The London School of Economics and Political Science

Talking through Difference: Everyday Ethics Across Borders in an Israeli-Palestinian Community

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Abstract

At the centre of one of the most well-known and seemingly intractable societal conflicts in modern history, a movement of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis has tried over the decades to work towards equality, a shared society, and positive inter-group relationships. Within this movement is the community of Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom ('Oasis of Peace' in Arabic and Hebrew), where 30 Jewish families and 30 Palestinian families have chosen to live together and run educational outreach projects to share their theories about peace and equality with others in Israel-Palestine. Key to this moral endeavour is dialogue, which really means being able to talk through difference; villagers believe in talking with each other despite the political and social barriers that may stand in their way, and making those very socio-political differences into objects of discussion.

This thesis, based on 17-months fieldwork in Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom, explores three puzzles with implications for the mission of the community as well as anthropological theory. First, what kind of language ideologies underlie the idea of talking as a tool for peace? Second, what concept of difference do community members have, given the potentially negative implications of either emphasizing or downplaying difference? Third, what motivates people in social movements to live their ethical ideals in the everyday?

Given the highly politicised context in which the villagers live, and the moral objectives they live by, even seemingly banal linguistic choices can affect relationships. Friendships across difference can be formed, strengthened, or fall apart as the result of verbal and non-verbal interactions — energising those involved when they go well and producing feelings of discomfort or embarrassment when they do not. In sum, this thesis suggests that everyday ethical approaches to difference draw on a mixture of political awareness and sensitivity, explicit theories about the way to engage with others, and the internal dynamics of interactions. These internal dynamics bring up moments of ambiguity that require reflection but also provide the potential for people to challenge their differences and how best to deal with them.

Contents

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Introduction

> "The idea of Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom is to stand as an example,
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> for the rest of [Israel-Palestine] and the world, that peace is possible if we
>
> – you know – respect our differences, learn about our differences, and not
>
> fight out our differences, and if we come together to have a dialogue and
>
> find a peaceful way."
>
> *– The village of Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom as explained by one of its*
>
> *villagers, Rita Boulos, in a recent news-report[1]*

Israelis and Palestinians are engaged in one of the world's most bitter, intractable, and internationally divisive conflicts. Decades of societal strife, and military occupation of the Palestinian territories, have entrenched inequality between the two peoples. Within the state of Israel the conflict causes strained relations and inequalities between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis. Over years of conflict, a movement of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis has tried to work towards ending inequality, promoting a shared society, and fostering more-positive inter-group relationships. This mission is complicated by the great degree of segregation in Israeli society, and put under great additional strain during occasional episodes of open warfare. This thesis examines the experiences of a group of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis within the peace and social justice movement, a group that jointly founded a village in which they could live out their ideals. The village, which was also the site of my fieldwork, is known as Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom (meaning 'Oasis of Peace' in Arabic then Hebrew), or WASNS (pronounced wasnas) for short. The villagers of WASNS are attempting to "live *with* the conflict" (WASNS website's FAQ) – to mitigate its consequences on their lives – by *talking*. The villagers are committed to talking through difference; by which I mean both talking despite differences but also making difference a topic of conversation itself. Their plight poses three puzzles with challenges for both for the mission of the community and theoretical anthropological principals. Firstly, what kind of ideas about language do people need to have for it to make sense for them to emphasise

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[1] The report on i24 News – an Israeli-American 24-hour news network – was broadcast in June 2017 and centred on a communal Iftar meal at the village. The report can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hisJPrSLnXg

talking as a tool for peace? Secondly, what kind of ideas about difference do they have, given the potentially negative implications of either emphasizing or flattening out difference? Thirdly, what motivates people in social movements to *live* their ethical ideals in the everyday?

Any attempt to counter violence and inequality by getting people to talk with one another will face challenges, and yet many such attempts persist in Israel-Palestine. Indeed, a 2007 UNESCO report listed Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom as one of fourteen joint Jewish-Palestinian NGOs in Israel-Palestine to be engaged in 'dialogue' projects (Verbeke 2007), and there are numerous one-off projects that fall under this category also. Aside from the obvious barrier of finding a safe space to hold such talks, and finding participants that are ready to talk, is the growing concern that 'dialogue' projects often serve the interests of the most powerful. There are many debates in the peace and social justice movement concerning the extent to which talk can effect political change and challenge inequality, when compared to joint actions — a debate that the villagers I knew were keenly involved with (Chapter I). The question then is: what ideas about language, and its limitations, are necessary for such endeavours to be considered efficacious?

This thesis is a contribution to the vast anthropological work already focused on the relationship between people's ideas about language, and its use. For decades, linguistic anthropologists have been paying attention to the socially contextual rules of language use. Dell Hymes and John Gumperz (1986) showed, through their ethnographies of speaking, that a speaker's linguistic choices (between varieties in register, language, or even whether to say anything at all) are based on various contextual details (the topics being discussed, the participants involved in the speech event, and these other participants' relationship to the speaker). Other linguistic anthropologists, such as Michael Silverstein, have shown how language has indexical properties; that is, different forms of communicating the same content can in fact communicate different things about the social context in which it is communicated (Silverstein 1976: 30). Within this vein of ethnography of communication, Tamar Katriel's works on communication in Israel (Katriel 1986; 1991; 2004) are of particular relevance to this

thesis. As will be seen, Katriel's findings resonate with some of the beliefs and practices present in WASNS.

By treating speech as action, sociolinguists made way for analyses that focused on the social effect of what one said (Rosaldo 1982; Silverstein 1976; Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 59). Recent works on 'language ideology' have shown different ways in which the social effect of language use can be examined (Gal 1989; Irvine 1990; Irvine & Gal 2000; Woolard & Schieffelin 1994). By focusing on 'language ideologies', linguist anthropologists have also drawn out the connection between beliefs people hold about language (its properties and proper use) and the political and moral stance of the speaker (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994; Gal 2006: 163). With this in mind, this thesis will explore how a person's approach to linguistic practices can be interpreted in the context of a concerted socio-political effort. These practices include speech in meetings and rallies (Chapter III), translation (Chapter IV), code-switching (Chapter V), joking (Chapter VII), and the decision not to speak at all (Chapter VI).

WASNS villagers put great stock in their ability to talk through difference, both in the sense of talking despite difference, and talking about difference. Central to the idea of WASNS is the celebration of diversity. As the village founder, Bruno Hussar, put it:

> "We had in mind a small village composed of inhabitants from different communities in the country. Jews, Christians and Muslims would live there in peace, each one faithful to his own faith and traditions, while respecting those of others. Each would find in this diversity a source of personal enrichment." (Hussar 1989: 103).

The WASNS project is not unique in this celebration of diversity. Diversity discourse is widely circulated in connection to values such as liberalism, multiculturalism, equality; everything from the 'diversity and inclusion' policies of charities and businesses, to mottos of multi-national organisations (e.g. the EU's 'united in diversity'). Importantly, WASNS villagers pair the values of diversity and equality, because they are always seeking to balance their responses to both the conflict and inequality that surrounds them. One researcher of WASNS summarised

this approach as "affirming basic human equality within acknowledged differentness" [sic.] (Nathan 2007: 278). As will be seen, this approach has potential pitfalls because stressing human equality can serve to make import differences irrelevant, and stressing differences can reproduce and entrench inequality. What kinds of ideas about difference, and how to deal with it, do people in projects like WASNS have to hold in order to tackle the various socio-political obstacles they encounter?

In paying ethnographic attention to the various ways people think through difference in this context, this thesis responds to a call that was made in a 2015 collection of essays on 'ethics across borders' (Mair & Evans 2015; Heywood 2015; Lambek 2015). Mair & Evans (2015) convincingly show that ethics are not bounded incommensurable positions but rather are made incommensurable in creative ways. In the case of Ahmadi Peace Symposia they draw on, a production of incommensurable difference can be used to foster respect (Mair & Evans 2015: 214-215). The insights in these essays on how difference and affinity are creatively produced when people engage in 'ethics across borders' makes much headway in understanding the workings of social movements based on cross-cultural or cross-community dialogue, like my own field-site. However, as is noted by these anthropologists themselves, not enough has been done to explore how power dynamics and inequality play into these processes of affinity and difference. In the context of Israel-Palestine, power dynamics are key to understanding approaches to affinity and difference. There is a concern that dialogue projects that focus too much on affinity normalise the inequalities that exist, precisely because such a focus resigns any difference — be it in historical narrative, life experience, or ethical standpoint — as irrelevant, and thus not up for discussion.

WASNS is part of a wider social movement in Israel-Palestine that aims to advance peace, equality and justice. I will be using the term *HaSmol* to refer to this community. *HaSmol* — literally 'the Left' in Hebrew — is an umbrella term often used to refer to a collection of NGOs, political organisations and movements. An Israeli can be said to be part of *HaSmol* if they are active, or simply interested, in the field of human rights, social justice, peace, shared society projects, dialogue or left-wing parties. To be considered politically left-wing in Israel

implies that one is generally more concerned with equality between Jews and Palestinians (as opposed to the right-wing emphasis on security) as well as being left-leaning on economic matters. Terms like *smolani/t* — in reference to a left-leaning individual — or *HaSmol* — in reference to the whole community — can often be used pejoratively in mainstream Israeli discourse, but people can also often self-identify as s*molanim* (plural of *smolani*).

WASNS has also been described as a "community for moral education" (Feuerverger 2001: 17) because, by bringing Jews and Palestinian together to deal with their differences, the everyday running of its institutions throws up moral dilemmas that most people in Israel-Palestine would not encounter: one does not have to reflect upon the best way to handle difference if one does not encounter or even perceive it. In this community (both the physical place of WASNS but also among the community of *HaSmol* more broadly) people are living by high moral aims of peace and equality but they also live day-to-day lives. How do the utopian aims translate to the day to day? How can we understand what drives people to continue taking part in peace movements?

There are several ways to approach these questions. Peace movements can be seen as similar to liberal state projects in that they address similar values (like diversity). Here, philosopher Martha Nussbaum's (2013) analysis – of the public events, national anthems, poems, even operas, that go into the making of liberal states – offers interesting insights into how liberal values are sustained through emotional cultivation. Peace movements, while being political, are also moral projects: they are about cultivating the right and just way of dealing with others. Therefore, to understand what drives them, and what drives people to take part in them, requires attention to the ethics involved in such projects. As Webb Keane writes, "there are dimensions of political life that cannot be understood without some grasp of the moral and ethical impulses behind them" (Keane 2015: 157). This thesis will draw on anthropological approaches to ethics and morality, specifically in relation to the difference between moral systems and ethics (outlined first in Chapter II). A focus on these ethical impulses can help draw a connection between the tacit notions of the 'right way to behave' in everyday encounters and the explicitly discussed political and moral ideology of a peace project.

Introducing the Oasis

Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom, or WASNS (pronounced 'wasnas') as it is sometimes called, was founded by Father Bruno Hussar when, in the early 70s, he made his home in a recycled cargo crate on a hilltop belonging to a nearby monastery. Hussar's dream was to create a space of interfaith dialogue, building on the work he had already done on Christian-Jewish relations in Jerusalem (Hussar 1989). In the early years the hilltop did indeed serve as a place of dialogue, although the focus was less on interfaith and more on Jewish-Arab relations. The first young families to join Hussar were drawn to the Jewish-Arab aspect of the project. Those young families that came to join Hussar in the 1970s are described as the first generation, but so too are any couples that joined the village over the next four decades (villagers tended to join as couples or young families). The distinction made between first and second generation is simply that the first are those that joined in adulthood, and the second generation are those who were born or grew up in the village. This means that there are some first generation and second generation villagers who are close in age, because the former joined the village more recently and the latter were born to the first wave of families to settle in the village. There is also a fledgling third generation, made up of the children of second generation villagers that settled in the village with their spouses — in all but one case these spouses are from outside the village. When I conducted my fieldwork (from November 2013 to May 2015) there were 60 families in the village — about 200 villagers in total - but the village has since expanded, and they expect a total of 90 new families to join over the next five years. Many of these new families are actually the second generation (and their spouses) who have been waiting for an opportunity to have space in the village to build their own homes

It may be best here to explain the demographics of the village, and the terms I will be using. The village is presented by the villagers as a social experiment where Jewish and Palestinian Israelis have chosen to live together, but in reality the village population is far more diverse. Some Jews and Palestinians, in both the first and second generation, have spouses that do not fall into either category; there are emigres from Asia, Europe, and America with a range

of religious backgrounds.[2] When the villagers speak about an equal number of Jewish and Palestinian families, what they really mean is that there are the same number of families in which at least one spouse is Palestinian or Jewish. Even within the category of Jew or Palestinian there is diversity. Jewish villagers come from a mix of Ashkenazi (European), Mizrahi (Arabic, Persian, or Asian) and Sephardi (Spanish) backgrounds, while Palestinians come from Muslim, Christian and mixed Muslim-Christian backgrounds. In terms of socio-economic status, however, most villagers are rather similar in that they are tertiary-educated professionals (academics, doctors, lawyers, psychologists, pharmacists, social workers, etc.) and thus occupy a slightly privileged status than the average population of Israel.[3] While many of the villagers have a similar socio-economic background, there are also people that spend time in the village, and are thus part of village life, who are from relatively less privileged backgrounds. These non-villagers include the Mizrahi women who clean the various offices of WASNS institutions; the Palestinian women who clean the guest house; the Palestinian men that construct and mend the village's buildings; and the Jewish and Palestinian Israeli children who receive bursaries to study at the WASNS school because they come from more deprived areas (such as the nearby cities of Ramle or Lod/al-Lydd). There are also Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, of similar backgrounds to the villagers, that work in the village institutions.

Walking through the village, one can easily feel as though it is just a peaceful leafy suburb far removed from conflict, but even its location shows how inescapable the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is. The village sits on the 'Green Line'. The Green Line was drawn up as part of the armistice agreements of 1949, and is meant to serve as a border between Israel and Palestine, but in some areas it demarcates pockets of 'demilitarised zones', and the village is located in one of these zones. In fact, the position of the green line places the municipal

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[2] It is difficult to give exact numbers because the Israeli census only gives a breakdown of Jewish residents, which it states make up 44.7% of the village population. One can work out from the census statistics that about 5% of the villagers were born abroad and are not Jewish. I personally met villagers from European Christian or Asian Christian backgrounds.

[3] According to the 2008 Israeli Census 51% of villagers had a university degree, whereas only 22.9% of the whole Israeli population have a degree. The same census shows that, of those villagers that are in full employment: 38.2% are defined as 'professional and/or technical' (compared to 15.8% in the whole population), 27% are defined as 'academic' (compared to 14.1% in the whole population), and 11.5% are defined as 'managerial' (compared to 5.7% in the whole population).
http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/mifkad/mifkad_2008/profiles/rep_h_000000.pdf Whole Population
http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/mifkad/mifkad_2008/profiles/rep_h_1259000000000.pdf Neve Shalom

buildings of the village in Israel, and all the residential homes are technically located in what was once a demilitarised zone (although this area is now under Israeli control). Several villagers would proudly and humorously recount how one villager used this technicality to win a court case in 2005. The villager had been driving with a Palestinian (from the West Bank) on a road in the village and was stopped by the border police, who often checked that area because of its proximity to the West Bank. On discovering that the young Palestinian did not have a permit, the villager who drove him was taken to court. At the court case, the villager proved that the border police had in fact spotted the Palestinian in an area defined by Israeli law as the demilitarised zone. The Palestinian, he successfully argued, did not need a permit to be in Israel because he was not in Israel. Friends in the village whose homes were near to this line would joke that their house was in one country and their garden in another. The joke works, of course, because the legal difference between these two places makes no real difference to the villagers' everyday lives. The villagers' experience of the effectively non-existent border cutting through their homes is in contrast to the experiences of the Palestinians crossing the border from the West Bank for employment, experiences which have been expertly documented in other ethnographies (see Bornstein 2002; Kelly 2006). Although, Palestinian villagers at WASNS did share with me many anecdotes in which they experienced stressful or humiliating treatment at checkpoints, on the way back from visiting family, friends, or work colleagues. That is, Palestinian Israeli WASNS villagers do experience the checkpoints and borders that loosely follow the Green Line, but this does occur around the village itself.

All the villagers are citizens of Israel. They attend Israeli schools and universities, they use Israeli banks and health clinics, and those who work in Israel also pay taxes to Israel. The village is part of a local regional council and receives money from the council for its primary school. Since 2014 the village's primary school has been under the aegis of the Israeli Ministry of Education, and so receives some financial support from the state. The only road into the village leads into Israel, so if one wanted to travel to the West Bank they would have to drive through Israeli roads first, although many villagers would point out that the nearest highway junction to the village, and the road to Jerusalem that it connects to, are technically in Palestinian territory because they cross the Green Line.

The political position of the village in Israel can become apparent as soon as one boards the only bus that enters the village, a bus that is run by an Israeli bus company. Once, when I boarded the bus early on a weekday, the driver, who I had not met before, immediately asked me, in Hebrew, 'you're not Jewish are you?' Knowing that, in an Israeli context, when people ask you if you are Jewish they are not necessarily asking about your religion but your social identity in Israel, I simply answered in Hebrew that I was Jewish, thinking that would quickly end the conversation. This was a gross miscalculation as the driver proceeded to shout: 'well tell me then, no because I really want to know, explain to me why you have decided to live with the enemies.' The bus driver further elaborated his question with a long racist rant as the bus continued to trundle down the winding downhill road away from the village and on to the main road (where the state-produced road sign names the village only in Hebrew form). I considered my answers carefully so as to express polite disagreement, while uncomfortably aware that I was the only passenger on a fast-moving bus – with a driver so passionate about the topic of discussion that he was not really focusing on the road.

When the Palestinian villagers leave the village to go to school, work, shop for groceries (there was no store in the village), go to the cinema or a bar, they encounter inequality in myriad ways. The Palestinians I got to know faced outright racists remarks, like those of the bus driver, to slightly more subtle racial judgements. An example would be that, on more than one occasion, when going to a bar in Tel Aviv with a mixed group of Palestinian, Israeli and European friends, the minimum age requirement for entry suddenly jumped a few years when the security guard checked the ID of a Palestinian Israeli (even when members of our group that were under that age had just entered with no issues). These more subtle forms of prejudice are not always easy to prove, but they still affect work and study opportunities. This is partly the reason why many of the young people I met and hung out with in the village were Palestinian (because they were still there), and that a much greater number of Palestinians than Jewish Israelis from the village have chosen to study abroad.

Whilst the villagers are aware of the inequality and conflict that surround them and are committed to addressing it, they do not all agree on the same approaches. According to the

village's website, the inhabitants of WASNS are aiming to live 'with' the conflict. They see their shared life as a demonstration that it is possible to mitigate the effects of inequality and conflict in their relationships, but they do not think that the wider political situation can be changed from the village alone. There are, however, several educational outreach projects and public services in the village, aimed at Jews and Palestinians from the whole region. I will introduce these institutions, and their place in village life, in the same way one would be introduced to them on first entering the village, on a tour of the main circular road that passes most of the public facing buildings.

The first building one sees on entering the village is the *Ahlan* cafe, which is run by a couple who have lived in the village for decades. The cafe's welcoming appearance – its name actually means 'welcome' in Arabic – often draws in visitors before they see the village's official visitor centre, and acts as an unofficial visitor centre when the official one happens to be closed. The *Ahlan* cafe is also an ideal location for villagers to arrange to meet guests from outside the village. Just behind the cafe, and based in a small complex of converted cargo crates, is the *Nadi*; the village's youth centre, a place where the high-school age villagers hang out. To the left of the cafe, one can see a sign for the village guest house. Whenever one of the village's educational institutions runs weekend-long seminars for people outside the village, they use the rooms here. The guest house also hosts tours by companies that bring groups of Jewish youth from around the world to visit Israel. There are many organisations that bring foreign Jews to experience Israel and it is the more left-leaning companies that would add the village to the list of places on its tours. These companies were eager to show the positive message of the village, that "Arabs and Jews refuse to be enemies," but not to discuss the sociopolitical context it was battling against, which occasionally caused tensions when a villager wanted to discuss an issue like racism. Separate from the village's work or identity, the guest house also hosts tourists and working visits unconnected to the social or political context. For example, during my fieldwork, I encountered an American group of archaeologists and a group of young Polish cyclists on a training holiday.

To the right of the village entrance, is a two-story building that houses the 'visitors and communications' office and the municipal office. This was the first building that visiting groups, journalists, and special guests would be taken. Like the other village institutions there was a mixed staff of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, who were appointed to the roles by the general village committee. In this space, I heard Arabic, Hebrew, and English through-out the working day, although meetings tended to be predominantly in Hebrew so that everyone could understand. All the village post is delivered to the office, and the P.O. boxes just outside it, so, in my experience, the office often served as an impromptu and informal meeting place (much like in any village post office). In the evenings the office building also served as a meeting place for various village committees.

