

# SETTLER MIMICRY: COLONIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION THROUGH IMITATION

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**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the dynamics of settler mimicry in Israel—Palestine and its manifestations in the visual arts. It probes the operation of mimicry as a colonial strategy but also emphasizes its decolonial potential. Although imitation of the Palestinian natives enables Israeli settlers to annex the territory, this article suggests that mimicry can be delinked from its colonial registers and transform the settlers' worldview. This analysis seeks to expand the insights of Patrick Wolfe, who saw the elimination of the natives as the central feature of settler colonialism. By highlighting instances in which the settler mimics the native, this article challenges his reductionist framework, which pins colonial projects to their materialist objectives. Whereas exploitation colonialism uses the colony's resources, Wolfe contends, settler colonialism is geared toward the seizure of land, and hence toward physical and ideological elimination of the native. This article, on the other hand, emphasizes the complexity of settler colonialism and foregrounds the tension between the cultural apparatuses of elimination and mimicry. While imitation facilitates the indigenization of settlers, it also highlights the presence of natives. This internal tension renders the operation of settler colonialism ambiguous and thus can be utilized to decolonize Zionism.



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*On Yom Kippur in the year 5728, I dressed up  
In dark holiday clothes and walked to the Old City of Jerusalem.  
I stood for a long time in front of the alcove of an Arab's shop,  
not far from the Damascus Gate, a shop  
of buttons and zippers and spools of thread  
in every colour and snaps and buckles.  
A bright light and many colours, like an open Torah Ark.  
I told him in my heart that my father too  
had a shop like this, with thread and buttons.  
I explained to him in my heart about all the decades  
and the causes and the events, why I am now here  
and my father's shop is burnt there, and he is buried here.  
When I finished, it was time for the Closing of the Gates Prayer.  
He too lowered the shutters and locked the gate  
and I returned, with all the worshippers, home.*

—Yehuda Amichai, from *Jerusalem Poems* 5

Yehuda Amichai's poem was written after the sweeping Israeli victory in the Six-Day War in 1967. It describes a visit of the Israeli poet to the Old City of Jerusalem during the Jewish Day of Atonement and is peculiar in its somber tone. While Israel was celebrating its triumph, Amichai seemed ambivalent. His holiday clothes were dark, and the conspicuous indication of the Hebrew year 5728 (תשכ"ח) implies forgetfulness.<sup>1</sup> Amichai does not specify what this oblivion entails, but the poem addresses two issues that Zionist rhetoric tends to neglect: Jewish exile and the Palestinian Other. That the two amnesias are juxtaposed in the poem is hardly a coincidence. The Zionist negation of exile, as Raz-Karkotzkin argues, is inherently linked to the Israeli suppression of "the Arab problem."<sup>2</sup> If the suppression of exile enables Zionists to forget the Palestinians, the latter's presence may have the opposite effect. Amichai's poem was triggered by his encounter with a shop of an Arab that reminded him of the burnt shop of his father, who fled Germany in 1933. The (Palestinian) Other evoked the memory of the (Israeli) Self as the Other.

Gradually, however, identification with the Other's suffering is transformed into Zionist apologetics. The poet's silent monologue addressed to the Palestinian shop owner reveals his anxiety regarding the intrusion into the occupied territory: "I explained to him in my heart about all the decades/and the causes and the events, why I am now here/and my father's shop was burned there, and he is buried here." This inner and unidirectional monologue in which "decades," "causes," and "events" are invoked but not explicated ends abruptly when the Arab closes his shop. But despite the poet's inability to justify his presence, the poem does it by other means. It establishes an analogy between the conqueror and the conquered, which serves not only as a victimization strategy that makes the Palestinian and Jewish dispossessions comparable but also puts into action a mimetic strategy that enables the poet to see himself as the native. If the poem begins with angst about the Israeli occupation, the gap between Amichai and the Arab is gradually receding. Amichai not only equates his father's and the Arab's shops, thread to thread and button to button, but also visualizes the encounter with the Arab's shop as the Closing of the Gates prayer during which the Torah Ark is kept open and the colorful decoration of the holy books are visible.

If mimicry, as Homi Bhabha argues, following Jacques Lacan, is a camouflaging strategy,<sup>3</sup> the representation of the shop as a Torah Ark disguises the difference between the settler and the native. Similarly, by juxtaposing the Closing of the Gates prayer with the closing of the shop, Amichai makes the shop owner a participant of sorts in the Jewish ceremony. Thus, in the last line of the poem, the binary oppositions of Arab/Jew, occupier/occupied, and settler/native collapse. Unlike the ethnic identity of the shop owner or the religious specificity of the Closing of the Gates prayer, the word "worshippers" (*"mitpalelim,"* literally those who pray) is not followed by any modifier and thus might refer to the Jews who completed their Yom Kippur prayers, the Arab shop owner, or any other worshipper. Thence, under the darkness that descended on Jerusalem, Amichai becomes undistinguishable, and within a homogeneous crowd of worshippers, he returns *home* . . .

Amichai's strategy is subtle but not unusual. The Israeli society from its very Zionist inception appropriated elements from the local Palestinian culture. The adoption of local dresses and customs by

HaShomer members, the integration of Arabic words into Palmach's lexicon, and the inclusion of Palestinian dishes in Israeli cuisine are popular examples of Zionist mimicry. The Israeli singer Meir Ariel famously writes, "At the end of every sentence in Hebrew sits an Arab with narghile, even if it starts in Siberia or in Hollywood with *hava nagila*." The notion of mimicry has been discussed by several scholars in the Israeli context. Daniel Boyarin argues that Zionism embodied a "mimicry of colonization" through which "the Zionists seek to escape the stigma of Jewish difference."<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, Livnat Konopny-Decleve, who studies the Hilltop youth's appropriation of Palestinian modes of resistance, emphasizes instances "in which the conqueror imitates the conquered."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Nur Masalha perceives the Israeli "appropriation of Palestinian place names" as a case of mimicry,<sup>6</sup> and Nicola Perugini analyzes "the appropriation of the [Palestinian] discourse of trauma, human rights, and displacement" by Gush Katif settlers.<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein, Haim Yacobi argues regarding Israeli built environment that "the Palestinian landscape is a subject of mimicry through which a symbolic indigenization of the settlers takes place."<sup>8</sup>

The desire to imitate the natives and thus claim their position characterizes other settler projects.<sup>9</sup> The Australian literary scholar Alan Lawson argues that "in settler cultures, mimicry is a necessary and unavoidable part of the repertoire of the settler,"<sup>10</sup> and the Australian sociologist Avril Bell maintains that after the establishment of settler states "the desire and need to 'mimic' the imperial culture has been fully replaced by the desire/need to mimic indigenous culture and authenticity."<sup>11</sup> The aim of this article is thus not to describe an unknown phenomenon, but to explore its political function in Israel–Palestine. This analysis will enable me to reflect on the settler colonialism paradigm and highlight aspects that remain marginal in the theory of Wolfe, who was responsible for its rejuvenation in the 1990s.<sup>12</sup> Finally, I will underline the ambiguities that settler mimicry generates and argue that it may be used for a decolonial end.

