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Designing in Real-Time: An Introduction to Weapons Design in the Settler-Colonial Present of Palestine

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ABSTRACT Israel is one of the world's ten biggest exporters of weapons. Its military industry promotes rapid iterative design and real-time testing in the occupied territories as national capabilities ensuring the survival of the state and its status as a laboratory for innovating cutting-edge, battle-proven weapons for the future battlefield. This essay shows how weapons design is deployed in the theaters of military occupation in Palestine. It traces how design practices, national narratives, and ideology are entwined to produce and sustain the world of permanent war in which the Israeli military industry operates. In the process, I show how Israeli designers and design practices inhabit Zionism's universe of reference and draw on its folk ontologies to produce individual and collective settler subjectivity. My aim is to provide an introductory map to weapons design as a feature of the

settler-colonial present of Palestine and emphasize the role of design practice in organizing and shaping the ongoing nature of settler colonization in the age of neoliberal globalization.

KEYWORDS: weapons design, settler colonialism, ideology, laboratory, military industry, neoliberalism

War Entrepreneurs

> We [Israelis] are world champions of occupation, and we've brought it to an art form. –Gadi Shamni[1]
> If Israel sells weapons they've been tested, tried out. –Binyamin Ben-Eliezer[2]

Disaster Capitalism and Destroying to Replace: Positioning the Israeli Military Industry

Israel is the world's single largest exporter of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and is in control of about 70 percent of that global market (Gordon 2009, 33). In 2013, aerial drone sales accounted for 10 percent of Israel's total military exports (Frost and Sullivan 2013). Since then, this percentage has grown exponentially with more than forty-five military drones in development (O'Gorman and Abbott 2013, 82) and forty Israeli start-ups entering the drone market, with the overwhelming majority of them launching in the last four to five years (Leitersdorf, Schreiber, and Reznik 2016). The military industry designing and manufacturing these weapons holds a position among the ten biggest exporters of arms in the world with an annual export average of US$6.5 billion in the last decade (Ahronheim 2017). Comprised of 1,000 defense companies as of 2012 (Katz and Bohbot 2017, 8), this industry is one of the biggest employers in the country and is by far its largest economic sector, accounting for 25 percent of all annual exports (Denes 2011, 171). Moreover, the industry plays a leading role in the development of the country's industrial and technological capabilities, including through civilianizing military technologies and transferring know-how for nation-building in other sectors. To have this vital role in the national economy and strategic position within the Israeli state system, the military industry is based on an outward-oriented industrialization model with more than 80 percent of weapons production geared for export (Denes 2011, 171).

The Israeli military-security industry is one of the biggest benefactors from the state's strategic investment in the political failure of the peace process. As Naomi Klein (2008, 428) shows in *The Shock Doctrine*, this industry has been at the center of the Israeli nation-building project to craft an economy that thrives on permanent war and the models

and techniques of military occupation Israel has been practicing on Palestinian land for decades. This has turned the occupied territories into "laboratories where the terrifying tools of our security states are being field-tested," Klein (2007) adds. To David Lloyd and the late Patrick Wolfe (Lloyd and Wolfe 2015, 116), this project has made Israel function as "a program for contemporary state form … [that] highlights the continuities between the logics of settler colonialism and those of the neoliberal state globally." Indeed, Israel today is a fusion of disaster capitalism (Klein 2008) and a project that "destroys to replace" an Indigenous people to realize a Jewish nation-state in Palestine (Wolfe 2006, 388). This combination has intensified the ongoing *Nakba* (catastrophe) for Palestinians and exposed them to the volatility and instability of the neoliberal globalization of settler economies of violence. The Israeli military-industrial complex takes this instability as its natural condition due to the state's strategic decision to make weapons export success "a necessary condition for the continued existence of the entire system" (Hania 2016, 46). This export reliance has exacerbated anxieties around the strategic role of the military industry – which is to secure the state's sovereignty – and extended them to settler-colonial anxieties around the continued existence of the Israeli state.[3] As Brian Massumi (2015, 53) notes regarding the productive role of instability and the anxieties associated with it, "Faced with the specter of catastrophe, [the neoliberal economy] does not turn self-protectively inward. It fully assumes the risks of its ontogenetic outside … [and] positively embodies instability." In the Israeli case, the military-industrial complex makes this pursuit ontologically dependent on meeting Palestinian bodies in a state of total war organized as a weapons design experiment exportable to the world. Design, in the process, has become a dominant way of formulating the problems of settler colonialism. Indeed, in the existential sphere of the Israeli military industry, the settler-colonial binary of colonizer and colonized has been re-instituted in a binary of settlers as weapons designers and the Indigenous as design problems whose solutions are applicable the world over. To Israel, weapons design is nested within the settler-colonial project as a practice imbued with Zionism and inhabiting its "universe of reference" (Guattari 1995), that is, the "folk ontologies" shared by its adherents (Bryant 2006). My aim is to provide an introductory map to this practice as a feature of the "settler colonial present" of Palestine (Salamanca et al. 2012; Veracini 2015) and emphasize the role of weapons design in shaping the ongoing nature of settler colonization.