Behind the offices is a swimming pool, open between May and September, that is visited by residents from the surrounding area, and acts as a social space for villagers. Throughout my time in the village people always said that pool season was the best time to be in the village, and the rest of the time the village was quiet. In the summer of 2014, during the World Cup, the villagers frequently gathered on the grass by the pool. There they would sit on semi-circle rows of pool chairs opposite the off-white wall of a small storage building where a villager would project the games streaming on his laptop.

The pool is reached by taking a road that lies between the cafe and office. Further along this road, and just past the pool, there is a complex of bungalows that comprise the School for Peace. The School for Peace (SFP) was founded in 1979 and benefitted from the uniqueness of the village as a site for dialogue workshops even before the village itself was properly settled. Most of the villagers I met had attended a course by the SFP, and several of them had been group facilitators in SFP-run dialogue workshops. The SFP is an academic institution whose staff, most of whom hold at least a second degree, are constantly involved in research of both working practice and theory (of their specific socio-political context and in social psychology). The SFP also runs courses in Israeli universities, a course which has been adapted by graduates and taught in American universities as well. As detailed in several works by SFP staff, the SFP 'encounter approach' draws on a body of work on intergroup encounters in the U.S; post-

colonial theory; and other works on Israeli-Palestinian encounters. The aim of the SFP approach is to effect a real long-lasting change in the participants' thoughts and behaviours, as well as drawing awareness to power dynamics that exist between Israelis and Palestinians. To achieve this aim, the SFP approach has three key elements. First, the use of academic literature to evoke reflection from course participants on the power dynamics between themselves; the awareness and discussion of inequality in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel. Second, encouraging Jewish and Palestinian participants to think in terms of group identity so that they see their Palestinian and Jewish counterparts as representative of, not exceptions to, their group, and also understand the effects group identity has on their own thoughts, behaviours and responsibilities. Third, aiding reflection on power dynamics and group identity by following 'binational' meetings (between Jewish and Palestinian participants) with 'uninational' meetings (in which Jewish and Palestinian participants meet only with their group). The SFP has, for over a decade, tailored its approach to train Jewish and Palestinian professionals to work together by adding another component, which educates the professionals about the ways in which the sociopolitical context of the conflict affects their professional field. For example, during my fieldwork I observed a course – funded by the Journalists Writers Foundation – that the SFP ran, in partnership with a Palestinian NGO, that trained Jewish and Palestinian teachers to use Palestinian and Israeli literature as a tool to teach their students about the 'other' (mentioned in Chapter IV).

Opposite the SFP is a towering three-storey structure, the village library. Only recently opened, this dusty-pink building is the tallest structure in the village, emphasised by its location on one of the higher sections of the hill, and overlooks the rest of the village. Occasionally the village youth would sneak up to sit on the roof together because of the view and the seclusion. The library was often used by the SFP for its events, the village community meetings, and large conferences (often attended by international as well as Israeli and Palestinian audiences). Near the end of my time at WASNS, the ground floor of the library had been converted into a museum/gallery that would display Palestinian and Israeli artwork and would focus on inspirational approaches to conflicts and inequalities, both in the region and across the world.

Just past the SFP and library, and located at the bottom of a slope on the left side of the road, is the village's primary school, which is partially hidden by trees. Despite the secluded location, it is hard to miss the school because, during school hours, there is a big yellow metal gate to prevent cars driving past the stretch of road outside the school. A friendly security guard, hired to fit with state regulations, sits by the pedestrian gate to make sure strangers do not enter the school and children do not run out into the road. Much of the familiarity between the first generation and the second, and the closeness of the second generation amongst themselves, was developed at the village primary school. When the primary school was founded in 1984 by two WASNS parents (one Jewish, one Palestinian) there were ten children of school-age, so there was one class encompassing all age groups. As the school expanded, and took in children from outside the village, the villagers were still greatly involved, the first generation as teachers and the second generation as pupils. As a result of this shared history, and continued shared activities, many of the close relationships were described to me with kin terms; e.g. "she's like my sister" or "he's like my brother".

At the end of the small stretch of road outside the school, and past the second school gate, the road begins to turn. As one follows the road around the corner another road can be seen to the right, which leads down to the village's Pluralistic Spiritual Centre (PSC). The PSC began because the founder of the village, Father Bruno Hussar, wanted to create a place of prayer that served all religions, although many of the villagers identify themselves as secular. The Pluralistic Spiritual Centre usually runs outreach projects such as a religious texts workshop for Muslim, Jewish and Christian women from the surrounding area, or more new-age style "tribal fires" and "environmental symposiums". Often these events run by the PSC have a large number of international participants and take a more universalist approach than the other institutions, focusing on shared humanity (more on this in Chapter I, Chapter V, and Chapter VI).

Soon after the road to the spiritual centre is another road on the right, and on the corner of this road is a horse-shoe shaped building with a tree in its courtyard. This building is the volunteers house, and my home for 17 months, where young adults from Europe, America

and Australia live for a few months while volunteering at the village guest house or spiritual centre, or acting as interns in the village offices and SFP. Beyond this house the roads lead to the residences of the villagers. The village, much like a kibbutz, had a long history of volunteer involvement from its inception and the volunteers' house was a hang-out spot for the young adults of the village (ages varying between 18 to 30). Every age group above the age of 18 remembers the time when their group of friends went to socialise with the volunteers. When villagers came to hang out with volunteers we would often all sit in the large open plan living-room/kitchen of the volunteers house on old second-hand mattresses and moth eaten cushions, donated by the villagers or the village guest house. For the benefit of the foreign volunteers (the volunteers were often from Germany or German-speaking countries) these conversations were usually in English, although no one could help but break into splinter conversations in German, Arabic and Hebrew. These conversations were often about music, television, recounting adventures and misadventures of youth, and other usual topics between teenagers and young adults. On the one hand the volunteers were an exciting opportunity for villagers to meet new people from other countries. On the other hand, volunteers were outside the conflict and the village so some villagers felt they could freely share all frustrations with these things. The villagers would try to explain the politics of the area to the volunteers in tangible ways, usually they would share their, or their families' experiences (such as examples of racism or loss of family property). The volunteers were occasionally ascribed to a particular 'side' of the conflict. One villager shared with me his view that volunteers always pick sides, and gave the example of a German volunteer that dated a Palestinian-Arab but then chose to study Hebrew not Arabic. Despite their romantic choices their linguistic ones were a sign they had 'picked a side'. Whatever 'side' they were or were not assigned, Volunteers did play a constant and integral role in village social life, and thus have a great presence in this thesis.

Methodology and Ethical Considerations

A Volunteer Anthropologist

This thesis is based on 17 months fieldwork in WASNS, conducted between November 2013 and May 2015 (as I have already mentioned above). The only way to conduct

immersive fieldwork in the village was to find a way to live in the village, and to this end I applied for an internship at the village office. Interns, and volunteers, have a long-standing history in WASNS, much like they do in Kibbutzim in Israel; in fact some volunteers I met during my time at WASNS had come through the Kibbutz volunteer network. In return for my work at the village office, I could rent a room in the volunteer house. In my application for the internship I stated my research interests and everyone that I worked with was aware of my project. However, I was often introduced to people at the beginning of my field-work as a volunteer. For the first few months, I was at pains to make sure everyone I was introduced to as a volunteer understood I was there as an anthropologist.

Being a volunteer was extremely useful because it put me into an already recognised social role in the village. Many anthropologists talk about anxieties associated with the start of fieldwork and the difficulties of making connections, but being a volunteer in the WASNS was a great way of being introduced to social networks. As mentioned earlier, the volunteer house – a six-room, horseshoe-shaped building on the main circle road of the village – is a social hub for the second generation, who tended to visit when new batches of volunteers arrived, and continued to visit as friendships formed. The social relationships that form between volunteers and second generation villagers have a long history. I met villagers in their late twenties and mid-thirties who still had contacts with people who had come to volunteer at WASNS when they were in their teens. Villagers were keen to invite volunteers to village events, family dinners, and hang-outs due to this pre-existing notion of volunteers and their role in WASNS life. I cannot thank the villagers enough for the way I was welcomed into friendship circles, family events, and a variety of festivities throughout the year.

My involvement in community life, and thus my exposure to a wide range of events and kinds of interaction was greatly aided by my role as volunteer. Firstly because, as just mentioned, there was already the social convention to welcome and invite volunteers to social activities. Secondly, my role as intern required my attendance at a variety of institutional events in the village. In the office, I attended dozens of staff meetings and a handful of staff meals, which were held in honour of a leaving intern or staff member's maternity leave. I also attended

a great many primary school assemblies and activities; although the school was not a focus of my research, these events provided insights into the lives of villagers involved with the school. At the Pluralistic Spiritual Centre I attended activities run for people outside the village, and the parties hosted there for villagers (and guests) at seasonal holidays. These included two winter holiday celebrations (for Christmas, Hanukkah and Mawlid al-Nabi); two celebrations of the Jewish and Muslim new years; and a spring celebration (combining Easter and Passover). I also had the opportunity to attend a variety of activities at The School for Peace; including sitting in on workshops; attending the seminars and conferences; and bimonthly discussion sessions held at the village library.

I conducted some interviews on behalf of the communication office, which I have found useful for the thesis. The purpose of these interviews was either to aid in writing an article about the work of the villagers, both within the village and beyond it, or as part of project to compile information about the second generation for an interested Dutch organisation. In total I have 20 recorded interviews, half of which were conducted on behalf of the office, and the other half on my own initiative. Whenever I use this material in what follows, I shall indicate which kind of interview it comes from.

It is important to state that, during my internship at the communication office, the content of my own research was never constrained, neither in terms of contract or verbal request. I have great admiration for the work my interlocutors do, and the uphill struggle they face. During my fieldwork I experienced first-hand the exhausting and emotionally-wrought efforts of dealing with peace and equality in such difficult circumstances and with so many possible detractors. I continue to support the work my friends at WASNS are trying to accomplish, through their institutions. As this thesis is concerned with ethical judgments it would be disingenuous to hide my own ethical and political position concerning Israel-Palestine, which was close to that of my interlocutors from the beginning. Indeed, I sought out WASNS partly because I was fascinated by the approach of the SFP from what I had read of the academic papers their staff had published. It is important to state my general support here because this thesis centres around the everyday ethics of difference that I myself was part of.

This was not only in my role as the British anthropologist interested in talking through difference, but also as the Jewish Israeli who had chosen to live within a shared Palestinian-Jewish community.

A Jewish-Israeli in a Jewish-Palestinian Community

Although I began field-work by taking up the already-recognised social role of volunteer, I eventually fell into a different kind of category. Volunteers usually stay in the village between three to six months but I was there for seventeen; friends in the village would joke about my being a fixture at the volunteer house. During that time I had gotten to know many of the villagers, their gossip, and generally the ways things worked in the village, which meant that I could catch between-the-lines references in conversations. I had become, as one villager put it, an 'insider'. My insider status was partly aided by my Jewish Israeli identity, and the many family links I had in Israel, some of whom had social links with people in the village. As an Israeli who spoke Hebrew, and understood some Arabic, I fitted easily into one of the two groups that are working on their differences in WASNS. Some of my closest contacts in the village did consider my Jewish Israeli identity when asking me how I felt I had changed through my experience in WASNS; an acknowledgement that I had been engaging, on some level, in the project myself.

Being a Jewish Israeli was potentially problematic for a variety of interconnected reasons. Jewish Israeli anthropologist Daniel Rabinowitz has pointed out why a certain degree of reflectivity is necessary for Jewish Israeli working with Palestinian interlocutors (Rabinowitz 1997: 106-107). Firstly, Jewish Israelis hold a privileged position in Israeli society; this needs to be addressed, especially in a study that examines how structural inequality can impact the ethics of dealing with difference in everyday encounters. Secondly, this privileged position compounds the already complex power relations between anthropologists and interlocutors, which anthropologists have been tackling for years. Thirdly, Jewish Israeli anthropological work on 'Arab society' and other subaltern groups in Israel has a substantial historical baggage because several studies have contributed to the Israeli state's treatment of minorities, by presenting

essentialised, ahistorical accounts that served to 'other' these groups. (Rabinowitz 2002).[4] Awareness of this historical baggage, and being able to discuss it, was actually a way of engaging with the kinds of discussions the villagers at WASNS were already having.

Beyond these concerns about power dynamics, I am also wary of the potential risk of projecting my own feelings as a Jewish Israeli in an Jewish-Palestinian community onto my Jewish friends in the village, even though my own feelings helped me understand their emotional and practical dilemmas. These dilemmas range from responses to weighty emotional events, such as those on the *Nakba* memorial day (Chapter II), to the more day-to-day concerns about language use, such as the rest my own initiative (Chapter V).

A Note on Language

Any anthropologist needs to acquire the language of their field-site in order to fully take part in day-to-day life. In my case it was also particularly necessary due to the focus on talking. The two main languages of communication in WASNS are Hebrew and Arabic, as the 'mother tongue' (more on this later) of the Jewish and Palestinian villagers respectively. Already fluent in Hebrew before my fieldwork, as my parents and immediate family are Israeli, I had much work to do on Arabic. Before going to the field I attended modern standard Arabic classes weekly for two years at SOAS and, while at the village, I was lucky enough to join a few eager learners (a group of volunteers and one villager) for weekly spoken Arabic lessons kindly hosted by one of the first village members (these lasted a few months). It would have been foolhardy to expect that I could develop my spoken Arabic to anywhere the same level as my Hebrew, the knowledge of which I have developed over a lifetime. However, there were several factors that further increased the dominant use of Hebrew, and indeed, English, in my interactions with villagers.

In the office, where I spent most of the week-days, we often reverted to English, partly because my fellow interns did not speak Hebrew or Arabic, and partly because we were working in English (on grant proposals, articles and reports aimed at English speakers). Staff meetings

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[4] See also Talal Asad's (1975) analysis of Abner Cohen's (1965) work on Arab villages in Israel.

were mostly conducted in Hebrew, although two colleagues would occasionally break into Arabic. At the volunteer house, where I spent many of my evenings, the majority of the conversations were in English for the benefit of the volunteers, and the rest was Arabic. I could generally follow the gist from the context of these Arabic conversations, often aided by the Hebrew loan-words often used. Even when I understood, I did not feel comfortable to speak the Arabic I knew for many of the same reasons that the Jewish second generation of the village (who are more proficient in Arabic than I am) would be too embarrassed to speak in Arabic (as mentioned above, this will be expanded upon in Chapter V).

This thesis includes many quotes from my interlocutors. Some of these are verbatim, transcribed directly from recorded interviews, others were noted down, as well as memory served, in field notes. It is important to distinguish between the two so I have put verbatim quotes in double quotation marks and remembered utterances in single quotations. In order to stay as true to the original meaning of quotations I have tried to keep translations as close to the original as possible, and have made very few changes to syntax or grammar for the sake of clarity. Where code-switching occurs I have indicated some loan words in italics and others in bold, this was necessary when the quotation included three different languages. Most Arabic or Hebrew transliteration have been written using international phonetic alphabet, unless there is a well-known English spelling of the word (this mostly applies to place names).

In terms of translation, I have attempted to strike a balance between capturing the sentiment of a phrase, and trying to stay as close to a literal translation as possible. The majority of the translation work I have done for this thesis is from Hebrew to English. As Hebrew is my 'mother-tongue', I have relied on my own sense of the language to capture the meaning of what was said.

Working in a Much-Studied Field-Site

The unique nature of WASNS makes it a site of interest for journalists and researchers alike. During my fieldwork I encountered countless journalists and three academic researchers. Two academics have written books to address the village as whole, pedagogical researcher

Grace Feuerverger's (2001) overview of all the institutions in the village, and psychologist Amia Lieblich's (2012) compilation of narrative interviews with villagers about life in the village and the institutions. There have also been three autobiographies by villagers: Rayek Rizek's (2017) book elucidating the philosophy of the village, Eyas and Evi Shbeta's (2004) account of their work for peace and the experience of being in a 'mixed' Jewish-Palestine marriage, and the autobiography of Father Bruno Hussar. I follow the lead of these previous academic works on WASNS by using its real name. Due to its unique nature, it was simply not possible to anonymise the village. However, I have used pseudonyms for all the villagers and non-villagers mentioned in this thesis, unless I am referencing their published works.

There have also been academic works that focus on particular village institutions. The School for Peace was the subject of a Ford Foundation report in the 1980s. SFP founder Dr Nava Sonnenschein's (2008) book 'Dialogue Challenging Identity' is based on her PhD research on SFP encounter workshops. Dr Sonnenschein has also published numerous academic articles on the topic, some co-authored with Israeli anthropologist Zvi Bekereman (Sonnenschein & Bekerman 2010; Sonnenschein, Bekerman & Horenczyk 2010) and one with a former SFP director Rabah Halabi (Halabi & Sonnenschein 2004). Halabi edited a book of papers by academics on the SFP approach (published in English in 2004). Interviews with SFP staff also appeared in Michel Gawerc's (2012) analysis of dialogue projects in Israel. The village primary school has received academic attention from linguists Aura Mor-Sommerfeld and Alon Fragman, has been written about by villagers, and features in several documentaries. The Pluralistic Spiritual Centre was recently a focus of an academic paper in German journal (see Groppe 2016).

One major distinction between my methods and those of other researchers who have visited the village is the extended stay. Some researchers have used ethnographic methods for shorter lengths over a series of years (e.g. Feuerverger 2001), others have worked on existing friendships with villagers (e.g. Lieblich 2012). Works written by villagers themselves on the community and its institutions, study the dynamics of village institutions (such as the school or the school for peace) or provide retrospectives on the village project. By contrast, my focus is

the nature of quotidian interactions that happen to take place anywhere in the village, and the ethical implications of those interactions for dealing with difference more broadly.

Villagers have been very candid about the more difficult elements of life in the village in past works. See for example the interviews conducted by Amia Lieblich, or the reflections by School for Peace staff (some of whom also village members) in Michelle Gawerc's (2012) analysis of a rift that had occurred about a decade before. Interviews are the main method of data collection for past researchers and journalists in WASNS, which meant that many of my interlocutors were already accustomed to interviews — to the point that they had mentally prepared lines to answer certain recurring questions — or were completely averse to interviews and researchers at all.

Despite this loaded nature of interviews in WASNS I found them to be useful nearer the end of fieldwork as they provided an opportunity to share my observations, and get feedback, from my closest interlocutors and friends. Sharing, in the course of an interview, what exactly interested me about everyday life in WASNS was also a way of allaying ethical doubts that arise when, in longterm fieldwork, the real social bonds one makes blur the distinction between social interactions and research. Although my friends in WASNS were aware of my research, it was not necessarily something they were conscious of in every social situation, so mentioning in interviews that I was asking a question because of something I had observed before was a way of reminding people this may be part of my research.

Many of the villagers I got know are academics, particularly in the field of social science, and thus had a good idea about the nature of my research. Many villagers would be familiar with the literature I reference in this thesis. Indeed several of the academics I have referenced have given lectures at WASNS, whether as part of a School for Peace programme or as a general event for villagers and their guests. Some villagers have also contributed to the literature on Jewish-Palestinian relations and it is important to note that the working method of the School for Peace and Primary School are greatly influenced by academic research. There is a potential overlap here between analysis and ethnographic data, a phenomenon common to the anthropology of experts or intellectuals (Boyer 2008). Dominic Boyer (2008) suggests that a

way to move beyond the potential confines of this 'paraethnography' is to humanise the experts, to view how their expertise carries through into their day to day lives. That is precisely what this thesis aims to do, by focusing more on the day-to-day interactions in the village, including the voices of those not involved in the village institutions or the academic research surrounding it.

Chapter I: Living with the Conflict

Any attempt to bring together Jewish and Palestinian Israelis faces two major obstacles; the presence of two competing national narratives, and the inequality Palestinian Israelis experience in Israeli society. These competing narratives, and inequality, load certain words, conversation topics, and styles of speech, with emotive and destructive qualities that can easily unsettle interactions. This chapter will first introduce these two obstacles and then present the debates surrounding divergent approaches to overcoming them within the peace and coexistence community. These debates touch upon the very notion of difference, and have a tangible impact on WASNS villagers, who have individually been involved in a variety of efforts over the last four decades. Sketching the intellectual landscape will help to contextualise what I observed in the field.

Two Narratives

Most dialogue or peace-related projects operating in Israel-Palestine have to take as their starting point the presence of two competing national narratives about the conflict. The same series of events are interpreted in very different ways. Palestinians experienced the loss of a homeland and are engaged in a struggle for self-determination, human rights and justice. Jewish Israelis experienced the escape from persecution, achievement of self-determination and a homeland, and are engaged in an ensuing struggle to defend that position. These competing narratives subsume new events, and offer both peoples a lens with which to interpret current experience. Academic research on encounters between Israelis and Palestinians has shown how the two national groups draw upon these over-arching narratives to initially put forward competitive positions of victimhood (Feuerverger 2003: 138-41; Steinberg 2004 1-16) and to argue "who is more humane" (Sonnenschein & Bekerman 2010: 308).