## ZIONISM AND THE PARADIGM OF SETTLER COLONIALISM

Examining Zionism through the lens of colonialism remains a sensitive political issue that overshadows the analytical horizon opened up

by comparing Israeli society to other settler states. Tellingly, scholars who question the classification of Zionism as a colonial venture gauge it through the prism of what Wolfe dubs exploitation colonialism (Boyarin 256, Cohen 18-19, Penslar 94).<sup>13</sup> Derek J. Penslar, for instance, questions the equation of Zionism with colonialism and insists on the “eccentric, distinctive qualities of the Zionist project,”<sup>14</sup> emphasizing that “[c]olonial and anti-colonial elements co-existed in the Zionist project from its inception until the creation of the state in 1948.”<sup>15</sup> These opposing “elements,” however, can be found in other settler projects that typically battle on two fronts: against the natives and in opposition to the imperial powers.<sup>16</sup> What makes Zionism peculiar in relation to other settler projects is that the notion of nativity is debated, not the way it functions.<sup>17</sup> Raef Zreik explicates this important distinction between the narrative and practice of Zionism: “Zionists’ self-image of coming back home to the ancient Promised Land,” and the ambiguity regarding “mother homeland supporting the project . . . are not important as a matter of *praxis* — taking over the land, expansionism, supremacy over the natives, etc.”<sup>18</sup>

For Zreik, the characterization of Zionism as a colonial project is more straightforward. Contrary to “[t]he Europeans [who] see the back of the Jewish refugee fleeing for his life. The Palestinian sees the face of the settler colonialist taking over his land.”<sup>19</sup> From this vantage point, the complexity of the Zionist project does not change its colonial character: “Its [Zionism’s] colonial nature does not make it less national, and its national nature does not make it less colonial.”<sup>20</sup> Markedly, as Areej Sabbagh-Khoury argues, Palestinian scholars were using the concept of settler colonialism since the 1960s,<sup>21</sup> but “that earlier work was largely occluded from the canon in Israel and ignored by Western academia.”<sup>22</sup> The settler colonialism paradigm distinguishes between two colonial projects: exploitation colonialism and settler colonialism. The former utilizes the colony’s resources (human as well as natural), and the latter’s aim is the expropriation of land. While this distinction was discussed by Palestinian scholars such as Jamil Hilal and Fayez Sayegh already in the 1960s and the 1970s,<sup>23</sup> under Wolfe’s pen it became sharper and considerably rigid. Since settlers are interested in land and not solely in economic profit, Wolfe argues, settler colonialism leads to the elimination of the natives. In North America,

for instance, Native Americans were displaced from their lands, whereas Africans were exploited as a labor force.<sup>24</sup>

The logic of elimination has brutal manifestations, as in ethnic cleansing, or subtler expressions, as a cultural practice. Unlike nation-states that were formed through an imagination of a common past, as Benedict Anderson argues, the settler state was established through forgetfulness.<sup>25</sup> Zionism epitomizes this ideological elimination, presenting itself as a project of settling people without a land in a land without a people.<sup>26</sup> The Specialized Expo “Conquest of the Desert” that was held in Jerusalem in 1953, and the opening of Moshe Shamir’s *With His Own Hands*, “Alik Was Born from the Sea,” are demonstrative examples of this discursive strategy, which is well documented in research.<sup>27</sup> These examples of ideological elimination, however, are at odds with the imitation of the native, which is yet another common feature in Israeli culture that enables the settler to blend into the local landscape. Thus, although the two strategies are directed toward the same goal, their mutual operation yields ambiguity, as I will argue in this article.

While settler colonialism provides a novel perspective from which to view the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the dynamics of Israeli culture, it generates theoretical and political complications, some of which are specific to the Israeli context, and some of which are entangled with the paradigm itself. Recently, Rachel Busbridge argued that the use of the paradigm in the Israeli–Palestinian context “preclude[s] engagement with the national aspects of the conflict” and obstructs the possibility of decolonization since it “leaves very little room for transformation.”<sup>28</sup> Her critique is predicated on and participates in a wider debate on Wolfe’s version of settler colonialism that has both enthusiastic followers and searching critics. The criticisms against settler colonialism are usually empiricist in nature and political in intent. Counterexamples are provided to undermine Wolfe’s claims, and their peculiar decisiveness is gauged in light of their political consequences. Francesca Merlan, for example, argues that Wolfe “seems to offer no prospect of a place and a future for indigenous peoples ‘within the modern order’, except perhaps a completely oppositional one.”<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Marcelo Svirsky maintains that “Wolfe’s ontology put politics to death,”<sup>30</sup> and Elizabeth A. Povinelli proposes instead “coalition politics,”

which enable indigenous communities to join forces with other subaltern groups to challenge the Australian state's "dynamics of knowledge, power, and practice."<sup>31</sup> These disagreements, however, are rooted not only in diverging political orientations but also in different theoretical frameworks to which Wolfe and his critics adhere. In the following, I will explore the theoretical framework through which Wolfe develops the paradigm of settler colonialism, that is, Marxist structuralism, and compare with to Povinelli's poststructuralist reading of the Australian case. This juxtaposition will allow me to foreground the phenomenon of settler mimicry, which remains marginal in Wolfe's writing.

#### STRUCTURALIST AND POSTSTRUCTURALIST VERSIONS OF SETTLER COLONIALISM

Wolfe's paradigm is informed by postcolonial theory, notably by Edward Said and Homi Bhabha. Rather than applying insights that were developed in the contexts of Asia and Africa to new case studies, however, his distinction between exploitation colonialism and settler colonialism is predicated on his critique of the postcolonial allusion to poststructuralism and the anticipation of a purely discursive framework. Following Louis Althusser, Wolfe adopts a structural-Marxist method to examine the materialist interests that underpin the discourse of each colonial project.<sup>32</sup> The distinction between exploitation colonialism and settler colonialism is thus structural rather than descriptive and is predicated on Althusser's reading of the Marxist notion of social formation understood as "a totality of instances articulated on the basis of a determinate mode of production."<sup>33</sup> Whereas exploitation colonialism is geared toward utilizing the colony's resources, in settler colonialism expropriation is the determine variable, since territory is "a precondition for any system of production."<sup>34</sup>

The difference between "Bhabha's India" and Wolfe's Australia is thus twofold, pertaining to variation between case studies and theoretical frameworks.<sup>35</sup> If, according to Wolfe's structural-Marxist perspective, postcolonial theory fails to acknowledge structural materialistic differences, from Bhabha's point of view, Wolfe's analysis may be seen as rigid and reductionist. This theoretical divergence remains

somehow obscure even in Wolfe's 1994 essay "Nation and Miscegenation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era,"<sup>36</sup> which responds to Bhabha's 1990 article "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation,"<sup>37</sup> since it does not provide a structuralist account of Bhabha's case study, but rather shows how in the Australian case hybridity (miscegenation) functions as a strategy of elimination rather than possessing an ambiguous subversive potentiality.

