

GENDER, NATION, AND SELF-NARRATION

THREE GENERATIONS OF DAYAN WOMEN IN PALESTINE/ISRAEL

The essence of the nation...is a matter of self-awareness or self-consciousness.
— Walker Connor (104)

Central dimensions of the roles of women are constituted around the relationships of collectivities to the state...[and] central dimensions of the relationships between collectivities and the state are constituted around the roles of women. — Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1)

I, YOU, WE (?)

To enter the discursive universe of autobiography is to enter a linguistic space shaped by the signs of the deixis—the contingencies of person, time, and place—and their subject-forming function. This space is ultimately an existential and ethical one. The autobiographer cannot but say (however obliquely) “I,” and “here,” and “now,” and in so doing makes a subject emerge who claims a particular location in the world. In the autobiographical act, a self and its other(s) are named, a community (a “we”) and a place of belonging are invoked, histories (both individual and collective) are fashioned. To say “I,” the linguist Emile Benveniste contends, is always already to say “I am”: an act of self-engendering. But this subject-constituting act is also inextricably embedded in a system that (re)presents three principal modes of the self’s relation to the other. These modes—which autobiographical practices foreground and, in turn, allow us to investigate—alert us to what is at stake, epistemologically and ethically, in the construction of individual and collective identities. Benveniste identifies two axes along which the relationship between self and other can unfold: the axis of subjectivity (the I-you relationship, reversible by definition) points to the possibility of dialogue and mutuality between subjects; and the axis of personality (which distinguishes between I/you as persons,

and he/she/they as non-persons) is the paradigmatic mode of exclusion and othering. The third modality, whose relation to the axes of subjectivity and personality forms my theoretical object of investigation here, is exemplified by the first-person plural: the affirmation of collective be(long)ing through a discursive feat by which an “I” wills a “we” into being. If, as Walker Connor and Benedict Anderson argue, the essence of the nation is self-consciousness—born of those cognitive and affective acts by which subjects effect a shift from “I” to national “we”—then self-narratives can serve as privileged sites for both the construction and interrogation of the nation.

Any reflection on nation that has as its focus Palestine/Israel¹ is inevitably carried out in the shadow of the difficult and complex realities that have marked the region for over a century now. These realities, and the contesting narratives that have been an integral part of them, heighten one’s sense of the inescapably partial character of the language we use to represent self and other. In an earlier version of this paper, I identified myself as an Israeli belonging to the first generation born after Independence: a generation born to refugee parents and greeted with the promise of an end to a millennia-old history of persecution and genocide,² the promise of a homecoming and the long-awaited Ingathering of Exiles. But I am, of course, also an Israeli born in the aftermath of what has been inscribed in Palestinian memory and historiography as the catastrophe or *al-Nakba*, the “traumatic events of 1947–49, which cost the Palestinians their majority status in Palestine and their hope of controlling the country, and cost half of them their homes, land, and property” (Khalidi 178). I have since made another home for myself in the calmer but by no means uncontested national space that is Montreal/Québec/Canada (Freiwalld “Nation”), but for the Jewish and Arab inhabitants of Palestine/Israel, daily reality continues to be shaped by the disastrous consequences of an inability to reconcile respective national aspirations, a failure to engage in an “I-You” relation of reciprocity (Buber 58).

While the present essay deals with autobiographical writings by Jewish women in Palestine/Israel, I would like to frame my discussion with the voices of two Israeli Palestinian³ contributors to *Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel* (Swirski and Safir). What their observations suggest—beyond the shared concerns of Palestinian and Jewish women as women in patriarchal societies—is the critical and emancipatory potential of the perspective of those whose gendered position places them in an oblique relation to the nation. Nabila Espanioly, a Palestinian from Nazareth, reminds us that *Women in Black*, a group that includes both Jewish and Arab

women, was one of “several women’s peace groups that organized in the wake of the *intifada*, as women were the first to respond” (148).⁴ Her essay concludes with this expression of hope: “If Israeli Jewish women perceive the connection between Israeli Palestinian women’s struggles for peace and equality and their own efforts, the two circles will come closer together” (151). Mariam Mar’i, a Palestinian from Acre, insists in an interview with the Jewish Israeli reporter Bili Moskona-Lerman that “a Palestinian state is the only solution to the problem,” but she also acknowledges that “you see the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization] as we once saw Zionism” (44). The interviewer notes that Mar’i’s other concerns are “about tradition, religion and extremism—Arab as well as Jewish” (44). As I listen to these voices, I think of a recent commentator on the Arab-Israeli conflict who urges us to adopt the principle of mutual personhood (between individuals as well as groups) as a foundational moral imperative (Bornstein vii), and I think of Virginia Woolf’s compelling demonstration, in *Three Guineas*, that violations of this principle begin inside the patriarchal home and inevitably lead to the deadly battlefields of the nation, with their “ruined houses and dead bodies” (162). What I hear in the first-person accounts of Espanioly, Mar’i, and (to varying degrees) the Jewish women autobiographers discussed below, is both an affirmation of the right to collective identity (for oneself and for the other), and a critique—born of an intimate knowledge of inequalities *within* the nation—of the injustices that can be perpetrated in its name. What such a critique can enable is the creation of what ethnographer Ayala Emmett describes, in her study of Jewish and Palestinian women’s peace activism, as a discursive “transnational territory” (48): not a final destination, but a potential site of solidarity and resistance to different forms of oppression. Gender, Emmett concludes, can provide a ground for reimagining the nation, as such peace groups “deploy gender solidarity to participate in imagining nation-ness indivisible from justice” (183).⁵

This essay examines the life writings of three women—Deborah Dayan, Ruth Dayan, and Yael Dayan—who represent three generations of one of Israel’s most public families. Spanning over a century, their life histories allow us insights into the making of the imagined community that is contemporary Israel. The Dayans, one should however add, have been an integral part of the Ashkenazi (of European ancestry) “labor elite” whose moral, social, cultural, and political authority has shaped present-day Israel (Sternhell 4–5). The voices heard here, then, while marginalized by gender, come to us from the centre of power and privilege. It will be the task of the larger project of which this essay is a part to bring into the discus-

sion the experiences and perspectives of other segments of the national population, most notably those of Mizrahi (Oriental) subjects (of North-African or Middle-Eastern origin) whose ethnically marked experience within the nation has been one of cultural, socioeconomic, and political inequality (Hever et al., "Epistemology" 17).

