

Preface: On the Way to Thinking from the South

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Sami Berdugo's latest book, "Donkey," (Berdugo 2019), tells the story of the 50-year-old Ruslan Isakov, the son of immigrants from Azerbaijan who lives in Kiryat Yam, "the most dismissed suburb of them all," who in the midst of studying engineering in the 1990s suddenly leaves everything and heads south — not to Beersheva, or Mitzpe Ramon, but to the town of Bat Hadar, a small village near Ashkelon. There he lives, secluded from society, in a small and neglected shed; and now, in the narrative present, he is living with a donkey — an abandoned donkey whose owner two policemen had been looking for and asked Ruslan to watch for a little while, and whom he has already been watching for several weeks in the back yard of the shed that he now shares with it. Ruslan takes care of the donkey's needs — gives it food and water, cleans it and takes care of it; but even more so, he lives with an animal in a strange kind of partnership, in the heavy heat of the summer of 2018.

Sometimes they are joined by Steve, Ruslan's occasional lover, who tells Ruslan: "'You're here' [...]" and that statement is enough to understand that that's the way he [Ruslan] is: marginal; such is his personality too. Thus Steve sums up in two words what is apparently not so true in the area of the back lawn, neither 'you' nor 'here'" (ibid, 23). Astonishment over the fact that anyone lives in such neglect is replaced by recognition that it is not an actual place and there is no person who actually belongs there. But his social marginality and existential detachment do not lead Ruslan to evaporate or fade away and disappear. To the contrary, the novel exposes a present, rich and fierce existence — layered, material, and very physical. Although it is a remote, neglected and perverse way of life, the perversion around which the book is organized — the erotic life of a man with a donkey ("we're here," Ruslan replies to

Steve) — is not understood in clinical or identitarian terms. It is a perversion that is created as a deflection of the habitual and familiar, an existence that seeks forms of understanding and modes of action, that is in search of the possibility of “erection.”

Ruslan and the donkey live in the South, a Southern life. Berdugo’s whole book is a sensitive seismograph of the Southern space: the environment and the atmosphere, the hot winds, the heat and the dryness, the weather and the spirit of the soul. It has the temporality of suspension and delay, of helplessness and inaction, yet also bursts of vigorous activity. It contains observation, reflection and expectation, complex and long contemplation; and then sharp turns and sudden decisions. It depicts continuous self-pleasuring, but also reaching out to others. And it exposes a realm of distant existence, far from any place, completely peripheral; and at the same time an all-encompassing, total, Southern existence, that is not posed against any North, is not derived from it or compared to it:

After all, the nature that overly governs Ashkelon and its environs in the regional South is actually the character of all of the State of Israel and its satellites. Because where in this whole country is there a space where the sun does not reside, and reside there most of the hours of the day? Where is the sun really hidden and concealed so that the area could be called “Northern Israeli” or “Northern Palestinian”? There is no such thing; this is a land-flooded entity of South. This is actually the place, and that is its quality, which is not only geography [...] (Id., 75).

The Southern land floods the whole country, carves wrinkles in its residents, and makes them “drunk with light,” and the scorching sun “southernizes all of its subjects.” This is not the Platonic sun, the source of wisdom and knowledge, the light one must extract oneself from the cave in order to discover. Here is a sun you cannot escape, which exposes and reveals and ferments and rots. Nor is it the black sun, Nerval’s sun of melancholy, but rather the yellow sun of the desert and desertification, perhaps the sun of Albert Camus’s “midday thought,” but also of “peripheral urbanism,” of the “edges of the edge of Earth,” which is to say the edge of the inhabited area, from its inner or back side.

