to exchange the War Machine with a wide variety of State apparatuses, such as an army, police and municipal enforcement, as well as bureaucratic organizations whose purpose is surveillance and supervision. In face of the threat posed by the nomadic War Machine, the sedentary State culture instigates war aimed at warding off and annihilating the invasive nomads.[[25]](#footnote-25)

The affinity between the ants in Orpaz’s novella and the nomadic War Machine is based on the existential modus of multitude: an assemblage of objects in a state of symbiosis with one another that form a single, dynamic, and nonhierarchical functioning entity. The ant colonies do not operate around a center, and although a queen exists within them, her status is not subordinating: she neither commands nor is she considered an actual authoritative figure.[[26]](#footnote-26) According to Delleuze and Guattari, the animalistic mode of existence as multitude is contingent on the ability to create infinite rhizomatic connections,[[27]](#footnote-27) which are not aimed at consolidating territory or establishing commonality. In the framework of multitude, the singularity of each and every subject is preserved and its subjugation to a group or sovereign is prevented. For this reason, the ant-like multitude contradicts the organized structures of nation, people, and state, which, while guaranteeing the individual’s liberty and freedom, in fact, interpelate them towards a center of hegemony and control.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Considering that, according to Deleuze and Guattari, every animal may be part of a multitude, the becoming-animal renders the human individual an animal within a multitude.[[29]](#footnote-29) From here stems the connection between the becoming process and the War Machine; the animalistic existence as multitude, like the nomadic mode of existence, is incongruent to existence in a State or domestic territory subjugated to any given meta-signifier. In contrast to Oedipal animals—domestic animals that undergo a continuous process of anthropomorphism and individuation—animals that exist in multitude (such as swarms, flocks, herds, and schools) are not subject to the hierarchical relations between human and animal.[[30]](#footnote-30) Given that this type of animal cannot be Oedipalized or confined to a defined relationship structure, their social forms constantly threaten territorial units that aspire to establish hierarchy and a stabilized balance of power. Thus, in addition to the ants’ specific role in the novella as a gnawing factor which, in the most literal sense, crumbles the walls of the domestic territory, they also constitute an animalistic multitude that complies with the War Machine’s nomadic logic. If the nomadic way of life is based on arbitrariness and the blurring of boundaries, then the ants’ activity within the walls of the house is comparable to that of the nomadic War Machine in space and vis-à-vis the State apparatus’s acts of territorialization.

Jacob is “a first-class builder” (103). His trade is a manifestation of one of sovereignty’s main objectives: the forging of distinct territories by delineating and normalizing geographical units in space. However, for Jacob, this type of territorial demarcation is not only a profession, it is also an automatic default activated when any given territory faces a threat of disassembly and severance. The novella begins with such a threat—“We decided to divorce” (103)—with the implication of the couple’s separation. Fearing the couple-territorial disjunction, Jacob admits that “The idea of changing apartments took hold of me. To build a house, a home for Rachel and me [...] After all, building is what I do” (104).

When the ants’ invasion threatens the wholeness of the domestic territory, Jacob’s enthusiasm surrounding the building of the new house is replaced with robust zeal for Rachel, his wife, and the domestic space. In face of what is perceived as a nomadic threat over the domestic territory, Jacob puts an intricate network of surveillance mechanisms in place to restore order. When Rachel refuses Jacob’s rapturous erotic advances, he follows her in an attempt to transform her into a type of besieged territorial enclave. Jacob employs territorial terms of delineation and fortification to describe this surveillance, admitting that he has become “tired of circling again and again the white walls of my wife” (14).[[31]](#footnote-31)

Jacob’s relationship with Rachel, who in his words, does not let him “have [his] way with her like a man has with a woman” (103), quickly manifests as a series of attempts to enforce upon her the same appropriation mechanisms that the State enforces upon the nomadic War Machine. Observing Rachel meticulously, Jacob notes that “When the business of the traps had started [...] her hair had been gathered on the back of her head; now it was loose”(126)—an analogy to the ants’ diffusive drive to scatter in space and avoid becoming firmly fixed in a defined territory. Representing a threat to Jacob, he restrains this impulse in Rachel—“I insisted on plaiting her hair into a kind of wreath around her head [...] I thought of the garlanded head of the Roman soldier on the calendar” (ibid). The bay leaf wreath, traditionally placed in the Greek and Roman empires on the heads of army officers, was a class marker of the ruling social strata and represented its victory in the battle for the polis, city-state. The metonymic and historical linkage between garlanded head and polis, frames Jacob’s desire in terms of a territorial impulse for demarcation: plaiting the hair into a garland on the head of Rachel, whose innate nomadism threatens the domestic territory, conspicuously redefines and constitutes her status as a military leader in the battle against the ants. Rachel, however, refuses Jacob: “‘No,’ I heard her voice from between her locks of hair. Her voice was tired and self-indulgent – and peculiar” (ibid).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the State invests vast resources to block the nomadic rhizomatic agency, which undermines the very existence of the ostensibly stable borders. This attempt, they argue, involves a systematic and massive implementation of mechanisms of power and violence. Indeed, in his attempt to preserve his home as an ant-free space, Jacob waives an all-out anti-rhizomatic war against the ants: “Systematically, I filled all the gaps and cracks—in short, anything that could have served as access to an ant nest. And I improved on my weapons as well as I could, putting down ingestion poisons and inhalation poisons in alternating layers” (116). These steps not only ratify the territory’s fortitude, but complement the statement Jacob makes following his temporary extermination of the ants and Rachel’s ensuing infidelity: “Now I believed in the strength of our building. I saved the house, I had routed the enemy” (125).

In Jacob’s battle against the “enemy,” the ants become an object of scientific research in the course of which he employs a variety of observation and surveillance technologies designed to define, classify, and categorize: “I have learned to distinguish between different sounds: the scratching of the scrapers [...] the clinking of the drillers [...] the pounding of the hammerheads [...] the sawing of the saw-edge bearers” (139). Jacob’s desire to stay and obstruct the ants’ multitude while forging a territory with a definitive and permanent border, is therefore manifested as an impulse to signify, distinguish, and define. This impulse, and the violence it entails, are forcefully underscored when Jacob joyously admits: “Still, I wasn’t completely at ease until I laid out the cadaver of an ant on the drainboard and examined it” (141).