"Indigenous Industry" and Exporting the "Zionist Experience"

As Wolfe (2006, 388–390) explains, making use not only of genocide to empty territory for foreign settlement, settler colonialism is "a continuity through time" constituted and continuously re-activated through various manifestations of the "logic of elimination" which serves as settler society's "organizing principle." The Israeli military-security industry organizes its

operations at all those sites where the logic of elimination manifests in militarized and securitized forms – sites such as Gaza wherein nation-building takes shape in what Allen Feldman (2014) calls the "new forms of imagery, discourse, war, security and state right being carved out of the bent backs of Palestinian civilians." As Eyal Weizman (2007, 6) showed in *Hollow Land*, the Israeli settler-colonial structure is verticalized in its organization and "splintered into a multitude of temporary, transportable, deployable and removable border-synonyms … that shrink and expand the territory at will." This organization of space is the mass proliferation of violent frontiers for weapons design and innovation at which the Israeli military, the state's research and development infrastructure (including universities), the high-tech sector, and the arms industry converge to produce a wide spectrum of "cutting-edge" weapons systems and security devices. The result, in Achille Mbembe's (2003, 27) terms, is a "contemporary colonial occupation" – the "most accomplished form of necropower" today – furnished with the most advanced technologies of "disciplinary, biopolitical, and necropolitical" power to establish "absolute domination" over Palestinians.

In the hands of Israeli export agencies, this settler-colonial occupation is presented as a catalogue of "field-tested" and "combat-proven" products and models that, against overwhelming odds, have "evolved over three generations" of nation-building to address the "unique security requirements" of the Israeli state (IEICI 2012). Every marketing effort emphasizes how these weapons and security devices, with their "domestically developed, matured and tested capabilities" (IEICI 2012), emerge from the "Zionist experience" (Denes 2011, 173) or the "Israeli experience" (Graham 2010). Therefore, the Israeli state is not simply selling weapons but is marketing its brand of settler colonialism as an exemplar of twenty-first-century warfare. Israeli promoters of this "offering" present design as the practice of "wizards" realizing an "indigenous weapons industry" whose story is a "new layer" to the "tale of how a weak and ancient people returned to their homeland, established a state and, against all odds, not only survived but prospered" (Katz and Bohbot 2017, 26).[4] Inhabiting Zionism's universe of reference, weapons design is imbued with this narrative arc and sense of wonder as a process of becoming, conferring on it an ontological dimension. Here, weapons design is at once the outcome of the "unique" story and circumstances of Israel and the process through which this story of becoming is realized in "return." Indeed, to Israel, weapons design is a practice involved in erasing Indigenous presence from the land and indigenizing the settler. A whole arsenal of geographical and racial imaginaries, images of enemy-others, and narrative myths are brought to bear on the design process, including "research," "prototyping," "testing," and so on, whereby these practices come to index experiences of weakness and ultimate historical triumph concordant with the Zionist story. For example, Israel boasts the fastest R&D-to-tests cycles in comparison with other military industries (Denes 2011, 179). This capability is often portrayed as a response to being uniquely imperiled whether because of being "surrounded by millions of Arabs"

or having to constantly "fight for survival" as an ontological condition of the national content of the Israeli state.[5] "Testing in real-time" (on Palestinians) is promoted as one of Israel's main "capabilities," a rapid iterative design process which simultaneously ensures "competitive advantage" in the global market and the "survival" of the settler-state.

The "Zionist experience" extends from the "unique" design capabilities of the state to its product. As Klein (2007) notes, "Israel has learned to turn endless war into a brand asset, pitching its uprooting, occupation and containment of the Palestinian people as a half-century head start in the 'global war on terror'." In this pitch, occupation is not an obstacle to peace but an accomplishment resulting from a prolonged experience of domination. The outcome, Jeff Halper (2015, 71) notes, is a model applicable to other situations all over the world: "a global Matrix of Control arising from [Israel's] occupation." For example, with the intensification of the so-called refugee problem in Europe, Israel promoted its "border wars" to keep Palestinian refugees from returning or to hold them in incarceration camps (like Gaza) as a model applicable to Europe. In these wars, Jewish Israelis are always presented as "returnees" who have been invaded by "infiltrators" and "illegal immigrants" since 1948 (see Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2015a). Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) headed the transfer and application of Israeli homeland security models to European borders and boasted that their approach "covers everything" (Lappin 2015). These technologies and models are also moving to the United States; the Israeli companies Elbit and Magal have been contracted to build Donald Trump's wall between the US and Mexico (Ferziger 2017).