While Wolfe does not venture a structuralist account of exploitation colonialism,<sup>38</sup> Povinelli articulates a poststructuralist analysis of settler colonialism. Wolfe's analysis of the discursive practices of settler colonialism was triggered in part by the Mabo and the Native Title Act, which was seen by supporters and critics alike as a watershed in settler/native relation in Australia. While both Wolfe and Povinelli underline the continuity between different forms of domination and see Mabo as a transfiguration rather than a turning point, they disagree on the function of the Aboriginal presence in the settler state apparatus. For Wolfe, the native's presence embodies a threat to the settler. Unlike exploitation colonialism, which capitalizes on the presence of colonial subjects by utilizing their labor, the settlers' aim is the seizure of land, which necessitates elimination. For Povinelli, the economy of aboriginal presence and absence is more complex. Without denying the settler's drive to elimination, she also shows "the necessary form of presence that the [Australian] state demands from Aboriginal social organization" (23), as the self-formation of the settlers was predicated on the indigenous presence. The native's presence allows the colonizers to construct a civilizing narrative of the benefits the natives derive from imitating the colonizers. Povinelli cites an incident in which a certain tribe chief learned the art of boiling meat from Arthur Phillip and his men (23-4). The colonizers' technological superiority and the educational nature of their project could not be exercised without the native.

Echoing Bhabha's analysis of colonial mimicry, Povinelli argues that "[colonial] officers did not desire that Aboriginal men be 'the same' as they were," since the colonial difference was an active element in the construction of their identity and in distinguishing the Australian elite from other social groups and "white others" (Povinelli 24). One may argue that Wolfe himself recognizes this mutual formation of the settler and native identities but sees this process as secondary to the logic



of elimination. Povinelli, however, argues that the Australian state's dependence on the native's presence leads it to defer the completion of the elimination: "[t]he state also strove to and did viciously participate in the elimination of Australian men and women, but these material and symbolic practices were riven by a deep ambivalence—always moving toward devouring but never quite willing to swallow every last bit, continually deferring the end date of the project" (25).

This disagreement regarding the indigenous presence is far more illuminating than the debates about the paradigm's allusion to "binarism." While critics and supporters and even Wolfe himself emphasize this issue as their bone of contention,<sup>39</sup> it is important to note that neither does Wolfe perceive the settler and the native as stable categories nor do critics such as Povinelli and Merlan deny their existence and endurance. When Wolfe proclaims that "one's position on binarism cannot be innocent,"<sup>40</sup> he submits that binary oppositions in the settler colonialism context can be destabilized but that their effacement is dictated by a "deeper" and more enduring center, "the logic of elimination."<sup>41</sup> While the settlers construct binaries in order to eradicate the native in the frontier phase, they may also efface them at later stages of the project if it serves the logic of elimination. In other words, what distinguishes Wolfe's structuralist and Povinelli's poststructuralist accounts is the way in which they conceive the relation between the structure and what Derrida calls the center (352).<sup>42</sup> Although they concede that the settler/native structure is not always stable, they disagree on the ability of the center, in this case, the event of invasion, to dictate its dynamics.

Although any historical thinking presupposes an event that restricts the free play of any linguistic structure, Wolfe further confines the interpretation of settler colonialism. When he argues that "invasion is a structure rather than an event,"<sup>43</sup> he grants the event the repetition and permanency of a structure and the event's singularity and definiteness to the structure. Povinelli, on the other hand, refuses a reductionist description and emphasizes ambivalence instead. Even though elimination is a central feature, settler colonialism does not follow a single and coherent framework.

Consistent with the insights of deconstruction, Povinelli apprehends the necessity of the native's presence mainly in negative terms. The settlers construct their identities in reference to and by a negation

of a (phantomized) aboriginal subjectivity. Wolfe, however, points out a more “positive” role that the native’s presence plays in the Australian state formation, namely as a model for imitation and identification. Drawing on the studies of Andrew Lattas and Michael Taussig, Wolfe argues that even though the settler state eliminates the presence of the native, it paradoxically strives on it while constructing its identity not simply by negation but also through association. “This is because, as Andrew Lattas . . . and others have pointed out, in order to produce a narrative that can bind it transcendentally to its territorial base—to make it, as it were, spring organically from the local soil—the settler state is obliged to appropriate the symbolism of the very Aboriginally that it has historically effaced” (Wolfe 126).<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, this strategy has an important function in organizing the relationship between the settler state and the mother country, enabling the former “to be British for the purpose of expropriating Australians and Australian for the purpose of independence from Britain.”<sup>45</sup>

Settler mimicry serves at least two purposes: It facilitates a sense of belonging to the territory and demarcates a settler difference from the mother country. The settler state, in this sense, is not fundamentally different from other nation-states that construct their identity on a common memory, even if this recollection passes through an appropriation of the native. Wolfe is too quick to dismiss Anderson’s argument in the settler colonialism context, and thus draws an incomplete portrait of the settler state operation, ignoring its need, like that of any other nation-state, to form a unique identity. If its immediate past is indeed entangled with theft and dispossession, it is precisely the native who paradoxically fulfils this function. “[T]he settler,” as Lawson puts it, “mimics, appropriates, and desires the authority of the Indigene.”<sup>46</sup>

Although Wolfe is conscious of the threat that settler mimicry poses,<sup>47</sup> he argues that the settler state resolves this contradiction by romanticizing the figure of the native.<sup>48</sup> While one may agree with Wolfe that the romanticization of the natives is an attempt to understate their presence, it is clearly not a foolproof solution. Rather, mimicry renders the operation of the settler state ambiguous, as it accentuates the native presence and thus obstructs the function of elimination. Like any other human endeavor, settler colonialism is

not free from inner contradictions, and the reduction of its phenomena to a single logic yields a partial description.

Wolfe's adherence to Marxist structuralism prevents him from developing a more complex description of settler colonialism with its ambiguities, contradictions, and inconsistencies. This framework also undergirds his distinction between exploitation and settler colonialisms, which, despite its usefulness, runs the risk of simplifying the relationship between the two projects. Settler colonialism operates both in concert and in conflict with (and within) complex imperial networks, in which, as Penslar argues, projects of exploitation, settlement, and penal colonialisms intermingle with one another.<sup>49</sup> Instead of seeing the difference between the two colonial projects as a clear-cut division, I propose to replace Wolfe's materialistic underpinning and distinguish the two in terms of propensity and orientation. Whereas what I prefer to call *imperial colonialism* organizes itself in relation to the mother country (and hence one of its central goals is exploitation), settler colonialism is moving in the opposite direction. The term "imperial colonialism" implies that the two projects are interconnected, and that settler colonialism functions within imperialist networks and sometimes also resists and defines itself vis-à-vis their centers. If Wolfe suspects the term imperialism for its "imprecision" and its interchangeability with other concepts such as "hegemony, dependency, or globalization,"<sup>50</sup> I prefer it precisely for its alleged vagueness. Rather than forming a cohesive framework with a singular organizing principle, the discourses of both imperial and settler colonialism are ambivalent and multifurcated.

## SETTLER MIMICRY AND ITS AMBIVALENCE

One of the instances in which the ambiguity of imperial colonialism's discourse comes to the fore is mimicry, which serves, according to Bhabha, as an "ironic compromise" between conflicting demands described by Said through the structuralist categories of diachrony and synchrony: the expectation that colonial subjects will remain the same, frozen in their otherness, and, at the same time, the attempt to transform and civilize them.<sup>51</sup> Colonial mimicry articulates a formula that ensures that the justification facilitated by the civilizing discourse will

never be exhausted: the colonized can become “[a]lmost the same but not white”<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, mimicry also has a pervasive potentiality for undermining the colonial discourse by revealing the insecurity and the indeterminacies at its authoritative heart.