1. **War and Anti-War: The State Apparatus and the War Machine**

Even if the ants’ movement destabilizes the apartment’s structured layout, it still avoids any actual conflict or struggle, and raises doubt concerning the ants’ militant and combative predisposition. Jacob’s description of the ants is indicative of their systematic avoidance of face-to-face confrontation: “They didn’t climb on the bed when I was lying on it. They didn’t attack me during my short naps. They always took care to walk around my feet, even if it meant they had to detour, which is no small matter for them” (157). Like the ants, Rachel also avoids physical contact with Jacob. While at the beginning of the novella Jacob describes how they “run into each other a lot and so get embarrassed a lot” (103), later he admits: “I’m not exactly elastic, but even when there’s only a hand’s width between me and the doorpost, my wife Rachel now gets by without touching me [...] she floats and glides and does not see, like light” (136). The ants’ avoidance of clash and confrontation corresponds with Deleuze and Guattari’s contention that war is not the ultimate purpose of the nomadic War Machine, rather it is to ensure its own survival by safeguarding the space that enables its free and unlimited movement.[[32]](#footnote-32)

In contrast, Jacob’s attempts to prevent the ants’ dispersal take on a militant overtone and are described in terms of war and battleground: “two parallel lines of defense. One tactical stopping up the cracks in the wall as soon as they appeared. The other, a long-term strategic project: brick walls on the indie of the drywall” (129). Likewise, the state of a particular room after an attempt to exterminate the ants, is “like a battlefield after the battle” (125). Jacob’s territorial endeavor to appropriate the ant-nomadic War Machine entails the ants installment in a formation of political discourse. This in turn, frames their actions in organized army terms: “Rank upon ranks of ants flowing out of an arched opening in the wall [...] Regiments, brigades, camps, trotting along in unison [...]. Clearly, a great feat of organizational acumen” (163). Moreover, in contemplating whether one of their attacks “was [...] a display of retaliation?”[[33]](#footnote-33) Jacob employs language drawn specifically from the Israeli security discourse. It appears, therefore, that Jacob, representative of the State apparatus in the novella, activates a different type of War Machine against the ants, one well suited to his territorial needs and which is manifested in systematic and violent attempts to stabilize the territory and rule over it.

1. **The War Machine’s Smooth Space and the State Apparatus’s Striated Space**

Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between two types of space—Smooth and Striated—and associate this and their difference with that between nomads and permanent inhabitants, or, in other words, between the War Machine’s space and the State apparatus’s space. The striated space is homogeneous, territorial, demarcated, and delimited, and enables movement upon defined linear trajectories. In contrast, the smooth space is a rhizomatic space, consisting of infinite vectors and constantly changing in accordance with its intrinsic nomadic dynamics. In this space, there is often a blurring of boundaries, and it is open to infinite movement and linkages.[[34]](#footnote-34) Jacob and Rachel’s apartment is portrayed as a striated space in which movement is restricted to linear routes and lines defined in the space between its walls: “Our apartment was small [...] The hall lead into the main room, the main room led into a tiny kitchen, the tiny kitchen into a very small washroom [...] All doors run in a straight line from the door to the roof, and we can’t help bumping into each other again and again” (105).

The ants nibble at the walls, perforating their contours in what appears like rhizomatic movement:

Moving in the veins of the tunnels [...] flowing between the patches of light on our ceiling. Multitudes of tiny ants [...] turning incessantly left and right as if repeating some secret handshake [...] They began as stippled black lines, then the lines grew heavier, thicker, twisted on the wall like eels, like their tails evasive, their heads spreading out and disappearing [...] like twisted roots, they emerge and rise from the walls. (124-125)

Not only does the ants’ movement through the walls transgress the space’s defined passages, it also appropriates these passages as part of a complex and intricate network of other alternative routes. This movement, which is described as “multi-lane processions, an army of stippled lines” (116), resists standardized passages and instead forges a rhizomatic network of new shapes, rhythms, and tracks. Viewing the ants’ actions through a territorial and sedentary prism, Jacob perceives this rhizomatic behavior as evidence of the ants’ inferiority, describing their movement as “general confusion, running about in all directions at once, a hurried, graceless, even hysterical touching of one another” (117). The ants’ alternative movement in the space appears to Jacob as chaos, and he strives to annihilate it by normalizing the space and sealing the fissures in the wall “with the rapid movements of a skilled builder” (158).

Jacob’s obsessive preservation of the domestic territory’s striated characteristics invariably generates a circumstance of confinement and fortification for the inhabitants themselves: in his effort to protect the apartment’s walls, Jacob builds additional interior walls, which in turn, narrow the territorial space even more. The construction of these walls resumes the inner-territorial conflict, which now proves particularly destructive, between Jacob and his wife: “Rachel started the chasing game again, and the wall would come down, and our galloping would raise shivers of desire in my flesh. And eat away at my strength” (178).

1. **Becoming-Ant**

Becoming is a spontaneous exchange of molecular components between two entities (human and/or non-human), which brings about the creation of a new and singular entity.[[35]](#footnote-35) Becoming does not constitute a transition from one stable point to another in an organized structure of relations, but is rather a rhizomatic movement that can simultaneously branch out into an infinite number of unpredictable possibilities.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Jacob and Rachel’s becoming-ant facilitates the erasure of the ontological distinctions between the human and the animalistic, and represents a key to escape the dualism of “I” vis-à-vis “Other,” the underpinning of the struggle against the ants. From the moment the ants first appear, Rachel is extraordinarily fascinated with them. As Jacob admits, “For thirteen years I have constructed houses, hundreds of floors, thousands of tons of building material, and I have never succeeded in exciting my wife the way a little ant can” (108). He notes the playfulness the ants elicit in Rachel when they first appeared: she “jumped to her feet and giggled. What her laughter meant I couldn’t say” (118), and later relates how, when hearing the neighbor screaming in horror “The house is crawling with ants,” Rachel “said proudly [...] ‘Oh yes [...] they get everywhere’” (146). Other descriptions are particularly indicative of an anatomic and physiological resemblance between Rachel and the ants: “My wife has slightly protruded, funnel-shaped ears [...] But it seems to have given her a very fine sense of hearing, When the ant invasion intensified, Rachel put another two hairpins at the sides of her head and so kept her ears unobstructed” (140). Gradually, Jacob joins Rachel, and the two nearly renounce their human way of life and assume animalistic characteristics:

We ate in silence, listening for any sign of the ants. Our table wasn’t set in the usual sense [...] But since we regarded that merely as a temporary inconvenience, we didn’t go to any trouble, and since we used no knives and forks, only our hands, we could also do without the rest of the tableware, napkins, and all that. (147)

Jacob and Rachel’s becoming-ant generates a closeness between them, even though they are on the brink of separation. Jacob recounts how when their neighbor, Bilha, offered Rachel to come live in her apartment until the ants were exterminated, Rachel’s refusal elicited in both husband and wife a similar response: “I looked at Rachel and Rachel looked at me. We never looked at each other that way, Rachel and I. It seems that we even smiled the same smile” (147).