Opposing conflict narratives have resulted in opposing 'national' calendars. Any institution or project that involves both communities has to navigate parallel sets of holidays and commemorative events. Take the example of the school calendar. Israel has a mostly segregated school system in which Jewish and Palestinian pupils follow slightly different term times based on their own holidays and comparative events. However, the eight mixed schools in

the country and their Jewish and Palestinian students have to deal with two national memorial days – the Palestinian *Yom al-Nakba* (Day of the Catastrophe) and Israeli *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day) – and Israel's *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* (Independence Day). These commemorative days are particularly difficult because they centre around two diverging historical narratives: Israel's independence is a source of celebration for Jewish Israelis, but it is a reminder of a great violence and loss for Palestinians.

Even those that accept the premise of contrasting interpretations of events often disagree on which events mark the starting points or milestones of the conflict. The teaching of history shows how controversial the conflict's origin can be. A 2014 documentary on the subject features a WASNS primary school history lesson in the lead up to *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Memorial Day in Israel), co-taught by a Palestinian teacher and Jewish teacher.[5] At the beginning of the scene, the Jewish teacher explains that lessons can be learned from *Yom HaShoah*, and, through a series of polite interjections from his Palestinian colleague, the lesson soon turns into a wider discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Crucially the Jewish Israeli teacher tells the children that the conflict started in the 1940s, following the Holocaust (the initial topic of the lesson), but the Palestinian teacher argues that it was actually the Balfour declaration of 1917 that set in motion a series of events which eventually meant that European Jews, escaping persecution, found shelter in Palestine "at the expense of [her] grandfather."[6] The starting point chosen on this occasion by the Palestinian teacher was one of a number of possible 'origins'. She could have easily looked back another half century or so to the late 1800s, when the Zionist movement gained momentum and the first wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine.[7]

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[5] The documentary "This is My Land" (2014), directed by Tamara Erde, follows a number of schools, including the primary school at WASNS

[6] The Balfour declaration stated the UK government's favourable view towards the foundation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine (then under British control).

[7] Many historians have taken this first wave of immigration as the start for their overviews (See, for example, Morris 1999 or Pappe 2004).

Memories of historical events impact upon the way the conflict is experienced in the present.[8] Since the conflict is ongoing and many of the pivotal events have taken place in living memory, the general national narrative is woven in with personal and familial accounts of the recent past. The interwoven nature of national and personal narratives is not specific to Israel-Palestine but it manifests here in how words like Nakba can refer to a multiplicity of issues as well as the totality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As the historian Adel Manna puts it:

> "the Nakba was not a one-time event connected to the war in Palestine and
> its immediate catastrophic repercussions on the Palestinians. Rather, and
> more correctly, it refers to the accumulated Palestinian experience since the
> 1948 war up to the present." (Manna 2013: 87).

The accumulated experience to which Manna refers includes the destruction and expulsion caused during the Nakba; the destruction and expulsion caused during the war of 1967 (referred to as the Naksa, meaning 'setback'); the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and lack of legal protection of Palestinians under Israeli military rule; the martial law that Palestinian Israelis were subjected to until 1966; the Israeli blockade of Gaza; and the indignity of check-points faced by all Palestinians, regardless of citizenship status. Particular words can refer to many events and relationships because of the interconnectedness of the shared Palestinian or Israeli experience. *HaKibush* ('the occupation' in Hebrew), for example, is a term generally understood by Jewish Israelis as a reference to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, but the occupation is experienced by Palestinians as part of a wider story of inequality. When a Palestinian Israeli uses the term *HaKibush* (or sometimes the English word 'occupation') to refer to this wider story when speaking to Jewish Israelis, the Jewish Israelis may not grasp the reference because they do not meet or know Palestinians and would not find out about their experiences through mainstream media. Many Jewish Israelis have their own sensitivities about the use of the term *HaKibush* to refer to anything more than the military occupation of the West Bank (or the use of the word at all) because even mainstream Israeli media and politicians present the use of the

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[8] Key anthropological works on the role of memory in the experience of Palestinian historical narratives include Ted Swedenburg's (1995) book on the 'Arab Revolt' of the 1930s, and a collection of essays on the Nakba edited by Ahmad H. Sadi and Lila Abu-Lughod (2007).

English word 'occupation' by the international community as an example of hatred and misunderstanding of Israel (and by extension Israelis). The same media and politicians refer to Israeli organisations that use such a term as traitors.[9] Palestinian Israelis will be aware of the Jewish Israeli concern about negative perceptions of Israel (and Israelis) abroad because this narrative reaches mainstream media while their own narrative does not have such mainstream exposure. It is important to note that the kind of Jewish Israelis who seek encounters with Palestinian Israelis tend to have a higher level of awareness of the occupation and the Palestinian experience.

In such a charged verbal context, where one can draw from a single word references to the totality of the conflict and inequality within it, even seemingly innocent observations about food or plants can spark an argument. One good example is the prickly pear, the fruit of a cactus that grows in the region, which is called *Saber* in Arabic and *Sabra* in Hebrew. For Palestinians the *Saber* was traditionally used to demarcate the borders between plots of land but, as everyone was equally free to use the fruit from the cactus, it was also connected to a sense of community (Abufarha 2008: 347). The toughness of the prickly pear cactus is also used as a metaphor for the resilience and patience of the Palestinian people, and thus is a symbol of Palestinian identity (*ibid.*: 348). Meanwhile, Jewish Israelis view the *Sabra* as a perfect metaphor for the ideal Israeli because they are both tough on the outside and sensitive on the inside; the term *Sabra* is often used to describe native-born Jewish Israelis (Almong 2000; Abufarha 2008: 365). The *Sabra* is ubiquitous in Israeli life both in name and use — from the cartoon anthropomorphic cactus I saw used in adverts during my fieldwork, to the widely-sold prickly pear juice in the supermarket, or even the brand name of a food company that makes humous, among other dips — but few Jewish Israelis are aware of the Palestinian claim to the same cactus and its fruit. The adoption of the *Sabra* as a symbol of Israeliness without any credit to Palestinian connections has been seen as a form of "semiotic warfare" (Abufarha 2008: 365), which also applies to the Israeli adoption of olives, oranges, and humous.

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[9] For example, the Israeli Prime Minister has accused human rights NGO B'Tselem of joining the "chorus of slander" against Israel by "recycling the false claim" that the Occupation is the reason for conflict (Ravid 2016). Accessible at: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.747653

To summarise, Jewish and Palestinian Israelis live with two general over-arching narratives about the conflict. Both these narratives are pervasive, encapsulating everything from views on history to the significance of the food one eats. These two narratives offer competing meanings to the same events, objects, and words, so when Jewish and Palestinian Israelis do meet and talk with one another there are several arguments that can arise even from a seemingly simple discussion. Tensions are compounded when there is an unequal awareness about alternative interpretations. Palestinian Israelis are more aware of the Jewish Israeli narrative than Jewish Israelis are of the Palestinian narrative because it is only the Jewish narrative that appears in mainstream media, politics and education in Israel. Predictably, the kinds of Jewish Israelis who tend to take part in Jewish-Palestinian encounters have a greater level of initial awareness of the Palestinian narrative. Mutual awareness, when it occurs, can result in a hyper-sensitivity about which words are used because of a concern that loaded words can lead to arguments.

A Context of Inequality

The different kinds of injustice faced by Palestinian Israelis are in the same list of injustices faced by Palestinians as a whole; these injustices serve as a point of connection for Palestinians from a wide range of social, economic, and geographical situations, and thus contribute to what Adel Manna described as a shared Palestinian experience (Manna 2013: 87). These different forms of inequality affect one another. Israel's military occupation of Palestinian territories since 1967, which has obviously had great costs for Palestinians living there, has had numerous economic and social costs on Israeli society that serve to exacerbate the inequality faced by its Palestinian citizens; as shown in a 2008 report compiled by the ADVA Centre for Information on Equality and Social Justice in Israel.[10] Thus, despite the relative protections offered by Israeli citizenship, Palestinian Israelis are affected by the inequalities faced by

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[10] The report shows, for example, that the increase of the military budget after the second intifada and the consequent construction of separation walls in the early 2000s, together with the priority of state investment in Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, has exacerbated inequalities within Israel, particularly stifling the economic and social advancement of Palestinian citizens of Israel (Swirski 2008). One area in which this effect can be clearly observed is education. In the years between 2001 and 2006 teaching hours per student in Israel decreased by 15% due to lack of funding (Swirski 2008: 25). How this average decrease played out across Israel's communities can be seen in the percentage of students gaining matriculation certificates in 2006. In Israel's "Arab communities" this percentage was 37.5%, falling to only 27.9% in Bedouin communities in the Negev, while in developing Jewish communities the percentage was 50% and for the rest of the Jewish community in Israel it was 66% (*ibid.*: 25).

Palestinians in Gaza, West Bank, and East Jerusalem (where Palestinians hold conditional Israeli residency permits but not necessarily citizenship). Palestinian Israelis are not only connected to a wider Palestinian experience because of the direct impact of inequality, but because they have friends and family in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Some of the Palestinians I met in WASNS were originally from East Jerusalem, and there are cases where their old homes (and neighbourhoods) are now practically inaccessible, or difficult to access, because separation walls, built after the second intifada in the early 2000s, now cut half-way across the street on which they used to live. Inequality in Israeli society poses a substantial obstacle for any attempt to create an equal peaceful space for Jewish-Palestinian interaction, especially since an asymmetry of awareness means that it is difficult for Jewish and Palestinian Israelis to even discuss the connected nature of inequality and conflict in the first place. This inequality manifests in a various ways – including socio-economic status, educational attainment, religious and cultural freedoms, political participation, etc. – but this section focuses on manifestations of inequality that were particularly relevant to interactions between villagers at WASNS. These two manifestations are language asymmetry and the importance of the military in a society where conscription is compulsory for all citizens except Palestinian Israelis.

Before turning to the topics of language and militarisation it is important to first briefly explain the wider process of which they are part. Palestinian Israeli political scientist Amal Jamal has usefully termed this process the 'hollowing out' of citizenship, by which he means the process by which citizenship cannot be fully realised because minorities are prevented from fully participating in several spheres of society (Jamal 2007: 473; Jamal 2009: 499). Drawing on the model developed by critical theorist Nancy Fraser (1997), Jamal has established an insightful tripartite analysis, in which political, economic and cultural policies work in combination to 'hollow out' the citizenship of Israel's Palestinian minority.

'Hollowed-out' Citizenship

This first component of Jamal's analysis is legislation and the political sphere. This approach builds on state-centric analyses of Israeli society, such as Oren Yiftachel's theory of 'ethnocracy' (Yiftachel 2006). Ethnocracy describes a society in which the state stratifies

citizenship according to ethnicity; in the case of Israel the system benefits Jewish Israelis of European origin (referred to as Askhenazi), and disadvantages groups such as Jews of Arabic origin (referred to as Mizrahi), African migrants, the growing Russian community, and Palestinian citizens of Israel (Yiftachel 2006). A central driver sustaining such a hierarchy is that the Jewish nature of the state, which is protected by law and acts as a "super-constitutional convention" over other democratic principles (Jamal 2007: 477). Further laws have made it illegal to express comments that are perceived to challenge that Jewish nature. These laws, and the super-constitutional nature of protecting the Jewish nature of the state, effectively limit Palestinian Israeli participation in politics as certain topics and areas of legislation become "taboo territories" (Jamal 2007: 478). The trend is increasingly problematic as shown by studies that reveal a steady 'religionisation' of Jewish Israeli society (e.g. Peled & Peled 2016) and a corresponding emphasis of the Jewish nature of the state in proposed bills and policies.

The second component to consider is economic policies and access to resources. On the state and municipal level, funding allocation to Palestinian-Arab localities is not equal to that received by Jewish areas. Permission for urban planning projects is more difficult to obtain in Arab towns than Jewish ones, preventing expansion (Yiftachel 1997; Rabinowitz 1997; Massalha 2014). Palestinian-Arab towns in Israel are also more likely to be underserved by infrastructure, making it more difficult to base businesses there. Although the law protects equal opportunities in employment, there are certain ways in which Palestinian Israelis have less access to the job market, and equal earning within it (Hesketh et al. 2011: 26). Firstly, Palestinian Israelis do not benefit from graduate schemes designed for those who have completed army service (which I will expand on below). Secondly, there are a lack of job opportunities for Palestinian Israelis in their home-towns because of the lack of state investment in education, business, and infrastructure in Israel's Arab towns (all of which are explored in Massalha 2014). Finally, there is an element of racism which affects job opportunities and choice of residence. A 2010 report by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor found that almost one-third (29%) of Arab job seekers report that they have been denied a position because they are Arabs and 61% of the Arabs surveyed believed that there is employment discrimination

against Arabs as a group.[11] The Palestinian Israelis (and some Mizrahi Israelis) I knew also revealed anecdotal evidence of losing job opportunities or being denied rental opportunities. This kind of surreptitious racism is so hard to challenge precisely because of its underhanded nature; claims of racism are hard to substantiate when employers and landlords have not explicitly mentioned race, although the sheer volume of Palestinians who feel they have experienced prejudice indicates such racism is most likely real.

The third component of Jamal's analysis, which he calls the cultural/symbolic, intertwines with the other two components and refers to the role of education, media, and entertainment in fostering the misrecognition of Palestinian Israeli identity. In terms of education there are crossovers with the issue of access to resources, as schools serving Arab areas are given less funding. In addition, there is the way in which schools operate as a political and cultural apparatus of the state. Palestinian-Arab schools in Israel are still under the remit of the Ministry of Education, so the curriculum only covers Jewish Israeli culture, language, and historical narrative, which serves to dispossess 'Arab Israelis' of their Palestinian identity (by not presenting their culture, religions, and historical narrative) (Jamal 2007: 486). Education plays a role in what Jamal has termed 'phony integration', a series of political and social policies that serve to present 'Israeliness' as "a neutral common civic identity that can incorporate the Arab citizens inside the state despite its Jewish character" (Jamal 2009: 496). A careful balance is established between allowing expressions of difference – by allowing separate Arabic-language schools; leaving space for Arab Israeli political parties; and not requiring Arab Israelis to serve in the Israeli army – with structures that limit these expressions of difference within Israeli citizenship, such as the education system.[12]

Just as identifiably-Palestinian culture, language, and narrative do not have a space in the national curriculum so too is their presence limited in Israeli media. As such Palestinian

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[11] Statistics were cited in an article on the Israel Democracy Institute website (https://en.idi.org.il/articles/10190). The original report by Shuki Handels — Research and Economic Administration of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor — is titled 'The Sense of Discrimination of Job Seekers and Employees and What the Public Thinks on the Subject.'

[12] C.f. Tamer Sorek's (2007) Gramscian analysis of football in Israel as a space in which the state allows Arab Israeli expression and resistance precisely because it is limited to the sphere of sport.

Israelis are marginalized in that their identifiable culture and language are underrepresented in the media and so in Jewish Israeli conceptions of Israeliness. Palestinian Israelis are rarely featured in primetime programming, and when they are featured it is usually in a negative light (Jamal 2007: 488) Due to this lack of representation, Palestinian Israelis do not have the incentive to take on any more of the Israeli identity than they have to adopt in order to succeed in the education system, economic activities, and politics.[13] The kind of ideals concerning language use and behaviour, which feature in the mainstream media, and through the education system, reflect the ethnocracy described above. If one were to take a Bourdieu-style analysis, one would expect certain styles of speech, tastes, name, and dress to be more socially and economically valuable in a society. However, in this case, Arabic language is not just less valuable in the Israeli ethnocracy, since for Jewish Israelis Arabic is the 'language of the enemy' (as one Palestinian Israeli WASNS villager put it) and as such creates feelings of fear and distrust among many. There is not only a hierarchy of languages but a hierarchy of the way in which they are spoken. As we have seen, the dominant ideal of Israeliness is represented by the Sabra, the prickly pear, tough on the outside, and sensitive on the inside. This ideal extends to the ideal way of speaking, which is to refrain from expressing emotion (or sign of sensitivity), while being tough (or assertive) in one's communications.

Language Asymmetry

One of the most fundamental linguistic choices people have is which language they speak. The asymmetry between Hebrew and Arabic within Israeli society is therefore of great relevance to virtually every interaction between the two groups. The two languages vary greatly in both their degree of adoption by non-native speakers and in the societal benefits afforded by their fluent use. In the following chapters, we will examine the direct effects of this language asymmetry on seemingly banal linguistic choices – how a simple act of translation can step into a political minefield or how an emotional burden can be placed on common loan words. But

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[13] Jamal also argues that it is due to their lack of representation in the media, that many Palestinian citizens of Israel do not watch or listen to Israeli TV or radio aside from some news reports (Jamal 2007: 487). Although this does not necessarily apply to many of the Palestinian Israelis I met.

first, it is useful to chart the development and chief characteristics of this asymmetry which pervades Israeli society.

In any given interaction between a Palestinian and Jewish Israeli it is likely that the Palestinian Israeli will have a better grasp of Hebrew than the Jewish Israeli will have of Arabic, which poses a problem for any educational, dialogue, or coexistence project that aims at achieving equality. Although Arabic and Hebrew are both official state languages in Israel, in practice Hebrew is the dominant language.

To begin with, the status of Arabic as an official state language is not always upheld in practice and Jewish politicians have gone as far as to propose bills to repeal the status of Arabic entirely (ACRI 2011: 62). For now, government policy cannot explicitly challenge Arabic's equal status, yet there are policies that do so in practice, a good example being the case of road signs. Both the state and city municipalities are meant to ensure that all road signs are both in Arabic and Hebrew, and this was confirmed by an Israeli Supreme Court decision in 1999 (Hesketh et al. 2011). However, in 2009 the Ministry of Transport put forward a plan that would change all road signs so that the Arabic place-name would be merely a transliteration of the Hebrew, rather than its Arabic place-name (*ibid.*). For example, during my fieldwork I noticed that many of the signs to Jerusalem read *Yerushalayim* in Hebrew and *Urusalayem* in Arabic with *alQuds* (the Arabic name for Jerusalem) in brackets. Jerusalem was the only case I saw where the Arabic name was at least acknowledged, despite being put inside brackets. As Yasir Suleiman (2004) wrote of the policy, due to the politics of claims to land and place, removing Arabic names from signs is an attempt to remove the Arabic history of that place.

In addition, policies that do enshrine equality of the two languages are not always upheld. For example, ACRI (the Association of Civil Rights in Israel) found a large proportion of essential government documents that had no Arabic translation (ACRI 2011). Similarly, Palestinian Israeli Members of Knesset (parliament) are technically allowed to address parliament in Arabic, however they choose not to do so as they know their Jewish Israeli counterparts will not understand them. The same discrepancy between Arabic's official status and actual use can be seen in other public institutions, such as hospitals, banks, and transport.

One reason this occurs is the relative lack of Arabic knowledge among Jewish Israelis. Education policy is a major contributor to this deficiency of Arabic knowledge. Although Arabic is taught as part of the Israeli curriculum, what is taught is *fuṣḥá* (Modern Standard or literary) Arabic. This means that Jewish Israelis do not learn, and are not exposed to, spoken Palestinian Arabic, which Palestinian Israelis actually use in day-to-day life.

It is illegal for businesses to ban Arabic use in Israel, yet many businesses have internal policies that effectively ban it, sometimes citing the discomfort of Israeli customers and colleagues at hearing Arabic spoken, a feeling of connected to the conflict. Most recently, Haaretz reported that a Haifa branch of popular coffee chain had issued a ban on Arabic use in the work place (Khoury 2016). With a few exceptions (such as intelligence services) knowledge of Arabic is not advantageous in the job market. Knowledge of Hebrew, however, is essential, particularly if spoken with a mainstream Israeli accent. Arabic is associated by mainstream Israeli society with suspicion and low status, as already discussed, which not only affects Palestinians. Despite it being their native tongue, Mizrahi Jewish Israelis tend not to speak in Arabic in front of other Israelis because of its perceived low status (Furberg Moe 2012; Lefkowitz 2001; Lefkowitz 2004).

In this context, efforts to teach Hebrew and Arabic to the same level of use in schools, as is the case in WASNS and other such co-existence projects, have faced many challenges. Firstly, the dominance of Hebrew in Israel means that, while Palestinian Israeli parents and teachers can speak both languages, Jewish Israeli parents and teachers mostly speak only Hebrew, which means the children are exposed to more Hebrew even in bilingual schools (see analysis by Mor-Sommerfeld, Azaiza, & Hertz-Lazarowitz 2007). Another factor to explain the language asymmetry is the socio-economic value placed on English as well as Hebrew. In his studies of bilingual schools in Israel, anthropologist Zvi Bekerman has shown how the value attributed to Hebrew and English, by pupils and parents alike, contributed to the poor acquisition of Arabic by Jewish Israelis compared to the acquisition of Hebrew by their Palestinian Israeli peers (Bekerman 2005; Bekerman and Horenczyk 2001).