Settler mimicry is the mirror image of this procedure. Instead of the colonial expectation that the colonized will imitate the colonizer, the settler is the one who imitates the native.<sup>53</sup> In a manner similar to colonial mimicry, however, the settler must stop short before going “completely” native in order to maintain a colonial difference that ensures domination and superiority. If settler mimicry is a compromise between the local and the imperial poles that threaten the settler’s position, however, it engenders its own ambiguity. The imitation of the native, as the following examples will show, emphasizes the presence of the native that the settler endeavors to conceal.

*Houses in Tel Aviv*, by Reuven Rubin (1893–1974), demonstrates a visual strategy of elimination (Figure 1). The painting shows “a group of small new houses scattered on the dunes near the sea . . . [and] mirrors the myth of Tel Aviv as the city that had emerged from the sand.”<sup>54</sup> The framing of the painting isolates Tel Aviv from Jaffa and renders it as surrounded by wilderness and not as located on the outskirts of a flourishing Palestinian city with its ancient port and historical buildings. In this manner, it endorses the myth of empty land and the settler’s logic of elimination by ideological means.

This visual rendering of the founding Zionist myth of making the desert bloom, however, was not prevalent.<sup>55</sup> Instead, early Israeli artists were more fascinated with the Palestinian Other and erected their artistic projects of emplacement through the figure of the native. Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874–1925) and Ze’ev Raban (1890–1970) portrayed biblical protagonists as Arab figures, rendering them in a highly romanticized fashion as stagnant and frozen in time (Figure 2). Similarly, Israel Paldi (1892–1979) and Nachum Gutmann (1898–1980) exoticized (and sometimes eroticized) Arab farmers and prostitutes, but also offered diachronic representations while depicting them as contemporary dwellers in Palestine.

The Israeli curator and art historian Dalia Manor emphasizes this fascination of Eretz Yisrael artists with the figures and the landscape of the Palestinians. This enchantment was so pervasive that she



FIGURE 1. Reuven Rubín, *Houses in Tel Aviv*, c. 1923.



FIGURE 2. Ephraim Moses Lilien, *Joshua*, 1908.

wonders—without giving a satisfying answer—why Eretz Yisrael artists preferred to portray Palestinian villages and cities instead of depicting “images of modern life in the country” or “pioneers ‘making the desert bloom.’”<sup>56</sup> From the perspective of the settler colonialism paradigm, however, this artistic fascination with the natives and their



FIGURE 3. Ze'ev Raban, *Come to Palestine*, 1929.

landscape is rather unsurprising. The local imagery, although appropriated, enabled Zionist artists to visualize their homecoming and construct a perceptible identity.

Raban's 1929 poster *Come to Palestine* demonstrates this strategy vividly (Figure 3). It was designed for the Society for the Promotion of Travel in the Holy Land, a Zionist organization that, like the poster itself, encouraged Jewish immigration to Israel under the pretext of promoting tourism. Raban depicts the Sea of Galilee and its surroundings as a pastoral setting. The palm tree in the foreground, the Islamic design of Tiberias's buildings, and the Arab shepherd with his beloved and the lamb in her lap picture Palestine as an idyllic Oriental destination. Through this mimicry, the attire of the Arab shepherd, the palm trees, and the architecture of the Tiberian Al-Zidani Mosque were appropriated as Zionist symbols, but they also emphasize, despite the explicit romanticization, the undermining presence of the native.

Seven years later Franz Krausz (1905–1998) designed another poster for the same society that strongly resembles Raban's print (*Visit Palestine*, Figure 4). Illustrating the view of The Dome of the Rock and West Jerusalem from The Mount of Olives, its mimicry has a dual function. On one hand, it transformed the Islamic edifice into a Zionist symbol, and, on the other, it serves as camouflage. While the poster was easily deciphered by Jews in exile, it could pass unnoticed by the British bureaucrats precisely because its iconography was borrowed. In this sense, *Visit Palestine* resonates with *Come to Palestine*, but it introduces some changes that are not merely stylistic. It replaces the dual meaning of Raban's title with a less suggestive slogan and mitigates its orientalism. Instead of the pastoral view of Galilee in Raban's poster, Krausz depicted the Dome of the Rock along with the old city of Jerusalem and portrayed them as surrounded by sand. This transformation might



FIGURE 4. Franz Krausz, *Visit Palestine*, 1936.

be indicative of the changing relations between Jews and Arabs after the 1929 Palestine riots and during the Great Palestinian Revolt (1936–1939), and between Ha-Yishuv and the British Mandate due to the increasing Jewish immigration of the Fifth Aliya. Be it as it may, Krausz's poster integrates elements of mimicry and elimination, and thus subdues the tension between the two settler apparatuses. It acknowledges Palestinian presence but reproduces the Zionist myth that apart from a few ancient sites Palestine was deserted.

The poster would have probably been forgotten were it not for the Oslo Agreement and the designer David Tartakover (b. 1944), who discovered Krausz's print in 1995 and reproduced it. The Oslo Agreement and the partial recognition of the Palestinians' claim to the territory made the use of the word "Palestine" permissible in Israeli discourse. Consequently, the poster became a popular Palestinian image and even now is available in shops such as [palestineonlinestore.com](http://palestineonlinestore.com). This Palestinian reappropriation, which was possible precisely due to the Zionist mimicry of the original poster, serves Palestinians as a camouflaging strategy. Under the guise of promoting tourism, the Palestinians invite outsiders to witness the atrocities of the Israeli occupation first-hand. In this manner, the Palestinian mimicry exposes the Zionist ambiguity. If *Visit Palestine* endeavors to reconcile the apparatuses of mimicry and elimination, [palestineonlinestore.com](http://palestineonlinestore.com) uses this poster to question Zionist claims:

A Zionist-published poster (1936) that effectively debunks their [Israelis'] three core myths; that Palestine was a land without people, that Palestine was a barren desert, and that there never was any such thing as Palestine.<sup>57</sup>

#### A DECOLONIAL GENEALOGY OF THE NATION-STATE

Hinging settler colonialism on the logic of elimination, Wolfe presents a radical condemnation against states such as Canada, the United States, and Australia that were not in the spotlight of postcolonial criticism. Seen through the prism of settler colonialism, the more "obvious" colonial sites such as India are at the receiving end of a "milder" colonial violence that is directed toward exploitation but not elimination.



This account unfolds disturbing aspects of settler colonialism, but it understates, as discussed above, the conflicted position of the settler, and hinders the possibility of decolonization. A multifaceted description of settler colonialism may thus produce a more nuanced analysis and clear the way for decolonization. In the following, I will explore Water Mignolo's notion of decolonization in the Israeli–Palestinian context, in order to show how a decolonized mimicry may contribute to this process.