In exporting the "Zionist experience" of ethnic cleansing as "tailored operational solutions [that] ensure that you detect, locate and target terrorists, smugglers, illegal immigrants and other threats to public welfare" (Israel Aerospace Industries n.d.), Israel is aligning and reconnecting its model of enmity with economies and models of violence and exclusion throughout the world. In the process, Palestinianess is fractured into all sorts of categories intended to dismantle it while also becoming materially connected to other struggles. Meanwhile, the Israeli weapons designer is indigenized as he goes about the process of conceptualizing, prototyping, and "testing" his designs in the "field."

The New Pioneers

Weapons design is understood by the Israeli military establishment to be the vocation of the "post-exilic" Jew. This designer combines Theodor Herzl's science and modernity with what Menachem Begin (2007, xxv) described in his terrorist memoir as "a specimen completely unknown to the world for over eighteen hundred years, 'the Fighting Jew'." Most of the designers and innovators behind the industry's catalog of weaponry are or were themselves in military uniform conducting operations in the West Bank, Gaza, and beyond. Whether they be engineers, entrepreneurs, or university students and professors, they

are presented by the Israeli Ministry of Defense as "a skilled and militarily experienced multi-disciplinary workforce" designing the "pioneering, operationally-proven" weapons of the Israeli military industry (SIBAT 2011). Embodying the fusion of soldiering (the "conquest of defense") and pioneering (the "conquest of labor") has always been seen as the preserve of the ideal Zionist type, the "New Man" who, with "a weapon in one hand and a tool in the other," would conquer the land and build settlements in the frontier (Neumann 2011). In the era of "High-tech Zionism" however (Kuntsman and Stein 2015, 9), this figure is embodied in the weapons designer and the security entrepreneur as the "New Pioneers" who turn "swords into silicon chips," according to Benjamin Netanyahu (Stockmarr 2015), to build a militarized "start-up nation" (Senor and Singer 2011) and, as Katherine Natanel (2016, 27) has put it, "fulfill the masculinized role of protection, ensuring collective safety in ways perhaps now more expedient than hand-to-hand combat."

Weapons design occupies a place in the symbolic and material life of Zionism in Palestine wherein, in the words of those crafting the brand image of this industry, "innovation and technology are the twenty-first-century version of going back to the land" (Senor and Singer 2011, 228). In this universe of reference, the "Zionist experience" produces a "unique" weapons design process, "unique" offers, and "unique" designers. This exceptionalism, however, seems to lend itself very easily to a universalism imagined in civilizational enemies and realized through the exports of a settler-capitalist enterprise dependent on foreign sales for its existence.

Going forward, I will trace more closely how the weapons design process and the narrative arc of Zionism are enmeshed through iterative performances of rapid design and testing "in real-time" on the theaters of occupation. My approach is indebted to Katherine Natanel's (2016, 28) *Sustaining Conflict*, in which she talks about how in Israeli society "ideology and practice, narrative and materiality, become entwined through acts of repetition, producing and maintaining a world particular to Zionism." It is especially urgent to understand the settler-colonial logics that sustain the investment in testing weapons on Palestinians and promoting them as "combat-proven," including the rationalist investments of neoliberal capitalism and the ontological and identity-based investments of Zionism. Therefore, it is also important to resist the dominant narratives that normalize the "Zionist experience," and look more closely at how performative acts of design produce individual and collective settler subjectivity (rather than assuming that design is derived from fixed identities). This is particularly urgent because of the industry's instrumentalization and essentializing of "Jewishness" and Jewish histories to explain its practices and to immunize its violent project against decolonial futures led by Palestinian and Jewish movements. To do this work, I will first introduce Israeli conceptions of the design process and how Palestinians are produced as "design problems." My focus will be Gaza.

Designing in Real-Time

> In the history of human experimentation, the dominant form of acquiring bodies has been the debasement (avilissement) of the subjects of the experiment, whether this debasement was initiated by the experimenter or pre-existed experimentation as an available externality which the experimenter could leverage. –Grégoire Chamayou 2011a[6]

Testing, Testing, Testing

After Israel completed its withdrawal from Gaza in September 2005, it turned the Strip into a hermetically sealed "high-tech enclosure" (Tawil-Souri 2012) serving as a laboratory for a military-industrial complex "moving into the robotic era" (Levinson 2010). In the years since, Israel has deployed a series of drone and robotic unmanned weapons against Gaza in regular, day-to-day operations and in large-scale assaults, which are described as "tests" that are part of an iterative design process. In an interview for *Der Spiegel*, Avner Benzaken, head of the technology and logistics division in the Israeli army – a unit which is "mostly comprised of academics who serve as officers" – explained this process as follows:

> If I develop a product and want to test it in the field, I only have to go five or 10 kilometers from my base and I can look and see what is happening with the equipment … I get feedback, so it makes the development process faster and much more efficient. (Becker 2014)