The southern space Berdugo portrays is built entirely of a *mise en abyme* of periphery: Ruslan lives in a “back space” of a housing unit in the village of Bat Hadar, which itself is located in the back yard of the city of Ashkelon, which is the back yard of Israel itself: a dirty, scorching, saturated yard. As a yard within a yard, it is a back yard without a main arena: there is no parlor standing in contrast to it and constituting its standard. Therefore it is a shifted space of marginality and perversion, but also one-of-a-kind. It is the whole space and it prevails over the country. It is not

the “second” (Southern) Israel versus the “first” (Northern) Israel, because there is “no such thing” as the latter. There is only Israel as South. Berdugo’s book poses a nonreactive, non-antagonistic South. Peripheral but expanding. The coronation of this difficult book with the two main literary awards of 2020 — the Brenner Prize and the Sapir Prize — is a demonstration by the literary world of the book’s own argument. The Southern, the distant and the marginal does not equal the aberrant, in the sense of that which digresses from the center; there no longer is a center from which to digress. The drift begins in the South and moves onward. It also gives rise to a different epistemology, a different way of knowing the world, and a different language, a substandard Hebrew, one that circumvents the frayed and faded standard; a language that Berdugo follows and actually fabricates, at the heart of the book’s stirring act of fiction. “In the haze of this time” the whole country is South.

The military conflagration of last May placed us in the haze of the time of the South — the time of the Western Negev, Sderot and the Gaza envelope, as well as the time of Gaza itself, of Rafah, Deir al-Balah, Shuja’iya. The conflict between Israel and Hamas erupted yet again, and what is usually repressed burst out once more, but this time it also burst beyond its boundaries and overtook the whole country, from Sheikh Jarrah to al-Aqsa to Lod, Jaffa, Haifa, and Acre. If it seemed as if the South could be delineated, closed, forgotten, and then remembered once in a while, while it stayed forever enclosed within its boundaries, as a space where a violent conflict can be fought every few years without overcoming other areas, a slice of space separate from the center or the North — those ten days in May clarified that the South is not enclosed, that it expands and spreads, that it is here, potentially or actually. Israeli bombings of Gaza population centers destroyed high-rising buildings and attempted to reach underground; the range of Hamas rocket fire at Israel expanded; violent clashes trickled into the centers of major cities. The sense of siege and awareness of the state of war were no longer merely the lot of citizens and subjects in a single geographic area. Nor was the Palestinian national uprising limited to a single closed and delineated place. Southern Israel became the south of the Greater Syria. For a moment the whole country was South.

Those were dramatic moments. The previous issue of *Theory and Criticism* was devoted to the stretching, non-articulative time of the coronavirus. Chronological time that distinguishes between weeks and days and hours was replaced by the mythical time surrounding the closures: a tight or breathing closure, a certain opening

and then another closure, like seasons of the year; a time of slowing, standstill and non-action, which the issue reflected. But last January we went back to the frantic time of acceleration: from the vaccine fever to the complete opening of the economy, with “the return to life” and “the return to smiling” in between. But those who wished to return to routine may have forgotten what routine includes in this place. Then came the month of May, and the “Israeli miracle” hailed all over the world became the Israeli curse. The contradictions at the basis of this place rose to the surface and the violent events were compacted and heaped into a lurching and wild gallop, seemingly the reverse of the repetitive monotony of the coronavirus period. But that gallop also encompassed the eternal return, first of killing and destruction, then of ceasefire and forgetting.

Those events occurred in the last stages of editing this issue and disrupted it. The attempt to conceptualize the present is defeated when the actual becomes historic overnight. Some of the essays in this issue were written out of the previous political moment, interpreting its questions without yet knowing what turn would occur. To an extent, these lines do not know yet either. But this gap is one of the features of this journal. And even if the events of the month of May are hardly articulated in this issue, still the movement at their basis, the movement that they revealed, the movement of this place southwards, pushes us all the more to think about the South, the expanding, bursting and wild South, exposed to the winds. And then to also think from the South.

By South we do not mean only one of the points of the compass. South here is the global South, a term that indicates areas of economic and social distress, most of which are concentrated in Earth’s Southern Hemisphere. A place that possesses only a fraction of the wealth of the nations; an enslaved, subjugated, exploited place, determined by forces outside of itself and managed by them — through colonial (military and political) or neocolonial (economic control even after decolonization) control. Therefore the Global South is a sociopolitical, economic and cultural site. Actually, it is a concept that expresses the connection between the geographic and the social. “The Global South” has been the subject of public discourse for the last decades. Other terms that preceded it indicated different kinds of relations. “The Third World countries” were the countries that were not part of the First (Western) or Second (the East under Soviet rule) world countries; “the Third World” reverberated “the Third Class” of the French Revolution, and was thereby invested with its

emancipatory meaning (the Third World countries were those that were outside of the bipolar system of the Cold War and were not subject to the rule of either one of the superpowers). The “Nonaligned Movement” was a body founded at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955 and included 29 mostly newly-independent countries, mainly in Africa and Asia, which sought to articulate a new agenda beyond the American-Soviet conflict. Then came the Tricontinental countries (from the three continents Africa, Asia and Latin America): the Tricontinental coronation conference was in Havana, Cuba, 1966, on the background of the major revolutions of those years (Cuba, Bolivia, Vietnam), anti-Imperial liberation struggles that sparked the imaginations of many (Young 2003).