It is not just language that gets attributed with positive or negative social value, but also the way in which the language is spoken. As linguistic anthropologist Daniel Lefkowitz's (2001; 2004) work has shown, the way in which Hebrew is pronounced and intoned can denote to other Hebrew speakers the speaker's background. For example, the upward intonation at the end of phrases and the pronunciation of the 'p' letter more like a 'b' are associated with Arabic-speakers. Moreover, Lefkowitz notes that there is an assumption in Israeli society that Arabic-speaking communities (both Palestinian Israelis and Mizrahi Jewish Israelis) express more emotion when they speak, which is contrary to the mainstream Sabra ideal. Being identified through emotive expression, or lack of, is about more than just how a language is pronounced or intoned but how ways of speaking are associated with social norms.

As we have seen above, the way in which one speaks in Israel is connected to ideals about how best to contribute to society. Take, for example, *Dugri*, a term used to describe a particularly direct way of speaking, or 'straight-talking', and being open about opinions regardless of potential offence caused, like informing an acquaintance you think they have gained weight. *Dugri* is associated with the dominant social group and is used by speakers in order to emphasise their 'Israeliness' in any given social situation (Katriel 1986; Lefkowitz 2001); indeed, failing to interpret the bluntness of *Dugri* as it was intended, and visibly taking offence at the bluntness, actually calls into question one's own claim to Israeliness (Katriel 2004). *Dugri* is in fact a lone-word from the Arabic *Dughri*, although it has a different meaning. In Arabic, *Dughri* is about being truthful to facts, while *Dugri* is about being truthful to one's opinion (Katriel 1986). Studies have shown that Arabic and Hebrew ways of speaking differ in their interactional norms; the essential difference is that the Israeli interactional norm (*Dugri*) is about how one presents oneself while the Palestinian interactional norm (encapsulated by the term *Musayara'*) is about showing deference to one's interlocutor (Ellis & Maoz 2003: 265; Katriel 1986: 99; Greifat & Katriel 1989). Even when Palestinian Israelis speak perfect Hebrew, they can still be judged as failing to adhere to the dominant Israeli way of speaking, which can compound the prejudice against them.

When Jewish and Palestinian Israelis meet, before they even begin to navigate loaded words and conversation topics, they first have to choose a language to use. Usually Palestinian Israelis must relinquish the use of their own language because Hebrew, as the dominant language in society, is the only language their Jewish counterparts understand. The dominance of Hebrew is part of a wider process in which political emphasis on the Jewish nature of the state results in policies that effectively exclude non-Jewish citizens from several spheres of daily life. This leaves little room for the expression of other cultures and languages. The militarisation of Israeli society means that army service provides Jewish Israelis – and Jewish Israelis alone – with access to shared experiences, a popular culture, ways of speaking, and better job prospects; all of which are out of reach for Palestinians Israelis because they do not serve in the army (Hesketh et al. 2011: 27).[14] As will be seen in Chapter VII, the prospect of military service also poses a great dilemma for conscription-age Jewish Israelis with Palestinian friends.

A Militarised Society

The military plays an important part in Israeli social life as nearly all Jewish adults, as well as many Druze and Bedouin citizens, have served in the army. There are two stages of army service: the initial conscription at age 18 to 21, and the reserve duty one is required to do for a decade or so after (depending on factors such as health, residency, and marital status in the case of women). Military and civil life often weave into one another, as noted in sociological and anthropological works on Israeli society (eg. Ben Ari & Sion 2005; Grassiani 2013). It will be seen later in the thesis that army service is a contentious issue in WASNS, and has been a central issue of discussion and social rupture on several occasions. I found that the militarisation of society played into everyday interactions in the village in subtle ways as well (Chapter VII).

Army service affects job opportunities and career trajectories. Some graduate programmes are aimed at those who have served, but the link between job market and army

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[14] According to Israeli law 'Arab Israelis' are exempt from army service, except the Druze community, whose leaders signed an agreement with the state in 1956 (Hesketh et. al 2011: 64). On the rare occasions in which Palestinian Israelis do want to serve in the army they face many obstacles, including security concerns from the IDF and ostracisation from their own community.

service is much deeper. Teenagers are given guidance as to which area of the army to serve so as to benefit their future career. Good examples of this are the army-based apprenticeships, such as those in engineering, which provide industry-recognised training to conscripts. Candidates for employment are also looked upon favourably if they have served in an elite unit, partly because there is an element of selection, and such a candidate has had to pass tests of intelligence or skill. Army service is also a good source of networking contacts that can often be called upon when looking for job opportunities. Finally, the Jewish Israelis who serve have access to a set of conversational topics that can be drawn upon in job interviews, such as the gruelling experience of the initial weeks of training.

Military service is a topic of everyday conversations. Asking an acquaintance what unit they served in is as normal a question as asking where in Israel they live, so in this way military service affects the everyday ways in which language is used in Israel. Army service service is not just a direct topic of conversation, but also gives rise to a set of vocabulary and related colloquialisms that permeate civilian life. Knowledge and use of Arabic by those who have served is affected by army service; most Jewish Israelis learn basic commands in spoken Arabic to use when policing the occupied territories, such as 'go back to your homes'.

Military service has also cultivated a particular sense of humour. Ben Ari and Sion (2005) have written about this with reference to all-male reserve units. The humour is identifiable by its connection to a particular masculine ideal and tends to be in the form of "banter" or "pranks" (Ben Ari & Sion 2005: 655). I have found that this type of humour, which could perhaps be seen as rather aggressive outside its original context, does trickle into civilian life as well. While Jewish Israelis who have been in the army will at least be familiar with this kind of 'banter' when it arises in civilian life, whether or not they consider it appropriate or funny, Palestinian Israelis may just experience it as a form of aggression.

In effect, at the age of 18, Palestinian and Jewish Israeli life-paths diverge. Palestinian Israelis go straight to work or university, where the majority of their Jewish classmates are two or three years older and share among themselves an experience in the army service – together with its language and sense of humour – that the Palestinians do not. Palestinian Israelis also do

not have a connection to certain mainstream phrases, forms of knowledge, and even ways of speaking that are cultivated in the army. Jewish Israelis, on the other hand, spend two to three years of their life in an army environment and, as much as they may not wish to remind their Palestinian friends or colleagues of this, there are many subtle ways in which their frames of reference, and way of speaking, have been affected by the military and the mainstream culture in civil society that connects to it.

Addressing the Conflict — Different Approaches in the Peace Movement

Against this backdrop, a social movement in Israel-Palestine is trying to address conflicting narratives and inequality to advance peace, equality and justice. WASNS is part of this social movement. As will be seen in Chapter III, the activities of the villagers often intersected with a wider community of peace and human rights activists. The villagers of WASNS, particularly those who founded or took part in its institutions, are part of the wider conversation within the Israeli-Palestinian peace and social movement, and have contributed to the academic literature on Israeli-Palestinian encounters. The changes in the peace movement during the course of WASNS's history are telling, as the debates and developments in approaches taken by the network of groups and individuals promoting peace speak to the different opinions villagers had about the best way to deal with, and talk through, difference. These debates are rooted in the political and social history of the movement itself, and it is to this history that I now turn.

All peace and co-existence projects in Israel attempt to deal with differences between Jews and Palestinians in some way, but the projects that proliferated in the early 1980s were actually indirectly designed to redress differences *within* Jewish society. Efforts to bring together Jewish and Palestinian Israelis had already existed for about two decades by this point, but the 1980s featured a marked increase in encounter programmes aiming to improve intergroup relations and many were officially recognized by the Ministry of Education (Maoz 2011: 116; Abu-Nimer 2004). The increased interest in, and support for, such intergroup activities has been attributed to the liberal Jewish Israeli community's concern about the rise of right-wing and anti-Arab sentiments in Israel at the time, typified by the popularity of Meir

Kahane[15] (Abu-Nimer 1999; Maoz 2011; Rabinowitz 2001). It has been argued that the left-wing reacted in this way because the sudden popularity of an extreme right-wing party challenged left-wing Jewish Israeli perceptions of Israel as a liberal democracy (Rabinowitz 2001: 66). The rise of right-wing populists such as Kahane also posed a threat to the centre-left Ashkenazi Jewish establishment — who held and still hold most positions of power and influence in Israel — because many of these populist groups were appealing to, and empowering, previously marginalised groups, like Mizrahi Jews. One potential underlying political motivation for institutional support of coexistence educational programmes may have been an elite concern for teaching Mizrahi Jews, who are associated with more conservative politics, to adhere to the liberal ideal (Rabinowitz 2001: 77). Historically, peace groups in Israel have largely been led by tertiary-educated Ashkenazis, who are more privileged in Israeli society, and have had difficulty engaging Mizrahi communities. Mizrahi communities tend to see Ashkenazis as more shielded from, and naive about, the conflict, as it is Mizrahi communities who are more likely to encounter Palestinian Israelis, and who live in the border towns most affected by conflicts with Israel's neighbours (see Clarke 2003). During my fieldwork I also sensed a frustration among left-wing Mizrahi Israelis that Mizrahi concerns are side-lined in the peace movement.

Following the lead of the peace movement itself, in this chapter I have focused mostly on the inequality and differences between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis despite other pertinent differences and inequalities within and across those two groups. One topic of debate within the peace movement then is how one addresses all kinds of differences — such as those between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews, between social classes, or between genders — without detracting from their efforts to address Jewish-Palestinian relations in particular. During the time I spent in the left-wing community, there was still discussion and reflection on the need for more diversity in the peace and social justice movement; it was a topic that often came up in

[15] Meir Kahane founded the right-wing Kach party, which was eventually banned from Israeli politics for its racist activities by the late 1980s. Kahane and Kach continued to be powerful right-wing symbols. Baruch Goldstein, who committed the massacre at the Cave of the Patriarchs in 1994, was a Kach supporter. To this day, Kahane remains a symbol for right-wing groups in Israel. During the summer of 2014, while I was in WASNS, vandals left spray-painted "Kahane lives" in Hebrew over the WASNS school bus-shelter and a road sign leading to the village (WASNS 2014). Two years earlier the villagers' personal property was vandalised with similar messages (WASNS 2012).

meetings (see Chapter III). Due to Israel's ever-changing demography, it is no longer just a case of reaching out to Mizrahi communities – as it was in the 1980s – but also to the Russian and Ethiopian Jewish communities in Israel.

The coexistence projects of the early 1980s drew on methods from the US, particularly 'contact theory', which takes as its premise that by bringing two groups into contact and fostering successful interpersonal relationships, one can challenge stereotypes and improve intergroup relations (Abu-Nimer 1999; Bar-On 1996; Maoz 2011; Rabinowitz 2001). These projects tended to focus on shared humanity and 'cultural encounters' (Abu-Nimer 1999), as participants would talk about shared linguistic roots, food and music. At the time, encounters following this 'Coexistence Model' (as described by Maoz 2011) may have seemed a radical reaction to the political climate, but they have since been criticised for being too shallow to effectively deal with the underlying inequality between the groups, and are mockingly referred to by detractors as the humous and falafel approach. Some criticisms went further to suggest that such approaches actually serve to support the underlying inequality by only dealing with superficial differences, and concentrating on shared humanity.

At the same time as the 'Coexistence Model' was finding favour, and funding, so too was the 'Joint Projects Model' (Maoz 2011). This approach brings together Jewish and Palestinian Israelis (and also Palestinians from the West Bank) to work on projects together, whether it is music, the environment, sport etc. These earlier co-existence projects were designed to humanise the 'other', an objective that still remains in present-day approaches like that of the School for Peace. The School for Peace bases its approach to dialogue encounters on the premise that groups need to overcome negative perceptions of an 'other'. Connected to this is a concern about 'othering', and the post-colonial academic reflections on the exoticisation of groups of people in subjects like Anthropology. It is interesting to note that the English word 'othering' would be used in conversations in WASNS no matter what language was being spoken. Ironically, earlier projects' attempts at preventing 'othering' actually served to reinforce it by limiting the involvement of Palestinians in the planning and running of projects.

Palestinian involvement in coexistence and peace education projects was problematic from the beginning, due to differing objectives and inequality. In the earliest coexistence projects, whilst the Palestinian population of Israel was under martial law, the goal was to "mobilize Arab voters whose support symbolized loyalty to the state of Israel" (Abu-Nimer 2004: 408).[16] In the projects of the 1980s, Palestinians were treated as little more than a teaching device for Jewish Israelis; Palestinian speakers would give talks at Jewish high-schools to give young Jewish Israelis an impression of Palestinians beyond the images they formed from the media. On the one hand, these projects could be seen as utilising Palestinians to further the intra-Jewish political project mentioned above (ie elite Israelis' attempts to bring Mizrahi Israelis in line with liberal ideals); on the other hand, this was an opportunity for the Palestinians to explain to Jewish Israelis about their experience as a minority group. The academic literature on early attempts at dialogue encounters suggests that Jewish Israelis tended to get involved in peace and coexistence projects with the expectation of *talking* beyond politics (or rather avoiding politics), while Palestinians tended to see these projects as an opportunity to discuss political issues and address inequality (see, for example, Rabinowitz 2001: Abu-Nimer 2004). This created misunderstandings, for example, Palestinians would not show much commitment to a joint project because they were frustrated that political realities were not being discussed, but this non-participation was interpreted as laziness by Jewish Israelis (Maoz 2011). Underlying these issues is a concern about 'normalisation', and the anti-normalisation movement. 'Normalisation' has several interpretations and uses with regards to Israel and its relations with the Arab world as a whole, but in this context the most relevant interpretation is the supporting of the status quo, that is, engaging in peace or coexistence projects that do not deal with the issue of inequality or address political issues, and can be used by the Israeli government to present an image of a liberal society.[17] This, it is argued, can serve to legitimise the structural inequality that exists between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians.

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[16] See also Abu-Nimer 1999.

[17] The anti-normalisation, and thus the exact nature of the status quo people believe they are normalising by engaging with Israel has various roots and expressions, ranging from religious belief that Palestine is Islamic territory to Marxist interpretation of Israel as an imperialist entity (Salem 2005). Importantly, the anti-normalisation movement in Palestinian society differs in several ways from that within the Arab world and international community because the former needs and does engage with Israel while the latter can choose, as some countries do, to refuse to acknowledge Israel as a country (Salem 2005).

An important debate within the peace and co-existence movement concerns inequality and whether or not it should be directly addressed in interactions. The earlier projects did not deal explicitly with inequality, which is why they were subject to accusations of actually contributing to it. By the mid 1980s, however, several events and trends prompted the rise of a different approach, often termed the 'confrontational model', which tackles the difficult issues of politics, inequality, and historical narratives. One prompt for this approach was academic work produced on existing methods within the movement, such as a study funded by the Ford Foundation at WASNS's School for Peace that found there was a difficulty in countering structural inequality within the encounter sessions (Bar, Bar-Gal, & Asaqla 1989). The SFP, and others, adjusted their approach accordingly, shifting the focus from interpersonal relations (as the previous coexistence models did) to intergroup relations. This change in approach was justified in two ways. Firstly, it was found that simply getting participants in 'cultural encounters' to know individuals from the other side of the conflict was not a useful way to tackle prejudice since the participants were unlikely to extrapolate their experience; i.e. the Jewish/Palestinian individuals they were getting to know were nice enough but they were not seen as representative of their group. Secondly, a focus on group identity rather than personal identity allows for discussion of structural inequality and the socio-political landscape in which all Jewish and Palestinian participants are implicated.

The confrontational approach is aptly named because this style of dealing with differences (as they pertain to political and social identities, power inequality, and historical narratives) deliberately confronts topics despite the discomfort this can cause; such an approach of talking about difficult issues has been found to be alienating by some (Maoz 2011: 120). Additionally, the focus on group identity can potentially essentialise identities to the point that no space is given to the discussion of differences *within* groups due to the importance placed on differences *between* them (Abu-Nimer 2004). This can be problematic when a group is expected to have the same opinion on a key issue when they do not, for example in a discussion on the Jewish nature of the state of Israel when not all the Jewish Israelis even agree on this point. The SFP devised a method that allows both intra and inter group differences to be aired and analysed by holding both binational and uni-national encounters as part of the same course, allowing the

Jewish and Palestinian groups to reflect on the nature of ingroup and outgroup perceptions (Abu-Nimer 2004). These approaches follow a similar premise to the "metacognitive approach" set-out by psychologist Rachel Ben-Ari. In this approach participants of an encounter are aided in developing an "awareness of the biases inherent in the elaboration processes that underlie the development of perceptions and attitudes about the ingroup and the outgroup" (Ben-Ari 2004: 313). The idea is that this awareness makes the participants more likely to challenge their own perceptions.

International funding for coexistence and peace projects increased after the Oslo accords of 1993 and 1995 (Rabinowitz 2001: 67). However, the failings of the Oslo accords, and the feeling among Palestinians that the accords had cost them many compromises and served the interests of Israel, led to a sense of scepticism and fatigue with the notion of peace (see Said 1995). This dejection was further aggravated by the cycle of violence seen during the Second Intifada in 2000, which left many casualties. In the wake of this turbulence, there was a trend to take part in joint Israeli-Palestinian non-violent resistance movements, rather than structured dialogue encounters. People were fed up with peace and with 'conflict resolution' because the conflict-versus-peace dichotomy had for too long been used to fit into Israeli narratives that did not address structural inequality (De Jong 2011).

The various approaches mentioned so far are ideal types. In reality, projects have attempted to use elements from more than one approach, even though they all highlight a central problem all Israeli-Palestinian projects have to contend with, which is their approach to difference. Putting too much stress on difference can essentialise categories like Jewish and Palestinian. At the same time, we have seen that denying differences, or rather stressing affinity on the basis of commonalities, can serve to entrench difference. A Jewish Israeli, with the best of intentions, exclaiming a shared love of humous to their Palestinian acquaintance belittles the difference, which for the Palestinian means inequality, as something that can be bridged by shared tastes. That is, by belittling the difference the Jewish Israeli is belittling the experience of the Palestinian, and making it difficult to address inequality. By stressing superficial similarities and shared tastes, one actively perpetuates the status quo. By the same logic, expressions of

other social differences can also be seen as detracting from the goal of achieving Jewish-Palestinian equality; for example, Jewish and Palestinian women finding common ground about gender inequality can be seen as a potential distraction from the main cause.

One way to avoid the pitfalls of denying or exaggerating difference is to make the acceptance of difference itself a source of affinity, of common ground. This is the direction of newer inter-group approaches in Israel. For example, the 'narrative approach', which combines the strong emotive power of the interpersonal approaches through the sharing of personal narratives with the weight of the political approaches, as these personal stories weave within them the social and political realities of Israel-Palestine. In 2003 a collective of academics named PRIME (Peace Research Institute in the Middle East) created a textbook that incorporated both national historical narratives in the hope that it could be applied in schools throughout Israel. Each page of that textbook consists of three columns; one being a chronology of events from the Jewish perspective, one being a chronology of events from the Palestinian perspective, and an empty column in the middle for one's own interpretation. These approaches give space for the expression of potentially contradictory narratives to be expressed and understood, but do not present them as mutually exclusive. The Jewish Israelis listen to, and internalise, the experiences of the Palestinian Israelis without invalidating the aspects of history that are important to them, and vice versa. This approach extends beyond narratives to any potentially contradictory perspective or opinion. As we have seen above, conflicting narratives can even affect how one perceives fruit or plants.

It is important to contextualise all these dialogue efforts within the wider culture of communication in Israel. The search for 'authentic' dialogue draws on local beliefs of how best to participate in society (Katriel 2004). Using Erving Goffman's concept of 'face-work', linguistic anthropologist Tamar Katriel illustrates a key difference between the Jewish and Palestinian Israeli participation principles of *Dugri* and *Musayara*. As mentioned above, *Dugri* is essentially about contributing to society by best presenting one's own 'face', while *Musayara* is about showing deference to the 'face' of one's interlocutor (Katriel 1986: 72; 111). These principles that Katriel describes resonate with the elements of the ideal dialogue many of the

villagers in WASNS described to me. Dialogue, as many it was explained to me, is both about being honest and straight about one's opinions, and about knowing when and how to listen respectfully to the opinion of one's interlocutor. Successful dialogue does not imply unity – the villagers take pride in their ability to fiercely disagree. Many WASNS villagers explained to me that the point of doing dialogue is not to convince each other of their opinions, or convert each other to their point of view, but rather to be able to listen and understand different points of view and still live civilly and even amicably with each other. Put another way, the WASNS approach to dialogue can be described as agreeing to disagree (albeit if one has at least tried to understand the other point of view). Of great relevance here is Katriel's interpretation of Martin Buber's philosophy that "the dialogic quality of human encounters relates to the promise of interpersonal relationships and to the possibility of personal authenticity" (Katriel 2004: 13). This philosophy resonates with some of my villagers' reflections, two of whom even recommended Buber to me on hearing my research interests. Central to all ideas about dialogue I came across in WASNS is the idea of working on oneself so that one can really listen to the perspective of an 'other'.