Gaza is the site for "testing" formations of unmanned war, what many in Palestine refer to as "remote-control occupation" (Gordon 2009; Hanafi 2012; Salamanca 2011; Weizman 2007). According to Israel, the purpose is to explore and optimize integrations of "operational concepts" and weapons development – a process Israeli military planners refer to as "technological force design" (Hania 2016, 73). This "design process," which operates in "real-time," is pursued under the heading of the "Future Battlefield" and is managed by MAFAT, the defense ministry's R&D directorate. The "Future Battlefield" is a scenario-based construct through which design problems are captured and articulated for the weapons manufacturers, universities, and SMEs to organize the design and development of solutions for future "operational requirements."
Remote-control occupation in Palestine is located at the evolutionary end of what Grégoire Chamayou (2011b, 4) calls cynegetic wars: wars that bear "an ideal of non-confrontation with death, and of domination without real combat." This aligns with the basic strategy behind the drone as explained by the commander of the Israeli Air Force's UAV training center: drone operators can "make life and death decisions"

while they "sit in a safe room and their personal level of danger is the same as of someone on the beach in Tel Aviv" (IDF 2014). Looking to multiply this power, Israel's official plan is to increase the population of these "soldiers" and diversify them to eventually unman two-thirds of the Israeli air force (Berger 2015) and a third of Israel's ground machinery (Levinson 2010) in the next five to ten years. According to Israeli ground forces technology division, the induction of these machines into the army will create a future where "autonomous soldiers could carry the weight in the war" (IDF 2015).[7] To realize their plan, Israel has carried out the following tests among many others.

During "Operation Cast Lead" of 2008–9, the Israeli military tested the extensive use of 60 ton remote-controlled bulldozers designed for "urban warfare" by the IAI (Katz 2009). A total of 11,000 civilian homes were destroyed or damaged during this three-week assault, 12 percent of them by bulldozer (Al-Haq 2009). In an operation conducted in 2012, the military shifted its focus from ground drones to test the "massive" use of aerial drones for "surgical warfare" over Gaza. Called "Pillar of Cloud," that operation was deemed a "milestone in the history of aerial combat" (Dobbing and Cole 2010). Two years later during "Operation Protective Edge" in 2014, the army tested the integration of hand-launched Skylark aerial drones into ground battalions; the Hermes 900 autonomous drone in collaboration with Elbit systems, one of the suppliers of drones to the Israeli military (Khalek 2017); and the use of subterranean robots designed by an Israeli start-up called Roboteam (Orpaz 2015). A figure of 872 drone strikes were conducted during the operation (Amnesty and Forensic Architecture 2014). Over 2,219 Palestinians were killed (Al Mezan 2015) including 547 children, 30 percent of them by drone strikes, according to Defense for Children Palestine (DCIP 2015). Amnesty International also reported that 18,000 homes were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable (Amnesty 2014). After the fifty-one days of "Protective Edge," the United Nations reported that Gaza's life supporting systems could completely collapse in less than five years rendering the Strip uninhabitable (UNCTAD 2015). A few months after the 2014 operation, the Israeli army started testing new urban warfare concepts that integrated ground robotic capabilities (Opall-Rome 2015).

These horrific events took place in "cycles" of violence that occurred every two to three years. Israelis give these cycles the "operative metaphor" of "'cutting the grass' [or 'mowing the lawn'], meaning a task that must be performed regularly and has no end" (Bronner 2012). In each assault the death ratio was one to three Israelis killed to every 100 Palestinians killed (BBC 2014).[8] The tests took place during periods of high visibility that turned Gaza into a showcase, not only of Israeli designs but also of Israeli "in real-time" designing capabilities. In 2014, Udi Adam, the chair of the state-owned Israel Military Industries who today serves as Director-General of the Israel Ministry of Defense, made clear that the "defense industry is in a perpetual learning mode together with the IDF and the Defense Ministry" to analyze and evaluate newly introduced weapons and other systems in operation (Sadeh 2014). This "perpetual learning mode" is portrayed as a national capa-

bility unparalleled elsewhere in the world. Quoting Ran Galli, corporate vice-president of major campaigns for Elbit Systems (one of Israel's biggest private weapons manufactures), Neve Gordon (2011, 161) had written that "no other country has Israel's extensive hands-on experience in fighting terror, including the development of new systems, testing them in real-time and adapting and fine-tuning following feedback from performance in the field." Adding to this "design experience" an element of speed, Nissim Hania (2016, 46) writes: "the operational friction that the IDF 'provides' for the weapons systems developed by the industry allows it to shorten the systems' development and maturation cycles." Because Israeli military operations accelerate Israeli weapons design cycles, operations are also seen as the "opportunity to cut red tape" (Sadeh 2014). Amir Rapport says, "new products were introduced for the army's use … [and] weapons systems that have long been under development suddenly became operational during the course of the fighting" (Sadeh 2014). Overall, the acceleration of the design cycle is boasted as a national capability that allows weapons to "receive the 'stamp of approval' of operational experience at a far higher rate than others in the market" (Hania 2016, 46), thus turning the occupation into a kind of high-volume production site for Israel's export-oriented industry.