The Third World countries, the Nonaligned countries or the Tricontinental countries, all of those denoted not only associations of countries in international forums. These were categories that contained the demand for an alternative epistemology that was associated with a theory of struggle and with concrete political uprisings. With the liberal mass media on the one hand and the single-party censorial propaganda on the other, they demanded to develop different communication networks and to encourage the distribution of a different kind of knowledge, knowledge about global inequality and the ways to fight it. But the decline of the revolutionary unrest in the 1970s, the US administration-funded counter-revolutions, the global economic crisis, and the drift towards political conservatism and economic neoliberalism, led to the retreat of tricontinentalism. A new concept appeared on the stage, postcolonialism, at the heart of which was postcolonial theory, namely a theory that broke free from revolutionary praxis, forged on the academic campus, and which is the thought of the period after emancipation from colonial occupation and rule, and after the liberation and decolonization struggles; the thought of after, “after colonialism,” in its various senses — temporal, epistemological and political (Shenhav 2004). It is a theory that poses the question of representation — who represents and where, the question of positioning, the question of the way that power relations are designed, and the relationship between knowledge, control, language and consciousness; a theory that is usually conceived by postcolonial subjects (an Indian in London, a Palestinian and Bengali in New York) in the 1980s and 90s, in a world after the major struggles, a world under a single hegemony, where attention is turned to hybrid identities, multiculturalism, and third spaces.

The Global South is a concept that expresses a different world. It began as a World Bank category that combines the areas of the world where the average per capita income is low or medium. Therefore, it was associated with previous

economic-social categories such as “underdeveloped countries,” or “developing countries,” in which a liberal economic ideology is already embodied. But the Global South is more elastic. As opposed to post-colonialism, where the emphasis is on cultural difference, questions of representation and power systems, symbolic power and uses of language, it is a geographic-economic concept. And it calls for thinking about a single global system — single but not equal, single but split between North and South. Its sources are in Latin American dependency theory and Immanuel Wallerstein’s world systems theory, and it turns its back to a large extent on postcolonial difference and the subsequent system of intersections. Against the differences it poses a segmentation that arises primarily from the distribution of material (not symbolic) resources. Therefore it calls to think first of all about the connection between geography and economy; then about the connection between them and the life forms and epistemologies that arise from them; and only then about language and culture (Chambers 2016). It is a principled disciplinary distinction: a turn from culture studies, critical sociology, literature and discourse analysis, to political economics, macro-sociology and environmental studies.

Thus the South became a key concept in the last decade. The South African couple of anthropologists, Jean and John Comaroff, issued a resounding call to develop a “theory from the South.” Since European Enlightenment, they argued, the Global South was a preferred subject of interest in various disciplines. It constituted the research field and provided the empirical data, the experiences and trials, the “raw material,” while the center — economic, cultural and academic — was responsible for theory and produced the concept, analysis and writing. But now the order ought to be reversed and the theory itself should be developed from the Global South, because it is in the South that the global processes are exposed in full force and it is from there that they ought to be described, interpreted and understood — from the extreme phenomena of megacities, the depleting of the concept of modern citizenship, the new sovereignty of global corporations; from the flexibility and fluidity of capital and its deregulation; from the informal trade and the debt economy; and from the crumbling of liberal democracy and the rise of new ethnicity. All of that happened in Africa before it came as a shock to Europe and North America, and therefore theory should be written from there: “Europe and America were the past and Africa is the future” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012). This call reverberates the assertion by Achille Mbembe that today, with the prevalence of the residue-free exchange rate, with the numbering and quantifying of many areas of existence, with the expansion of the application of post-human technology — what stands at the basis of contemporary global capitalism is