Jacob’s becoming-ant entails renouncing his hierarchal status in the group of builders he works with. When his deputy foreman, Moshe, arrives to reinstate Jacob within a functional framework and extant order—arguing that “the job has to get done” (150)—Jacob announces, “I’m no longer foreman, you’re the foreman now” (152). While looking for the business accounts book to give to Moshe, Joseph’s search takes on an nuance of animalistic-antlike movement in the space. This unique behavior involves an intensive use of the sense of smell:

I looked for it under the armchair, under the easy chair, under the night table. Suddenly I remembered, and I crawled to the tile skirting around the kitchen floor [...] I sniffed at the bookmark, and guided by its smell I started to dig with both hands—as I had seen the ants do—in a little heap of sand with mortar. (155)

This situation also exposes a shift in Jacob’s attitude towards the ants and frees him from the patronizing and violent attitude towards the animalistic “enemy.” In recounting the incident in which a stray ant crawls onto Moshe’s mouth, Jacob says: “I saw its perfect antennae beat uselessly in the air—an embarrassing situation for an ant [...] ‘Just a moment,’ I shouted, and snatched the ant from his fingers and laid it on a little heap of sand” (ibid).

The dissolution of the rigid boundaries between “I” and “Other” corresponds with the dissipation of the linguistic signifying system identified with the domestic territory. At the end of the novella, this home’s capacity for linguistic signification disintegrates completely:

Rachel lays two fingers on my lips to silence me, and her voice falls strangely into what sounds like ragged words from an old worn-out song:

“What will...our house be like?”

“What house...Rachel?” my lips murmur.

“What did you say...Jacob?”

“A dome... a dome...” (190)

Jacob and Rachel’s stammering and fragmented language is characterized by a movement unconstrained by discipline or coherency. This language subverts the functional and referential language responsible for the creation of the new house. By eschewing the signifying territorial language, and the violence it involves, the novella enables the detection of an alternative to this position, a position that imprisons the inhabitants of the Israeli home in an endangered and fortified territory. This new viewpoint, as it arises from the novella, offers a different *modus* *operandi* regarding the territory’s borders: it transforms the borders into routes, which enable one to pass through them, walk alongside them, and transform them.

**“‘Tell Them’, said Daniel, ‘Tell Them: He Left for the Sands.’”[[37]](#footnote-37) *Daniel*’*s Voyage***

*Daniel’s Voyage* was written between 1967 and 1968 and was first published in 1969.

At the epicenter of the novel, which takes place in the days and weeks following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, stands the character of Daniel Dror, an outstanding officer in the paratrooper corps, who “returned very tired from the war” (11). Haunted by the image of the dead body of the Egyptian soldier he killed in the dunes of the Sinai Peninsula, Daniel chooses to stay isolated in his room. He spends most of his time sleeping, staring into thin air, and dismissing the pleas of his mother, Masha, that he go and work at her partner’s architectural firm, with disinterested laconic answers. On the backdrop of his nightmarish memory and his difficulty to adjust to a demanding social environment, Daniel decides to leave his home and travel to the seafront. Those who have killed in the war, explains Daniel, “either go to the sands, or drag their dead with them” (46). Daniel, who is already “dragging” his dead with him, chooses to retire from urban social life, and moves to a deserted corner on Tel-Aviv’s northern shore. There, he encounters Denino, an old fisherman, and Gi, a mysterious nature-girl who “emerged from the sea” (85). As fall descends, Denino dies, Gi disappears, and Daniel leaves his secluded habitat on the beach and returns to his city. Upon his return, and until the end of the novel, Daniel devotes most of his time to what appears like pointless loitering throughout the city without returning home.

Most critics have interpreted the novel as a realization of the existential ideas Orpaz laid out in his essay “The Secular Pilgrim.”[[38]](#footnote-38) The secular pilgrim, states Orpaz, is a character whose existential experience manifests a paradoxical combination between the sober realization of the existential void in a reality without a God, and an uncompromising yearning to find a redemptive meaning for this very existence. Daniel’s encounter with the insufferable arbitrariness of death brings him face to face with the horrific meaninglessness of existence. His sojourn on the beach was hence described as a quintessential existential act of a man who awakens to the realization of his depleted spiritual world.[[39]](#footnote-39) This act generates a chain of epiphanies and mystical experiences: the sea appears before Daniel as an immeasurable entity, rife with life, a source of shelter and meaning, which fills him with a sense of elation and leads him to an unmitigated encounter with creation.

Readings that cast *Daniel’s Voyage* in the existential mold tend to downplay the novel’s political overtones, which constitute it as a response to the events of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Most critics presented the trademarks of Israeli reality that appear in the novel as merely a starting point for a philosophical pilgrimage of a universal nature, which transcends any concrete local framework.[[40]](#footnote-40) However, by “turning his face to the sea” (51), Daniel turns his back on the expanding territory of the Israeli state. Unlike the Zionist meta-narrative, which purports the redeeming movement of the Jewish people towards the “promised land,” Daniel wanders from the homely Israeli territory to a place that does not seem like “someone’s dreamland” (55), in favor of experiencing a non-territorial homelessness. Therefore, Daniel’s “voyage” attempts neither to offer a new model of social affiliation, nor to fill an existential void with sense or meaning, nor even to rehabilitate Daniel’s ideological attachment to the Israeli space. Through Deleuze and Gutattari’s notion of “nomadology,” and the distinction they offer between the “nomad” and the “sedentary,” I suggest that Daniel’s voyage is an anti-journey—an affirmative choice to embrace the aimless, non-teleological nomadic movement that disengages from the aggressive patterns permeating Israeli national existence. This nomadism enables both a different conception of “home,” which is not based on the rigid outlines imposed by the national project, and the emergence of a different subject, whose ties to national territory are no longer dependent on the belligerent enforcement of these ties.

1. **Becoming-Nomad**

Daniel’s initial encounter with the maritime space arouses aggressive and warlike behavior patterns, which are isomorphic with the militaristic position assigned to him by the Israeli sovereignty. The sea, state Deleuze and Guattari, is a prototypical smooth space, and therefore the first of all smooth spaces to encounter the State apparatus’ stratification endeavors.[[41]](#footnote-41) Daniel first views the sea as a territorial destination that he must appropriate: “He stood up, alone before the sea, and felt the spark of madness ignite his eyes: ‘to penetrate, penetrate the womb of the sea!’” (59). The sexual energy accompanying this maritime penetration attests to the conceptualization of nature as a threatening, primordial feminine “Other,” and echoes the erotic rhetoric used to describe the land of Israel in the Zionist pioneering discourse. This “Otherness” receives its validation in Daniel’s description of the sea as a mysterious, limitless, and lustful entity:

‘…and here I am swimming in the sea, striking and rising over its waves. I am of the land and of the sea as one. And yet, the land is also of the sea […]—a fearful idea,’ thought Daniel. ‘When you think of all the hidden depths of the sea you get caught in a vortex.’ (60).