The state aggressively markets its "field-tested" weapons as the "Israeli advantage" and the "brand promise" in the global defense and security markets. Each test can produce one or more of these outcomes: validate a new weapons system with a "stamp of approval"; move the weapons development process forward towards further refinement; modulate the speed of the development process; and "[generate] new requirements in order to supply for the next battle," in the words of the chief scientist of Elbit Systems (Denes 2011, 181). All these outcomes reactivate the process and generate more design incursions into Palestinian bodies. Indeed, while reports of war crimes were being crafted by local and international investigative bodies after "Protective Edge," MAFAT was putting together a design brief for the "new requirements" needed after "lessons learned" from the operation. The result is an armored fighting vehicle for "urban warfare" in "the future battlefield" designed to fight in the "narrow streets and alleys" of Gaza and equipped with 360-degree viewing, a remote-controlled machine gun, and a missile launcher (Ahronheim 2017) (Figure 1).

Avilissement: The Indigenous as a Design Problem

Writing about Israel's "colonial experiments in Gaza" since 2006 Samera Esmeir (2014) noted that the "horror is in the careful and measured instrumentalization of the Palestinian population and in the logic that the colonized are expendable for any end." She notes that this instrumentalization is made possible "by imposing on [Gaza] different forms of confinements." Deployed in this manner, mechanisms of confinement should be understood as what Chamayou calls "vilization

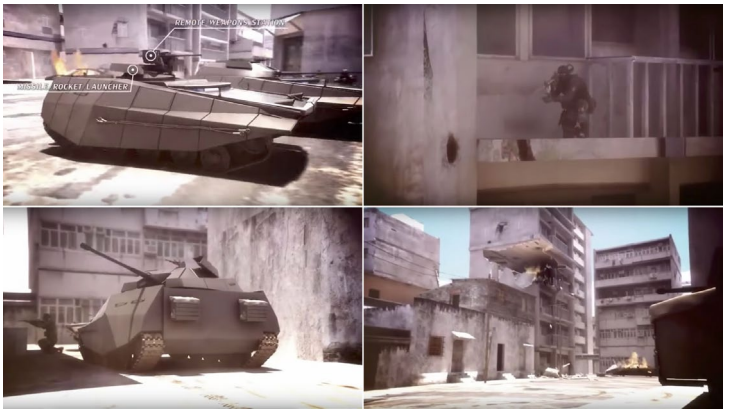

Figure 1
"CARMEL Future Combat Vehicle" (multiple screenshots from original video). Representation of Gaza as "*the future battlefield*" created by MAFAT, the Israeli military R&D directorate. Video published by the Israeli Ministry of Defense (2017).

[or debasement] technologies" (technologies d'avilissement) (Lambert 2015). A subset of exploitation technologies, they include discursive and physical mechanisms that "serve to produce the type of 'vile' body needed for practices of experimentation to unfold" (Jacobsen 2017, 47). These technologies acquire this classification, Chamayou states, because bodies, especially en masse, are not legitimately available for experimentation. Through different mechanisms, divisions must be established that constitute one body as "worthy" and the other as "vile" and of little importance. In this scheme, the latter is to be captured and produced in typologies that render them suitable for the experiments to be conducted on them. Key, Chamayou says, is decreasing those bodies' "acquisition price" by lowering their "power of acting" (Lambert 2015) to ultimately make them serve the "crucial function … of aiding sovereign power in its ceaseless transformations, including the invention of new technologies of power" (Jackobsen 2017, 47).

As Esmeir (2014) notes, the relentless testing since 2006 has revealed once and again "[Gaza's] particular fragility and its susceptibility to Israeli experimentation more so than other parts of Palestine." The production of this vulnerability is at the heart of Israeli weapon design. Vilization technologies, in other words, are the condition of possibility for its exercise. Indeed, the production of the Palestinians as a design problem is the active process of making their life available to the forces and possibilities of Israeli design. This involves varied techniques from mass internment to collective punishment (Khalili 2013), the "'asphixatory' application of power" (Salamanca 2011, 30) to mass debilitation (Puar 2017), and governing Gaza by "the standards of the humanitarian minimum … by reducing them to the limit of bare physical existence" (Weizman 2012, 5). This has given the occupation a temporality punctuated by the ballistics of the Israeli "humanitarian agenda" where "each Israeli attack on Gaza," Feldman (2014) says, "is simultaneously and implicitly recast by

state subtext as a *desistance from genocide*."[9] Jasbir Puar (2017, 139) has said that the "temporalities of living and dying" have been reworked, leading to "[t]he stretching of the horizon of life (what can bare life bear?) and the finality of death into perverted versions of life [that] seem and feel like neither life nor death, not even attenuated death."