Benedict Anderson's brief but astute observations about Zionism and Israel provide a helpful point of entry into a discussion of those founding narratives of the Jewish nation-state within and against which the Dayan women's own self/nation-narratives emerge. Anderson sees the Zionist project as a response to that particular form of racism that is anti-Semitism, an ideology that in the age of nationalism has made the Jew the nation's Other: "Jews, the seed of Abraham, [are, for the anti-Semite,] forever Jews, no matter what passports they carry or what languages they speak and read" (149). For Anderson, the significance of the emergence of Zionism and the birth of Israel lie in that "the former marks the reimagining of an ancient religious community as a nation, down there among other nations—while the latter charts an alchemic change from a wandering devotee to local patriot" (149). Two popular Hebrew expressions of the pre-state era capture the centrality to the national narrative of the elements evoked by Anderson: the dream of escaping a perpetual condition of otherness; the desire for sovereignty and a measure of control over one's collective destiny; and the foregrounding, in the expression of that collective identity, of a relation to the homeland that draws on, but also secularizes, a biblical connection to the territory. This is the spirit of the famous exhortation by Theodor Herzl, one of the founders of political Zionism: *im tirzu ein zo hagada* (if you [plural] will it, the dream will come true); and of the rallying cry of the pre-state *Yishuv* era: *anu banu hartza livnot u'lhibanot ba* (we have come to the land of Israel to build and be rebuilt in her).

Nations and nationalism, Walker Connor has noted, "are 'the stuff that dreams are made of,'" in part by virtue of their appeal to a myth of common descent—a particularly compelling form of group identification (210). But the very principle around which notions of nation and homeland are built, other theorists remind us, "is a pattern of select inclusions and exclusions" (George 2). Thus while the early Zionists felt a historic connection to the land, the territory they longed to build and be rebuilt in was, of course, neither empty nor "unbuilt." Adding gender to the critical perspective through which nation is examined further foregrounds the dual sense in which exclusions are constitutive of the nation: overt exclusion is the principle by which group membership is established and belonging is determined; but a pattern of occluded exclusions also marks the nation from

within. As Anderson points out, one of the senses in which the nation is an imagined community is that “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail [within the nation]...the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship,” a “fraternity” (7). The very language used here suggests one kind of inequality the nation not only naturalizes but indeed exploits; in the patriarchal blueprint for the nation as a masculinized fraternity, women become its absolute—yet absolutely necessary—binary Other. Recognition, Ernest Gellner has suggested, is the operative principle in the (internal) constitution of the nation: “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture...[and/or] recognize each other as belonging to the same nation” (7). But how do Woman/women (de Lauretis, “Feminist” 5) figure in this originary reciprocal gaze? The present essay thus approaches the three Dayan autobiographies with the following questions: how have these women seen their contributions to *binyan ha’aretz*, the building of the national home? Were they indeed rebuilt in her? How did their (gendered and other) experiences transform their understanding of the nation and of nation-ness? And how can their writings help us rethink the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion, of recognition and misrecognition, that are constitutive of one of the most potent forces in our contemporary world, that of (ethno)nationalism?⁶

THREE LIVES: AN OVERVIEW

A brief overview of the three lives is in order before broaching these questions. Deborah Zolovskiy was born in Ukraine in 1890 and came to Ottoman-governed Palestine in 1913, leaving behind family, an interrupted university education, and socialist activism. She lived through the years of the British Mandate in Palestine and died in 1956, eight years after the founding of the Jewish state. In Palestine, she married Shmuel Dayan, and had a daughter and two sons. Her oldest, Moshe Dayan, would become one of Israel’s most recognizable military and political figures. She lived to mourn the death of her youngest son, Zorick, killed in the War of Independence, but was spared her daughter Aviva’s suicide years later.⁷ A *halutza* (woman pioneer) of the wave of Zionist immigration to Palestine commonly referred to as the Second *Aliyah* (1904–1914), Deborah Dayan is in many respects an exemplary Founding Mother. She lived and worked in Degania (the first *kvutza* or collective village) and then in Nahalal (the first *moshav* or cooperative village), experiencing the many hardships of those years.⁸ She was active in the Women Workers’ Movement, and was an editorial member and writer for its journal *Dvar Hapolet* (Voice of the

Woman Worker) for twenty-two years. In 1953, Deborah Dayan was named Mother of Israel. Her autobiographical volume, *B'osher u'veyagon (In Happiness and in Sorrow)*, appeared posthumously in 1957. The volume, edited by her husband Shmuel Dayan, is comprised mainly of her columns for *Dvar Hapoelet* but also includes selected letters (mostly addressed to her husband during his travels), as well as Shmuel Dayan's diary entries from the last days of her life. An abridged English translation of the volume was published in 1968 under the title *Pioneer*. At 152 pages compared to the original's 400, the English translation is not only highly selective but also clearly slanted and unreliable (and will thus not be used in this essay). The choice of the English title is already telling, for *Pioneer* celebrates the myth but gives little indication of the complex life the original volume reveals: Deborah's ambivalence towards the national project, arising from her experience as a *woman* pioneer (in sections like "The Woman's Part"); her clear-eyed view of the monumental challenge involved in turning an ethnically diverse population of immigrants (herself included) into a national citizenry; and her grappling with the personal cost of a collective dream that left her, as her grandson would put it, a bereaved mother with "mourning permanently lodged in her eyes" (Gefen 30, my translation).

Ruth Schwartz (b. 1917), like Moshe Dayan, was born in Palestine. She lived from the ages of two to nine in England, where her parents were posted, acquiring English as her first language. She met and married Dayan in 1937 (they divorced in 1971; shortly thereafter he would marry Rahel Rabinovich, his lover of eighteen years). Her autobiography, *And Perhaps... The Story of Ruth Dayan* (1973; written with Helga Dudman and published simultaneously in Hebrew and in English), takes us from the late 1930s in Nahalal through the social and military upheavals of the next four decades, touching on issues and conflicts that still remain unresolved today. As a text that reflects on both the private life and a lifetime of national service, Ruth Dayan's autobiography, like Deborah Dayan's, speaks directly to the question of the woman's part in the national dream (and its darker underside), aptly taking its title from a poem by Rachel (a celebrated pre-state poet): "And perhaps these things never happened at all.../.../Was it real? Or did I dream a dream?"

The third autobiography discussed here is by the daughter of Ruth and Moshe Dayan, Yael Dayan (b. 1939). The autobiography was published in English in 1985 and translated by the author into Hebrew in 1986. The title and dedication alone tell a good part of the private story. Entitled *My Father, His Daughter*, the autobiography is dedicated to "my mother, who loved, understood, and tolerated us both"; and there was

much to tolerate: the married Moshe Dayan would, for example, invite his daughter to meet his lovers at a separate apartment he kept. Interwoven with this charged familial story is a public narrative that voices the pre-occupations of a society well past its pioneering days: a society marked by a succession of wars and constant threats to its existence; transformed by the experience of becoming an occupying force; and grappling with internally divisive issues of religion, class, and ethnicity. Like her grandparents and parents, Yael Dayan has been involved in public national service, serving as a member of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) in its thirteenth session (representing Labor), fourteenth session (representing One Israel), and fifteenth session (as a member of Labor-Meimad).