Daniel, who believes that “we are strangers, the sea and I” (60), wages a forceful confrontation, which perpetuates an adversary pattern, in which disparate entities confront and subdue each other. Through Daniel’s prism, reality is perceived as a collection of distinct categories, and each phenomenon is grasped as a separate and stable totality, existing in and of itself. This conception helps him to perpetuate the violent superiority of man over nature, and justifies the characterization of the latter as a passive, controllable object.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Daniel’s extended stay on the ever-changing coastline causes him to open up to a complex process of metamorphosis and becoming:

Hidden tentacles opened in his body [...] his movements became more flexible, his old clumsiness was gone. A space opened between his shoulders. New tumescence flowed into his veins, and the skin of his body, which often seemed to be stitched and blemished by sun damage, glistened in the color of the sand […] the eye of the bystander beyond the shelter of the wall already finds it somewhat difficult to tear away from this strange creature. (79-80)

Daniel’s physical experiences in the maritime space indicate that the human factor is not external and separate from the environment, but is an integral part of it—constituting one of many variables operating together in a complex and multi-dimensional web of interactions.[[43]](#footnote-43)

This rhizomatic connectivity that haphazardly binds multiple variables from different origins, weaves Daniel and the various non-human elements of nature into a heterogonous assemblage, which is characterized by a shared movement of intensities and fluxes. The physical excitations Daniel experiences merge into the changing shifts of his surroundings, and the correlation between his external and internal environment obscure the border that separates them. Upon seeing “a dance of two sea-horses,” who “leap forward and leap backwards as their backs rub one against the other,” Daniel feels as if “a shudder runs suddenly down his spine” (80). The shared movement of Daniel and his surrounding environment transgresses the regulated outlines of the human body; it draws a continual line between man and nature that challenges their conception as essentially separate beings:

The sun was cast directly on the little shell he held in his hand, and the little open shell exposed before him […] and then the shell grew a bit before Daniel’s eyes and he saw that it was not the movement of light but an actual wave, a wave surging and passing through the living body—as it continues to grow, even causing slight outward ripples […]. And Daniel sees that the living surface is furrowed, and in the furrows the water currents move, even though no water flows in them, and it is his hand carrying the shell that flows, for the living flow of the shell’s body passed into his hand as well. (140)

The wave that passes from the sea into the living body of the shell and then into Daniel’s palm, exposes the existence of invisible interfaces between human and non-human heterogeneous bodies. Their shared movement assembles them into a new dynamic entity, and testifies to the polymorphic potential of the human body and its virtual capabilities to become a part of other physical assemblages. Such a “physical nomadicity,” which breaks through the thresholds of the unified, territorial body, undermines the conception of the body as a fixed, coherent unity that is bound by immovable territorial borders.

Daniel’s exposure to the multiplicity of connections between man and nature undermines his attempt to construct them as two stable, distinct entities, and leads him to change his attitude towards the non-human environment. If initially he wished to “penetrate” the sea and breach his way to its core (59), now, he “dipped into it, dipped himself with humility” (78). After observing the living body of the shell, he has a change of heart and says: “‘forgive me, but to eat you I cannot’—and he cast the shell into the sea, saying: ‘it is the sea that cast you ashore and it is to the sea that I shall return you’” (140). These examples indicate that the rhizomatic connectivity neutralizes the dialectic distance between man and nature, a distance that allowed Daniel to grasp himself as someone located outside nature, and nature as an “Otherness” that can be conquered and controlled. The abolition of this distance generates, as Orpaz’s novel illustrates, an ethics of responsibility and accountability that necessitates the suspension of the unbridled aggressiveness of man towards nature.

The becoming-nomad of Daniel finds its expression in the manner in which he occupies the maritime space. When reaching the shore, Daniel wishes to construct a transient residency, and builds himself a shed:

He made the shed almost sealed. Raised it on four planks on its four corners and stretched a wire between each plank […] He strengthened the poles of the shed yet again, and placed mats on the thin bamboo reeds […]. He took another mat to cover the roof of the shed, placed on it some torn pieces of fabric, which rolled on the stretch of sand, and above them, he spread and tied the tent’s fly. (75)

But after the work is done, Daniel confesses his reservations about the finished product: “‘I tried to build myself a shed and instead I constructed another sort of home,’ he said in wonder and discontent” (76). It seems that Daniel does not wish to turn the new space, in which he resides, into a duplicate of his home, urban space. Hence, Daniel implements changes in the structure of the sealed, barricaded home-like shed, and turns it into an open, non-hermetic nomadic dwelling point:[[44]](#footnote-44)

[…] he removed the flap and rags from the roof of the shed, and discarded the mats from the sides [...] from here, he thought, the morning and evening wind will breeze through, and a few rays of sun, and the salty taste of the sea and its views and sounds of crashing waves. (76)

These changes do not only blur the barrier between the shed’s internal environment and its external maritime space, but also inverts the customary hierarchy between them. The shed becomes an integral part of the external, maritime space, and as Daniel’s words disclose, it even carries its traits and is “as transient as footprints in the sand” (76). The transient and penetrable borders of this shed undermine the “domestic logic” upon which it was first constructed, a logic that is manifested in a series of clear distinctions (for instance, “internal”-“external”), which are designed to guarantee that the domestic space constitutes an autonomic and controlled enclave of sorts. The conflation of these distinctions brings forth a different relation between the resident and his transient residency: the shed is no longer destined for prolonged possession, but is rather subordinated to a broad, nomadic movement that inevitably leaves it behind.[[45]](#footnote-45) And indeed, when Daniel eventually does leave his shed on the beach, he makes sure to leave its door wide open, “for the wind and the one who will come after him” (156).

1. **Nomadic Thought**

Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between “nomadic thought” and “sedentary thought” is largely metonymic to the fundamental contrast between “rhizome” and “tree.” Sedentary thought, which characterizes Western, logocentric philosophy, is founded upon distinct categories that are defined through relations of similarity and contrast. Thus, this form of thinking perceives things as entrenched in their safe and stable ontological limits.[[46]](#footnote-46) Like the rhizome, nomadic thought is anti-dialectic; it is based upon the principle of multiplicity; it is in constant flux, and it refuses any conceptual fixation.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The nomadic thought, as Daniel’s contemplations reveal, does not grasp reality as a solid entity or a stable totality, but rather as a never-ending movement of metamorphosis and change:

It all flows to the different and the different to the different from it, and what is eternal is only the flow towards the different; the tree and the rock flow as well, and the rot and the blight and the withering […]. One drop of water will never resemble another, nor will a hand-shake, and even the lovers will awake to a different love each time […]. (141-142)

Daniel’s nomadic consciousness challenges the mental structures that narrow the wide spectrum of existence. The divisions that separate different phenomena dissipate in front of his eyes, and these phenomena are perceived as interlaced via arbitrary associations, with no centralized infrastructure or adherence to any principle of a common essence.[[48]](#footnote-48) As Daniel’s thoughts reveal, this smooth-consciousness space constitutes reality as an arbitrary collage of unceasing states of becoming:

I look again at the grain of sand, and I see flying fish, with fins for wings, and trees meandering on the sea’s surface […] umbrellas sing, and a steamroller wanders the street, honking, and people and their dead sit around the table for an evening chat, and a small child in the skies converses with a split-winged eagle […] and in a place where one grain of sand clings, countless others cling as well, and the wave comes upon it and is swallowed and the footprints come and are erased, and it oozes from all the patterns, and in it everything flows and is not caught. (141-143)

The ability to see reality as subjected to a ceaseless movement of heterogeneous flows allows Daniel to discern the (doomed for failure) operations of ideological signifying mechanisms, which attempt to block this movement and to artificially regulate it in accordance with the State’s meta-signifier:[[49]](#footnote-49)

And if you said in your heart: I will construct a dam against the flow, the dam has also become water; and if you said in your heart: I will close the shutters, the shutters and the home flow to the dirt, which became the stone, which became the house […] I have seen a nation asking to return to its olden days—and there is no return, and a border between nations and races, like the flowing coastline, twists and disappears and returns and flows—and there is no return […]. (142).