Gaza's unlivability produces for Palestinians a life without telos or finality that endlessly serves to structure the advancement of Israeli weapons design. What emerges is an occupation in permanent beta-phase. Every cycle of hellish violence brings forth new iterations of "vile" life on which weapons may be tested. These logics are inscribed in the micro-politics of Israeli design practice wherein incorporating "feedback from the field" into the design brief reinstates the zero-sum logic of settler colonialism. In the process, Palestinian life is reproduced as a technical design problem while eliminating any possibility for the Indigenous to be otherwise. Genocide, mediating the completion of settler colonialism, is replaced with cyclical and iterative design logics wherein the "real-time testing" of a weapon prototype signals the "humanitarian" nature of the Israeli designer's mission. Genocidal desistance is economically and ideologically profitable because the suspension of settler-colonial finality displaces the limits to the capitalist operation of the Israeli military industry while showing the "restraint" of the "most moral army in the world" towards a people who otherwise should be disposed of. The ontological presence of the Indigenous thus re-institutes the "state of emergency" where the weapons designer must remain vigilant and prepare for "the future battlefield." In all this, what Israeli design terms seek to conceal is the "ontological investments," to borrow from Michael J. Shapiro (1997), involved in creating such a world of permanent war in which the Israeli military industry operates.

By deploying different kinds of vilization technologies, Israel has managed to turn its war against Gaza into an iterative design abyss from which it can endlessly extract value while securing this capitalist process behind a shield of Israeli humanitarian credentials as a self-declared "post-genocidal state." As I will show, by enmeshing ideology and practice, this process is also recast by the Israeli state as one of survival and overcoming overwhelming odds. In this recasting, however, the Palestinian is not only made available for the instrumentalist ends of Israeli settler colonialism but also for producing settler subjectivity through iterated performances on the theaters of occupation that entwine material practice with folk ontologies of *becoming*.

The Few Against the Many: The Making of Battle-Proven Designers

> Israel is a laboratory and we have people who have experience. –Guy Zuri[10]
>
> The appearance of Indigenes reconstitutes the conqueror's self-image even more than the desire to expropriate new lands and resources. –Steven Salaita[11]

A year after the 2008–9 "Operation Cast Lead," *The Wall Street Journal* interviewed Thomas Tate, a former US Army lieutenant who was then involved in US–Israeli military cooperation, about the Israeli robots "remaking the battlefield." Noting that it is not technological know-how that makes Israel a pioneer in the robotization of military violence, he emphasized Israel's rapid design capabilities: "The Israelis do [military robotics] differently, not because they're more clever [sic] than we are, but because they live in a tough neighborhood and need to respond fast to operational issues" (Levinson 2010).

The geopolitical imaginary of a state located in a "tough neighborhood" combines discursive formations and geographic and racial ontologies that are key to Israel's iterated performances of rapid design. Indeed, as Puar (2017, 136) notes, Israeli "[a]ccelerationist logics map speed … as an assemblage of racial ontologies." These assemblages inhabit Zionism's universe of reference through myth and practice. As Naomi Klein (2007) notes, many in the military-security industry use the geography of "a fortressed state, surrounded by furious enemies, as a kind of twenty-four-hour-a-day showroom – a living example of how to enjoy relative safety amid constant war." This image of maximum securitization is one remake of the nineteenth-century Herzlian vision of Israel as an advanced post of Europe in Asia and a rampart of civilization against the Orient. Today, this vision is reconfigured as a twenty-first-century high-tech settler colony located at the frontline of the "global war on terror." Attendant to this geopolitical imaginary is a racial imaginary of "the few against the many" who have to overcome unimaginable odds in order to survive. "The few against the many" is "the founding ethos of the Israeli security concept" (Hania 2016, 44). It dictates that to overcome a situation of incredible asymmetry, the Israeli state and its army must develop and maintain a "qualitative edge" over the enemy. As Nur Masalha (2007) notes, the "few against the many" is a key narrative in Israeli Zionist culture and is based on the biblical story of Joshua's conquest of Palestine. This story has been adopted and reinterpreted in post-1948 Zionist discourse to portray the ongoing Palestinian Nakba as a reenactment of ancient battles and wars where "a desperate, heroic and ultimately successful Jewish struggle against overwhelming odds" is achieved against Palestinians and Arabs who are the "embodiment of various ancient oppressors" (Masalha 2007, 56). The adaptation of Zionist mythologies to establish security concepts is a phenomenon Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2015b, 15) has described as Israeli "security theology" wherein the "discursive collapse of biblical and security claims works to exonerate [racist structures] … [and] mask state violence" towards Palestinians to ultimately make them disappear. This formulation erases Palestinian presence in the land and locates them in their "Arabness" as exterior to Israel's "Jewishness." In deploying these racial categories, it also ejects Palestinians from colonial captivity onto an amorphous outside-surround numerically overwhelming a beleaguered Jewish state. In this phantasmagoria, rapid design and development capabilities are understood as Israel's "qualitative edge" in a war of "the few against the many." In the

manner of Israeli "security theology," this image of a struggle between unequals where Israel realizes an improbable and miraculous victory invokes the biblical story of David's sling against Goliath. Here, though, it is reinterpreted as a parable, one that serves as a design theory of settler national security.