THE MASTER NARRATIVE

In their introduction to a collection of essays entitled *Woman-Nation-State*, Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias examine the ways in which women figure and participate in ethnic and national processes. The broad areas they identify provide a helpful grid with which to approach the Dayan autobiographies. Women, they note, figure as symbols in national discourses, and although they participate in national, economic, political, and military struggles, they are often seen as occupying supporting and nurturing roles in relation to men. Among the areas in which women's participation is crucial, Yuval-Davis and Anthias list the following: women are "recruited" as biological reproducers of members of the ethnic collectivity, but also as reproducers of the boundaries of the ethnic/national group; women are not only socializers of small children, but also participate centrally as transmitters and reproducers of the collectivity's culture and, in the case of a multi-ethnic collectivity, the ethnic symbols and ways of life of the dominant group. I want to begin by looking at the gendered national script against which the lives and life narratives of the three women unfold.

The ideological inscription of women as absent from the valorized public sphere and as idealized keepers of the patriarchal familial/national hearth is nowhere more evident than in Moshe Dayan's massive autobiography, *Moshe Dayan: Story of My life* (1976). Women are all but absent from this narrative in which the political and military saga of an emergent nation and Dayan's own life story become practically interchangeable. The autobiography's framing prologue and epilogue, however, are telling. The prologue takes us back to the first days of the Six-Day War, and the visit by Moshe Dayan (the war's greatest hero) to the Wailing Wall. He writes "[leaving it] I had noticed some wild cyclamen of a delicate pinkish mauve sprouting between the Wall and the Mograbi Gate. I plucked a

few to bring to Rahel [his second wife]. I was sorry she could not have been there that day" (3). A fine sentiment, if one chooses to disregard the insidious gender ideology underwriting the familiar troping of women as delicate flowers,⁹ or overlook the fact that, as Moshe Dayan would have well known, *no* woman could have been there. Indeed, what makes this scene—of a male soldier at the site of the ancient Temple—a particularly resonant national tableau is the convergence of two patriarchal ideologies that have been constitutive of the Jewish nation-state: an orthodox Judaism that excludes women "from full participation in the public sphere while subordinating them to male authority in the private sphere" (Raday 19), and a masculinist militarism reinforced by the realities of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the perceived imperatives of "national survival and national identity" (Sharoni 96). To draw again on de Lauretis's terms of analysis, in Dayan's prototypical narrative of the nation, women—"the real historical beings who cannot as yet be defined outside of those [patriarchal] discursive formations"—are absent, but Woman—that "fictional construct, a distillate from diverse but congruent discourses dominant in Western cultures...the other-from-man (nature and Mother, site of sexuality and masculine desire, sign and object of men's social exchange)" ("Feminist" 5)—does make a brief but crucial appearance. In the epilogue, we find Moshe Dayan, in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War (the war that will turn him from hero to villain), seeking solace in his favorite activity, amateur archeological exploration. Roaming the Negev desert, he discovers a cave which he imagines housed a family "some two thousand years before our Patriarch Abraham" (516). These are the autobiography's concluding lines: "It was an extraordinary sensation. I crouched by the ancient hearth. It was as though the fire had only just died down, and I did not need to close my eyes to conjure up the woman of the house bending over to spark its embers into flame as she prepared the meal for her family. My family" (516).

In Dayan's national and personal narrative, the men are patriarchs, history's shakers and movers who, like Abraham, have proper names and identities; the women, while crucial as legitimating symbols of national continuity (by Jewish law, maternity determines the identity of the child), remain anonymous and faceless as they prepare the family meal. Further, the slippage from "her family" to "my family" is particularly revealing, as it naturalizes (by literalizing) the reigning trope (myth) of the nation—which is also that of traditional autobiography—the trope of blood and/as belonging. The nation, Connor writes, is "a group of people who *feel* that they are ancestrally related. It is the largest group that can command a person's loyalty because of *felt* kinship ties; it is, from this perspective, the

fully extended family” (202, emphasis added). Rooted in the trope of the patriarchal family, the national narrative depends on—and is thus invested in naturalizing and perpetuating—its gendered script. Moshe Dayan’s autobiography clearly illustrates the multiple ways in which women’s gendered discursive position as the eternal maternal-feminine serves the national narrative: it functions to erase history—the plural, discontinuous histories that have taken shape over the intervening millennia—allowing a unified, continuous story to be told (more on this, as seen through Yael Dayan’s eyes, later in the essay); it serves to legitimate a collective claim through an appeal to a biological relation, arguably the most basic form of human kinship; and it invokes (in the figure of the mother/land) a particularly powerful affective bond (given the historically gendered division of labour in which women have been the nurturers of infants and young children) between members of the collectivity.

In form, Moshe Dayan’s hegemonic self/nation-narrative follows the model of his beloved scriptures. The narratives of the Hebrew Bible often “begin with ancestry” (Lewis 33), and are rarely interested in exploring character as a “locus of conflicting emotion...[or] internal tension” (Davies 14). It is perhaps not surprising, then, to find in women’s counter-narratives of the nation the very traits—conflicting emotions and internal strife—shunned by the dominant national paradigm. Such inner turmoil can be seen as the direct result of a contradiction at the heart of the nation-building project, for while Zionism proclaimed equality for all, “in practice, neither the early settlers nor the second wave of immigrants at the turn of the century had transcended the patriarchal norms of their home communities in Europe” (Feldman 30–31). In *The Founding Myths of Israel*, Zeev Sternhell makes the broader claim that as a form of “nationalist socialism” and an ideology based on the idea of the nation as an extended family, Zionism subjected social concerns (such as class and gender equality) to “the principle of the nation’s primacy,” and reinscribed traditional bourgeois gender roles (7–8). Thus while women were there from the very start, the story of their immigration and settlement is just beginning to be told, for their experiences, actions, and struggles have been “either ignored, or put on a ‘pioneering pedestal,’...In neither case were women’s own voices heard” (Bernstein 1–2).

DEBORAH DAYAN

One voice that has come through to us, loud and clear in its ambivalence towards the hegemonic national script, is Deborah Dayan’s. Here is her own take on the woman-in-the-primordial-kitchen fantasy so beloved by her son.