Speaking of the formation of the settler state in North America, Mignolo points toward its biformity and emphasizes two simultaneous processes, modern and colonial. The settler state facilitated liberation for a “postcolonial elite” by enabling “the Anglo-Creoles to delink from the British monarchy,” while “depriving of freedom and dispossessing millions of Native Americans.”<sup>58</sup> In a similar manner, Mignolo presents Zionism as a two-fold project: “[T]he paradox of the Zionist State is that the return to the land of their historical birth implied the dispossession of communities that have not conquered that land by dispossession.”<sup>59</sup> The entanglement of Zionism with colonialism, however, did not begin in the nineteenth century. One of the contributions of Mignolo's collective to the study of colonialism is the examination of the colonial matrix of power not only through its French and British manifestations but also through the Spanish and Portuguese. Accordingly, the colonization of the Americas and the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula are seen by Mignolo as part of the same historical process that enabled “Christians . . . to classify and make their classifications valid for centuries to come: Jews, Muslims, ‘Indians,’ and ‘Blacks’ formed the initial racial tetragon that has survived, with mutation and additions, to the present day.”<sup>60</sup> This historical moment shaped the European racial mindset and laid the foundation for the modern nation-state that “communities of faith by communities of birth and purity of blood by skin color.”<sup>61</sup> European Jews had a distinct position within the colonial matrix of power: “While Muslims became the external imperial enemy . . . and ‘Indians’ and ‘Blacks’ became the external colonial subject, Jews who remained in the lands of Western Christians . . . became the internal colonial subject.”<sup>62</sup>

Seen on this broad canvas, Zionism can also be regarded as a decolonial movement. Its blindness and in the worst instances disregard toward

the Palestinian dispossession are what metamorphose it into a colonial project. This indifference, however, is not accidental but structural, according to Mignolo, as it represents the modern framework in which the Zionist movement was and still is operating. The language and practice that were available for Jewish liberation came in the form of nationalism and the nation-state. Thus, decolonization necessitates not only a political change but also a reconsideration of the way the political domain is addressed. If, for Busbridge, settler colonialism's inability to consider the nationalistic aspects of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict hinders the possibility of decolonization, for Mignolo it is rather the Zionist incapacity to transcend the modern order of the nation-state.

Mignolo's decolonial procedure of delinking enables him to render Zionism as a complex and even paradoxical project instead of reducing it to one organizing principle. His proposition of "decolonising Zionism" and of "uncoupl[ing] Zionism from the State of Israel," replaces the demand to reject Zionism as a prerequisite for decolonization. The title of Elian Weizman's article, for instance, expresses a common post-Zionist sentiment.<sup>63</sup> For Mignolo, however, "Jewish Zionism was the necessary response to, on the one hand, the long history of Jewish diaspora and, on the other hand, the transformation and subsequent persecution that Jews have endured in Europe."<sup>64</sup> By delinking Zionism from the rationality of the nation-state "in which one state corresponds to one nation," one may salvage the liberatory elements of Zionism and dispense with its colonial aspects.

Clearly, this is more easily said than done, and one may rightly wonder if Zionism can be dissected from its nationalist logic. Thus, to redirect the course of Zionism, a more fundamental transformation is probably needed. Mignolo explores the possibility of decolonizing Zionism while reading the texts of Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), who envisions Zionism primarily as a political movement (political Zionism). To decolonize Zionism, à la Mignolo, is to render it a liberation movement. This proposal, however, addresses what Mignolo calls coloniality of power, and not the coloniality of knowledge and being that sustain its operation. Accordingly, to neutralize the impact of coloniality on politics, a parallel move has to be advanced in the domains of knowledge and culture. In the following, I will probe the concept of mimicry in the context of cultural Zionism, which saw Zionism as a vehicle for

the rejuvenation of Jewish and Hebraic culture. My argument is that mimicry can be used to undermine the colonial/modern framework that warrants the settler's superiority and domination. Since Zionist mimicry also emerged from the need to resist the impact of coloniality of knowledge and being, it has the potential to facilitate a meaningful dialogue between the settler and the native. In the following, I will explore this possibility in Ahad Ha'am's texts and later in the paintings of Siona Tagger (1900–1988).

#### ZIONIST MIMICRY AND DECOLONIZATION: AHAD HA'AM'S EASTERN SPIRIT

One of the weaknesses of Bhabha's Lacanian reading of colonial mimicry is his indifference to its literal stratum.<sup>65</sup> As a camouflaging strategy that resembles rather than creates "harmonization of repression of difference,"<sup>66</sup> mimicry challenges the colonial discourse's supposedly stable distribution of identities and differences, by revealing its "farce," "indeterminacy," and "ambivalence" (122).<sup>67</sup> But if cultural differences are not rooted in dissected presences but in the *durée* of traditions, imitation may hinder their continuation. Elsewhere, I argued, following Hans-Georg Gadamer and Judith Butler that the existence and endurance of cultures depend on interpretative repetition.<sup>68</sup> Being in a culture is not an expression of an inner essence but the fact of being shaped by specific social structures. The survival of these worlds is at peril when agents no longer perform according to their practices but imitate other modes of behavior.

Bhabha borrows some of his examples from Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, but his catalogue is rather selective. When he emphasizes the mockery of the colonial proposal to establish "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes,"<sup>69</sup> he omits, perhaps not accidentally, the rest of Anderson's citation from the "Minute" of the British politician Thomas Babington Macaulay (1835): "No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion . . . if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence."<sup>70</sup> From a decolonial perspective and quite unambiguously, in short, mimicry plays a central role in the violence of coloniality of knowledge and being.

If colonial mimicry has also to be taken at face value, so can settler mimicry, as long as its political stakes and entanglement with power are acknowledged. Mimicry then should be read as located at the intersection of a complex web of factors, needs, and interests, and as capable of being transformed into a decolonial practice. Focusing on political Zionism, as noted above, Mignolo foregrounds the possibility of decolonization by untangling its emancipatory dimensions from the rationale of the nation-state. While this procedure is directed toward decoloniality of power, mimicry, understood in the wide sense of the shifting of the settler's epistemic attention from the empire to the colony, has the potential of facilitating the decoloniality of knowledge and being.

Both the possibility of delinking Zionism from the nation-state and that of adopting mimicry as a decolonizing strategy are to be found in the writings Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg, better known as Ahad Ha'am, the founder of cultural Zionism. Ahad Ha'am's worldview was obviously informed by nationalism, Eurocentrism, and Orientalism, but his texts offer several keys to delink the Zionist pursuit for particularity from its colonial manifestations. Much has been written about Ahad Ha'am's unique approach to Zionism and the alternative Zionism that his figure prompted (Reinharz 146).<sup>71</sup> He was more attentive to the so-called "Arab problem"<sup>72</sup> and "advocated in 1920 a Jewish-Arab confederation to succeed the British Mandate."<sup>73</sup> Moreover, while "the negation of exile" was one of the main features of Zionism (Raz-Karkotzkin),<sup>74</sup> "Ahad Ha-'Am was favorably inclined toward the continuity of Jewish life in exile."<sup>75</sup> All these features make his doctrine attractive for anyone who wishes to think Zionism otherwise than its current manifestations. My point, however, is neither to present him as a liberal Zionist<sup>76</sup> nor to identify him as a "nationalist with a difference,"<sup>77</sup> but to stress the decolonial potentiality of his mimicry. If the alliances with the metropolis preserve the settlers' superiority, I suggest, bonding with the colony is the first step toward decolonization.