Daniel’s observations expose the manner in which the State apparatus constantly seeks to supervise and block the rhizomatic movement outlined above and impose unifying categories such as “race” and “nationality” on multiplicities. Thus, the change in Daniel’s conception of reality marks the moment in which his thought becomes a nomadic War Machine that evades the hegemonic models of perception and smoothes the striated surface of the sedentary patterns of thought.[[50]](#footnote-50)

1. **An Alternative Nomadic Community**

Not long after he arrives at the beach, Daniel discovers that he is sharing his secluded refuge with Gi and Denino, lonely and homeless characters. Gi, a young and mysterious girl, appears suddenly from among the waves, “wobbling on her two legs, wondering whether to return to the sea or continue to shore.” (89). Denino, an old fisherman, is a Job-like character, who lost his entire family and belongings, and ever since “he walks on, walks to wherever his legs take him. He no longer remembers for what purpose. But he cannot stop walking.” (120).

The random association of these unusual characters turns them into a nomadic community. Gi, “for whose comings and goings there is no law” (88), seems a potential and liberating replacement for the organized social frameworks of Israeli sovereignty, and Denino, who “does not count the years of his life nor does he know his age” (83-85), are free from any striated conception of time as a continuous, quantifiable progression from past to present; a conception that cultivates, in turn, a sense of shared social destiny and national affiliation. They do not adhere to the common frameworks of the social existence, nor do they share the passion to participate in the collective process of forming a national identity.

When Gi and Denino sit on the beach “a little while or a long while, a time not defined in hours” (177), the non-quantifiable passages of time are emphasized. Once Daniel joins them, he finds that he has lost count of the days “and again it was night—he could not say how many have passed” (71). When Daniel mysteriously loses his watch, an object that symbolizes the striated perception of time (78), he, in fact, succumbs to the elusive topography of the smooth space. Free of his watch, Daniel, like Gi and Denino, experiences the changing, amorphous metamorphosis of nature, and sees “the liquid, elusive scenery of sunset. The play of shifting shades, the sun shuddering as it first touches the water.” (89).

The alternative posed by this nomadic community to the oppressive social order is manifested, among others, in the fraternal covenant between Gi and Daniel, who declare themselves to be “brother and sister” (96; 101). Their fraternal bond evades the restraining power of the Oedipal familial schema, since “in the society of brothers, alliance replaces filiation, and the blood pact replaces consanguinity.”[[51]](#footnote-51) The horizontal relationship between brother and sister is hence posited as an alternative to the vertical filiation of the Oedipal model. It does not duplicate the hierarchical family triangle, whose protagonist, Oedipus, can only contemplate his mother and father, but converts it into a relationship of equality and fraternity: “a brother, a sister, all the more true, for no longer being ‘his’ or ‘hers’, since all ‘propriety’, all ‘proprietorship’ has disappeared.”[[52]](#footnote-52) The implied erotic dimension of Daniel’s relationship with Gi speaks for a heterogeneous, unbridled flow of desire, which passes “through the incestuous relation between brother and sister.”[[53]](#footnote-53) Thus, Daniel’s desire for Gi replaces his own Oedipal desire for his mother and produces another form of incest, “that gives evidence of a nonhuman sexuality as in the becoming-animal.”[[54]](#footnote-54) This form of sexuality characterizes Daniel’s experience in blurring the boundaries of his identity and the regulated, homogeneous desire that it entails.

1. **Becoming and Forgetting the (Oedipal and National) Journey in the Footsteps of the Father**

By becoming-nomad, Daniel evades the hegemonic, teleological schema of two meta-narratives of identity-formation: the masculine-formation journey in the footsteps of the lost father, and the Oedipal journey to eliminate the present father.[[55]](#footnote-55) As the novel demonstrates, these narratives are destined to lead Daniel into a predetermined subject position, which is based on his identification with the authority embodied in these fathers: an authority that is simultaneously Oedipal and national.

The Oedipal desire to eliminate the stepfather, Dave Ruskin, manifests itself in Daniel’s suspicion and animosity towards him. Daniel “detested the expression of content ownership Ruskin’s face would take every time he looked at his mother” (21-22). The wish to reunite with the lost biological father, who left his family without any explanation, drives Daniel’s choice to leave his home. Daniel follows the logic that assumes that “this is how it should be, the son follows the father and the son finds the father and then they both return, the son and the father” (59). Daniel’s gradual oblivion of his fathers is revealed as highly liberating: not only because their existence is related to a reductive male odyssey, but also because it removes the necessity of forming a subjectivity that is measured by its success in identifying with these fathers. The sole purpose of this necessity, as portrayed throughout the novel, is to affirm Daniel’s attachment to the State apparatus, used as a means to incarcerate his desire within the oppressive frameworks of national existence.

As a solution to Daniel’s persistent refusal to return to life’s routine, his mother proposes that he follow in the footsteps of his stepfather, Dave Ruskin, and work at his architectural firm. Ruskin’s profession manifests the State apparatus’ aspiration for constant territorialization, since he loyally pursues the task of marking the Israeli space.[[56]](#footnote-56) His architectural project is “…a project for Jerusalem […] I propose the Gate of Gates to Jerusalem. Jerusalem has many gates, but my gate will be the Gate of Gates […] symbolizing the eternity of Jerusalem and its universality.” (26-27). Constructing the “Gate of Gates” constitutes paradigm that combines the territorial with the theological and alludes to the occupation of the Old City in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. By attempting to construct the gate, a regulating apparatus, as a way of celebrating the city’s holiness, Ruskin’s plans expose how the architectural structure carries out the sovereign’s will to safeguard the territory as a unified, homogeneous totality, free from any de-territorial displacement.