In the following passage (dated 1935) from the autobiography, Deborah reflects on the symbolism of an inscription in a work-log found from the early days of the *Yishuv*: “There is something symbolic about this page, with only two words inscribed on it: ‘Kitchen: Sarah.’ That’s all it says. As if to remind us that this has been our lot since the Biblical days of Sarah to this day: ‘in the beginning there was the kitchen.’ We rebelled against the weight of this tradition, refused to be trapped in it...and when asked about the work we wanted to do, cried out: ‘anything but the kitchen’” (89).¹⁰ Deborah’s sentiments and critique here resonate with other testimonies of women who were part of the three waves of immigration known as the Second, Third, and Fourth *Aliyot* (Freiwald, “The Subject”). Their autobiographical writings document their extensive participation in the national struggle, but they also reveal another struggle. Writing of the settlement experience in the 1920s, Rahel Yanait (later married to the second president of Israel, Yizhak Ben-Zvi) is forceful in her indictment: “In the thick of that passionate movement toward the land, the women workers suddenly found themselves thrust aside and relegated once more to the ancient tradition of the house and the kitchen” (109). Similarly, Chuma Chayot, writing in 1932, denounces the prevalent gender ideology of the *Yishuv* and makes a range of demands whose foresight is truly impressive, calling for changes in the socio-economic conditions necessary to pave the way for women’s economic independence: a fair share for women in the labour market and in traditional male occupations; pay equity; more training and education; and daycares to accommodate working mothers (222–23).

Deborah Dayan’s autobiographical volume opens with a selection from a speech she gave in 1954—when I was three—in Petach-Tikva, my hometown. The occasion was the fiftieth anniversary of the Second *Aliyah*, that turn-of-the-century wave of immigration that was so instrumental in shaping the nascent nation-state. This short text (hereafter referred to as the Petach-Tikva speech) captures the principal threads of the life that unfolds in the pages of *In Happiness and in Sorrow*, but it also reveals—as much through what it says as through its silences—both the dominant national topoi that her generation would pass on down to mine, and a more complex vision of the individual and the collective than the one offered by the official state narrative. I will speak of the silences first. In the climactic conclusion to her speech, the rousing national rhetoric celebrating the “conquest of the [uncultivated, empty] land” is belied by the Arab place name (Um-Djuni) that Deborah uses to refer to their first settlement in the Galilee (later given the Hebrew name Degania): “Just as we had faith in that first breaking of the ground in Um-Djuni...so we will

have faith in the freshly turned furrows in the hills of Jerusalem, in the Galilee, in the ploughed expanses of the Negev" (n.pag.). The effect of putting the Arab presence on the land under erasure here is all the more poignant when one is reminded that Petach-Tikva—founded in 1878 and celebrated in the Zionist narrative as the first pioneering Jewish village in Palestine—was the site of one of the first conflicts, in 1886, between Arab *fellahin* (tenant farmers) and the Jewish settlers the *fellahin* saw as disposing them (Khalidi 99).

Alan Dowty has suggested a number of explanations for the failure of the early Zionists to meaningfully recognize the presence of the local Palestinian population (46-50). Among these is the suggestion that the hostile reaction of the Palestinian Arabs to the Jewish settlers simply led the latter to revert to a familiar pattern developed over a long history of persecution: "Increased threat usually forced Jews to bond more closely together, with tradition as the glue that held them together and ensured their survival" (89). The writings collected in *In Happiness and in Sorrow* demonstrate just how precarious that personal and collective sense of self was for the early settlers. In the opening of her Petach-Tikva speech, the sixty-four-year-old Deborah Dayan recalls her younger self aboard the *Princess Olga*, the ship that took her to Palestine. She was, Deborah writes of that other self, "a young woman who uprooted herself from school and everything held dear, for those fires that had once kept her alive now appeared alien, and in the distance new bright lights beckoned." But as the next sentence reveals, what lay ahead felt no less alien than what was being left behind; shifting to the first person, she writes, "I came to an unknown land, not knowing where to turn in this homeland" (n.pag.). The focal sentence in the speech, from which the volume's editor (Shmuel Dayan) might have taken its title, captures the affective centre from which all the writing flows: "In happiness and in sorrow one thought accompanies me: you are not alone, you belong to a greater collective, to a collectivity creating a homeland" (n.pag.). Throughout this speech and the volume as a whole, Deborah's voice vacillates between a sense of profound aloneness and not-belonging, and a fierce desire to find/make such belonging for herself and the other immigrants by creating the "greater collective." As the speech suggests and the rest of the volume amply documents, belonging remains elusive, undermined, on the one hand, by the realities of gender inequality, and on the other, by the inherent difficulties of a "diaspora nationalism" (Gellner 106) that seeks to turn an Ingathering of Exiles from many lands into a national populace. Deborah tells her audience, "After a while I could write to my friends in Russia that I was happy, that I arrived at the source,

my roots—that I belonged now to the great family of workers at Degania”; but in the next paragraph she recalls the need to confront the men in her agricultural collective with the “particular problems of the working woman,” due in no small part to their attitude towards her. She cites the difficulties of reconciling work with the familial duties expected of the women in the settlements, and the isolation experienced by young mothers with no familial or community support. The ethnic diversity of a predominantly immigrant population posed other problems. One of the great accomplishments of the early women settlers, Deborah tells her audience, was the absorption of immigrants from all corners of the world. But, she cautions, there is still much to be done to bring about integration and national unity: “with a prayer in our hearts we hope for the day when the people will become one, when divisions between the ethnic groups [*bein eda l’eda*] will fall away” (n.pag.).

The writings collected in *In Happiness and in Sorrow* flesh out the affective and ideological dimensions of the subject’s relation to the nation so suggestively captured by the Petach-Tikva speech. Immediately following the speech, a short personal narrative entitled “My Mother” (dated 1936) recreates an originary scene of lack and dispossession that is both historically specific and existential in scope. The speaker recalls a state in which “it seemed that in the whole world there remained only the three of us—mother, myself, and my little brother...now we are one body, but perhaps we don’t really exist. Only she exists—mother” (3). In the beginning, for the emergent subject, there is the longing for the gaze of the other to confirm one’s own existence. But for this subject the plea is to remain unanswered: born to the only Jewish family in the Ukrainian village, there is no community to embrace the child and claim her as their own. The gendered matrix of the family breeds further isolation: a father who locks himself in his study, and a distraught mother who tearfully sings a plaintive Ukrainian song bemoaning a woman’s bitter lot in life. Outside the home, other betrayals await the youngster. An undated text entitled “My Name” (4-7) speaks of young Deborah’s great attachment to the Russian people and culture and the painful experiences of rejection communicating to her her alien status. Nor is there relief once she reaches the shores of the promised land. The volume documents her continued experiences of alienation in Palestine: her fellow comrades in the kibbutz, regarding her as too urban and bourgeois, reject her application for membership: “finally I understood that they were talking about me [she can only follow their conversation with difficulty since her Hebrew is rudimentary]: ‘she has come to us from a different culture, our [communitarian,

rural] ideals and ideas are foreign to her.' I covered my ears, I could bear it no more. To get up and leave—but go where?" (264).¹¹ She moves with her husband to a less communitarian settlement, but her gendered marginalization and the isolation imposed on her as a mother leave her with a sense of "total, desperate, loneliness" (84). There was no escaping this condition of gendered otherness for the women of Deborah Dayan's generation, for it was enshrined in the very terms of the national vision as it was articulated by two of its founding fathers, Theodor Herzl and David Ben-Gurion (Israel's first prime minister). Reacting against a European racializing discourse that figured Jews as morally weak and emasculated, Herzl's vision "rested on the reification of a dichotomizing bourgeois gender system" and hailed the birth of a masculinized New Jew (Bunzl 83). It was women's "special mission" and ultimate obligation, Ben-Gurion would declare, to (re)produce the New Hebrew: "[women] should enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as the men, except where motherhood is concerned" (Ben-Gurion 375).