The practice of choosing to agree to disagree, is not particular to Israel, and recent works on ethics across borders have termed this way of dealing with difference as a process of "incommensuration" (Mair & Evans 2015; Heywood 2015); a process that designates certain positions as incomparable, so that these kinds of differences are not meant to be 'resolved', but rather understood. As Mair and Evans point out "incommensuration" may be more useful than processes of affinity in some cases. In the context of Israel-Palestine, an approach that avoids stressing affinity can be a very useful way of avoiding the risk of normalisation. However, as the academics concerned with ethics across borders themselves note, more work needs to be done on the effect of power on the way people deal with difference (Mair & Evans 2015: 218). While incommensuration has the potential to circumvent hierarchical structures – by making all perspectives incomparable – the process can also be used by dominant groups to deny inequality by categorising people and perspectives as other and unknown (Humphrey 2012: 303). Agreeing to disagree, or giving equal weight to opposing standpoints, can only work if both sides have a voice, or as Lambek puts it "you cannot have dialogue if the subaltern cannot speak (or cannot be heard)" (Lambek 2015; 230). For this reason, to address differences in narrative, one must

first address the inequality that gives voice to one narrative over another – indeed one language over another. Therefore those in dialogue and peace movements try to create spaces where both Jewish and Palestinian cultures, narratives, and languages can be equally represented.

Conclusion: A Peace Village in Context

In this chapter we have seen several ways in which inequality manifests itself between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, and the tension that exists not only between these two communities but also between sub-divisions within them (e.g. Ashkenazi-Mizrahi). We have also seen that there have been several attempts to address intergroup tensions, and inequality, in Israel-Palestine over the last four decades or so. The chapter has introduced several kinds of approaches to Israel-Palestinian encounters, all of which contend with the notion of difference. How can one overcome differences and still leave space to tackle the topic of inequality? How does one highlight differences that need to be overcome without essentialising them in the process? Those involved in efforts to advance peace and equality will undoubtably think about such questions in their interactions beyond the institutions they work in. The question for this thesis then is, to what extent these explicit theories about the best way to talk through difference, to engage in dialogue, permeate everyday life?

The village of WASNS is a good site to explore such a question because its villagers have not only developed educational institutions to advance equal and peaceful interactions, they have also chosen to live in an intentionally shared Jewish-Palestinian community where these interactions are part of everyday life. The next chapter will explore the ways in which the theories and utopian aims of the village's institutions play out in minute everyday encounters in village life.

Chapter II: Ethical Life in an Intentional Community

Chapter I introduced the ways in which conflicting narratives and inequality pervade interactions between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, and asked to what extent explicit theories about dealing with these differences figured into everyday lives. To answer this question, it is analytically useful to view the village of WASNS as an intentional community — as many of the villagers actually do — because the literature on intentional communities addresses precisely this dynamic between the grand aims of social projects, and everyday social interaction. Like other intentional communities and communes, WASNS has two key characteristics: on one level, its villagers are committed to the utopian aims on which the community was founded, and on another level, they are engaged in an everyday endeavour to sustain relationships within the community. To illustrate this, the chapter will present ethnographic moments in which WASNS villagers drew on theories developed within the institutions in the village, consciously reflected on the political and moral implications of their actions, yet also acted with regard for their social relationships. The ethnographic data raises another question; do the social relationships serve the socio-political project, with every interaction treated as another way to enact a grand moral aim, or do they simply provide people with the motivation to continue caring about the project? A similar dynamic, between grand moral aims and everyday interactions, emerges from recent anthropological literature on morality and ethics. By mapping that literature on to this ethnographic setting, this chapter introduces the ways in which everyday interactions in the village are potential ethical sites for dealing with difference.

An Intentional Community

Intentional communities, sometimes referred to as communes, are usually defined as such if their members have chosen specifically to live in the same area for a communal purpose. This communal intention is to share particular economic resources and social relationships that the wider society of which they are part does not usually share (Kamau 2002: 17). The literature on intentional communities thus spans a wide range of projects from across the globe, which

differ in ideological focus; some are based on religious belief, some on the search for closer social and economic relationships, and others on a mix of socialism and nation-building.[18] On a basic definitional level then, WASNS is an intentional community because villagers are living together for a purpose and are trying to create a social world that is different to the wider society of which they are part; they are striving for peace and equality in a context of conflict and injustice. Many villagers themselves speak about the village as an 'intentional community', in fact it is defined as such on the WASNS website.[19] Despite the self-identification and the basic definitional match, WASNS is an outlier in comparison to other intentional communities as there are no clearly enforced rules concerning division of personal property and/or social relations, nor is shared religious belief a community concern (Rizek 2017: 14-15).

Seeing WASNS as an intentional community helps to explain important elements of day-to-day interaction. Firstly, there is a shared intention among the villagers to live together in a more equal and peaceful social world, and find the best ways to talk through difference, which prompts reflection on one's everyday interactions. Secondly, the villagers are part of a community in which they share a particular experience that is set apart from wider Israeli-Palestinian society, and they are thus invested in close relationships with each other. WASNS, like any intentional community, has certain practices in place to strengthen and sustain social relationships, but these relationships are also developed on their own accord in a day-to-day process of more or less successful interactions.

It is difficult to pin down one defining aim or intention of the village, as the ideas about how to achieve peace and equality differ within the village just as they do in the wider peace movement in Israel (as seen in chapter I). There are some utopian values that are widely shared; peace, equality, respect for difference, and belief in the productivity of dialogue (although definitions of dialogue differ). They are utopian because they aspire to an ideal social

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[18] One oft-studied kind of intentional communities which is close to WASNS, at least geographically, is the kibbutz; socialist communes that began when Jewish migrants began to make their home in Palestine in the 19th century and helped form the beginnings of an Israeli state. See, for example, Spiro (1956; 1958) or Evens 1995.

[19] "Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom (pronounced "waaḥat' as-salaam/nevei shalom") is Arabic and Hebrew for *Oasis of Peace*: an intentional community jointly established by Jewish and Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel." (WASNS website)

world, not that they feel they have reached that utopia or that they can impact on Israel-Palestine at large on their own. Utopian values are central to any intentional community or commune and, as Rosabeth Kanter (1973) has convincingly argued, these values echo many of the values in Plato's conception of utopia. Of particular importance for my analysis is the platonic value of self-knowledge, that is knowing one's role in the ideal society, and how this knowledge can lead to heightened ethical self-awareness in day-to-day interactions.

The value of self-knowledge in the village is expressed through a sense of being implicated in an unjust world and thus responsibility for acting to change that world. WASNS institutions, like the School for Peace (SFP), foster this sense of responsibility in participants by encouraging them to reflect on the effects that being Jewish or Palestinian has had on their life choices, and opportunities, as well as their preconceptions about Palestinians and Jews. Acknowledging that group identity is such a formative part of one's character is the first step in realising that one's personal life is not, and cannot be, seen as separated from the conflict. A central premise of the work of the primary school and School for Peace (SFP) is that group identities cannot and should not be suppressed, but they can be channeled in positive and productive ways. As Grace Feuerverger writes of the primary school: "its mission is to create national identities informed by moral vision and social ethics in order to provide an understanding of what it means to become active and critical citizens in a diverse, pluralistic Israeli society." (Feuerverger 2001: 54). Self-knowledge in WASNS is understanding the role one plays in Israel-Palestine because of one's group identity and accepting the moral responsibility that comes with that role.

The concern to recognise differing group identities is linked to a frequent criticism of simply stressing 'common humanity' as a conflict resolution tool: avoiding difference can 'normalise' inequality and entrench tension between groups (as we saw in Chapter I). The SFP approach is built on the premise that fostering an awareness of group identity allows participants to really address the tensions and inequalities that underlie their relationships with others in Israel-Palestine. This approach, SFP staff would argue, is key to creating enduring positive outcomes for the participants of encounter or education projects. Participants are

encouraged to extrapolate positive social relations they formed with a member of the 'other' national group as indicative of that group as a whole. The aim is to avoid participants failing to change negative assumptions held about Jewish or Palestinian Israelis because they see their new-found acquaintances as exceptions to the rule.

WASNS is unusual as an intentional community in its degree of outward focus. Typically, intentional communities seek to achieve their utopian aims through insularity. Terence Evans argues that it is communes' tendency to seclude themselves from wider society that differentiates them from social movements, which in contrast "constitute collective endeavours to resist, dislodge, and creatively supplant domination, capitalism, and the State as we know it." (Evens 2015). WASNS's villagers participate in a wider social movement and the work of its three educational institutions is designed to involve, and benefit, Jews and Palestinians from outside of the community. To some degree, 'self-knowledge' for villagers means the same as it does for the participants in their encounters; that is, they encourage each other to think about the role they personally play in Israel-Palestine and the responsibility that entails.

Though the villagers and their institutions are more outward-looking than in many intentional communities, there is still a great deal of emphasis on the internal relationships of everyday life within the community. Successfully dealing with difference locally provides a working proof of the utopian aims for wider society. For example, the key WASNS value of 'dialogue' applies to a method and strategy both for changing wider society for the better, and living well in the community day-to-day. Dialogue as a value in this case asserts that talking through differences is the best way to deal with Israeli-Palestinian relations even in the most extreme situations. During the height of Israel's war with Gaza in summer 2014 one villager passionately described why she felt the two sides had to talk rather than resort to violence: "there is no such thing that one cannot talk through; me, I would talk with the devil if it was for my children, I would talk to anyone that comes to me if I knew it would prevent killing". Dialogue is seen as an ideal way to engage with others, which involves honestly presenting oneself and one's point of view as well as listening and understanding others. The villagers

regularly hold round-table-style discussions that provide a space for them to engage in this kind of dialogue, especially during periods of heightened tension. During the Israel-Gazan war of 2014, for example, the villagers met to discuss a painful current situation, to share their emotional reactions to it, and to find empathy and understanding among people they knew well.

No matter how strong individual convictions are to a common cause, intentional communities are only sustained as long as there is a *community*, by which I mean a network of social relationships. As Rosabeth Kanter notes in her work on intentional communities, "communal life depends on a continual flow of energy and support among members, on their depth of shared relationships, and on their continued attachment to each other and to the joint endeavour" (Kanter 1972: 65). Intentional communities often have certain practices in place to ensure people remain committed to the utopian aim of the community as well as the social relationships that comprise it, which Kanter (1972) has described these practices as, "commitment mechanisms." Many of the mechanisms Kanter suggests — like investment of property or labour, or of engaging in confessions — are practiced in intentional communities where social relationships are built around a new way of dividing labour and property or around religious belief. In WASNS the project is the social relationships themselves.

Round-table-style discussions in WASNS are a mechanism for maintaining social relationships because they provide a space where people can show each other support as well as showing each other they are still committed to the shared cause. As we will see in chapter VI, friendships, and activities that sustained them, kept villagers engaged in the cause of the village even if they had tired of the approaches taken by its institutions. Many intentional communities have established mechanisms like meetings not only to sustain connections, like the WASNS meetings do, but to handle potential rifts.[20] While there was no prescribed process for dealing with interpersonal issues in WASNS, as there are in other intentional communities, there is a general approach to dealing with others. I found my interlocutors placed a high value on being able to discuss differences in any circumstance. In theory everything from small disagreements to personal theories about how the Israeli-Palestinian political situation could be solved through

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[20] Such as the 'mutual criticism' practices at Oneida (see, for example, Nordhoff 1965 [1875]) or group meetings in urban communes (Brown & Brown 1973).

dialogue. Even the most the most banal, everyday disagreements are potential sites for putting into practice the ideal of listening to, and internalising, a different opinion. This attitude of course could not be taken in every disagreement; not all rifts that arose throughout the years have been fully healed, and I witnessed several heated arguments in my time there.[21] As I will show throughout the thesis, an imperfect record of living these values was not all that important. What was important was the value placed on one's own responsibility to embrace difference in any given interaction, because this led to a heightened awareness that made any interaction a potential site for conscious reflection on the right way to behave.

It has been suggested that focusing on commitment mechanisms gives a rather static view of social life when, in reality, communities can come together or fall-apart for numerous and complex reasons that cannot be explained by the issue-and-redress logic of mechanisms (Andelson 2002). Viewing the establishment of commitment as a process (as Andelson suggests) is useful because it shows the constant labour involved in sustaining relationships. Many of the close relationships between villagers were fostered in the earlier years of the village. Before proper buildings were built and any connections were made to state infrastructures (e.g the electricity grid and public roads) the first families to make WASNS their home were very reliant on each other. Much of the familiarity between the first generation and the second, and the closeness of the second generation amongst themselves, was formed at the village primary school (as mentioned in the introduction). This shared history and experience of living in a small close-knit community had resulted in almost familial levels of intimacy I encountered among villagers. Unlike some utopian communities, the villagers were not aiming to redefine the notion of family, in fact a great emphasis was placed on the importance of nuclear family, but these kin-like relationships developed nonetheless.[22] The intimacy established and developed between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis in WASNS is an almost constant practice. Just as the bond between members of a community can be better viewed as a process rather than a series of incidences and redresses, friendships are constantly open for

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[21] This has been well documented by narrative interviews conducted by Israeli psychologist Amia Lieblich (2012) and referred to in Rayek Rizek's (2017) book.

[22] An interesting contrasting example from the same region as WASNS is the Israeli kibbutz model, which in the early years housed parents and children separately (Talmon 1973: Spiro 1958: Rabin 1965).

definition. Every encounter can (re)define the way in which people relate to one another, or should be relating one another.

The villagers have developed theories and practices designed to present Jewish and Palestinian Israelis with moral dilemmas that lead them to reflect on how they have been dealing with difference, and feel a sense of responsibility for tackling inequality. The way in which round-table discussions were conducted, for example, had been developed within the SFP, but the villagers adopted these practices for use within the village in order to address moral dilemmas affecting their own social relationships within the village. However, social relationships have their own dynamics and close relationships form regardless of any specific mechanisms designed to sustain them. Relationships are not sustained by having structured practices in place every time there is a potential rift, or even by having a set of theories to consciously draw on in every interaction. That is, relationships develop organically regardless of round-table discussions. It has been useful to look at WASNS as an intentional community because it shows how everyday interactions are shaped by the explicit theories developed under a grand aim and set of institutions and their practices, but the conviction to act in the right way in interactions is part of an ongoing process of social relations. Just because commitment to social relations feeds into the very purpose, or intention, that defines the community does not mean that commitment to social relationships can be explained by explicit theories and ideology. Social relationships are a process, in which every interaction could add or detract.

The literature on intentional communities draws out two important aspects underlying participation in utopian endeavours like WASNS. Firstly, a cultivation of self-knowledge – self-awareness about one's place in, and responsibility to, society – and secondly, displays of commitment to the social relationships that underpin the community. As has already been established, villagers in WASNS believe in talking through differences; indeed doing so is widely regarded as process of personal development' (or 'personal enrichment', to borrow the words of the village founder Bruno Hussar). When I asked several members of the first generation to define 'dialogue' several answered that in order to be in dialogue with another person one had to "first be in dialogue with oneself". The same people who gave me this answer

also framed their decades of life in WASNS as a learning process of how to listen to others. To bring forward the change in society one wants to see, one must start with oneself. Villager Rayek Rizek's (2017) book perfectly illustrates this process of realisation, by describing how his experience of life in the village led him to shift from wanting to convince others to realising that being able to listen to and internalise what others had to say is a more effective form of dialogue. Crucially, Rizek's conclusion comes not just from what he learned from taking part in the village's institutions, it came from the experience of living as part of a community.

In such a context, every casual conversation can be a chance to learn, and to reflect upon one's commitment to both the values of the community and one's friendships. This could occur, for example, when considering the use of a particular word within a casual conversation between two villagers (one Palestinian, one Jewish). In just that kind of context, just before a party at the spiritual centre, two villagers were talking to me in Hebrew about a project they were working on to honour people across the world, and across history, who have acted courageously to rescue others from genocide or ethnic cleansing. As the two villagers were explaining the project to me, the Jewish villager used the Hebrew word *Tzadikim* (righteous) to refer to these rescuers. It was a term that made sense in this context because the Israeli Holocaust museum uses it to refer to those who saved Jews from the holocaust. However, the Palestinian villager, waiting for her Jewish friend to finish, explained that perhaps it would be better to find a different word to describe these rescuers because the word *Tzadikim* also had religious nationalist connotations; it was used to refer to early zionist pioneers. The Jewish villager, having not thought about this connotation before, but recognising it as soon as his Palestinian friend drew attention to it, immediately started to roll off a few alternative words they could use, because he wanted the project to be inclusive. I encountered hundreds of such moments in the village, when a comment from a colleague – or a person's own sudden realisation – about the socio-political connotation of words and actions could result in acts of self-correction and reflection. While numerous, these moments were also fleeting, so to fully explore the use of self-reflection in villager's interactions, this chapter will now turn to a more elongated example. As we have seen above, villagers hold regular events and discussions throughout the year, precisely so that they can address socio-political issues. One of the most

important and emotionally-charged events of this kind takes place every year to commemorate the Nakba.

Commemorating the Nakba

As we have already seen in Chapter I, one potential way in which conflicting narratives arise in the everyday life of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis is through the many politically-charged days in the Israeli-Palestinian calendar. Jewish and Palestinian Israelis do not only observe annual memorial days, but also particular anniversaries of historical events, or deaths of individuals, that gain extra meaning on particular years. For instance, June 10th 2017 marked 50 years since the end of the Six-Day war and the beginning of Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank; the villagers held a day-long public event about the need to end the occupation. Even for those well-versed in the history of Israel-Palestine, who are aware of the important days for both groups, it takes some effort to keep track of all these significant dates when planning any given week, especially when one is dealing with both Jewish and Gregorian calendars.

For those uninitiated in this tricky combination of calendars, there are many potential embarrassing situations. When a small group of European volunteers innocently attempted to arrange a leaving party for the end of one week in May 2014 and invited several villagers – none of whom happened to think about what precise date would fall at the end of the week – they were mortified when one of the invitees gently explained the significance of the date they had chosen, May 15th. May 15th marks the anniversary of the declaration of Israel's independence according to the Gregorian calendar. It is on this day every year that Palestinians commemorate *Yom al-Nakba* (Nakba Day) because Israel's independence marked the culmination of a great loss for the Palestinians and the start of their struggle for self-determination. Jewish Israelis, however, celebrate the anniversary of their independence on *Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Independence Day), but they do so according to the Jewish calendar. Thus, one historical event not only has two interpretations and two different national events that embody those interpretations; such events do not even fall on the same day. Although the volunteers were aware that the Nakba and Israeli Independence are two sides of the same coin, a country-

wide celebration of *Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Independence Day) had just taken place on May 6th that year and so they might have reasonably assumed that both events had already passed, not thinking that two different calendars are in operation.

Every *Yom al-Nakba* a number of villagers hold a day of events designed to further educate themselves about the events of 1948 — although many of them have great knowledge on this subject already — and to engage in a process of "living with the conflict" by discussing these events together. As part of the commemoration events in 2014, I joined a group of twenty Jewish and Palestinian Israeli villagers and four European volunteers for a series of activities, beginning with a tour of *al-Lud/Lod* (Lydda). Today the Israeli city of Lod has a mixed Jewish-Palestinian population but, before the events of 1948, it was the prominent Palestinian city of al-Lydd. Much of the Palestinian population of al-Lydd/Lod was expelled or killed in 1948, leaving the Palestinians as a minority in the city. The tour was led by a villager who works for the organisation Zochrot, an NGO that collects testimonies in order to put together histories of Palestinian towns and villages, many of which were destroyed in 1948 or later in 1967 during the Six-Day War, known as the Naksa (meaning 'the set-back') by Palestinians.

The tour of al-Lydd/Lod was heavy with emotion for all present. On a basic level the tour was emotionally charged because of the nature of the events we were being told about; events that were harrowing to any listener, regardless of connection to Israel-Palestine. One of the stops we made on the tour was at Dahmash mosque, where the guide described a massacre that had taken place there in 1948. The emotional atmosphere of the tour was compounded by people's personal connection to the city. Several of the Palestinian WASNSers on the tour had originally been from al-Lydd/Lod and their parents had lived through the events of 1948 so, as we walked through al-Lydd/Lod, they would add to our guide's narrative with their own knowledge, and stories their parents had told them about the loss of friends, family members and homes.

After we returned to the village, roughly the same group who attended the tour sat in a broken circle in the village library to watch the videotaped testimonies of two Jewish Israelis who had been serving in the Palmach — a proto-military precursor to Israel's Army — in Lydda

at the time of the mosque massacre.[23] One of the interviewees was actively involved in the massacre and coldly delivered the facts of the event seemingly without remorse, while the other interviewee, a holocaust survivor who was not directly involved in the massacre but was stationed at Lydda at the time, spoke about the events surrounding the massacre with visible horror.