Ahad Ha'am's critique of political Zionism's functionalism and lack of attention to the spiritual dimensions of the national revival led him to question the feasibility of the establishment of a Jewish state. Two of his major concerns are squarely related to the current discussion: the Arab resistance to the Jewish intrusion and the inability of Palestine to

accommodate the entire Jewish population. Bearing these concerns in mind, Ahad Ha'am deviates from mainstream nationalism and conceives Palestine as a spiritual Jewish center rather than a nationalist polity.

By emphasizing this departure from the nation-state, I do not wish to obscure Ahad Ha'am's nationalistic views. I easily accept that he was a nationalist through and through, but mainly because nationalism was the only language available to him to undermine the impact of coloniality and assert his particularism. Although he speaks of a deep nationalistic feeling, his other two options were (at least according to his understanding) orthodox Judaism or assimilation. He writes, "Even while the new Jew bows to the European culture and looks up to its fruits of wisdom and [its] other virtues with the utmost respect, when it comes to the question of Judaism's existence, he [sic] looks for and always finds, even if with difficulties, some kind of 'logical reason,' for which Judaism 'still' has to exist and why its [Judaism's] sons must remain loyal to its treaty."<sup>78</sup>

Unlike many of his peers, Ahad Ha'am did not see the Arabs simply as passive observers or barbarians, and despite romanticizing the "East," he emphasizes the role that it can play in overcoming Western cultural domination. In a letter to the Turkish Jewish community aiming to appease their inner ideological fissures, Ahad Ha'am has this to say about Western culture and the contribution of the "Eastern Spirit" to what now may be called decolonization.

[In the Ottoman empire] a land was found which was the cradle of Judaism and is the provenance of our people's spirit, where the Eastern spirit, which is closer to our people's spirit than the western spirit, will govern, where our people always lived in peace and preserved our spiritual inheritance faithfully and innocently, and where there is no longer a big and enormous culture like in Europe and America that swallows who so ever come closer to it like a jackal.<sup>79</sup>

What should be appreciated here is not only the impact of coloniality on Ahad Ha'am's thinking, but also his insistence on delinking from it. Although the letter is saturated with colonial presumptions, it lends itself to a decolonial reading. The enormity of Western culture may be seen as a reflection of the rhetoric of modernity and its ability to

swallow other cultures as a result of its universalizing mechanism. Similarly, while Ahad Ha'am's admiration of the "Eastern Spirit" has obvious Orientalist undertones, it may also represent a quest for other epistemological and cultural possibilities that exist beyond the pale of Western modernity.

#### ON THE SHORE OF JAFFA: SIONA TAGGER

Unlike Ahad Ha'am, who settled in Israel toward the end of his life, Siona Tagger was born to a Sephardi family in Jaffa in 1900. Her father emigrated from Bulgaria in 1879 and was one of the founders of Ahuzat Bayit, the first neighborhood of Tel Aviv. In a manner similar to other artists of the Eretz Yisrael school, Tagger was fascinated with the Palestinian milieu. She painted Arab sellers, laborers, and cafe customers, as well as the cityscapes of Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Tiberias. Her contribution to the Zionist appropriation of native imagery notwithstanding, her mimicry has distinctive features that reflect a unique cultural position. Like other members of the Sephardi community in Palestine, she spoke Arabic,<sup>80</sup> and she describes good and neighborly relations with the Arab residents of Jaffa. This perception of coexistence was common in the narratives of Sephardi Jews and Arabs alike at the turn of the previous century,<sup>81</sup> for example in the memoir of Yosef Eliyahu Chelouche, one of the leaders of the Sephardi community in Jaffa.<sup>82</sup> These good relations were soured, according to some of these accounts, by Jewish immigration from Europe and in the wake of British colonialism.<sup>83</sup> "[T]he Sephardim," as Abigail Jacobson suggests, "were closely linked to the Ottoman identity, while the Ashkenazim were legally connected to the European powers, which were perceived by the Ottomans as colonialist powers."<sup>84</sup> These diverse affiliations informed their approach to Zionism as "the Sephardim combined Ottomanism with Jewish nationalism, whereas the Ashkenazim combined Jewish nationalism with European influences."<sup>85</sup> This "Middle Eastern Jewish memory" of coexistence, as Michelle Campos argues, was suppressed by Zionist historiography, which established a more rigid dichotomy between Jews and Arabs,<sup>86</sup> and the "Sephardi natives," as Yuval Evri and Hagar Kotef suggest, were absorbed into the settler community.<sup>87</sup>

Tagger's mimicry, in other words, not only was shaped as a settler practice, but also sprang from a cultural tendency to integrate, to varying degrees, into the local landscape. Her mother, for example, used to dress up as an Arab woman with a veil covering her face, and her father wore a tarboosh. This attention to trifles is not entirely out of place, considering the attraction of Eretz Yisrael artists to "oriental" attire. Thus, when Tagger painted Arab figures such as the *Tamarind Seller* (1944) and *An Arab in a Coffeeshop* (1977), she was not portraying characters who were alien to her culture. This cultural affinity comes to the fore in the painting of her grandfather, Yeshaya Bachar Schmucl, who was a member of the Council of the Sephardic Community in Jerusalem. The grandfather is sitting on a mattress with round cushions, and the blue interior is framed with a pointed arch, a compositional strategy that the artist employs when depicting Palestinian spaces, as in *Alley in the Old City* (1930), *Alcove in the Old City of Jerusalem* (1969), and *An Arab Café in Jaffa* (?).<sup>88</sup>

Tagger's alternative approach to mimicry can also be discerned in her landscapes and cityscapes. Although some of them, particularly her earlier works, tend toward a mythical and timeless representation—such as *Ein Karem* (1926) and *Lifta View* (1926), which bring to mind the canvases of Rubin and Paldi—her paintings usually appear as images of concrete places, such as her 1930 renderings of Tiberias. Painted a year after Raban's *Come to Palestine*, Tagger does not idealize Tiberias and its surroundings, but represents them in a plain and unpretentious manner, without overstating their otherness. In one painting, she depicts carriages parking on the roadside, and in another, an automobile passing in front of a minaret. The automobile is in fact a recurring motif in her oeuvre, which, unlike orientalist paintings, does not occlude history.<sup>89</sup> In a similar manner, the pendulum clock on the blue wall behind her grandfather's portrait from 1950 suggests that time does not stand still in his synagogue (*Grandfather in Prayer*).

A similar straightforwardness characterizes Tagger's depiction of the Dome of the Rock from 1932 (*Umar Mosque—Jerusalem*). The shrine emerges from a dense cluster of houses on a background of yellowish hills. The dark dome presides over the adjoining buildings, but its appearance resonates with their ordinariness. The uneven brushstrokes add to the painting's mundanity, as well as the bright light that

floods the scene. If *Visit Palestine* distinguishes the Dome of the Rock from its surroundings by lightening the background and darkening the dome, Tagger renders the shrine as part of the day-to-day life of the old city.

In another painting of the Dome of the Rock, Tagger's approach is conspicuously different (*Temple Mount*, 1979). The Dome of the Rock is positioned in the foreground, and the roundness and verticality of its dome contrast with the rectangularity and horizontalness of the surrounding buildings. The chimeric aura of the painting, however, does not strike as orientalist, perhaps due to its augmented abstraction. The pictorial organization recalls medieval cityscapes or pious renderings of holy places, and the desert that facilitates ideological elimination in *Visit Palestine* is absent. Instead, Tagger bends the rules of Albertian perspective to highlight the circular presence of the wall that enfolds the sacred city.