As the writings in *In Happiness and in Sorrow* demonstrate, Deborah Dayan sought her personal salvation in the project that would also become the nation's lifeline: "the national task of absorbing new immigrants" (Dowty 63). In a conclusion to a text dated 1950 and included in the section entitled "In the Immigrant Villages," Deborah adopts and adapts the *mode ani* prayer, the first dawn blessing recited by observant Jews in gratitude to the Creator for restoring the soul after the night's sleep. Replacing the prayer's religious referent with a national(ist) one, Deborah gives thanks "to the people for allowing me to observe the *mitzvah* [commandment] of absorbing immigrants" (168). Yael Dayan comments on the work that her grandmother and mother dedicated much of their lives to, the monumental task of absorbing, settling, and training new immigrants: "Women from old established *moshavim* [plural of *moshav*] volunteered to work with new immigrants, initiating them into a style of work and life they had never known. My grandmother Dvorah had been doing it for a while already, and my mother joined in, going every day to the *moshav* not far from Jerusalem to which she was assigned" (74–75). This life work too, however, would ultimately prove a precarious route to collective belonging. Spanning many decades, Deborah's writings demonstrate a profound longing to embrace and be embraced by the national collectivity, a longing that is continuously frustrated by the many divisions—ideological, ethnic, gendered—within the nation. From the beginning, she challenges the oppressive gender ideology of her (Ashkenazi) pioneering comrades, and later she denounces the oppression and abuse of women within other immi-

grant groups (235); she is equally disheartened by manifestations of rejection and hostility between the different (Jewish) ethnic groups, resulting in "another kind of exile within the nation: a Jew rejecting a Jew!" (228). More muted is Deborah's critique of the way in which the Jewish establishment (of which she was a part) handled the absorption of immigrants from what she calls the "developing countries" (Arab and Muslim countries) (182). As recent scholarship has reminded us, these immigrants were sent to live "in remote locations, usually near disputed border areas, lacking in the necessary infrastructure for subsistence, and excluded from the socio-economic and political centers of power" (Kemp 65). Although Deborah does acknowledge "serious mistakes in the planning of these villages, discrimination in matters of housing and infrastructure...problems regarding social programs, the condition of schools, the future of the youth" (182), one will have to turn to the narratives of these subjects themselves for a fuller understanding of both their subjection (partly through an Orientalizing ideology) and their modes of resistance to emerge.

RUTH DAYAN

Two generations removed from the pioneering world of Deborah Dayan, Yael Dayan recognizes the significance of her grandmother's and mother's contributions to the national project of absorbing immigrants, but feels a greater affinity with (and indeed admiration for) the military and political world of her father. In sharp contrast to the proto-feminist critique that animates Deborah Dayan's writing, the granddaughter's narrative—with the famous photographs from the Six-Day War on the covers of the English and Hebrew editions, showing father and daughter in military uniform and poses that bespeak both camaraderie and intimacy—naturalizes the patriarchal family structure that dictates that "Mother" could pursue her work, but only as long as "she was always home in the evenings, to settle our quarrels, look at our school reports, or engage in the social activities my father's position required" (75).¹² Without much evidence of a (self-)critical perspective, Yael Dayan writes of her parents, "By nature and upbringing, my father was a patriarch....My mother's lack of confidence and natural humility served both of them well....They both knew that his needs, his desires and comforts and plans would come first with her" (75). Ruth Dayan's own narrative, however, tells a different story, as she reflects on the seductive lure that the patriarchal family first held for her, and her subsequent realization of its oppressive grip.

In the household of Deborah and Shmuel Dayan, Ruth writes, she initially saw her dream come true (it was a dream constructed, in part,

out of the Russian novels so beloved by both Deborah and Ruth): "I fell in love with this Russian family....This, I thought, was what I had been dreaming of; this was exactly the way I wanted my own life to be. The way they all sat down together for meals...with Shmuel presiding like a patriarch, was a joy to me" (10). When she gets her wish, however, that fate proves less than joyful. As the narrative reveals, Moshe Dayan, like his father, extolled the virtues of agricultural work on redeemed native soil but was hardly interested in it himself. Joining the Haganah (precursor to the Israeli army) and leaving Ruth and their young daughter Yael to fend for themselves on the farm, he preferred the battlefields to the cornfields, and in later years the company of his many lovers to that of his wife and children. Ruth's narrative throughout reveals an ambivalence that is never fully addressed. At times, she loudly proclaims her willing participation in the gendered script of the family (but this might be, at least in part, in self-defence against accusations that she worked outside the home while the children were still young): "Building my life around my family was what I wanted; and it was what I did until circumstances changed our way of life. Yael was certainly never left alone at Nahalal. I did not work outside the home—or join the Haganah—in the years before Yael was born, because all that I wanted was to be with Moshe" (151–52). Elsewhere, her critical perspective recalls Deborah's, as when she speaks of the Haganah men getting "all the fun and glory" while she was left behind "dutifully cleaning out sheep dung" and feeling "very much on the fringe of things" (46). When their first child, Yael, is born, Moshe is away, and she is left "alone with a crying baby, growing increasingly bitter about the Haganah, feeling out of the mainstream" (60). Ruth's ambivalence towards the gendered script of the nation is most clearly articulated in her tribute to Deborah Dayan: "Though I admired Devora tremendously, I did not understand until afterwards how much she had given up to come to Nahalal, and how much she continued to give up. With her mind and education she could have been one of the country's leaders. Instead she remained at the farm, holding the family together, driving herself physically with the hardest chores" (10).