the manufacture of non-difference. Thus, in contrast with the “black” of the initial capitalist age — which was the name given to the condition inflicted upon people of African origins with the transatlantic trade and which marked them as distinct from the human order — “Now, for the first time in human history, the term “Black” has been generalized. This new fungibility, this solubility, institutionalized as a new norm of existence and expanded to the entire planet, is what I call the Becoming Black of the world.” (Mbembe 2017, p. 6). Whereas the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls for an understanding of the world that goes beyond the Western understanding, the development of “epistemologies of the South” that will lead to the demand for global social justice, correction of the material inequality, that will also include a demand for “cognitive justice.” The knowledge of the South, he argues, is knowledge that was created by struggle, which is to say ways of knowing that social groups develop out of their resistance to the global structures of inequality created by capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy. In his work he seeks to develop “ecologies of knowledge” that bring together different forms of knowing the world, especially those that come from the pre-imperial South, created out of new bursts of its knowledge and intercultural translation; knowledge that is objective even if it is not neutral, the kind that is created by the fight against the power centers and elicits a past where even non-human entities held and transmitted knowledge (de Sousa Santos 2014).

Several preliminary questions must be addressed as we attempt to engage in thinking from the South: is there a single meaning of South — a realistic, economic, measurable sense, that sharply distinguishes it from the north with facts and figures, like those of the IMF (but what about the limitedness of that modernization- and development-biased data, and of statistical data in general)? Or are there several meanings of South, that is, of social-economic subjugation, that are not located only in some identified geographical South but apply to different parts of the world — both in Africa and in the hi-tech industry — in the abandonment, in the loss of rights, in the subordination to the speculation of capital? And if the South is a metonym for the periphery, is there a single identifiable periphery, knowable by measurement, or is periphery a relative and contextual concept — always the periphery of something? South African artist William Kentridge talks about the periphery of the page, of the work of art, of thought (Kentridge 2009). Mbembe is concerned with the courage to get out of the center and touch the shadow regions of the soul, the areas of blackness (Mbembe

2017). But does this not move us away from the material questions (about economy, inequality, dependency; the social collective existence of a Global South), or perhaps the opposite, expanding the application of the material (the tactile material, as well as the materials of experience and consciousness)?

Also, does the South have a separate epistemological meaning? In what ways is the Global South a different site of thought? Can this be assumed without falling into essentialist characterizations of the South (the South is hot, in the meteorological sense that immediately becomes metaphorical; it sizzles and flows, is communal and collective, in contrast with the divided, individualist and isolating North)? Or perhaps the separate epistemology arose from contingent characteristics of the South, its unique history of exploitation, and therefore the South is a place of poverty, need, subjugation — conditions out of which ways of understanding the world and unique forms of action are created? But in that sense, the South is defined by the North because of its being subordinate to it, and therefore, from the outset, on the analytical level, subjugated to it. How to move away from the relationship where the North determines the South — economically and culturally on the one hand, principally and conceptually on the other? Ought we understand the North and the South as two organs of a single unequal system (according to the dependency theory)? Or should we think about them as two separate entities, at least analytically (according to the multiple modernities theory)? Or are they located within a dialectical structure, as two poles maintaining a conflict between them that gives each one of them its identity, which is created only after resolving the conflict — a relationship of mutual constitution, which begins with a split and ends with its internalization and unity? That is of course the Hegelian narrative: developmental, teleological, eternal. But is the South part of that story? Even in Hegel it is not. And this is after all what Fanon has claimed: that in the colonies there is no dialectic of recognition, because the colonialist needs only the labor of the natives, not their recognition (Fanon 2008).