Iterated performances of rapid design enact this security theology to produce the world of Zionism in which the operations of the Israeli military industry acquire their meaning. These performances become lived reenactments of Israeli weapons designers overcoming a desperate, almost impossible situation and fulfilling the Zionist trajectory from historical weakness to ultimate triumph, embodied in the now combat-proven designer. In this performance, the weapons "test" becomes the climactic point. Each time a "test" establishes a weapon prototype as "combat-proven," it comes to validate the entire process and system that brought it into being, thus producing Israel as a "battle-proven laboratory" (Ettinger 2011). Heeding these performances, one is reminded not to "begin with the state as a universal phenomenon and ask how it acts but instead [inquire] into how various enactments have created what constitutes the mobile, constantly changing phenomenon known as the state" (Shapiro 2015, 21). Keeping in mind this insight, practices of security theology produce the image of what Edward Said (2003, 166) called the Israeli "survivor state," which, in the words of Feldman (2015, 157), is "a political ark in which citizenship is identical with universal catastrophe past, present, and future; a state that conceives of its existence in the zero-sum game of minimal survival as a political ultimacy." To this sovereign who monopolizes violence and victimhood, "the Native repressed continues to structure settler-colonial society" (Wolfe 2016, 33) by undermining the narrative of "progress" in which the phantasmagoric completion of settler colonialism is imagined in the disappearance of the Indigenous.[12] Israel presents the alternative image of the "survivor state"; its continued existence requires innovation and adaptation on the edge of neoliberal market dynamics of shock and disequilibrium. In this state of "enterprise emergency" (Massumi 2015, 52), the nonlinear and iterative design process which structures occupation becomes a performance of

> an updated vision of Zionism, a belief draped in drones and rainbow flags, [which] does not aim at the goals of its origin – a sovereign state and guaranteed safety for the Jewish people – but rather becomes an endless iteration of its founding narrative: persecution, trauma, perseverance, and triumph. (Natanel 2016, 27)

This performance, punctuated by weapons tests, is the Israeli state's formula for value extraction from Indigenous bodies in Palestine.

Conclusion: Decolonizing Design

As Linda Tabar and Chandni Desai (2017, i–xix) powerfully state, "Decolonization is a global project." While I was writing this article, I

read that Magal, the Israeli company that built the fences around Gaza, has been awarded contracts for "security solutions" for correctional facilities in North America. Magal has been participating in the American carceral state through designs it developed in Palestine while building on accumulated experiences of internment and mass incarceration in the United States, from the ongoing Indian wars to the New Jim Crow (Alexander 2012). These projects of control are connected. The violent designs emerging in one site proliferate in the other, and so do the techniques of designing. These states have exchange programs. They coordinate and co-operate on joint projects and often exchange technology and design know-how. The struggles of Palestinian, Black, and Indigenous bodies are similarly connected.

In 2005, Palestinian civil society issued a global call for solidarity with their struggle for freedom and justice and launched the international campaign to boycott, divest, and sanction (BDS) Israeli and international institutions complicit in colonization. Many around the world, including The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), decided to honor BDS. The Palestinian international movement has also committed itself to the M4BL and to stand in solidarity with Indigenous movements in Standing Rock, the Pacific, and beyond. These solidarities can be seen as an acknowledgement of the interconnected nature of colonial projects and the need to commit to, in the words of Steven Salaita (2016, ix), "mutual liberation based on the proposition that colonial power must be rendered diffuse across multiple hemispheres through reciprocal struggle."