Ruth recalls that, as a young married woman watching her mother-in-law "hold the farm together while Shmuel was so often at Zionist meetings," she resolved to "never repeat Devora's pattern of life" (62). While the pattern would repeat itself in the early years of Ruth's marriage, both Deborah and Ruth devote much of their autobiographical writing to documenting their involvement in what they perceive to be women's great contribution to the building of the Jewish nation-state, the absorption of

immigrants. Ruth makes the case eloquently: "All the fighting," she writes, "all the deaths and tragedies, brought us our state. With the state came newcomers—displaced persons from camps in Europe and refugees from Arab countries. For me, the state of Israel began not with the War of Independence, but with the newcomers. The war was the price that had to be paid to build a nation that would absorb immigrants" (122). For Ruth, her life work in the service of the nation is a direct continuation of the mission undertaken by the pioneer women of Deborah's generation:

During this period [early 1950s] Devora asked me if I could help her in her work. She was in charge of the *moshav* movement's program of women volunteers who went from veteran settlements like Nahalal to help immigrants being organized into new *moshavim*. . . . *Moshav* women were performing one of the most important tasks in the country: showing families who came from the Arabian desert and European camps how to live in their new homes as Israelis. Under Deborah's direction wives left their comfortable *moshav* farmhouses to live in the new villages, often for as long as a year. . . . This was a form of national service. (128)

Ruth's contribution to this form of national service would eventually turn into an original and significant project. Visiting villages of Bulgarian and Yemenite immigrants who were failing as farmers, Ruth notices traditional crafts in their houses and recognizes that "Here was something unexpected. If rats and water shortage made agriculture impractical, why not do something with this talent? . . . suddenly, leaders in other places discovered handicraft talents. . . . It became a craze" (128). By 1973, the craze would become a large-scale home industry supplying an extensive chain of stores called Maskit and defining a new Israeli style in jewelry and weaving.

The vision that emerges from the nation-building work of women like Deborah Dayan and Ruth Dayan, unlike the hegemonic vision articulated by Moshe Dayan, is pluralistic and profoundly ethical. Integrating immigrants, Ruth recognizes, is a two-way process, as she finds herself "learning about customs and beliefs and ways of life totally foreign to those of us who grew up in Israel" (136). As a national-scale project that brought together Palestinian Arabs and Jews from different ethnic backgrounds in the creation of arts and crafts that combined traditional skills with modern designs, Maskit was premised on a recognition of the plural character of the population inhabiting the territory of the state. It was driven by both (historically oriented) respect for those differences, and (future-oriented) faith that these cultures could meet and converge in productive

aesthetic and ideological ways. Recognizing that immigrants often have more in common with the non-Jews of their countries of origin leads Ruth to conclude, "I always feel uncomfortable talking about 'racial purity': there is no such thing; our world is too mixed up" (131). This vision, Ruth writes, gained particular importance after the Six-Day War: "Once the fighting stopped and the new situation permitted open contact with our former enemies, I realized that I did have a real job. It started with handicrafts, through my travels for Maskit, and led to friendships. War and peace, I know perfectly well, are made by military men and politicians. But all sorts of things are possible when people learn to understand each other and realize that such understanding is in their interest" (211). She calls for the creation of a climate where Jews and Arabs "can sit down and talk together" (220), and adds that "until the Palestinians unite to form their own state, I do not see how the problem can be solved permanently" (221). Ruth's foresight here is all the more striking when one recognizes that "until 1992 the women's peace and coexistence position [a position that began to be publicly articulated only after the 1982 Lebanon War] seemed utopian" (Emmett 2).

One of the closing passages of Ruth Dayan's autobiography suggests some of the issues at stake for contemporary Israeli women as citizens of a nation-state that continues to negotiate the terms of its existence both from within (with respect to the secular/religious rift, for example), and from without (with respect to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict). As is often the case in autobiographical writing, this passage illuminates larger collective concerns while focusing on intensely felt personal experiences. The passage sets side by side two episodes involving an exchange of rings. In the first, Ruth recalls a meeting with Theresa, an Arab-nationalist friend to whom she offered a Maskit ring as a gift. Theresa responds with ambivalence, but also with her own gift to Ruth, a gift of (mutual) recognition offered not in the spirit of forgetting (or forgiving) historical grievances, but of reaching out in spite of them; she tells Ruth, "more than twenty years ago my husband was sentenced to death by the Haganah. He escaped. I swore then that I would never wear a ring until our rights were restored. But because this ring is from you, I will wear it around my neck, on a chain" (231). In the very next sentence, Ruth writes, "Rings also play a painful part in a Jewish divorce. The woman must remove her wedding ring and all other rings she may be wearing...under the searching eye of the presiding rabbi...nobody has warned me of this" (231). What follows is an account of the humiliating yet hilarious experience of the divorce ritual at the house of Rabbi Goren, chief rabbi of Tel Aviv at the

time, who presided over the Dayans' divorce. "There is little dignity in many of the customs we preserve" (233), Ruth observes of the ritual of "casting out" the woman. In the domestic space of the Gorens' living room, however, the procedure gets somehow transformed. When the ink on the *Get* (divorce) document would not dry, the Rabbi's wife thinks of a solution: "she brought out her electric hot plate and we put the document, with its age old terminology, on the hot plate and plugged it in. This worked very well" (232).

For things to "work very well," these anecdotes seem to suggest, what is needed are the perspectives and interventions of those who think of people as well as "the people." Countering a monolithic and past-bound national narrative of origins, Ruth Dayan offers a forward-looking vision based on mutual recognition and the negotiation of differences. The very last page of her autobiography, listing entries from her appointment book, is emblematic in this regard. The list includes appointments with Maskit personnel, with a friend's daughter having romantic complications, with a group of Arab women from Bethlehem about doing work for Maskit, with Rabbi Darai of Jaffa about a group of Jews from Ethiopia, with Jewish and Arab students at Haifa University, with a new immigrant from France who makes handbags, with a unit of border police, mostly Druses, in Gaza, and lastly, "With a friend, an expert in these things, to plan the garden of my new [post-divorce] home" (236). The list stands as a defiant response to the injunction "Sara: Kitchen"; as an acknowledgment of the multiple and complex strands that run through "I" and "we" in (post-1948 and then post-1967) Palestine/Israel; and finally (echoes of *Candide* here), as an expression of hope in the simple prospect of a peaceful existence (sadly, yet to be realized in the region).

Helga Dudman opens her foreword to Ruth Dayan's autobiography with these observations: "you can divorce a husband, but not a legend. In this case there was not the slightest reason for saying good-bye to the legend. A long love affair with a force of history may be easier to maintain than a marriage" (xi). Ruth Dayan's own narrative registers (however obliquely) a more ambivalent relation to the force of history—the particular vision of the nation—represented by Moshe Dayan. "My love affair with my husband," she writes, "was part of my love affair with my country" (170), but then she adds, "the price of living with a legend can be too great" (176). It is in the daughter's narrative that we find both the most explicit critique of the legend and the clearest evidence of the price it can exact.