Is the thought of the South the thought of difference, thought of the non-general, the biased and the partial — which is to say, the ability to think against universal history, whether Hegelian or Marxist, and thus to provincialize it? And therefore, is it a thought that examines the concrete, the physical, the formerly rejected and the marginal, thought that involves a political praxis of resistance to the systems of subjugation and exploitation, that expresses an epistemological rupture from abstract, general thought? But over the past several decades the thought of difference in itself became the overall

and abstract structure of critical thought, a structure that understands difference additively and cumulatively, and offers an amplification of differences, which are all subjected to the great unification system of capital. Therefore, perhaps the meaning of thinking from the South is precisely posing a non-particularist movement, which is not a series of differences, as a counter-movement to the Northern movement of capital — an internationalist neo-Marxist or global anti-colonial movement to lead a new universalism that goes beyond the thought of difference. At the basis of this deliberation is the shift from the East to the South. The East-West axis, which was the main axis of postcolonial discourse, from Said's critique of Orientalism to the criticism of the European Protestant secularization model, was comprised of questions of state and sovereignty, tradition and modernity (Bethlehem et al. 2009). In contrast, the discussion of the Global South focuses on the global socioeconomic system, material poverty and class inequality, and cultural difference is often understood in it as something that can be co-opted into a neoliberal economy of identities. Yet the relationship between East and South as two epistemologies, two ways of knowing the world, can be articulated in different ways, and in this issue it appears not only as a contrast but also as another primary intersection: as a South-East perspective.

And finally, what does this place, which in the absence of another name we will call Israel, have to do with the South? It depends, of course, how you understand Israel. The hi-tech nation, with its defense and arms industries, is a rich and strong country that is far, materially and conceptually, from the Global South. But inside Israel the division between North and South, between center and periphery, dominates — a division that has powerful material and cultural reasons and which shapes the public discourse. And the Greater Israel, the one between the river and the sea, is comprised mainly of need, crowding, poverty and stress; of a creeping loss of the right to the land and of the gaping abyss between citizenship and subjecthood. If we go back to Sami Berdugo, perhaps the entire Israel/Palestine is nothing but “a land-flooded entity of South.” Sometimes Israel is all periphery, a province of the Euro-American empire, that relies on foreign aid and reparation money; sometimes it is all a vanguard of post-democratic capitalism, of the war on terror, of a thriving export of positioning and control technologies and the depletion of civil rights. One way or another, it is an Israel overwhelmed by desertification processes and being swept into the southification of the world.

The current issue begins with an article by Eliran Arazi about the Andoque, a native tribe living on its land on the banks of the Caquetá River in the country of Columbia. In the early twentieth century the tribe was cruelly exploited, enslaved by an Anglo-Peruvian rubber company, was almost completely exterminated, and currently has only 360 members. As part of his ethnographical work, Arazi lived among them for a year and a half and studied their unique cosmology and power structures. The article describes the house of the dead — the residence of the people who died and transitioned into a different spiritual-animal state, and serves as an intersection for contacts between human and nonhuman agents, living and dead, native and non-native. But in order to discuss the house of the dead, Arazi does not describe, examine and analyze it from a distance, but rather enters it and explicates it out of its sounds, occurrences and terms. Thus, instead of acquiescing to the logic of representation — and therefore also to the problematic of representation — he traces the cannibal cogito, which poses relations of predator-prey and metamorphoses of materials and souls in different bodies, which are therefore no longer sharply distinct from each other. The article presents a process of reverse anthropology: instead of thinking of the Andoque as the margins of the civilized world, as existence on the periphery that must be known out of the center of political and cultural power, the Andoque — part of the “central nations” of the Amazon — are the ones who create the “thought of the center.” And it is out of it that we must go back to and understand ourselves, we the white people, or rather we who became white by being touched by them can go back and enter our own homes of the dead.

Oren Yiftachel and Erez Tzfadia attempt in their article to develop thought about contemporary urbanism from a South-Eastern perspective. At a time when more and more people living in the city are prone to being pushed out and uprooted from it, they demand first of all to place those processes at the center of urban thought and not to treat them as a secondary dynamic of it, because they are rooted in the very structure of contemporary urban citizenship in wide areas of the world, in the Global South but also beyond it. Secondly, they demand to analyze the processes of displacement and uprooting from the city not only from the meta-logic of neoliberal capitalism and the forms of dispossession that derive from it, but also from the variety of political, legal and planning dynamics that comprise it. They look at the city from its outskirts, from its gray expenses, spaces where civil and social rights are temporary and the danger of loss shapes the experience of life. A comparative analysis of processes of neo-colonization and social economic bankruptcy provides a detailed description of different states of dispossession, and conversely, different forms of coping and even resistance.