Ruskin’s passion for territorial marking far exceeds the field of architecture—it emerges time and again as a salient strategy that is put into action whenever he wishes to demonstrate his power and control within a new territory, be it geographical or human. His entrance into the nuclear family positions him in a central role within the Oedipal rivalry with Daniel, and is described as an actual territorial invasion. Like territorial animals, this invasion leaves its mark through smell: the smell of Ruskin’s pipes, which “clung to every corner of the house,” clings to “the hair on [Daniel’s] mother’s head” (21), and even the phone reeks of his “tobacco and bad teeth” (11). Ruskin’s violent territorial marking also appears in the description of his trip to Ramallah, during which he “urinated on their land for all to see [...] ‘like the jackals’ [Ruskin] yelled… ‘If you don’t believe me, read Woolworth’s book: jackals urinate on a place or an object and that is how they claim ownership over it.’” (29).

After Ruskin completes the account of his exploits in Ramallah, it seems that Daniel surrenders to the predetermined course of the Oedipal-territorial struggle for power and conquest. He assents to Ruskin’s animalistic marking ceremony by challenging him to participate in a urinating contest, over the roof of the building. However, he quickly discovers that in the competition they find themselves in—“Ruskin and Daniel, each in his own puddle […] with trembling voices” (30)—there are no winners. Daniel silently ponders: “I know that both of us, you, Ruskin the architect […] and myself, Daniel the victorious warrior, stand here with wet pants. Yes, and lost.” (Ibid). This mutual “defeat” of Israeli sovereignty’s prototype figures—the architect, builder of the country, and the military man, entrusted with conquering it—attests to the fact that “the question of the father is not how to be free in relation to him (an Oedipal question), but how to find a path there where he didn’t find any.”[[57]](#footnote-57) Daniel finds this path by attempting to regain his freedom, his inventiveness and his nomadic capacities.

Misha, Daniel’s biological father, embodies not only Daniel’s attachment to his biographic, personal past, but also to his broader, mythic and ideological attachment to the Israeli territory. Daniel’s memory of his biological father cannot be understood solely in terms of a journey after a lost father, but also as a yearning for a territorial promise, designed to fully legitimize the national subject’s ownership of space. In one childhood memory, Daniel and his father, a high-ranking military officer, travel together to Masada: “…and his father points at the gloomy mountains in the East and the white mountains in the West, and says: ‘all of this is yours, my son.’” (19). The deliberate choice of Masada, whose historical tale was appropriated by Zionism as a symbol of national rebirth at the price of unrelenting struggle,[[58]](#footnote-58) and the allusion to the divine promise given to Abraham,[[59]](#footnote-59) turns the fault in Daniel’s memory into a liberating opportunity to escape a subjectivity that is defined as a territorial destiny and through a mythic conception of the Israeli nation. Therefore, Daniel’s fading memory of his fathers enables the emergence of a different subject—a minor, nomadic and ever-changing subject—who is free from the violent chains of any mytho-national meta-narrative.

1. **Urban Nomadism**

In the last part of the novel, Daniel returns to the urban space not as a man of the State demanding ownership of territory as a way to restore his status, but as a homeless vagabond; a constant vector of de-territorialization, who understands that “man, like a shell, can carry the sigh of the ocean everywhere. And even to bathrooms” (179). Daniel’s return to the city neither rectifies nor restores his affinity with the space he left, rather it is a return characterized by a movement of urban meandering, which challenges the obstructive dictates of the defined routes in the urban space: “There was a strange feeling in him, in Daniel as he walked like that in the street. He was light on his feet, but still felt as if they were scattered about, as if wanting to feel, all at the same time, the entire sidewalk” (p. 190).

Daniel’s succumbing to urban ambling deflects his attention from his home and postpones his return to it. This surrender may be indicative not only of a lack of a physical bond to the house or of the nomadic refusal to reside in a defined place and time, but also of the absence of a movement of renewed settlement in the context of the ideological structure this house signifies. Daniel seeks to conserve this fundamental position of foreignness and exiles himself to the geographical and ideological margins of the urban space. Daniel’s urban meandering subverts the social paradigm dictated by the Israeli hegemony and anticipates its return to the official and legitimate home by way of an unmediated encounter with the “Other home” of Jewish nationalism:

And he slowly ascended [...] through a narrow and winding path, Sumail hill. A few stone houses, **relics of a former Arab village**, scattered at the edges of the hill, their walls peeled-plaster, and mute people living in them [...] It was an old decrepit house, its window closed, and simple rough stones peeping through remnants of green plaster, without a spot of green or a tree nearby [...] The stone itself was dry, stubborn, insubordinate [...] He felt the stone with his hand, his eyes. He ran his hands over the soft, somewhat succulent, yet pleasant to the touch, leaves moving joyously, wanting to feel the stone’s wounds. (174; my emphasis).

Daniel’s wandering through Tel-Aviv’s urban space generates blurring and a de-territorializing displacement of the rigid borders between the conspicuous urban center and the hidden periphery; it relocates the hegemonic center (the Jewish-Israeli-Ashkenazi home) to the margins of Daniel’s consciousness, and replaces it with a different center, one consisting of the denied and territory-less parts of the Israeli sovereignty – the Arab house. Daniel’s turn towards the hidden areas of the “White City,”[[60]](#footnote-60) towards the remnants of the Arab village and its people who lack the ability to speak,[[61]](#footnote-61) sabotages the exclusive bond between the subject and the territory the Israeli sovereign strives to stabilize. In doing so, Daniel expresses a minor-nomadic stance, which is not motivated by a zealous aspiration to establish a sense of ownership – “authentic” and “ensconced” – over the space, in the context of which relegating himself “to the margins of the collective to which he belongs is the obvious move.”[[62]](#footnote-62)

From this standpoint, which veers the gaze towards the marginal, borderline, and remote part of Israeli reality, Daniel encounters the “Other” in a relationship of closeness, not of distance, adversity, and conflict. Hidden within this encounter is an opportunity to retell the story of the city—and perhaps even the story of Israel’s sovereignty—from a point of view capable of telling the “opposite-story”: the story of “Others” bound to this territory. By way of this encounter, like others described in the novel, a commonality emerges between *Daniel’s Voyage* and *Ants*. These works enable, if only for a few fragile moments, to think about forms of existence that evade the adversarial opposition between “I” and “Other,” the foundations and scaffolds of Israeli reality, “the origin and collective destination of a people to come still ensconced in its betrayals and repudiations.”