In a manner similar to that of Raban, Tagger draws the Dome of the Rock from the prism of East Jerusalem, but by 1979 this perspective was politically charged and associated with the Other's geography. The adaptation of this vantage point, however, is a two-edged sword. It can represent an identification with the natives or an appropriation of their milieu. Perhaps this can be said of other instances of settler mimicry, whose significance depends not only on the context in which they are produced but also on the way in which they are decoded.<sup>90</sup> Thus, although Tagger's oeuvre reflects a vision of Jewish and Arab coexistence, it was hitched to the project of Zionist settler colonialism. Similarly, but in reverse, her imagery can be decoded in a manner that undercuts its colonial reception and contributes to decolonization of Palestine–Israel.

Zreik argues persuasively that decolonization is possible only after the settlers renounce their privileges.<sup>91</sup> But these entitlements are facilitated by a complex web of presuppositions, which can only be disentangled by transforming the settler's cultural and epistemological horizons. Here, settler mimicry can be put to decolonial use, provided that it is cured from its diplopia of seeing simultaneously a settlement and a homeland, an imperial outpost and a common territory. These two possibilities present themselves in *Jaffa Port* (1926), one of Tagger's most iconic paintings. The small fishing port with



its boats and overlooking balconies is quiet but not deserted. A few figures are watching from one of the rooftops, and a boatman stands in the water in the lower right corner of the canvas. Curiously, unlike her other maritime paintings, the viewpoint is not from the land to the sea but from the sea to the land. Manor suggests that this view was “the first impression of the town one would have when arriving by boat. The newcomers . . . would be seated in the little boats that regularly carried to shore both people and goods from ships anchored outside the shallow harbour.”<sup>92</sup> Tagger, however, was born in Jaffa, and this scene was surely not her first encounter with the city. Accordingly, the painting may denote the viewpoint of one of “[t]he muscular boatmen whose job it was to ferry in” goods and newcomers,<sup>93</sup> or of any other local to whom the little port gave a sense of home. The painting, indeed, does not connote a mysterious and eerie mood, as in artworks depicting colonial encounters with new lands (Robert Cleveley, *Botany Bay*, 1789; John Vanderlyn, *Landing of Columbus*, 1847). Rather, the city seems to embrace the Mediterranean water, and the arches of its gates resonate with the shapes of the boats and the waves.

## CONCLUSION

Imitation is not merely the outcome of the colonial interaction but one of the modes through which it is enacted. As such, it shapes rather than merely reflects the relations between the colonizer and the colonized. Since simulating may be not only a display of appearances, but also a way of exploring the world of the Other through one’s own being, it can be used to enhance colonial hierarchies, but also to undo them. This article explored these two aspects of mimicry, underlining its complicity with settler colonialism, but also its decolonial potentiality.

Mimicry is usually conceived as an act that is oriented from bottom to top, conceivably due to the hierarchy between the “original” and the copy in modern Western culture. Even Bhabha, who had shown that mimicry has a subversive effect of undermining the authority of the “original,” focuses on instances in which the colonized imitates or is required to imitate the colonizer. Settler mimicry reverses this conventional structure, not only because the colonizer is imitating the colonized, but also because this imitation strengthens the power of the

imitator. Whereas empires make efforts to prevent their agents from “going native,” settler (partial) imitation is a strategy for annexation and expansionism.

Settler mimicry was explored in research on Israeli culture, albeit under different headings. By adopting the term settler mimicry to analyze this phenomenon, this article not only emphasizes its central role in Israeli culture, but also probes it as a settler strategy and in juxtaposition to other settler projects. Accordingly, instead of seeing Zionism as an exception to colonialism, this article maintains that in some measure it is a demonstrative case. Since the presence of the natives still poses a feasible threat to the stability of the Israeli state, the cultural practices of elimination and mimicry operate in full swing.

The study of mimicry expands the understanding of the settler/native dynamics and complements the theory of Wolfe, who focuses, almost exclusively, on the operation of elimination. Whereas mimicry was understated in Wolfe’s work, its analysis has the potential to mitigate his paradigm’s structuralist reductionism. The attention to instances of imitation renders settler colonialism a complex and ambiguous project and calls for its reevaluation through other theoretical frameworks.

Accordingly, throughout the article, the settler colonialism paradigm was put in dialogue with two other critiques of colonialism: postcolonial theory and decoloniality. By allowing a wider range of motivations and determinants, postcolonial theory, particularly in the deconstructionist version that Povinelli presents, enables the contradictions and indeterminacies of settler colonialism to come to the fore. In a similar vein, decoloniality facilitates new trajectories for thinking not only about settler societies but also about their decolonization. Decolonization, however, is a long and tedious procedure, and this article does not claim to offer a readymade solution. Moreover, while pointing toward the decolonizing potentiality of settler mimicry, I am also aware of the perils entailed by this expropriating strategy. Thus, without losing sight of its dangers, this article proposes to decolonize mimicry by reconfiguring its structure. In order to function as a colonial strategy, settler mimicry must limit its own operation. Settlers may go native but not entirely; otherwise, they would lose their colonial difference. The proposal of decolonizing settler mimicry is thus predicated

on reversing this condition. If imitation is allowed to operate freely/unrestrictedly, it may transform the settlers' horizon and their attitude toward the natives.

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#### NOTES

1. The Hebrew year תשכ"ח can also be read as *tishkach*, which literary means "you will forget." The translator Stephen Mitchell renders this as "the year of forgetting". Yehuda Amichai, *The Selected Poetry of Yehuda Amichai*, transl. Chana Bloch and Stephen Mitchell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 49.
2. Amnon Raz-Karkotzin, "Exile within Sovereignty: Critique of 'The Negation of Exile' in Israeli—Part I" (Hebrew), *Theory and Critique* 4 (1993): 23–55, 44.
3. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 49.
4. Daniel Boyarin, "The Colonial Drag: Zionism, Gender, and Mimicry," *The Pre-Occupation of Post-colonial Studies*, ed. Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 234–265, 253.
5. Livnat Konopny-Decleve, "Colonial Mimicry" [Hebrew], *Maft'e'akh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* 13 (2018): 25–42, 25.
6. Nur Masalha, "Settler-Colonialism, Memoricide and Indigenous Toponymic Memory: The Appropriation of Palestinian Place Names by the Israeli State," *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies* 14, no. 1 (2015): 3–57.
7. Nicola Perugini, "Settler Colonial Inversions: Israel's 'Disengagement' and the Gush Katif 'Museum of Expulsion' in Jerusalem," *Settler Colonial Studies* 9, no. 1 (2019): 1–18, 14.
8. Haim Yacobi, "Architecture, Orientalism, and Identity: The Politics of the Israeli-Built Environment," *Israel Studies* (2008): 94–118, 114.
9. Perugini, "Settler Colonial Inversions," 14.
10. Alan Lawson, "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Settler' Subject," *Essays on Canadian Writing* 56 (1995): 22–36, 26.
11. Avril Bell, *Relating Indigenous and Settler Identities: Beyond Domination* (Springer, 2014), 97–98.
12. Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999).
13. Boyarin, "The Colonial Drag," 256; Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab–Israeli Conflict 1929* (Jerusalem: Brandeis University Press, 2015), 18–19; Derek J. Penslar, *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 94. Boyarin, Cohen, and Penslar, however, are critical of Zionism and acknowledge its colonial dimensions.
14. Penslar, *Israel in History*, 104.