Tomer Gardi's article examines contemporary Hebrew literature as translated literature. The increase in the volume of translation of Hebrew literature at the beginning of the 21st century and the deterioration of the cultural status of literature in Israel have transformed the act of linguistic creation in Hebrew into an act that is performed partly and sometimes even mainly for export. Gardi examines the impact of these sociocultural processes on the literary works: he attempts to read the translatability of the work itself, which is the potential of translating it into another language, as it is expressed in the source text written in Hebrew. To do so he goes back to Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, but in his reading it is not internal to the novel but indicates the way the novel faces outward: the more complex and decentralized the Hebrew heteroglossia of the novel, the greater the movement between different social languages within the novel, the lower the translatability of the novel. Gardi selects two of the most significant bodies of Hebrew work in the last decade — the detective series by Dror Mishani and Shimon Adaf — and conducts a comparative reading of them. He follows the intersection of different discourse units, the lexical choices and their specific writing of place, and draws conclusions about the different facings of those two projects: one towards the global language of translation, the other towards a non-translatable localism. Gardi's article is therefore about Hebrew literature as a peripheral literature within a global worldwide system, a literature whose forms of creation are influenced by its changing external conditions.

These three articles pose three different kinds of Southern perspectives: an anthropological study of an indigenous Amazon tribe, a geographical study of gray citizenship in the global city, and a literary study of the contemporary Hebrew detective as peripheral literature written for translation. Supposedly, they move from the farthest to the closest, from animistic cosmology to literature written in Israel; but actually, they also allow the opposite movement — from “the thought of the center,” which with the tools of reverse anthropology can also exist here, to literature which, even if it appears to be conceived here, is written with the intention to face outward.

Later in the issue come several essays about peripherality and Mizrahiness and ask, each in its own way, about the relationship between South and East. The essays section begins with a text by Haviva Pedaya that depicts the South as a geographic and cultural space, from a global and Israeli perspective, and traces the homologies that occur between the different registers of its appearance. Pedaya wonders how the South was constituted as a site of residue and waste and a place of refuge; as a naked space, devoid of history and writing, but infused with tradition and speech; as a site of social subjugation but also of action and creation. She intersects the South with the East and contrasts the rapid civilizatory movement on the East-West axis with the

slow movement on the North-South axis. Instead of demanding that the South shake off the fantasies imposed on it, she seeks to examine it through them, namely through its cultural markers in movement, which also enable the South to speak for itself. This essay is part of a large, encompassing and intricate project, in which Pedaya is articulating a Southern-Eastern perspective of Israel.

Sigal Nagar-Ron questions in her essay the halo surrounding the concept of periphery. She explores how the concept is adopted by groups that wish to challenge the existing order and how it continues to carry a connotation of resistance to the social hegemony even when it is adopted by that very hegemony itself. Peripherality is celebrated not only in critical studies; it is also the key concept in the main social inequality index used by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics — the Peripherality Index. This can be seen as a seeping of critical insights into the heart of the official public regulations, but Nagar-Ron argues that such seeping empties the concept of critical meaning and exposes its conservative bias. She traces the sources of the Peripherality Index, examines its presumptions, and shows how it defines periphery solely geographically, and primarily by the distance of localities from the center. Such a definition provides a flat and unifying concept of periphery: a concept that stands solely in relation to a single center, a concept that cannot distinguish between communities of different kinds with diverse populations, that ignores the history that led to that geography and its different routes, so that the meaning of distance from the center — of a development town, a kibbutz or an “individual farm,” in the 1950s or today — remains identical. Especially, argues Nagar-Ron, the index erases the internal Jewish ethnic difference, and thereby becomes an ideological tool for the denial of the inequality between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim.

Itamar Tubi Taharlev’s point of departure is the indelible educational disparity between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. He argues that although the direct oppression of the Mizrahim, in the form of structural tracking into vocational education, did decline, it was replaced by a different form of tracking, which he calls emotional tracking. That tracking is created by a hierarchical distribution of the sense of self-efficacy that leads to a differential emotional habitus that influences the capacity for social mobility. Tubi Taharlev indicates three social systems that contribute to the emotional tracking of the Mizrahim: the education system, where teachers’ expectations from their Mizrahi students are structurally lower; the mass media, which provides low-value representations of Mizrahim; and the immediate environment — family and friends who internalize that low value and themselves verbalize and reconstruct it. An examination of the emotional tracking allows the movement between the fixed social structures and personal life experiences: Tubi Taharlev demonstrates how the

Mizrahi subject herself articulates the social structure that subjugates her, and thereby indicates the dialectical relationship — and not only the simple contrast — between the sociology of suspicion and sociology of meaning.