1. Z. Caspi and Y. Schwarz, ’טוב לי שם בארצות התפר‛ – ראיון בהתכתבות עם יצחק אוורבוך אורפז, Mikan: *Journal for Literary Studies* 6 (2005): p. 199-224. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Orpaz’s first book, עשב פרא(*Wild Grass*), was published in 1959, while Izhar’s first collection of stories, "החורשה בגבעה" (The Woods on the Hill), appeared already in 1947 and Shamir’s first novel, הוא הלך בשדות, was published in 1946. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See, for example: H. Barzel. “”מבוא לסיפורי י. אורפז (Introduction to the Fiction of Y. Orpaz), in שבעה מספרים (Seven Storytellers; Jerusalem: The Ministry of Culture and Education and Yakhdav Publishing, 1973) p. 185; E. Hanoch. מסורת עגנון והמודרנה בסיפורת העברית של שנות השישים: א. ב. יהושע, יצחק אורפז ויורם קניוק (Agnon’s tradition and modern Hebrew literature of the 1960s : A.B. Yehoshua, Y. Orpaz, Y. Kaniuk. PhD Thesis, 1987), p. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Gershon Shaked adds that the affinity between Orpaz and the Statehood Generation authors is not only stylistic, but idealistic as well. Shaked argues that Orpaz’s work managed to express, like the Statehood Generation authors, direct or indirect criticism of pre-statehood Israel’s political policy, through plots that undermine the fundamental norms upon which the Zionist meta-narrative was constructed. G. Shaked. הסיפורת העברית 1880-1980 [כרך ה] (Hebrew Narrative Fiction 1880-1970 [Volume 5]; Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1998), p. 104, 148-149. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. H. Barzel. סיפורת עברית מטריאליסטית. (Meta-Realistic Hebrew Fiction; Ramat Gan: The Hebrew Writers Association in Israel near Masada Publication, 1974), p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. O. Bartana. הפנטזיה בסיפורת דור המדינה (Fantasy in Statehood Generation Literature; Tel-Aviv: Papyrus, 1989), p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A. Balaban. גל אחר בסיפורת העברית (A New Wave in Hebrew Literature; Jerusalem: Keter, 1995), p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Bartana, 1989, p. 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Y. Oren. התפכחות בסיפורת הישראלית (Disillusionment in Israeli Prose; Tel-Aviv: Yachad, 1983), p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See, for example: Oren, 1983, p. 17; H. Hever. ”ספרות ישראלית מגיבה על מלחמת 1967‟ (Israeli Literature Reacts to 1967 War) in חמישים לארבעים ושמונה: מומנטים ביקורתיים בתולדות עם ישראל (Fifty to Forty-Eight: Critical Moments in the History of Israel; special issue of *Theory and Criticism* 12-13, ed. Adi Ophir, Jerusalem: Van Leer, Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1998), p. 179-187; S. Peled. הריבון הישראלי (The Israeli Sovereign; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2014), p. 33-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. In his Introduction to the English version of *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* – the first book coauthored by Deleuze and Guattari in 1972 – Michel Foucault characterizes the book as “Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life.” The fascism that Deleuze and Guattari object to, Foucault explains, is not Fascism as a political method, rather fascism that infiltrates everything and causes human beings to exalt hierarchies and glorify contest and rivalry; to enforce power over others also in the most basic interactions, sometimes unconsciously and unintentionally. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1984 [1972]), pp. xv. For further explanation, see: O. Zehavi. ”מינוריות‟ (‟Minoracy”; Mafte’akh: Lexical Review of Political Thought 1 [2010]: 37-50). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Deleuze and Guatarri’s anti-methodic and anti-interpretive philosophy refuses to crystalize into a closed schema of terms that can serve as a basis for reading and interpreting literature. Even when Deleuze and Guattari deal with a particular author’s work, they do so without proposing a distinct reading method that can function as an interpretive framework. Reading in the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy, as it arises from their book *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1975), does not focus on the text’s levels of representation and meaning, but rather in the way it operates, that is, in the unique way it employs language. The reading presented in this paper is primarily based in the representational dimension of the language and the meaning derived from the action of linguistic representation, however, it still strives, through the perception of life and existence at the core of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy, to trace, as much as possible, the movement that eschews earlier interpretations upon which the existing readings of the discussed texts in literary scholarship. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Yitshak Orpaz. נמלים (Ants; Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1968). All citations in this article are taken from the English translation: Y. Orpaz. ‟Ants”, in *The Death of Lysanda—Two Novellas* (translation: Richard Flint and David Zaraf, Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2013), p. 103-192. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See, for instance: G. Moked. בזמן אמתי: 96 מסות, מאמרים, רצנזיות ורשימות על הספרות העברית של דור המדינה (In Real Time: 96 Essays, Articles, and Notes on the Hebrew Literature of Statehood Generation; Tel-Aviv: Achshav, 2011), p. 79; G. Lesham. ”סוריאליזם אנושי חרקי‟ (Human-Insect Surrealism; Moznaim 6 [1982]: 45-46). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Peled, 2014, p. 33-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. N. Govrin. ”השתקפות הבית הישראלי בספרות העברית‟ (The Reflection of the Israeli Home in Hebrew Literature), עיתון עיצוב (Design Journal; <<http://www.israelidesign.co.il/guide_item_4266.html>>). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. E. Ben-Ezer. ”נופים וגבולות: תחושת מצור בספרות העברית‟ (Landscapes and Borders: The Siege Experience in Hebrew Literature; Ma’arav 5 [2007]: <<http://www.maarav.org.il/archive/classes/PUItem1887.html>> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Kaspi and Schwarz, 2005, p. 223. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Also see in this context Benny Morris’s book*, Israel’s Border Wars, 1949-1956: Arab Infiltration, Israeli Retaliation, and the Countdown to the Suez War* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1996) in which he discussed the drastic and aggressive means used by the state of Israel to eradicate the infiltration that increasingly expanded between the 1948 War and the Sinai Campaign. The retaliation operations, which he calls “border wars,” reflected the fear that the Israeli state would be flooded with hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, which would undermine one of the most significant territorial accomplishment of the war: the formation of a Jewish majority in Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A. Kemp. מדברים גבולות: הבנייתה של טריטוריה פוליטית בישראל 1949-1957(Talking Borders: The Construction of a Political Territory in Israel, 1949-1957 [PhD dissertation], Tel-Aviv University, 1997), p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ibid, p. VII. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Hever, 1998, p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 351-423. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 355. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. For elaboration, see: D. Gordon. *Ant Encounters: Interaction Networks and Colony Behavior* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); A. Escobar. ‟Other Worlds Are (Already) Possible: Cyber-Internationalism and Post Capitalist Cultures” in *The World Social Forum: Challenging Empires* (Ed. Jai Sen, Anita Anad, Arturo Escobar, and Peter Waterman. Delhi: Viveka, 2004), p. 349-358. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari claim, represents a non-lineal way of thinking, which is the opposite of Western philosophy’s tree-like thought. While the tree represents order, hierarchy, causality, and authority, the rhizome expresses a network of non-hierarchal and non-linear connections, that assemble spontaneously, and which enables connectivity from any point to any other point. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 3-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. E. Dotan. להקה (א) (Pack [A]; Eyal Dotan’s Blog – Theory, Literature, Art, Culture Critique, June 15, 2010: <http://eyaldotan.com>). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 245-299. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid, p. 240-241. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The intertextual affinity between this description and the biblical story about the Israelite’s circumventing the walls of Jericho for seven days, which eventually led to the falling of the walls and enabled the conquering of the city (Josh 6), powerfully expresses how Jacob’s desire to control his wife is perceived by him as an aggressive-territorial strategy of occupation and rule. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 351. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. This sentence does not appear in the translation. What appears here is my own translation of the Hebrew source (Orpaz, "ההיה זה מפגן תגמול?" 1986, 176). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], pp. 492-499. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid, pp. 300-304. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. A. Azoulay and A. Ophir. אנו לא שואלים ’מה זה אומר‛ אלא ’איך זה פועל‛: הקדמה לאלף מֵישָרים(We Do Not Ask ‛What It Means’ But ‛How It Works’: Introduction to *A*Thousand Plateaus; Theory and Criticism 17 [2000]: p. 123-131), p. 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Y. Orpaz. *Daniel*’*s Voyage* (Bnei Brak: Hakibbutz Hameuchad. 2014 [1969], pp. 45 [in Hebrew]). All quotations from this source are originally in Hebrew and are my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. This essay was first published in installments between 1967-1977 in the journal מאזניים (Moznaim(, and was later collected into a book, which was published in 1982. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See: Y. Kedmi. בין שמא לוודאי: עיונים בשירה ובסיפורת העברית (Between Probably and Certainly: Readings in Hebrew Poetry and Fiction; Tel-Aviv: Sifriyat Hapoalim, 1981), p. 153; Bartana, 1989, p. 176; Barzel, 1974, p. 105; C. Ziskind. 'אדם קורא למישהו ומישהו פשוט עונה'—על מסע דניאל לאורפז (A Person Calls Someone and that Someone Simply Answers – On Daniel’s Voyage by Orpaz; Alei Siach 7 [1979]: p. 274-275. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. 40 Carmel Ziskind wrote that “ostensibly, this is a book about war, but it is fundamentally a work about man in the modern world. The topic of war serves as a background to emphasize the larger human problem [...] the war is the Six Day War. The casualty is Egyptian, and Daniel – Israeli, however [...] the is a war in general, including all of its consequences, and the casualty is any casualty, and Daniel is everyman” (Ziskind, 1979, p. 273). Orzion Bartana described the novel’s proximity to the contemporary reality, and argued that it embodies Orpaz’s attempt “to connect between current affairs, existentialism, and a metaphysical worldview.” However, he clarified that even if there is an implication in Orpaz’s novel of criticism of this current reality, it is more existential than political, given that “Orpaz is not interested in the meaning of the war but with its personal context – it is neither about ‘Palestinians,’ nor the struggle for this land, and not about the significance of the Six Day War victory, but rather about the meaning of death in the eyes of who faced it, who caused it, who was forced to kill a man” (Bartana, 1989, p. 182). Hillel Barzel even expressed הסתייגות from the reading of *Daniel’s Voyage* as a response to the issue of the territories occupied in the 1967 war and argued that this political issue is a marginal, not central, matter in the novel (Barzel 1974, p. 110). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 387. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. This violence against nature was the נחלתה of the ideological practice of “conquering the שממה.” According to Avivit Agam Dali, in the framework of Zionist discourse, nature served not only as a “white screen” upon which the collective-national fantasies new Jewish people in their land were projected, and the realization of these fantasies in the framework of the settlement mechanism was contingent on a desire to cultivate and domesticate nature, and thereby render it “Jewish.” (Agam Dali. מחוזות חפץ [The Place that Lacks Locality]; Tel-Aviv: Resling, 2010, p. 76). The Zionist movement’s impulse to rehabilitate renew the connection between the territory of the Land of Israel and the Jewish nation, involved, to a large extent, the re-territorialization of the multiple links between man and nature possible into defined and one-directional channels, which are supported by ideological signifying (demarcating) practices. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Y. Dayan. אקווה פואטיקה (Aqua Poetics; Tel-Aviv: Resling, 2012), p. 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Contrary to the common conception, the nomad can have a territory, as well as dwelling points and temporary residences, and although they do not function as a formative existential principle, or a purpose in and of itself (like for the sedentary), it would be a mistake to define the nomad solely through his ongoing physical movement. However, even when the nomad rests in stationary dwellings, the way he distributes himself in space will always remain dynamic, since, unlike the sedentary, the nomad does not attempt to divide space into encircled, fixed territorial zones (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 381). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid, p. 380. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid, p. 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. H. Deuel Lusky. הקדמה לפילוסופיה של פני השטח: שמונה סוגיות בפילוסופיה של פריז (Preface to Philosophy of the Surface: Eight Issues in Paris Philosophy; Tel-Aviv: Resling, 2007), p. 53-74. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. B. Massumi. *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: The MIT Press. 1992), p. 5.   [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Azoulay and Ophir, 2000, p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 337. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. G. Deleuze. “Bartleby; or, The Formula.” *Essays Critical and Clinical* (Translation: Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco. New York: Verso. 1998 [1993]), p. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Ibid, Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Deleuze and Guattari, 1986 [1975], p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. For a further discussion of this narrative schema, see: O. Lubin. "איך בכל זאת נשים מצליחות לכתוב?" (How Do Women Manage to Write After All?) in דרכים לחשיבה פמיניסטית: מבוא ללימודי מגדר (Feminist Approaches: An Anthology; ed. Nitza Yanay, Tamar El’or, Orly Lubin, and Hannah Naveh. Ra’anana: The Open University, 2006), p. 277-278. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Deleuze and Guattari describe architecture, in its traditional and conservative sense, as the art of habitation; a discipline responsible for allocating structures that breach the continuity of the space and regulate the movement of objects within it. Architecture is identified with sedentary cultures, since it works towards forming a striated architectural space that executes the planning and governing patterns of the State apparatus (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 329). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari. Kafka*: Towards a Minor Literature* (translation: Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press. 1986 [1975]), p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. The Zionist movement used the historic event of Masada as a symbol of reborn Jewish nationalism and as an embodiment of the ideal of military self-sufficiency (S. Goldman. *God’s Sacred Tongue: Hebrew & the American Imagination*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press. 2004, p. 156). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See, for instance, this promise as it appears in the Covenant of the Pieces: “And he said unto him; I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land, to inherit it” (Genesis, 15:7). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. The city of Tel-Aviv developed on the geographical space which was inhabited by many Arab villages—mainly Jaffa and its neighborhoods to the south, but also smaller villages to the east and north. Somail, which is mentioned in the novel, is one of five Arab villages that exited on the territory upon which Tel-Aviv was later built. These villages were completely destroyed in the 1948 war. In his book, White City, Black City, Sharon Rotbard describes how the existence of Tel-Aviv as a Jewish, Hebrew, and “white” city, waving the flag of the Zionist project, was conducive to the ‘blackening’ and concealment of its Arabic areas. This enabled the formulation of the national narrative according to which the territory upon which the city was founded was empty and desolate when its founders and first residents arrived (S. Rotbard. *White City*, *Black City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015). Orpaz [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. ... [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Zehavi, 2010, 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)