The videos left a silence in the room for some moments before everyone shifted their chairs a little closer to form a tighter circle for a post-video discussion. Breaking the silence, Nazem, a Palestinian villager, suggested that we would take turns around the circle and each person could decide to share a reflection or not; almost all the villagers present shared an opinion, while the volunteers and I did not. At first many of the reactions were of shock, particularly at the coldly-delivered testimony of the soldier who participated in the massacre. There was consideration also for the importance of publicising testimonies such as these because there tends to be a culture of silence among palmachniks, and among those who have served in the Israeli Army since. One Jewish villager, known to be an activist and very left-leaning, said she had never seen something like these videos before, and Nazem interjected, jokingly stating *he* was was surprised that she had not come across it before.

A recurring theme in the discussion was the need to act, and feelings of responsibility. Many of the Jewish Israelis voiced a sense of guilt that such an act could have been done 'in their name' as Jewish Israelis. Pnina, a Jewish Israeli women, who had lived in the village for decades and had been involved with the School for Peace, drew attention to this point that her fellow villagers were making and asked what can be done with this guilt and sense of responsibility. What use is that strong feeling of guilt, she argued, if the feeling could not be channeled into action to improve the situation in Israel-Palestine. To conclude the discussion, Ghanem — the Palestinian villager that showed the videos, and who also used to be involved in the SFP for a number of years — suggested that perhaps the village should consider how to use the weight of their position to counter the silence on such issues.

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[23] The interviews had been collected in 2012, as part of the exhibit "Towards a Common Archive Video Testimonies of Zionists Fighters in 1948", curated by Eyal Sivan, Ilan Pappe, and Debby Farber. The two videos, and others collected as part of the same projects, can be found among other testimonies on the website of NGO Zochrot: http://zochrot.org/en/testimony/all

Although the Nakba is commemorated just once a year, the activities arranged specifically for that day were not out-of-the-ordinary in themselves. Throughout a year in WASNS there are several events that take as their focus difficult political, social and historical topics. Some events were planned far in advance – to coincide with the launch of a book or documentary by one of the villagers – and other events were impromptu, to address unexpected and unsettling events – such as the Israeli-Gazan conflict in the summer of 2014. These events all featured a round-table-style discussion, like the one that followed the testimony videos at the Nakba commemoration, and are part of an approach that effectively turns every element of the conflict into a subject for conscious reflection and discussion, in a structured environment. This approach is adopted and developed by the village's institutions; the School for Peace, primary school and Pluralistic Spiritual Centre. Grave Feuerverger, in her 2001 study of the village's educational institutions, argues that the village's institutions foster a sense of 'moral responsibility' within participants and staff precisely because of the constant dilemmas arising from engagement with diverse opinions, narratives, languages and cultures.[24] In such a context, one is more likely to consciously reflect upon the ways one deals with difference, and judge whether the right approach was taken.

It is clear to see from the round-table-style discussion described above – that the villagers directly address narratives and inequality that arise from conflict – but it is less obvious how they are explicitly referencing theories on how to approach those issues. We can trace their theoretical allusions and influences when viewing their statements in relation to the literature of the village institutions, particularly the School for Peace (SFP). Pnina and Ghanem's appeals to the assembled group — to take responsibility and act upon their insights and privileges — evoke the explicit theories and working practices of the SFP, of which both had great knowledge. In SFP encounter programmes, participants are made aware of their group identity (as Jewish Israelis, Palestinian Israelis, or Palestinians) and shown how that group identity has affected the way in which they have experienced and perceived the world. The aim

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[24] One illustration Feuerverger gives of this dilemma is a Palestinian Israeli pupil's explanation of the conflicting emotions she had during the Gulf War, in which she felt solidarity for the Iraqis; sympathy for the fear her Jewish Israeli classmates felt during the war; awareness for the Arab world's own internal divisions; and torn when her Palestinian friends from home (she was not from WASNS) were angry at her for having Jewish friends. (Feuerverger 2001: 30)

is to make participants able to listen to and understand the "other" (Halabi 2004; Halabi & Sonnenschein 2004), the "other" here being people of a different group identity. This notion of reaching an understanding with the "other" also arose in explanations village members gave me when I asked them what they thought dialogue meant. In these explanations the "other" could be anyone that is being engaged with in dialogue; the "other" is the one that needs to be understood. In order to begin successful conversations one must acknowledge that the "other" has a completely different and essentially incomparable experience and perspective to you. In the process of understanding the "other" these differences can become commensurable. One villager described this process to me as a spectrum in which both people engaged in dialogue eventually meet in the middle as they have both undergone a change in perspective.

SFP participants are inculcated with a sense of responsibility both for the part they – as members of a majority or minority group – play in a context of inequality, and to challenge the emotions and assumptions they hold as members of their ethno-national group. This is what Pnina and Ghanem were doing; Pnina, by calling upon fellow Jewish Israelis to see their strong feelings of guilt as a sense of responsibility and to act upon that feeling to positively affect the socio-political landscape at large; and Ghanem, by suggesting they should all make use of the privilege provided by being part of a collective village that has a voice. The villagers' actions appear natural and spontaneous, and to an extent they are, but they are also the product of, and are entwined with, an academic conversation on bridging differences (as discussed in Chapter I).

The process of self-awareness leading to a sense of personal responsibility, as it occurs in the SFP model, takes a different general path for Jewish and Palestinian Israelis. Jewish Israelis are made aware of their privileged position in Israeli society, as the majority group in an unequal context. This awareness is uncomfortable and can contradict two strongly held feelings connected with Jewish Israeli identification: first, an existential threat felt by Jewish people that draws on the Holocaust and history of persecution in the diaspora; and second, a challenge to Jewish Israeli notions of the moral character of their identity. These two feelings are part of a group of interrelated fears, or anxieties, that SFP staff have identified as recurrent among Jewish

Israeli participants in encounters (Sonnenschein, Bekerman & Horenczyk 2010).[25] Acknowledging and deconstructing these fears, and the sense of victimhood that comes with some of them, is essential to the 'evolved' identity, in which one's identification with a group results in a sense of personal responsibility. SFP's method also draws on Paolo Freire's (2015 [1970]) 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' (often featured in reading lists of SFP courses), which posits that combatting inequality begins with the awareness and empowerment of the oppressed group. So, for Palestinians too there needs to be a movement away from a sense of victimhood, because victimhood is seen as an obstacle to accepting one's responsibility to effect change. For both Jewish and Palestinians, victimhood prevents self-reflection and ability to empathise because it is focused on a feeling of suffering and a lack of agency.

These theories describing a need for responsibility and aversion to victimhood also arise in interactions that were not structured specifically to deal with difference, because political topics can evade any social interaction, even hang-outs at the volunteers house. For example, on one evening months before May, the regular attendees of volunteer-house hang-outs — the four European volunteers who lived in the house at the time and a group of 20-somethings from the second generation, all Palestinian on this occasion — were joined by a non-villager, a cousin of one of the villagers. The evening was usual enough. We all sat around a table on make-shift furniture and plastic chairs; snacks were shared; music was playing out of a wireless mini speaker someone had connected their phone to; and people joked and chatted about music, TV, village gossip, and experiences in Europe (as some of the second generation had studied or visited the countries that volunteers had come from). There was a brief break in the evening as some of the second generation, joined by two of the volunteers, went to pick up more drinks and snacks from a nearby petrol station (the closest thing the villagers have to a local off-license) and resumed in the early hours. It was at the later point of the evening (after the trip to get more supplies) that the visiting cousin, who had been relatively quiet for most of the evening, began to talk politics. He spoke about the racism he experienced in cities like Tel Aviv, and railed against injustice in Israel-Palestine in general. The discussion soon became

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[25] The other fears being threats posed by Palestinians in Israel — drawing on memories of terrorist attacks — and the sense that there would be an existential threat to Jews if Israel was not a Jewish hegemony.

heated for several reasons, including old rivalries I only found out about later, and that the frustration Palestinians from WASNS felt at being lectured to about experiences they knew too well themselves. As the argument came to a head, one Palestinian villager summarily expressed expressed his, and others', frustration with the conversation; principally the problem was that the visiting Palestinian's complaints focused only on the faults of Jewish Israelis and not on actions he and other Palestinians can take to change the situation. The obvious reluctance to engage with the visiting Palestinian's complaints was not due to an aversion to speaking about socio-political issues. Indeed on the same evening one of the Palestinian villagers brought up political topics himself, but in contrast to the visitor's complaints, he referred to specific policies that had been tabled by the government that week, and what their effects would be, rather than making general sweeping statements. The point that the WASNS villagers were making was that there was no point going over all the socio-political problems, of which they were all aware, if neither analysis nor suggested solutions were raised. Several of the second generation friends present that evening had at least one parent involved in the SFP, and it felt at the time that the position being taken by the friends that evening was inspired by the theories their parents had developed about responsibility and victimhood.

While the Nakba commemoration events drew upon the same structures and theories as encounter sessions run by the School for Peace, there is a crucial difference in the nature of the participants. Events run by the SFP, or any of the village's institutions, are aimed at Jewish and Palestinian Israelis who do not typically know each other before they attend – some Jewish Israelis may have never even interacted with Palestinian Israelis before, and vice versa. By contrast, the discussions about political and historical events in the village are attended mostly by villagers who have pre-existing social relationships. Villagers get involved in events like those commemorating the Nakba for similar reasons that draw people to take part in SFP projects; that is, they want to enrich their knowledge on an issue and are motivated by a socio-political cause that designates such activities as good ethical practice. Yet, villagers also take part in, and co-run, events because they are driven by a commitment to social relationships. When villagers listen to their neighbours recounting what happened to their family during the Nakba, they are not just practising an open-mindedness about different narratives; they are

empathising with people they know very well and have close friendships with. The commemorative events on *Yom al-Nakba* were deeply emotional precisely because all involved reflected upon and communicated their sense of connection to the events that took place in 1948. One purpose of the round-table-style discussion at the end of the day was to collectively process feelings and impressions within a group of people who understand each other, or at least know each other well enough to try to understand. A similar series of sharing circles would took place only months later as villagers found solace in each other's company during Israel's war with Gaza. It is this atmosphere of close acquaintance that also allows for moments of humour; Nazem's joke – about being surprised his left-leaning Jewish Israeli friend was surprised by the video testimonies – hinged on the premise that he knew the Jewish Israeli woman enough to find her statement surprising, and we will explore the use of humour in friendships across difference in chapter VII.

This chapter began with the claim that villagers draw on explicit theories about dealing with difference to a great extent in their everyday lives. They have reason to do so because they actively participate in events that require reflection on how they deal with different opinions and identities. The Nakba commemorative events are just one example of villagers confronting difficult topics about Israel-Palestine head-on, and, as the rest of this thesis will show, such difficult conversations arise even when they were not specifically intended. The theories that villagers draw on have been developed communally by them in the institutions of the village. These institutions value self-awareness and personal responsibility, providing a moral framework to judge behaviour. While villagers are clearly motivated by the socio-political cause that underpins these institutions, and the village itself, they are also motivated by commitment to social relationships.

From 'Moral Education' to Everyday Ethics of Difference

In her study of the educational projects at WASNS, Feuerverger defines the village as a "community of moral education" because it places Jewish and Palestinian Israelis together in a space in which conversations across differences must occur, and difficult political and social topics cannot be avoided. This chapter has set out two ways in which the nature of an

intentional community can affect everyday interactions. Firstly the explicit discussion of values – such as self-knowledge and responsibility – that are developed in the institutions of the intentional community – and the wider social movement of which it is part – are drawn upon and mentioned in non-institutional and informal conversations. Secondly, an intentional community is also a site of social relations like any other kind of community, by which I mean people's everyday interactions are about more than the utopian ideals laid out in more formal village structures; conversations among friends and neighbours are about far more than politics. The village is not only a site for social and educational projects, it is also a community in which a group of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis (two groups that do not usually interact in Israel) live together and socialise in more banal day-to-day encounters. How can one best analyse the connection between what Feuerverger described as the "community of moral education" – highly aware of the big political picture – and day-to-day interactions between the friends, family and colleagues?

One way to approach this question is to draw on the useful analytical distinction some anthropologists have made between moral systems and other kinds of ethics (Laidlaw 2002; Keane 2015). This distinction draws on that of moral philosopher Bernard Williams, in which a moral system is a set of values and obligations that everyone must adhere to, regardless of social context while ethics are eminently social. It is useful to consider the institutions and explicit moral theories of WASNS as part of a moral system; the wider social movement that has clear practices (e.g. facilitated workshops, rallies, round-table discussions), and shared symbols (people can connect a sarcastic reference to sharing humous and link it to the concern about normalisation). It is a unique system that makes people more likely to reflect on ethical life in the day-to-day. As already explained, engaging in dialogue, what I have called 'talking through difference', is a highly valued activity. One can improve oneself by striving to listen to people with different opinions, narratives, languages, nationalities. This process requires a great deal of self-awareness, interactions require reflection and analysis, even during as the interaction takes place.

Much like the awareness-raising projects Keane has described (Keane 2015: 157-159; Keane 2017: 188), involvement in WASNS activities leads participants to reframe moments of their life in terms of ethics; they are encouraged to think about their own personal responsibility to have acted in a certain way or have been aware of a certain issue. Many of the round-table style discussions at WASNS were held much like School for Peace encounters; they fostered a sense of personal responsibility by encouraging participants to reflect on the origins of their perspectives, and the role they play in Israel-Palestine because of their "group identity" (as Jewish or Palestinian). This can be seen in Pnina's appeal to her fellow Jewish villagers to think about how their actions can be used to change the socio-political landscape they felt so implicated in; the sense of implication that had been expressed in terms of guilt about the actions of the Palmach during the Nakba. I often detected this self-reflection and sense of personal responsibility among the villagers, both in answers like "to engage in dialogue with the other you first need to be in dialogue with yourself" and in the narratives of personal change that villagers shared with me.

The moral system — based on values such as self-knowledge and responsibility — I have just described, paints a picture in which an individual makes conscious moral decisions regardless of context, because the focus is always oneself. Every interaction at WASNS can be an opportunity for talking through differences and engaging in the valued moral activity of dialogue. Yet, not all differences are the same, and one is not always inclined to talk through them in the same way, because this depends on the relationship with one's interlocutor. For example, several villagers reflected that they was more likely to be impatient and argumentative with those closer to them, and I observed this a few times. The ethics of interactions are thus eminently social because one's judgements, or the weight one gives to those judgments, depend upon one's relation to one's interlocutor.

We have seen how displays of commitment are essential to the continued relationships in intentional communities like WASNS, as too are processes that aim to strengthen such commitment. This commitment is not just established over structured mechanisms but is a continual process. While the literature on intentional communities provides useful tools to

analyse mechanisms, it is not useful for making sense of the day-to-day process of commitment to relationships. To address this analytical gap, the emphasis on commitment in the literature on communes and intentional communities works well with reference to the concept of commitment in recent anthropological approaches to ethics. As Lambek argues, ethical life is not only about the choices and judgments one is free to make, but also "sustaining commitment to a specific direction" (Lambek 2010: 55). Building on the insights of Speech Act theory, Lambek has shown how conversations require acts of commitment, either to being understood or to keeping to various rules that apply to to different ways of speaking (*ibid.*: 48). This cooperation can be seen as ethical because it is about sharing a social reality with others and showing commitment to a cause. When villagers at WASNS take part in round-table-style discussions like the one at the Nakba commemoration, they may be committing to the aim of the village by productively engaging with difficult socio-political issues, but they are also committing to the rules of speaking in such discussions and the shared social lives in which those rules have been established. Such commitment takes place in many more banal exchanges as well.

Several recent works on the ethics of everyday interactions have interestingly built on Goffman's interaction ritual model to explore the kinds of moral commitment displayed and enacted in interactions. In Goffman's model, interactions involve a commitment to 'face', not only one's own – have I presented myself as committed to a cause, have I embarrassed myself – but also one's interlocutor – have I caused the other embarrassment, have I understood the other person, and have I shown the other person I understood. There are also cognitive factors at play; conversations involve reading others but also being aware that others read us. This possible because we are predisposed to higher-order intentionality (Carrithers 1992: 59), and conversations are cooperative because we are psychologically predisposed to intersubjectively aligning our stance to interlocutors (Keane 2017: 154). Returning to the discussions in the Nakba commemorations, people's contributions can be seen as displaying to other villagers that they care about the shared socio-political project, but the degree of concern for what the other villagers think of them depends on their social relationships. Indeed, drawing attention to pre-existing relationships, and the knowledge they therefore had about each other, played a part in

Nazem's teasing of the left-wing activist for her surprise at video testimonies. There was also an affective element at play, as villagers were providing each other with an open-minded and understanding audience to share emotional responses.

Critiques of the argument that all interactions have a moral quality warn that by finding morality in every interaction, one debases the concept of morality. The same critique is levelled at everyday ethicists who see ethics in every interaction (see for example Lempert 2013: 377). However, recent approaches to ethics have shown how everyday interactions are afforded ethical potentiality because people draw on explicit moral systems, norms of interaction, psychological underpinnings, and affective aspects of social relationships. As Keane (2015; 2017) has persuasively argued, one draws on a complex of affordances when making ethical judgements within interactions; these affordances cover not just the social codes of a moral system, or norms of interaction given the relationships established between those interactions, but also psychological underpinnings of interactions, such as theory of mind. The theories of the institutions are just one possible affordance. Another affordance, that is revealed when applying literature on intentional communities to behaviour at WASNS, is commitment to personal relationships.

The next three chapters will look at the more politically-driven approaches to everyday language use: in meetings held with the wider social movement (Chapter III); in translation practices aimed at addressing language asymmetry (Chapter IV); and in endeavours to create bilingual villagers and spaces (Chapter V). Then, consideration will be given to ways in which commitment to personal relationships are drawn upon in linguistic decisions: to play with code-switching and phatic communication (Chapter V); to communicate without words (chapter VI); and to make dark jokes (Chapter VII).

Chapter III: From Dialogue to Action

'From Dialogue to Action', encapsulates three ethnographic details that this chapter will use to explore, and explain, the drivers for sustained participation in a peace movement. Firstly, it describes the ethnographic case that this chapter will examine: a series of meetings (being the 'dialogue') between proponents of *HaSmol* and a rally (being the 'action') that partly resulted from these meetings. Secondly, the title refers to the distinctions people in this context made between talk and action – as well as the kind of talk or dialogue that leads to action and the kind of talk that is seen as talk for talk's sake (and indeed the kind of action that is seen as action for action's sake) – and the ethical claims involved in these distinctions. Thirdly, one can find a slightly similar phrase, "From Awareness to Action", on the home page of the School for Peace (The School for Peace n.d.). The phrase succinctly represents the central process of SFP courses; that a series of encounters foster an awareness, both of the socio-political landscape and of one's role within it, which in turn instills a sense of responsibility within participants to take on some kind of action to positively affect that landscape.

The influence of a socio-political cause, and its corresponding theories and practices, on its proponents is most evident when commitment to that cause is tested. For a movement that aims to advance peace and equality between Jews and Palestinians, the greatest test is faced when conflict is most heated. During the Israeli-Gazan war of 2014, I witnessed expressions of dejection and horror among left-leaning Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, as many doubted whether their efforts to combat conflict and racism had any meaning. In response to these feelings within *HaSmol* a group of villagers and activists arranged and attended a series of meetings with the aim of deciding and planning joint actions, and finding a way to end the occupation. This chapter explores how people sustained, and re-energised commitment to their cause by drawing on three values in micro-social moments within these meetings: first, the value of productive talk that leads to action, or that can be taken as action itself; second, the value of expressing and accommodating difference; and third, the value of addressing a mainstream wider public.

Strategic Meetings

On June 13th 2014, news broke out across Israel that the evening before three Jewish Israeli teenagers had been kidnapped in the West Bank. At first I did not hear many mentions of the story in day-to-day conversations in the village, apart from allusions to 'the news' in sombre tones and little elaboration. There was a tense atmosphere as anyone with experience of such news stories in Israel knew the potentially disastrous consequences they bode – in this case, it eventually led to another Gazan-Israeli war. In a matter of days, the repercussions of the kidnapping had played into the lives and livelihoods of the villagers. The village had to cancel a summer camp that would have hosted Palestinian children because none of the children's guardians were given permits and all entrance to Israel from Hebron (where the children were from) was suspended. Meanwhile, there was a rise in racist attacks on Palestinian citizens of Israel (and anyone else that looked 'Arab') that affected the lives of my Palestinian Israeli interlocutors and their families and friends beyond the village. In a matter of weeks these events had seemingly undone all the incremental positive social and political achievements these people had worked day-in day-out to achieve. There was a powerful atmosphere of dejection and frustration. As tensions rose in early June, the director of the School for Peace (SFP) decided to initiate a series of monthly meetings at the village to bring together the left-wing community to strategise a concrete solution to the whole Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As meetings continued, this aim was refined into ending the Occupation as this was seen as the heart of the issue.[26] This was later rephrased as "freeing ourselves from the Occupation" on the suggestion of a Palestinian Israeli villager who argued that that phrase was more inclusive.