Itzhak Benyamini proposes in his essay a unique theoretical framework for understanding the question of Mizrahiness. He argues that Mizrahiness cannot be located in any positive, essential, sociological or historical contents. Rather, one must look at the way the marker of Mizrahiness operates in the current political discourse. Benyamini maintains that the current turn to Mizrahiness follows Freud's model of retroactivity; according to that model, a traumatic event is experienced only through its belated symptoms, and therefore it is experienced and even actually first exists only retroactively, as a secondary event, according to the marks it left. Similarly, argues Benyamini, the Mizrahi past is recorded only from the position of the present, which constitutes it belatedly. Therefore, instead of asking about the veracity of the contents presently contained in different Mizrahi positions, whether it is a community-national orientation of the "second Israel" or the anti-national position of the Arab Jew, one ought to trace the belated constitution of the Mizrahi source; to trace it not in order to dismiss it as a mere ideological device, but in order to open up the seething phantasmatic space beyond the quasi-factual monolithic of Mizrahi identity.

The portfolio curated by Hadas Kedar presents the South as a state of mind, that is not only a geographic region or a socioeconomic site, but also an artistic stance and inter-artistic or para-artistic action that disrupts years-old Northern cultural arrangements. It is a speculative exhibit comprising three projects. A video piece by the Palestinian artist Jumana Emil Abboud, in which the artist enters a historic museum of classical art, interferes with her body in its mode of display, and inserts into it legends and oral traditions, is understood as a challenge to the method of museal organization and the history that it portrays. The action of the "New Mineral Collective," which turns to the North Pole and takes action against its mining and resource exploitation, shows a slow and meditative exposure of remnants of the landscape, which is devoid of human presence but speaks of the impact of human actions on it. The third project is not artistic per se: it is an agricultural farm in Wadi Atir in the Negev that experiments with traditional agricultural methods, studies them, and applies them. Kedar attempts to understand the farm in relation to the extra-museal land art and in relation to national and corporate soil improvement, and to see it as a combined act of social action and artistic practice of manufacture, study and representation — an act that turns to forms of local knowledge in order to establish Southern modes of work and ways of knowing.

Ameer Fakhoury's essay is about the far-reaching changes in domestic Israeli Palestinian parliamentary politics in the last year. The split of the United Arab List from the Joint Arab List, its entrance to the 24th Knesset, and the widespread coalition contacts it held culminating in its support for the new government — are all expressions of in-depth changes in Palestinian society in Israel and its relationship with the Jewish (and democratic) state. Fakhoury compares the move by Mansour Abbas to that of Ayman Odeh, with their commonalities and differences. Both wish to advance a politics of influence — Palestinian influence on and in the Israeli regime. But whereas Abbas enters Israeli politics through its dissolution into groups and tribes, Odeh wishes to expand the definition of Israeli citizenship so that it also includes the Palestinian citizens. The essay was written right before the events of May 2021, but the discussed Palestinian politics of influence, which left their mark on Israeli politics, is likely to have created a racist, nationalist counter-effect that was one of the causes of the violent conflagration in May.