Yael Dayan

As the narrative of a favoured, father-identified daughter of a nationalist patriarch, Yael Dayan's *My Father, His Daughter* exhibits the problematic dimensions of patriarchal nationalism as they play out on both the affective and ideological levels. Within the family, Yael's self-positioning reproduces the familiar triangulation: the daughter both devalues the mother¹³ and, considering her a rival, fantasizes about taking her place.¹⁴ The father in such a scenario, Jessica Benjamin has noted, becomes "a figure of excitement" representing "freedom, the outside world, will, agency, and desire" (86). Moshe Dayan is indeed such a figure in his daughter's life-narrative: she recalls being taken along with him on military excursions in the desert where she was, she writes, "the only female, the only child around, and I felt honored, as if allowed a glimpse of the world of giants" (79). She associates him with "a sense of freedom" (78), with "mobility...speed" (82), and liberties taken with the law and morality: stealing chickens from a *moshav* nearby (82), "indulging in extramarital affairs" (82), treating as his personal property millennia-old artifacts he finds on his amateur archeological digs. In thrall with such power, what the young Yael learns and internalizes from a father who allows her exceptional access to the privileges of patriarchy is a model of subjectivity that valorizes autonomy and separation at the expense of what Benjamin calls "intersubjectivity," the recognition of the subjectivity of the other and the limits on one's freedom such recognition ethically entails (93). Her creed becomes a demand for "total freedom and independence" (124), as she sides with her father (and against the mother) in vowing "not to be slaves to the confining dictates of family routine" (100).¹⁵

Espousing the father's creed of unfettered individualism (qualified perhaps only by his devotion to the soldiers under his command), with its indifference to the needs and rights of others, ultimately disables a more critical perspective in the daughter. In many respects, Yael Dayan's *My Father, His Daughter* follows the model of her father's autobiography, a volume she helped write and edit and which she describes as composed of "a series of peaks, with the personal and the national drama intertwined" (146). In Yael's narrative (as in her father's), the highest peak is the victorious ending of the Six-Day War, representing a convergence of personal and national high points: her father's greatest military accomplishment; her own most intense experience of national service (as a war reporter); and meeting her husband-to-be, an army officer many years her senior. "It wasn't mere coincidence," she writes, "that the nation's and my father's

finest hour, which was also a turning point, produced my own happiest moments and days" (194). Written to a large extent in defence of her father and his vision, *My Father, His Daughter* is marked by the autobiographer's blind acceptance of her own privilege, and her lack of critical awareness of the inequalities and injustice that characterize the domestic and national worlds surrounding her. In the domestic sphere, her response to her father's many infidelities is disgust, not with him but with the women he chooses, for their "vulgarity" (167). Her response to Ruth's decision to seek divorce is condescending disapproval: "[we] were strongly opposed to it...[the family] felt that if she had managed all these years, perhaps with our help and encouragement she could go on" (204). Politically and ideologically, Moshe Dayan's bedtime stories of "our ancestors who walked this desert" (80) continue to colour the adult daughter's perception. Even in retrospect, there is little thought given to the Arab owners of the "deserted houses" in Jerusalem taken over, after 1948, by the "Custodian of Absentees' Properties" (69), or to the owners of "deserted fruit orchards" in the "deserted Arab villages" around Jerusalem (72). Relocating to Jerusalem after the War of Independence, the family would enjoy frequent visits to these orchards; "each of these wild, overgrown, unattended 'bustans' was like a new Eden" (72-73), Yael recalls. The autobiographical narrative does eventually register Yael's critique of some of the consequences of her father's vision, but to the extent that such a new understanding is experienced as a fall from grace, nostalgia continues to exercise its powerful hold.

It could well be that it was the father's personal betrayal—Yael's narrative is framed by the account of how Moshe Dayan left his children out of his will, clearly choosing his second wife over the preferred daughter—that made it possible for the daughter to shake off the bonds of "ideal love" (J. Benjamin 79) and gain a measure of critical distance. As *My Father, His Daughter* moves towards closure, the autobiographer's voice assumes a new perspective. This perspective is not only critical of an imperialist national mindset emerging after the Six-Day War—"people quickly assumed the role of occupants in the territories, dismissing the possibility of ever returning them....Israeli society as a whole underwent a change for the worse, because it lost the strength to resist the chance of an easy life" (205-206)—but more broadly interrogates the vision of the nation exemplified by Moshe Dayan. In its recognition of the explosive plurality of the nation, Yael's challenge to the dominant homogenizing and totalizing nationalist dream of her father is ultimately congruent with her grandmother's and mother's shared vision. Referring to Moshe Dayan's *Living*

with the Bible, Yael writes: “[it is] a perfect juxtaposition of life in biblical Israel and Father’s own life as it related to it....*What was lacking was a whole dimension of Judaism which he failed to relate to....* The vast depths of Jewish morality, the gap in time when the people had the Book without the land and survived on faith alone, the heights of ethics the prophets demanded of the people, the post-biblical writing, the Talmud and the Mishnah, without which self-preservation would be impossible—he did not relate to” (251–52, emphasis added). And pausing to reflect on Moshe Dayan’s image of the pre-biblical woman bent over her cooking for her (and his) family, she adds, “His family was not exterminated in Dachau; it did not worship in secret in medieval Spain or fight in the Warsaw ghetto. His family did not derive strength from the Hasidic tales of an Eastern Shtetl or hide in caves in the Atlas Mountains. His family did not joke in Yiddish or read the Bible with a guttural Sephardic accent... The betterment of society, the ideological foundation of egalitarianism and socialism—of which the world of his parents consisted—the spiritual concerns of our revived civilization were not dominant in his priorities” (252).

MAY THERE BE PEACE (?)

Yael Dayan’s concluding reflections enact the tension between “the pedagogical and the performative” that Homi Bhabha sees as endemic to the construction of the nation (146). Her evocation of a national space defined by the “heterogeneity of its population” (Bhabha 148) gives the lie to her father’s totalizing narrative “of the ‘social’ as homogeneous” (146). But even such a pluralistic vision of the nation, for all its concern with social justice, cannot escape the dark shadow of the always potentially violent division between Self and Other that is the very condition of national identity. The normative national Subject, Israeli scholar Hannan Hever has suggested, is a “living dead”; constituted in opposition to a threatening Other, the national Subject is “either dead with a live [memorialized] national existence or alive as a person who has interiorized death [who lives with anticipation of dying for the national cause] and is dead within life” (133). It is indeed under the sign of death that the self/nation-narratives of both grandmother and granddaughter open. Sitting in the cemetery in Degania and contemplating those fallen in the service of the nation, the bereaved mother Deborah Dayan observes in herself a mixture of gut-wrenching anguish and strange calm; she is puzzled at first, then finds a name for it: “this is the feeling of homeland [*moledet*]! The feeling of homeland?—And I thought that we only knew the value of homeland, our duty to her. But no! Here we have earned the *feeling* of homeland” (34). In an early chap-

ter of her autobiography entitled “Before Memory,” Yael Dayan seeks to reach deep into that which sustains collective identification. What surfaces are figures of loss and bereavement: “the roots are where the home is, where the grave is, where some of the children are to live and be buried” (25). Although not recognized as such by the autobiographers themselves, their maternal subject position produces a distance from the script of national subjectivity and a third term—they are neither the dead nor the living dead, but their mothers—that disrupts the repetition of a Self-Other binary wherein “the question of the cost of individual death is obscured” and the figurative borders between the dead and the living are blurred (Hever 126). In these autobiographical narratives, death does not simply belong to “the people”; it is literal and literalized, its cost made horrifically particular.