The strategic meetings took place in the village library. The library often plays host to discussions, meetings, lectures, and film-screenings, all of which loosely follow the facilitation methods developed at and by the SFP. Often these meetings, just like in SFP dialogue workshops, had two co-facilitators, one Jewish Israeli and one Palestinian Israeli, who steered

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[26] As already discussed in Chapter I, the Occupation (*HaKibush* in Hebrew) primarily refers to Israeli military control of areas in the West Bank, but it can also refer to the Israeli blockade of Gaza, and, even more broadly, the treatment of Palestinians and their property within and beyond the Israeli state. I am not certain that everyone was operating with the same understanding of the Occupation, which perhaps contributed to the ease in which it was universally decided that participants of these meetings were against it.

conversation by interjecting when conversation was getting off-track or by highlighting particular reoccurring points and attitudes in the discussion. Many of the participants in these kinds of library events were either village members, graduates of SFP programmes, or both, and were familiar with particular SFP practices, such as leaving a gap after someone speaks in order to allow for translation if translation is needed (see Chapter IV).

On the evening of the first strategic meeting, about twenty-five attendees gathered on the ground floor of the village library. Seats had been arranged in a large circle just as they would be in future strategic meetings, following the style for meetings and discussions in the village. A table with pastries and fruit had been set up at the centre of the circle and a small kitchenette to the side of the main library hall had been stocked with all the necessary equipment and ingredients for people to prepare their own coffee and tea. As the meeting's participants began to arrive they formed clusters of acquaintances, catching up and making small talk, and helped themselves to refreshments. The meeting was supposed to start at eight but time ticked on; meetings hardly ever start on time in Israel. The late start on that particular evening was due in part to the unavoidable delay of Ghassan, the head of a Palestinian NGO, whose journey from Ramallah was more arduous than usual, due to heightened security at checkpoints in response to recent events. When Ghassan finally arrived, most people had already taken their seats and he made a point of making his way round the circle introducing himself to each person individually and shaking their hand. It was a gesture that stood out, as everyone else had only made such a greeting to the small clusters of people they already knew or had mutual connections with.

Nazem, a member of the village who was co-facilitating the meeting, began proceedings by introducing himself in Arabic. Nazem then switched to Hebrew for the rest of the opening talk; apart from exchanges and translations – of Hebrew into Arabic – on behalf of Ghassan, there would be little Arabic spoken for the rest of the evening (as would be the case in future meetings). Nazem spoke in a sombre tone about how it was usual to open these kinds of events with a welcome blessing but the circumstances under which we were meeting depressed him, and it was difficult to say whether he was happy or sad to see everyone. Reflecting on the

optimism of his youth, Nazem confessed that this current situation had left him wondering whether he was able to make a meaningful change to the political situation, and he was considering just moving to Switzerland. 'Why move to Switzerland?' a Jewish Israeli man interjected, 'you'd die of boredom.' Nazem did not react to the joke and continued to state that the purpose of the meeting was 'to do something bigger than a couple of hundred people protesting'.

The director of the SFP, as co-facilitator, echoed the purpose Nazem had set out, and added that they already had to cancel a protest that week due to security concerns. That protest, against racism and war, had been planned to take place by the side of a nearby highway. However, a day before the protest was to take place, it was announced that the funeral of the three kidnapped teens, whose bodies had recently been found, would take place in the nearby city of Modi'in. Many of the funeral's attendees would have passed that very highway, which would have given the protest a reactionary quality that was not intended and could well have led to unwanted clashes. The SFP director reiterated Nazem's concern for doing 'something bigger' than small protests and continued that they – which I took to mean the wider community of *HaSmol* – needed to have more impact, and that the way to accomplish this was joint action among NGOs. The director continued that she meant partnership in its widest sense, as the word "partner" in this context was often associated with cross-border projects between Palestinian and Israeli NGOs or, even more narrowly, Jewish and Palestinian Israelis. To stress the importance of the meeting's goal the director gave an impassioned reminder of the political situation they set themselves against, presenting a news article about a recent statement made by Israeli prime-minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in which he claimed the moral superiority of Israelis over Palestinians because Israelis "value human life". These opening statements set the scene for the meeting, and the many meetings to come, by addressing points many in the room could relate to. Later meetings would open with the circulation of minutes from previous meetings and a brief recap of what had been discussed and agreed previously.

After Nazem and the SFP director had introduced themselves, and the broad purpose of the meeting, they invited the rest of the participants to introduce themselves and their

connection to left-wing, human rights, or peace movements. Each person in the circle took their turn as attention moved anti-clockwise around the circle. There were representatives from a range of organisations as well as four members of the village, a few individuals with current or past links to Israeli and Palestinian government departments, and a couple of well-known (at least within this community) political activists with no direct ties to any particular NGO.

Finally, attention fell on Avi, a Jewish Israeli who was co-facilitating the meeting. Avi began by reflecting that whenever there is an escalation of violence in Israel-Palestine there is a knee-jerk reaction by *HaSmol* to 'do something now' and that usually ends up being a protest, a phenomenon most of the room recognised and a point they would reiterate throughout the evening. In order to be really effective, Avi continued, *HaSmol* needs to think about a more distant future, rather than reacting to current events. He highlighted three issues he wanted to tackle in the meeting. First, that there are many different organisations with similar goals but they have no impact without joint actions, as the SFP director had said earlier. Second, that the assembled group needed to come up with more creative actions than just protests, with a long-term plan to achieve social and political change, as Nazem had said. Third, and perhaps most importantly, Avi stressed the 'need for a different language' for engaging with the wider public. Avi mentioned having recently read Jonathan Haidt's (2012) 'The Righteous Mind' — a reading recommendation that had been included in the original announcement for this meeting — which had made him reflect upon the tendency within *HaSmol* to give the public a negative impression of disconnected moral superiority. Expanding on this, Avi explained he was concerned with how people in *HaSmol* could 'translate' their ideas to the Israeli mainstream. This was an important step in moving away from what Avi described as the 'Ashkenazi left-wing bubble'. Later in the meeting others would also pick up on the term 'Ashkenazi bubble', to refer to the dominance of 'Ashkenazis' in left-wing movements and organisations in Israel. As mentioned in Chapter I, there is growing awareness and concern within the movement that the collective has too often been led by Ashkenazi-centric analyses of Israeli–Palestinian issues, in which the circumstances of other interest groups are not taken into account, such as Mizrahi Jews (Jews from Arabic countries) or Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Avi had said much that people in the group already thought or agreed with, and there was the occasional nod from people around the circle as he spoke. It was soon clear, however, that Avi's speech was exceeding the group's patience; people began asking where the SFP director had gone. While Avi was speaking, both Nazem and the SFP director had left the room, thereby leaving the meeting without its perceived leaders. As all three (Nazem, Avi and the SFP director) had made opening statements about the purpose of the meeting, it was not entirely clear who was really facilitating the meeting and people began to ask (not directing the question to anyone in particular) who was leading the meeting and what the structure of the meeting would be. Discussion broke out around the room about how the meeting should be run as some remained silent and a Palestinian Israeli village member near me mumbled '*halas*' ('enough' in Arabic) to herself. Order was restored as the SFP director and Nazem returned. Nazem cut off the discussion by announcing that, from that point on, people should limit themselves to *short* impressions about the meeting's purpose and what Avi had said. The discussions that followed, which made up the bulk of the meeting, moved between many different points that were dropped and returned to; some meeting participants suggested actions, others questioned the points Avi had raised, and others theorised on Israeli politics or political shifts in general.

Three themes ran through the meeting: the importance of taking action rather than just talk; the differences in interests and approaches within *HaSmol*; and the difficulties in reaching the mainstream 'public'. These themes resonated with Avi's aims and map onto three values generally shared within the community of *HaSmol*. first, the value of productive talk that lead to action, or that can be taken as action itself; second, the value of expressing and accommodating difference; and third, the value of addressing a mainstream wider public.

Talk into Action and Talking for Talking's Sake

Meetings are sites in which people are constantly distinguishing between productive and unproductive ways of speaking. At the start of the meeting, Nazem, the SFP director, and Avi all expressed their hope that the meeting would result in action, and not simply any action ('like a few hundred people protesting') but the start of a socio-political sea-change in Israel-

Palestine. There was a clear concern among many participants that, if no identifiable action resulted from this meeting, it would have been 'just talk'. NGOs that deal with peace, human rights and Israeli-Palestinian joint projects are very conscious that if their projects are not seen as impacting upon social inequality, or resulting in some legal or policy change, then they are in danger of both losing access to funding (which increasingly requires proof of 'impact') and being seen as 'normalising' the conflict. This need to achieve particular 'actions' shaped in turn ideas about talk, which could be productive because it led to action, or *talk for talking's sake*. For example, discussions about what kinds of actions, or series of actions, could lead to political and social change required, understandably, some discussion about what the preferred social and political change would be. Yet, when the conversation reached the topic of one or two-state solutions, it was felt that the conversation had veered too far into abstraction and theory and away from planning tangible actions.[27]

The concern for productive talk also came through in the established norms of conversational participation in the meetings. As shown by participants' restlessness when Avi's introduction appeared to go on for too long, one of the norms of communication was to deliver short and relevant information. Linguist Paul Grice (1989) has argued that such maxims as delivering short and relevant statements, and allowing others a chance to speak, are part of the cooperative principle of conversation. Others have taken the implication of Grice's argument further to suggest that showing commitment by keeping to a maxim of conversation is part of ethical life (e.g. Lambek 2010: 28; Keane 2017: 86-88). Not following conversational maxims has consequences. In this case, 'talking for talking's sake' can be interpreted as simply rude, or worse, as acting against the very purpose of the meeting and even the wider values of the movement.

It was a stated purpose of the meetings to create partnerships across NGOs and communities interested in improving the situation in Israel-Palestine, and this required giving every representative of these NGOs and communities a platform to explain their needs and

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[27] The 'two-state solution' refers, of course, to the aim of establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel (the basis of most peace negotiations) and the 'one-state solution', in this case, refers to a shared state that is neither Israel nor Palestine (a kind of WASNS writ large).

concerns. However, there was always the potential for talk about interest groups to veer into 'lecturing'. In a later strategic meeting, a Palestinian from the West Bank was invited to report to the group what general feeling there was in Palestine. He proceeded to describe at length the Palestinian Authority's applications to the UN and some basic facts about the Occupation, at which point a Jewish Israeli facilitating the meeting interrupted him to say that no-one needed convincing that the Occupation needed to end, given that that was the very purpose of the meetings. What the group needed to know, the facilitator stressed, was what Palestinians in the West Bank were looking for in a prospective partnering organisation to work together to end it.

Throughout the evening, particularly if someone had just delivered a long theoretical statement, various people would voice their frustration that they (*HaSmol*) always meet to talk and nothing happens. The stated solution was to stop theorizing and plan something concrete. These criticisms and suggestions were also a way for the group to encourage each other to self-police contributions, not directly calling someone out for soap-boxing but rather making regular general comments about how practical suggestions were more important than abstraction.

In future meetings, several techniques were employed to foster more productive talk. For example, a guest group facilitator led the group in a thinking exercise, with the help of whiteboard and post-it notes, in which participants had to work backwards from the moment before the end of the Occupation. The aim was to create a causal link between actions that they planned for the near future with events they felt needed to occur in the far future without diverging into abstraction. By the third meeting, Nazem and the SFP director had also established a format in which the meeting was divided into two distinct sections. First, the group sat in a large circle to introduce themselves and discuss and refine their wider aim, usually aided by recapping the minute-notes of previous meetings; then, the group would be divided into smaller steering committees based on particular tasks (such as media strategy or event planning). The idea was that committees with a small number of participants would be more efficient in deciding upon actions than larger public meetings (an idea which is not particular to the Israeli left cf. Bailey 1965; Bailey 1977). All these practices are designed to aid the decision-making process of the meetings to ensure that some action would be decided upon

and planned as a result of the meeting. One discernible action to result from the first strategic meeting was a rally, and I now turn to the moment when it was decided a rally should be held.

Talk into Action: Planning a Rally

The initial idea for a rally arose in response to a contribution made by a Palestinian Israeli who discussed with the group the situation in his town as an example to explain the frustrations Palestinian Israelis have concerning joint Israeli-Palestinian actions. Tira is well known for a Saturday market that is often filled with Jewish Israelis from the nearby Jewish town of Kfar Saba. However, due to the rising tensions in the aftermath of the kidnappings and conflict with Gaza, the police advised Kfar Saba residents not to shop at the market and they stopped. The point of the story is that it raises doubts in Jewish Israelis' sense of commitment to shared society as the friendliness of the Kfar Saba Jewish Israelis seemed shallow if they were so easily convinced that the market they went to every week was suddenly dangerous. This story later inspired Nazem and others to conclude that if a rally were to take place it should be in Tira in order to support the people there and to publicly counter this notion that it was not a safe space for Jewish Israelis to go, and plans for that rally began at that very meeting. The Tira resident's contribution was perceived as productive talk because it provided information that was new to some members of the group, and inspired others to plan an action.

Whilst the plan for the rally originated at the meetings, it is not clear how much the meetings were really necessary to reach that outcome. There was not much of a decision to be made because the rally was the only suggested action that already had a set place, purpose and definable date (the soonest Saturday possible), and Maajid, who worked for the SFP, had already volunteered to organise it. Nazem had asked the group if they were all happy with the plan for a rally but this was a mostly rhetorical request as there was no formal decision-making process (such as voting or vetoing on issues) and there were not many strong reasons to disagree. There was no concern this event was being done 'in the name' of any group in particular as this was a loosely defined group and anyone could go off and run any event they wished. That someone quickly took responsibility for organizing the rally removed the task of allocating this work from the meeting. The actual planning of the rally appeared to take place

mostly through phone calls and emails. Over the next few days in the office where I worked I would hear Nazem and the SFP director fielding such calls. I also contributed a tiny part to the process by translating the initial e-notice for the rally into English.

As the meeting drew to a close one woman joked 'really we've gone from talking about the one and two state solutions, and all these big topics, to going to the *shuk* [market] on Saturday? Think about the headlines!'[28] While the joke did echo some sentiments in the room that evening, it seemed, from the small talk I heard as the meeting winded down, and from reflections of the SFP director a few days later, that this was considered a successful meeting. It was clear many thought it to be a good start to future successful meetings, which have since continued bimonthly, as many of those who attended the first meeting attended subsequent meetings that I witnessed. Arguably, the irony in the joke could mirror an ironic attitude taken to these strategic meetings, approaching them as if they could lead to change. This is a useful way to think about why people continue to take part in meetings and rallies despite being faced with frustrating and depressing events, like the war in Gaza, that make them doubt about their ability to change anything.

The way in which decisions are made in the meetings are important because they relate to roles that participants are meant to play. In his classic anthropological survey of decision-making in meetings, Frederick Bailey suggests that people tend towards consensus-based decisions if the issue to be decided is perfunctory or if the meeting participants see themselves as apart from the public (an 'elite council'), and that people tend towards vote-based decisions if the matter to be decided is akin to policy-making and the participants see themselves representatives of different segments of society (an 'arena council) (Bailey 1965: 13). On the one hand, the participants in the meetings I observed saw themselves as apart from a public (mainstream Israelis), and the decisions to hold a rally was made by a kind of consensus, because no-one objected to it and two participants volunteered to carry out the idea after the meeting. On the other hand, the meeting had similarities with that which Bailey described as an 'arena council' because people also saw themselves as representatives for sections of society as

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[28] I have left in the original word used because it is both the Hebrew and Arabic word for 'market', and could have been understood as either.

well as factions within *HaSmol*. These similarities with Bailey's ideal types are useful to consider because they highlight two roles each participant could be expected to play. Participants were there as individuals who share a general cause that is not mainstream (ie. apart from the wider public), but their commitment to that cause may be questioned if they are perceived to be talking for talking's sake. Participants were also there as representatives of a sector of society and had a duty to put across the concerns of those they represented, which did sometimes require some exposition; the Palestinian gentlemen that gave a run-down of efforts the P.A. had made by applying to the UN clearly felt this was important information to share with the Israelis on behalf of other Palestinians. Meeting participants thus had to balance two different ethical responsibilities: their commitment to the cause and their commitment to representing a wider group.[29]

The meetings can be seen as a community building exercise, bringing together different proponents of *HaSmol* and Palestinian partners in the West Bank to address their shared frustration with conflict. Here, I follow Schwartzman's analyses of meetings as social forms that "facilitate community construction" (Schwartzman 1987: 273). Recently several anthropologists have built on Schwartzman's premise to explore meetings as social forms and sites for ethical behaviour.[30] Such an analysis is useful because it helps explore the ways in which policing behaviour within meetings has an ethical dimension that connects to a wider set of values. Central to the WASNS community (and the wider community of *HaSmol*) is the ability to talk through difference. As will be seen below, practising consensus in meetings is an essential part of enacting one's involvement, and feeling one's belonging to a community. This sense of belonging to a community was also created through discussions about a public that they did not feel part of, and how to talk to this public.

Much of the traditional anthropological literature on meetings, like the work of Bailey, has focused on decision-making and conflict resolution. While the meetings I attended did have

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[29] Adam Reed (2017) has recently shown how such a friction also occurs in professional meetings within the third sector, in which those taking part as office holders (i.e. development or communications) may expect to follow certain organisational ethics but may find their own individual behaviour and beliefs under scrutiny in terms of their commitment to a cause.

[30] See for example contributions to JRAI's March 2017 special issue on meetings (see Brown, Reed & Yarrow 2017).

elements of decision-making processes and occurred under a wider umbrella of 'conflict resolution,' often the aim for consensus in meetings was simply to create an arena where different opinions can be expressed, but did not all need to be resolved. Acting as a representative of a different point of view in such meetings was thus a way of practising consensus.

Expressing Unity through Difference

Focusing solely on the participants' concern for 'actions' and for sustaining a sense (or hope) that these actions can create change, would not give a full picture of the meetings. Meetings are an important space to talk through differences. Specifically, these meetings aimed to bridge differences between NGOs and sectors of society involved in them. Consensus-building in meetings is not just a way to get to a plan of action but is an important action in and of itself. As anthropologists Brown et. al. put it, "meetings are spaces for the alignment and negotiation of distinct perspectives, and are constituted through the contextual interplay of similarity and difference" (Brown, Reed & Yarrow 2017: 14). Consensus-building is a way of acting that can have positive social effects, at least in the world that is directly observed, that is, among the Israelis and Palestinians in the meeting and the extended community of *HaSmol*.

A desirable way of talking meant more to my interlocutors than simply talk that leads to action. This came to light even as I asked directly what made talk productive. Nazem, who acted as facilitator in many of the meetings, often reminded the group to keep their comments short, and tried to veer the discussion towards achieving concrete plans. After the third strategic meeting, I asked Nazem what made the difference between talk for the sake of talking and talk that *did* something.

> "If the talk is with the intention of getting to a joint goal then it is, in my
> eyes, talk that contributes something, that something comes of it.
> Unfortunately what happens, especially in sessions outside Neve Shalom,
> how people talk… and people love to talk… If you noticed, yesterday we
> split into three groups, one group which is a group "to act", not to talk about

what "to act", rather to act. I was there, I believe in taking action, we've talked once or twice, now is the time for action. I have no doubt that my experience in Neve Shalom, that my ability to listen, to internalise, to take in what the 'other' is saying is what leads me to continue dialogue with them. That's the '*aleph-bet*' [the basics]. So talking, if it is reciprocal, if it's fully listened to from all sides, out of want... See I can say "Liat come over here" and say "now hear me", you can hear me but nothing will come from that. It is the mutual want from both sides to talk."

There are several points that can be drawn out from Nazem's reflection. First, of course, is the need for action over discussion. This was no surprise to me as Nazem also applied his preference for 'action' over discussion in the office where we both worked. Nazem is the kind of person who gets frustrated when small projects are delayed by seemingly endless discussion so that he often takes upon himself the responsibility for various projects simultaneously. Taking responsibility for a project was usually how projects came to being and Nazem was usually the one to make a closing remark in meetings to reiterate who had offered to take on what actions, and stressing the importance of following through with actions.

Another point that can be drawn from Nazem's explanation is that talk that leads to action is not only the opposite of talk for the love of talking but talk which is actively engaged in by all conversation partners. It is not just about the way one speaks but the fact that one has been ready to listen. This indicates a kind of ethic in dealing with difference (or the 'other'); a productive exchange is not just one in which different opinions can be aired but one in which there is a shared want to understand those different opinions. It is important to note that Nazem connects his ability to deal with difference with the fact that he lives in WASNS.

As mentioned earlier, one stated aim of the meeting was to explore avenues of joint action for left-wing NGOs in Israel and Palestine. To this end, participants were expected to present the experiences and interests of whatever NGO or community they were members of. These different ideas and beliefs were not framed in opposition to each other but rather as points for the whole group to consider in order to think about the best ways to work together. To

explore this aspect of the meetings I will draw on recent work on 'ethics across borders' (Mair & Evans 2015; Heywood 2015) that call for ethnographic attention to the various ways people think through difference (and affinity) and suggest a need to consider practises of incommensurability as well as commensurability; that is to say, when constructions of difference, albeit incomparable difference, can be as useful to an ethic of dealing with 'others' as constructions of affinity. In the context of the meetings I observed, two kinds of difference were treated in such a way, firstly the presence of different sectors of society and interest groups through their representatives, and secondly the presence of different points of view.