15. Penslar, *Israel in History*, 91.
16. Lawson, "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Settler' Subject"; Patrick Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era," *Social Analysis* 36 (1994): 93–152, 126.
17. Rachel Busbridge, "Israel–Palestine and the Settler Colonial 'Turn': From Interpretation to Decolonization," *Theory, Culture and Society* 35, no. 1 (2018): 91–115, 109.
18. Raef Zreik, "When Does a Settler Become a Native? (With Apologies to Mamdani)," *Constellations* 23, no. 3 (2016): 351–364, 359; my italics.
19. Zreik, "When Does a Settler Become a Native?" 359.
20. Zreik, "When Does a Settler Become a Native?" 359.
21. Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, "Tracing Settler Colonialism: A Genealogy of a Paradigm in the Sociology of Knowledge Production in Israel," *Politics and Society* 50, no. 1 (2022): 44–83, 50.
22. Sabbagh-Khoury, "Tracing Settler Colonialism," 60.
23. Jamil Hilal, "Imperialism and Settler Colonialism in West Asia: Israel and the Arab Palestinian Struggle," *Utafiti: Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science* 1, no. 1 (1976): 51–69, 53; Fayeze Sayegh, *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* (Beirut: Research Center, Palestine Liberation Organization, 1965), 5; Sabbagh-Khoury, "Tracing Settler Colonialism," 45.
24. Patrick Wolfe, "History and Imperialism: A Century of Theory, from Marx to Postcolonialism," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 2 (1997): 388–420, 419. Hilal, on the other hand, does not discern between the two colonial projects so sharply. Settler colonialism, according to him, is geared toward not only "dispossession" but also toward exploitation of cheap labor. The (early) Zionist refraining from exploiting Palestinian labor is explained by Hilal as an exception to the settlers' norms. Hilal, "Imperialism and Settler Colonialism," 53.
25. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006); Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism*, 33–34.
26. For an elaborate discussion on the origin of this Zionist slogan, see Diana Muir, "A Land without a People for a People without a Land," *Middle East Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (2008): 55–62.
27. Unlike Wolfe, Edward Said links the strategy of elimination to exploitation and to the civilizing mission: "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," *Social Text* 1, no. 1 (1979): 7–58, 27. For a critical analysis of this myth see Alan George, "'Making the Desert Bloom': A Myth Examined," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 8, no. 2 (1979): 88–100 and Ella Shohat, "Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews," *Social Text* 21, no. 2 (2003): 49–74.
28. Busbridge, "Israel–Palestine and the Settler Colonial 'Turn,'" 91.
29. Francesca Merlan, "Reply to Patrick Wolfe," *Social Analysis* 41, no. 2 (1997): 10–19, 18.
30. Marcelo Svirsky, "The Collaborative Struggle and the Permeability of Settler Colonialism," *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 4 (2014): 327–333, 327.
31. Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "Reading Ruptures, Rupturing Readings: Mabo and the Cultural Politics of Activism," *Social Analysis* 41, no. 2 (1997): 20–28, 26–27.
32. Wolfe, "History and Imperialism," 419.

33. Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital (Part 1)*, transl. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1970), 207.
34. Wolfe, "History and Imperialism," 418.
35. Wolfe, "History and Imperialism," 418.
36. Patrick Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Marxist Era," *Social Analysis* 36 (1994): 93–152.
37. Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 199–244.
38. Dependency theory offers this kind of analysis, in which the principle of exploitation persists after decolonization.
39. Patrick Wolfe, "Recuperating Binarism: A Heretical Introduction," *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, nos. 3–4 (2013), 257–279, 257.
40. Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation," 94.
41. Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation," 97.
42. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," *Writing and Difference* (Routledge, 2005), 351–370, 352.
43. Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism*, 209.
44. Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation," 126.
45. Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation," 126.
46. Lawson, "Postcolonial Theory," 26.
47. Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation," 126.
48. Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation," 126–127.
49. Penslar, *Israel in History*, 92.
50. Wolfe, "History and Imperialism," 388.
51. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.
52. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 89.
53. Bell, *Relating Indigenous and Settler Identities*; Lawson, "Postcolonial Theory."
54. Dalia Manor, *Art in Zion: The Genesis of Modern National Art in Jewish Palestine* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 115.
55. Manor, *Art in Zion*, 117.
56. Manor, *Art in Zion*, 117.
57. Palestine Online Store, *Visit Palestine Poster*, <https://palestineonlinestore.com/product/visit-palestine-poster/>, accessed 18 July 2021.
58. Walter D. Mignolo, "Decolonising the Nation-State: Zionism in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity," *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics*, ed. Gianni Vattimo and Michael Marder (Bloomsbury, 2014), 57–74, 58.
59. Mignolo, "Decolonising the Nation-State," 69.
60. Mignolo, "Decolonising the Nation-State," 63. Ella Shohat makes a similar argument and underlines the connection between the expulsions of Jews and Muslims from

- al-Andalus and the so-called “discovery of America”: *On the Arab–Jew, Palestine, and Other Displacements: Selected Writings* (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 15.
61. Mignolo, “Decolonising the Nation-State,” 63. Mahmood Mamdani pursues the same thesis in *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities* (Harvard University Press, 2020), 1.
  62. Mignolo, “Decolonising the Nation-State,” 63–64.
  63. Elian Weizman, “Decolonising Israeli Society? Resistance to Zionism as an Educative Practice,” *Ethnicities* 17, no. 4 (2017): 574–597.
  64. Mignolo, “Decolonising the Nation-State,” 68.
  65. Boyarin, “The Colonial Drag,” 255.
  66. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 128.
  67. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 122.
  68. Achia Anzi, *Countering Universalism: Decolonisation and the Order of Art*, PhD thesis (University of Amsterdam, 2022).
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  81. Hillel Cohen, *Enemies, a Love Story: Mizrahi Jews, Palestinian Arabs and Ashkenazi Jews from the Rise of Zionism to the Present* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Ivrit, 2022), 27.

82. Campos, "Remembering Jewish–Arab Contact and Conflict," 42.
83. Yosef Eliyahu Chelouche, *Reminiscences of My Life* (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2020), 15; Cohen, *Enemies*, 27.
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85. Jacobson, "Sephardim, Ashkenazim and the 'Arab Question,'" 127.
86. Campos, "Remembering Jewish-Arab Contact and Conflict," 42, 59.
87. Yuval Evri and Hagar Kotef, "When Does a Native Become a Settler? (With Apologies to Zreik and Mamdani)," *Constellations* 29, no. 1 (2022), 3–18.
88. Tagger portrays other synagogues and Jewish shrines in a similar fashion—e.g., the Ari Synagogue in Safed and the Tomb of Rabbi Meir in Tiberias.
89. Linda Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 35.
90. Stuart Hall, "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse," *CCCS Selected Working Papers* (Routledge, 2007), 402–414.
91. Zreik, "When Does a Settler Become a Native?" 357.
92. Manor, *Art in Zion*, 120–121.
93. Manor, *Art in Zion*, 121.