The specificity of nationalism, Liah Greenfeld has argued, is that it “locates the source of individual identity within a ‘people,’ which is seen as the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty, and the basis of collective solidarity” (3). Three principal imperatives, directed at individuals as members of the national collectivity, follow from this grounding of the nation in ideas of sovereignty, loyalty, and solidarity: one is called upon to privilege one’s own people, showing loyalty to them above all other people (or values); one is called upon to manifest that loyalty, in the first place, by doing whatever is necessary to safeguard the nation’s (primary) right to sovereignty; and one is called upon to espouse solidarity, that is, disregarding evidence to the contrary, to regard the collectivity as “fundamentally homogeneous, and only superficially divided by the lines of status, class, locality, [or] ethnicity” (Greenfeld 3). The self/nation-narratives examined here help us query and trouble the assumptions that underlie these imperatives. And beyond their value in dramatizing the disruptive intervention of the performative inside the exclusionary and homogenizing space of the nation, they also urge us to continue asking: how/can the nation be a feeling and a duty not to die and kill for, but to live and let live by?¹⁶

NOTES

- 1 I use this designation in order to encompass a range of referents that include both the Jewish and Arab Palestinian narratives of this contested geopolitical space. Palestine is both the name used for the region during the Ottoman regime and the British Mandate of 1918-1948 (before the founding of the Jewish state of Israel), and the Palestinians’ name for their national homeland.
- 2 At the risk of contributing to what one commentator has cleverly named the “*gevalt* syndrome,” or doomsday mentality...the deep-seated pessimism and anxiety rooted in the vicissitudes of Jewish history” (Dowty 25), here is a par-

trial list of the historical record that the events of World War II made all the more difficult to forget: "the eleventh-century Crusader slaughters, expulsion from England in the thirteenth century, from France in the fourteenth, from Spain in the fifteenth, the 1648–49 Chmielnicki massacres in the Ukraine (leaving tens of thousands dead), the pogrom in Uman (in 1768, again in the Ukraine), the pogroms throughout southern Russia in 1881. The twentieth century brought the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, the more general Russian pogroms of 1905, the pogroms in the Ukraine leaving approximately another 100,000 dead in 1919–20, and finally the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis" (Cohen 43).

- 3 In *Palestinian Citizens in an Ethnic Jewish State*, Nadim Rouhana suggests that a more accurate term for this collective identity would be "Palestinian in Israel,' a phrase that reflects the political realities and helps Arabs cope with the complexities and paradoxes of the political system of which they are formal, but not belonging, citizens" (150).
- 4 *Intifada* refers to the Palestinian uprising in response to the Israeli occupation of territories resulting from the 1967 war.
- 5 See Sharoni for another study that seeks to demonstrate that "Palestinian and Israeli-Jewish women's struggles for gender equality and for a just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" has resulted in the creation of a "space for new interpretations of peace and security" (152).
- 6 I adopt here Walker Connor's understanding that all nationalism is ethnically predicated, so that one would need to employ a different term, such as patriotism, to refer to civic identity or civic loyalty.
- 7 Aviva's son, the writer Johnathan Gefen, sees in his mother yet another casualty of the Zionist revolution. Gefen's ironically titled auto/biography *Isha Yekara* (literally Dear Lady) explores the impact on his own life of his mother's depression, a condition that indeed cost him dearly and which he sees as a symptom of a national malaise. Gefen writes of the generation of his grandparents Deborah and Shmuel Dayan: "they did not love themselves, only that reflection of themselves they sought in their high ideals and ideology, and so could not love their children" (189–90, my translation).
- 8 David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime-minister and a contemporary of Deborah Dayan's, describes the bitter "birth pangs of farm settlement in Israel": "plagues of nature, the desolation of the terrain, Arab enmity, corrupt Turkish administration, antagonism from the zealots of the 'old *Yishuv*' in Jerusalem, the agricultural ignorance of all but a few settlers" (36).
- 9 Mary Wollstonecraft's undoing of this trope still stands, over two centuries later, as a fine example of a counter-narrative: "The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity" (7).
- 10 All citations from Deborah Dayan's autobiography are from the Hebrew original, in my translation.
- 11 In the narrative, Deborah Dayan turns to A.D. Gordon, a towering figure among the pioneers of the Second *Aliyah*, hoping to find an answer to her

predicament: “how to pull up roots from a distant and foreign land, and put them in a new soil, telling them: ‘be nourished, and live’” (264). Although they find a common interest in the European culture they share (they speak of Isodora Duncan), Gordon can ultimately only reiterate the collectivist nationalist ethos, “speaking not of us [as individuals], but of the nation as a whole” (265). For an illuminating discussion of A.D. Gordon and the ethos of nation-building see Sternhell 47–73.

- 12 Reflecting on her years of feminist activism in Israel, Marcia Freedman writes, “the fear and hostility that feminism aroused in widening circles lasted throughout the seventies and into the eighties” (50). Yael Dayan, she recalls, rejected the women’s movement, claiming that “she was already liberated, she wrote in a mass-circulation woman’s magazine, and she hadn’t needed the help of a movement” (51).
- 13 Yael Dayan makes the briefest mention of her mother’s work accomplishments, and when she does, they are always framed by reminders that Ruth was, first and foremost, a wife and a mother who willingly did what was expected of her. Condescending comments—such as “My mother was famous for her lack of self-confidence” (29)—often accompany the few references to the mother in the narrative.
- 14 Throughout the narrative, Yael Dayan makes references to her father and herself as making “a good-looking couple” (167).
- 15 The mature autobiographer does question, however, the moral legitimacy of her (married) father’s claim to such freedom from all domestic obligations (100).
- 16 This essay is dedicated to the memory of David Solomonov, twenty-one, who was killed on Yom Kippur, 6 October 2003, on the Israel-Lebanon border.