Out of the abundance of writing from the Global South in recent decades, only a small amount of which was translated into Hebrew, we chose to translate for this issue a classic text: chapters from the book by the Argentinian philosopher Enrique Dussel, "Philosophy of Liberation." In this book, published in 1977 and reissued in several editions, Dussel clearly outlines one of the central streams of Latin American thought. Dussel went into exile in the mid-1970s after a bomb was placed next to his house, and settled in Mexico, where he teaches and writes to this day. In the book he proposes a new reading of Western philosophy, a historic and political reading — not of its abstract ideas but of the act of abstraction that stands at its basis, an abstraction from the actual world in which it is conceived and which it must conceive. Dussel argues that Descartes's ego cogito is based on the colonial ego conquiro, and modern European philosophy is a philosophy of conquest, colonization and control. But that was not always the case. Philosophy, argues Dussel, was conceived not in the center but in the periphery — from pre-Socratic thought in Turkey and northern Italy, through the Renaissance and medieval thought created far away from Rome, to the distant cities in which Descartes and Kant wrote. Philosophy begins as thought external to the political and cultural center, but then it turns to it, is integrated in it and becomes abstract ontology, epistemology, or phenomenology. Dussel's project therefore is to return philosophy to the periphery and reinstate it as thought about the current world political reality, a philosophy of power, inequality, alienation and difference, and thus a philosophy that provides a platform for the struggle for liberation. The chapters from Dussel's book are prefaced by an introduction by Efraim Davidi, who

positions Dussel and the philosophy of liberation alongside the dependency theory and liberation theology in the Latin American philosophical array of the second half of the twentieth century. Davidi also tells the story of Dussel's stay as a young man in Israel. In 1959-1960 Dussel lived in Nazareth, worked in construction and was a member of the Histadrut Labor Union. And according to his own testimony in an autobiography he published, that is where he first conceived of the possibility of thinking beyond Athenian philosophy, the thought of the rulers; to thinking the philosophy of Jerusalem, the thought of the poor, namely the philosophy of liberation.

We invited two researchers involved in political activity inside and outside of the university for a talk: Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, from the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University, and Lin Chalozin-Dovrat from the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Ideas at Tel Aviv University. We asked them to consider together, from their different geographical and disciplinary positions, the place of Israeli academe between North and South. Ben-Dor Benite looks at the Israeli university in its Asian context and sees it, from the establishment of Hebrew University in 1925 to this day, as an alienated university — as opposed to Asian universities (especially in India and China), which over the last hundred years became less alienated, host traditional bodies of knowledge, open their doors to wider publics and see them as legitimate subjects of knowledge. Ben-Dor Benite turns to the poet Rabindranath Tagore and the Oriental University he established in India, and describes it as a model of a hospitable local university. Chalozin-Dovrat examines academe in Israel through the question of language: an academe that is in fact peripheral and Hebrew-speaking, but strongly denies its peripherality and imagines itself as part of an English-speaking hegemonic center. She questions the meanings of the gap created between the language of research and science and the daily language of social intercourse, and discusses the recent debate over the commitment of Israeli academe to Hebrew. This debate ranges between a patriotic national position that prefers Hebrew as the language of Jewish renaissance in the Jewish homeland, and the universal globalist stance that prefers English for research collaboration. She sees it as a fake debate between two poles that are nothing but different emphases within a single national neoliberal hegemony, which behooves the proposal of a different stance of academe in the periphery. The conversation between the two ranges between criticism of the placeless and languageless academe of Israel, and the possibility of imagining a different kind of university here.

This issue's point of origin was the conference "To Think from the South" held at the Sapir College Multidisciplinary Studies Department in May 2016. For two days numerous researchers and artists lectured at the southern college — known for its social-local approach to teaching students, most of which are first-generation in higher education — and discussed the possibility of research and knowledge originating from the South. The issue continued out of a workshop of researchers at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and the Sapir College in late February and early March 2020, right before the coronavirus. I wish to thank the members of the workshop committee — Tal Kohavi, Orna Yoeli-Benbenisty, Sigal Nagar-Ron, and Erez Tzfadia for their collegiality, and the workshop participants for their interesting presentations and contribution to the joint learning. We could not include in the issue all of the southern lectures, papers and thoughts, and it contains only a sample of what occurred at the workshop. Indeed, more than a summary of the research process and presentation of its products, this issue is a pointer to a field that has yet to be created. I thank Anat Shalem, the journal's editorial coordinator, who worked with me on its editing; Lidar Artzi and Nadav Shtechman Polischuk for their thoughtful and excellent work; Ronit Tapiero, who came to our assistance at the last minute, and Tal Kohavi, who allowed the numerous fluctuations of this issue. The issue is dedicated to the memory of Naama Tsal, a researcher, lecturer and literary editor who died a year ago in her prime. Naama taught for many years at the Sapir College and was one of the originators of the 2016 conference, where the seed of this issue was planted.

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