The struggle to decolonize design must inhabit these spaces and worlds through networked solidarities and the relations of kinship that must be nurtured in the course of struggle. It must ground itself in the fields of encounter between the bodies of the oppressed and the violent designs circulating in the colonial world. This kind of engagement connects struggles through practice, displaces the centers of gravity in the design world itself, and relocates the modes of production to inhabit the universes of reference of decolonial struggle. My entry into these decolonial relations helped me recognize and unlearn the design education I received in US design institutions. I was taught that, as a design strategist, I inhabit what the US military calls a VUCA world – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous – which describes its "theater of operations" in its "global war on terror." I was also taught to apply Donald Rumsfeld's "unknown unknowns" to design strategy – a construct that is both epistemological and ontological that organizes preemptive warfare. For prototyping, I was told to "shoot then aim" instead of "aim then shoot," a lesson learned from the Vietnam War. My commitment to my people in Palestine and the commitment to struggles in the lands I live in today taught me to see how "the soldier mode of thinking and acting integrates with a civilian mode of thinking and acting and vice versa," in those spaces where war is seen to "be an integral and sustaining (rather than destroying) part of sociocultural reproduction" (Whitehead and Finnström 2013, 13). Part of decolonizing design is to understand the universes of reference designers

inhabit and the worlds they shape. Decolonization must disorder these worlds and "the territories of colonial occupation – mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally, imaginatively, economically, sexually, and intellectually" (Salaita 2016, 70). The goal is to dismantle relations of war and bring about new ways of being in the world.

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Notes

1. Quoted in (Landsmann 2016).
2. Former Israeli minister of Industry, Trade and Labor Interviewed in (Feldman 2013).
3. While these anxieties do exist due to the role of the military industry in the economy and the occupation, it is important to remember that Israel is not completely reliant on its own military industry to ensure the survival of the state. The United States provides Israel with a huge military aid package every year to sustain Israeli military operations and upgrade the army's capabilities. Under Obama's presidency, the US agreed to provide Israel with US$38 billion in new military aid until 2028 (Keinon 2017).
4. Zionist representations of Jews outside Palestine as "weak" or "deficient" instrumentalize European anti-Semitic typologies to show the significance of the Zionist movement and its role in transforming the "exilic Jew" into a "New Jew" in Palestine. These representations can be found in the works of the "founding fathers of Zionism", including Max Nordu, Leo Pinsker, Theodor Herzl, and Ze'ev Jabotinsky. For example, Jabotinsky, the founder of the revisionist Zionist Betar movement, wrote that, "of all the goals for which Betar was established, none is more honorable [than] to transform the Jewish people from a flock of battered slaves into a nation that knows the rifle" (Naor 2011, 141).
5. It is worth noting that Israel differentiates between citizens and nationals. As a self-declared "Jewish State," it confers national rights on Jews – and Jews only – regardless of place of birth. Narratives of state formation and survival exclusively reference the national content of the state as the life to be protected and secured. This exclusivity is based on the "Law of Return" which states that any Jew recognized by Israel can become a citizen of the state (Adalah n.d.). Palestinian refugees, on the other hand, are not allowed their right to return to their land and Palestinians who survived ethnic cleansing and are citizens of the state are subject to a different set of laws than those to which Jewish Israelis are subject. The Legal Center for Minority Rights in Israel provides documents that elaborate on these articles in Israeli basic law. On Citizenship Law, see https://www.adalah.org/en/law/view/536. On Law of Return, see https://www.adalah.org/en/law/view/537.

6. In his translation of excerpts from Grégoire Chamayou's book *Les Corps Vils*, Léopold Lambert used "vilization" for the French term "avilissement"; i.e. the creation of vile bodies (Lambert 2015). Avilissement can mean to abase, debase, or degrade, or more generally to lower the value or condition of someone in order to make them available for experimentation. I expand on this concept below.
7. These plans are also intimately tied to the global unmanned weapons market and the demands of maintaining Israeli dominance in this sector. The global military UAV market stood at US$8.5 billion in 2016, and is expected to grow to US$13.7 billion by 2026 (Strategic Defense Intelligence 2016). Israel is also anticipating that ground systems will become a huge market, with IAI forecasting that 70 percent of vehicles in the "battlefield" will be robotic (Ben-Dov and Yariv 2015).
8. The BBC collected the results of all Israeli operations since 2008 in one accessible page where the numbers of Palestinian and Israeli fatalities are available. "Gaza crisis: Toll of operations in Gaza" (BBC 2014). http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28439404
9. In *Time in the Shadows*, Laleh Khalili (2013) makes a similar argument concerning colonial representations of replacing genocide with regimes of internment and mass incarceration as a humanitarian act. This act of desistance, she notes, also created the conditions of possibility for sustainable war: "What I want to argue is that the tactics of war – whether mass slaughter or carceral techniques – are also the condition of possibility of a politics in the metropolis. If policy makers think that war can be waged more humanely, they may choose to wage war more often. The paradox, of course, is that the carceral regime of counterinsurgency was crafted precisely because mass slaughter as a routine colonial technique of warfare was challenged by anticolonial domestic constituencies, humanitarian monitoring and legislation, and the resistance of the colonized themselves" (Khalili 2013, 7).
10. Quoted in (Gordon 2011, 162).
11. (Salaita 2006, 77–78).
12. *American Progress*, the 1872 painting by John Gast of Columbia leading techno-civilization westward to realize "Manifest Destiny" is a dominant representation of settler-colonial linearity.

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