Heywood notes that "in some cases ethics across borders depends not only upon finding affinities and sustaining differences but also upon finding affinities over how to sustain differences" (Heywood 2015: 325). The WASNS community has established an affinity based on how to deal with the 'other'; this ethic was explained to me, by Nazem and others, as 'being ready to listen', 'internalising the other', and, 'being in dialogue first with oneself'. This was the general idea of how to approach difference, while in practice different situations required drawing up different borders of affinity or difference – particularly when there was concern about normalisation – and what 'internalising the other' actually entailed.

As Mair and Evans (2015) have pointed out, it is worth looking at processes of incommensuration as much as commensuration to understand how difference and affinity are managed. In strategic meetings with many attendees from outside the village, practising consensus often rested upon declaring incommensurability. This meant not simply agreeing to disagree, but rather that the meeting was a place for everyone to have their points heard rather than have their points pitted against each other. For example, in one of the meetings, participants Sima and Yara, two villagers actively involved with women's NGOs, both raised their concern that *HaSmol* needs to engage more with women and women's issues in order to achieve the kind of joint action the meetings were meant to inspire. These points were met with head nods and some vocal signs of affirmation. The points were not contested but neither were they met with comments on how to address the problem, the conversation simply moved on. This was striking as there is a well-known problem of addressing gender inequality in Israeli-

Palestinian groups, because it is seen by some as drawing too much attention away from other inequalities that need to be addressed. Many months previously I had attended a forum for SFP-trained facilitators on the topic of gender. The facilitators, most of them women, expressed their dilemma that any talk of a shared Israeli-Palestinian experience of gender inequality could be deemed as detracting from the more important inequality under discussion, that between Palestinians and Israelis. They felt they could only address gender inequality very carefully and at the margins of discussions. Approaching these two inequalities as incomparable, and thus not in competition with each other for importance, allowed for a temporary solution for discussion in the strategic meeting.

Agreeing to disagree was an important element of the strategic meetings, and indeed life in the village more generally, but there were also clear expressions of affinity on which this ability to disagree was based. As we saw above, Nazem believes that his experience of living and working in WASNS fostered his ability to understand and internalise the 'other'. This practise and "shared want" of understanding of the other in this way is integral to membership of both the community of WASNS and the wider community of *HaSmol*. Even throughout the meetings, which Nazem acknowledged included some people who 'loved to talk', there was a sense that everyone was part of the same loosely defined community; a sense that was made explicit by phrases like "how do *we* reach the public". As important as it was to engage in talk that led to decisions and concrete actions in these meetings, it was also important to practise the ability to talk through difference, to be part of a shared community. In this way meetings were an important space for proponents of *HaSmol* to feel like there were others engaged in a similar project to them, sharing the same struggle.

While incommensurisation has the potential to circumvent hierarchical structures – by making all perspectives incomparable – the process can also be used by dominant groups to deny inequality by categorising people and perspectives as other and unknown (Humphrey 2012: 303). Agreeing to disagree, thus giving equal weight to opposing standpoints, can only work if both sides have a voice. To address structural inequality, as the community of *HaSmol* aims to do, not all differences can be taken as incommensurable because dominant narratives

cannot be challenged. At least everyone in *HaSmol* shares the idea that inequality exists and that they should address it, but among the 'mainstream' Israeli audience the existence of inequality is not a given. Proponents of *HaSmol* cannot 'agree to disagree' with the mainstream because the dominant Israeli perspective – that there is no problem of inequality – actively recreates that very inequality. As we will see below, members of *HaSmol* had two general approaches to communicating with the mainstream. On the one hand, there are those who believe in slowly convincing a general public about societal problems by being sensitive to their concerns, on the other hand, there are those who believe it is their duty as the avant-garde to deliberately (and even antagonistically) draw on language and concepts that will make the general public uncomfortable.

Reaching out to the public

In order to engage in meaningful dialogue there needs to be an initial 'other' one is reaching out to. Put differently, the practice of reaching out to the 'other' requires constructions of difference and affinity. In the context of the meetings, differences of opinion and experience within *HaSmol* can be discussed and taken into account, but the perceived opinions of the mainstream public were not necessarily ones to be understood or internalised. Some, like Avi, believed that the group should consider a new language in order to bridge the differences between *HaSmol* and the public, while others felt that it was not their role to reach out to the public at all. Several different approaches to reaching a 'public' also played out in the rally in Tira.

One main argument that ran through the first meeting began when Yuval, a Jewish Israeli political activist, called Avi's third objective into question – the objective to find a 'new language' to reach the Israeli public, because the current communication practises of *HaSmol* were not convincing the mainstream. Why change the language used to reach out to the Israeli public, Yuval argued, if it was questionable whether they should be reaching out to the general public in the first place? Several meeting participants then agreed that they – which I took to mean the assembled group and the 'left' in general – should be the 'avant-garde' (their term). In their view, acting beyond accepted public opinion is necessary because it is the 'avant-garde'

that drives real change, whether political, cultural or artistic. Others in the group disagreed, and stressed that societal change could only occur if efforts were made to understand the wider public in order to find a better way to communicate the importance of social justice to them. A few meeting participants did not see why they, as a group, could not pursue both strategies. This equivocal approach was quashed when Yael, who had introduced herself earlier as a social worker, argued that *HaSmol* could not be both 'avant-garde' and effectively communicate their socio-political message to the public, precisely because of the different language required by each approach. She elaborated that words such as 'occupation' and 'apartheid' in public statements would turn off much of the Israeli public, but would likely be necessary to be credible as a political 'avant-garde' in the way suggested. A discussion that began with an analysis of historical political change, had soon evolved into a debate on the merits of activist antagonism; should the Israeli mainstream public be appeased and co-opted, or shocked, shamed and alienated. Some participants embraced the idea of being antagonistic with an almost gleeful enthusiasm.

It is not altogether surprising that some participants saw a huge communicative value in antagonism. This communicative preference can be linked to a developing trend in mainstream Israeli ways of speaking, that has been described by Tamar Katriel as the 'roughening of Dugri' (Katriel 2004: 210). As already mentioned in Chapter I, *Dugri* is a shared Israeli way of speaking – in which participants are expected, and expecting others, to speak their mind – that means potential offence can be contextualised. This newer, rougher, way of speaking is far more aggressive and operates beyond any kind of frame that would legitimise the offence caused, and is reflective of an increasingly politically divided society (*ibid)*. Katriel has shown that a certain moral panic has developed around this roughening of Dugri, with whole newspaper columns devoted to analysing the 'big mouth' behaviour of often older Ashkenazi men whose "combative spirit is anchored not in a desire to fight the system but in a sense of mastery and confidence in [their] ability to manipulate it" (Katriel 2004: 213). I found it ironic that anyone wishing to put forward a counter-mainstream point of view would choose to do so in the same antagonistic mode that had developed alongside the very socio-political issues *HaSmol* is trying to redress. The presence of this mainstream communicative logic among

members of *HaSmol* speaks to a tension in the whole movement. That is, a tension between the peripheral objectives of the left-wing, and the privileged positions in society held by many of its Ashkenazi members that tend to dominate the movement (see Clarke 2003). As Michael Warner has convincingly argued, in order to constitute a 'counter-public' a group needs to do more than simply counter mainstream ideas; rather "the conflict extends not just to ideas or policy questions, but to the speech genres and modes of address that constitute the public and to the hierarchy among media." (Warner 2002: 86). It is important to note that not everyone in the group agreed with the antagonist mode of communication, and perhaps the internal-focused drive within *HaSmol* to promote diverse voices internally, that do not resemble Israel's elite, is actually quite closely tied to the aim of establishing *HaSmol* as a viable counter-public externally.

All the emphasis on the 'best' communication with an external public invites debate over who or what that public exactly is. An important distinction can be made between *the* public, in a general sense (in this case being 'mainstream' Israelis), and *a* public, which is defined in terms of participation or involvement in the circulation of certain texts and ideas (Warner 2002; Gaonker & Povinelli 2003). We can see that *HaSmol* have produced their own public through the strategic meetings, through attendance, the minutes and agenda that are then circulated to a wider virtual group via email, and the interactions between the different representatives in actions taken. We now turn to a closer examination of one such action: the rally in Tira.

"Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies": A Rally

The rally took place the Saturday after that first strategic meeting. That morning I, along with some 30 villagers, gathered at the entrance of the WASNS to board a bus that would take us all to Tira. Busses had been arranged to pick up people from various points in Israel to ensure a good turnout.

A crowd had already started to form by the side of the Tira's central roundabout by the time our coach had arrived. The demonstration was to start at 10am so that the speakers would

be done before the midday sun. This was an exceedingly hot day in mid-July and there would be no shade for most of the rally participants to stand under, which would eventually affect the audience's ability to concentrate. A small pavilion had been set up where the speakers would give their talks. There was no stage and the ground was flat so it was difficult to see the speakers if one was standing further back than the initial few rows, like I was, and the audience jostled about for position every now and again. A sound system was set up so that everyone present could at least hear the speakers. While the crowd assembled there was a buzz of conversation and chants of "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies". When the proceedings began, and the first speaker was introduced, the chanting and conversations died down but there was never complete silence from the crowd as conversations sporadically continued throughout. However, attention was mostly focused on the speakers, and many of the speeches to come would be punctuated by applause if a particular pertinent point resonated well. Of the twelve or so speakers that morning there were two members of Knesset (parliament), several well-known political activists, various academics, two members of WASNS, as well as the mayor and deputy mayor of Tira and Kfar Saba respectively.

The mayor of Tira and the deputy mayor of Kfar Saba were the first to speak, and both addressed the issue of relations between the two communities. After all, the idea for this rally had emerged in response to the fact Jewish Israelis from Kfar Saba had stopped coming to Tira's Saturday market because they believed it to be dangerous after a police warning. The mayor of Tira, welcomed the crowd in Arabic and then Hebrew. His speech focused on the fact that "Jews and Arabs" had come together, despite the difficult times, to publicly decry war, and just the current situation in Gaza, but the whole context of aggression. The deputy mayor of Kfar Saba — the nearby Jewish town that had received the warning from police not to visit the market in Tira that Saturday — spoke out against the media and politicians for stirring hatred and fear. "I see how well we [Jews] are being received here [in Tira]" the deputy mayor declared "just as they have been warmly welcoming us every week". The phrase, like many to come from other speakers that morning, was partly addressing the audience, who applauded it, and partly a wider imagined public to be reached via the media coverage. The organisers had been sure to make this as 'big' an event as possible. Various media outlets were informed, and the rally was

eventually covered in two papers with big circulations in Israel — Ma'ariv and Yediot Ahronot. The event was also filmed by an independent media company/NGO, that documents activities and stories of interest to the Israeli left, and circulates them on platforms such as Youtube, where a 15 minute video summary of the rally can be found.[31] This was clearly an event aimed at a wider 'public'.

Many of the speakers emphasised the importance of Jews and Arabs meeting together, and some went further in specifically addressing the police warning and the significance of coming to Tira regardless. A Palestinian Israeli MK (Member of Knesset) for example, expressed his respect for all those who had turned up that day when the "easy thing" would have been for the Israelis to go and watch a film "outside the context" and for the Palestinians to sit amongst themselves "and discuss how right they were". This praise directly followed the MK's assertion that the Occupation was a shared tragedy for Israeli and Palestinian people, and thus working together had to be "more than meeting to eat humus together, but working for political change". This reference to eating humus together would have been understood by the audience as an allusion to the shallow kind of coexistence effort undertaken by some Jewish Israelis; the kind of Israeli who enjoys authentic Arabic markets but still harbours suspicions of Arabs.[32] Both the reference to a trope known by this particular audience, and the praise directed to all those present, suggested that this part of the MK's speech was addressed at this particular audience more than a wider public.

Several points were raised by the speakers: criticism of prime minister Netanyahu; calls for both Israel and Hamas to stop violence; the overarching situation of inequality and violence, which the current war and proliferating civil unrest was only part; and the troubled history of Gaza specifically. In general, reflections on the larger political situation were given in the third person, stating of facts, while most speeches began in second person to call the attention of a person or a group of people. Yara, who had taken part in the strategic meeting, began her speech with a call to Arab and Jewish women, altering the call of 'Arabs and Jews

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[31] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdz_fM1tZjw
עצרת נגד "צוק איתן" בטירה (SocialTV 2014)

[32] See also Daniel Rabinowitz (1997) on the 'bigoted liberal'

refuse to be enemies' from the male plurals ('*Aravim ve Yehudim mesarvim leyot oyvim*') to female plurals ('*Araviot ve Yehudiot mesarvot leyot oyvot*'). She continued by addressing two rhetorical questions to the women "in the audience, and in general": "aren't you fed up with this male conflict that has been raging for years? aren't you fed up with all these sons of Abraham speaking in your names and oppressing your mothers?"[33]

All the speeches that day had a complex of intended audiences and rhetorical ones. Several speakers directed sections of their speech at Netanyahu, state institutions, or in one case "the media". The SFP director, for example, gave a speech which directly addressed Hamas and Netanyhu, called upon the Israeli media to tell the whole story, praised the audience at the rally, and called upon a wider Israeli community to adopt a "different language":

> "we are in need of a different language, of dialogue, of understanding, of patience, of mutual respect. The time has come for a new language, new tools that see in Arabs not enemies but human beings like us, *ba'alei bayit*[34] like us. There will not be quiet while the Occupation continues, we will not achieve silence through force, through control of another people, through military action. The hope for freedom cannot be killed by bombs."

The call for a new language, presented here to mean the way the wider Israeli public should speak (and think) about Arab neighbours and the Occupation, is reminiscent of the call for a new language made several days earlier by Avi at the strategic meeting. As we saw, Avi was calling not for a new language for Israeli society but a new language for the left in order to communicate with the public without seeming elitist or alienating. In that meeting, there was a disagreement between those who felt one had to make antagonistic statements and those who felt that more moderate messages were needed in order to get the public on side. Both approaches were evident in the rally, and this could be seen clearly in discussions about

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[33] In the original hebrew:
אני רוצה לפנות לנשים בקהל, ונשים בכלל, לא נמאס לכן מהסכסוך הגברי המתלהם ארוח השנים? לו נמאס לכן לראות בני אברהם למיניהם מדברים בשמכן או כובשים את אמהותכן?

[34] This translates to 'landlords' but the sense it was evoking was that the land (Israel-Palestine) is home both to Israelis and Palestinians, who have equal claim to it.

violence. While everyone included in their speech a declaration against violence, there were clear differences. Three speakers made a personal reference to their concern for their children and for children in Gaza, others simply called for the end to violence. One of the speakers, an academic and well-known activist, speaking at the end of the event, said there was no point calling out violence if one did not acknowledge that the root causes were the actions of the Israeli state and the Occupation. He then proceeded to give a longer political analysis about these root causes. I wondered who this explanation was for. The content was neither shocking or new to the other rally attendees, and indeed earlier speakers had made similar points which had been well received. So, if this speech was aimed at an audience not yet converted to this analysis of the political situation, why was it resting on phrases and concepts that themselves would need to be explained to those not so aware of *HaSmol's* concerns?

One of the last speakers ended his contribution by introducing a "song we are used to hearing at large events" and proceeded to sing an alternative version of *Hatikvah* ('The Hope' — the Israeli national anthem). The new lyrics played upon the themes of hope, freedom and ethnicity that are central to the *Hatikvah*'s call for nationhood, turning the song instead into a call for equal freedom of all ethnicities.

Hatikvah – excerpt		Alternative Hatikvah - excerpt	
Then our hope - the two-thousand-year-old hope - will not be lost: To be a free people in our land, The land of Zion and Jerusalem.	עוד לא אבדה תקוותינו התקווה בת שנות אלפיים להיות עם חופשי בארצנו ארץ ציון וירושלים	עוד לא אבדה תקוותנו עוד חופשיה מחשבתינו על חורבותיך עיר דוד יפציע המחר שוויון זכויות לכל מן הים עד הנהר	We haven't lost our hope, Our thought is still free Upon your ruins, the city of David, a new dawn will rise With equal rights for all from the river to the sea

As the speaker suggested, the use of the Hatikva tune placed at the end of proceedings mirrored public national events, from political rallies to the annual Independence Day awards service. It could be argued that this deliberate play on the recognised procedures of national public events was an attempt to tap into the emotional effects they have on a wider Israeli public, albeit in a rather contentious manner.

After the rally had come to a close and people began to head back to their respective buses and cars, I joined Nazem's wife and few of the village's second generation, who decided that they would venture to the market before heading for the bus. The feeling was that it was not enough to show up in Tira in solidarity and then just get the bus home. They wanted to actually put their money where their mouth was, so to speak, and make their own humble contribution to the local economy, given that it was the prevention of Jewish Israelis traveling to the Tira market that had prompted the decision to hold a rally there in the first place. Sadly, but predictably, the huge sheltered market was indeed empty, apart from a few locals and market stall owners.

Conclusion

The last chapter distinguished between two levels of ethical consideration in everyday interaction: firstly, the system of values, practices and theories offered by institutions and social movements, and secondly, the motivation to care about this system due to commitment to personal relationships. While this was a useful analytical distinction for the purpose of explaining the potential for ethical reflection inherent in interactions, it does not help to explain how sometimes commitment to a socio-political cause has enough impact on ethical decisions on its own. Political scientists, like Martha Nussbaum (2013) have argued that liberal and left-leaning social and political movements are just as emotionally and morally powerful for their participants as those on the right, although the mechanisms involved in the right have had more academic attention. Nussbaum's (2013) analysis of the cultural 'ingredients' of liberal states – of the public events, national anthems, poems, even operas, that contribute to the making of liberal states – offers interesting insights into how liberal values are sustained through emotional cultivation, and recently academic attention has been paid to the role of meetings in activism (see for example Graeber 2009).

We have seen how the more politically active members of the WASNS community – who engaged in activism and NGO work – weighed the relative merits of talk and action with reference to concerns about 'normalisation'. That is, they did not want to engage in talk or

actions that served to minimise, or even justify, inequality. This concern also affected their constructions of affinity and difference because some inequalities had to be deemed necessarily more important than others. The distinctions between talk and action, difference and affinity, all played out in strategic planning meetings. While these meetings were ostensibly practical – concerned with planning and decision making — a crucial secondary purpose was to strengthen wider community feeling amongst *HaSmol*, at a time when individual communities could potentially feel most isolated. Practising difference together like this, through a consensus activity, allowed the political activists and NGO workers to also practise a shared ideal of dealing with difference that carried a tangible sense of achievement simply by holding the meetings. In that way, this talk was a kind of action to some of those present, not just in its potential to lead to action but actually through the process itself. This becomes clearer when we see meetings as part of a chain of activities, including rallies and other events, what Nazem referred to as living in WASNS.

The notion of the 'public' is important to the process in which the meetings and rallies (re)created a community who share ethics of difference is the notion of public. Within the meetings the wider 'mainstream Israeli' public was discussed with regard to communicative strategy; but the meetings themselves, and the circulation of minutes, discussions, emails, and other internet content that tied the meetings together, also served to form a kind of public, that of *HaSmol*. The kind of community that *HaSmol* are trying to build is itself connected the circulation of other ways of speaking. Most notably the notion of 'authentic dialogue', that itself changes as it circulates through media and everyday conversation in Israel (as also seen in Katriel 2004), came through in discussions about whether more or less antagonistic approaches to communication are appropriate. In that discussion it was clear here that the group attending these meetings came from different communities with different frames of references for the best way of speaking, even though these ideas about how to speak were not clearly delineated.

Chapter IV: Between Translation and Repetition

Chapter III established that people within a social movement drew on its moral aims in their micro-social decisions. One important question that remained unresolved is whether, and in what conditions, micro-social linguistic decisions do indeed challenge inequality or reproduce it? This chapter addresses that question through an exploration of the politics surrounding one particular kind of linguistic decision, translation. The role of translation in challenging inequality had been given much thought by the villagers, particularly those who have worked with the School for Peace (SFP) or the village primary school, and their theories figured into decisions as to whether to translate for themselves or others, or even if a linguistic act could be defined as translation in the first place.

Translation has often been of concern to anthropologists. Most ethnographers have at least thought about translation in their own work; Regna Darnell (2000), in a summation of these considerations, presents a spectrum of approaches from the literal to the poetic.[35] Other anthropologists have taken 'translation' more broadly as a metaphor for anthropological endeavour, such as the issues explored in *Writing Culture.*[36] The latter broader take on translation, sometimes metaphorical, has been applied as an analytical framework by anthropologists studying a wide range of not necessarily linguistic topics. Reviewing this use of "translation" as a prominent rubric in current anthropological research on a vast array of topics – for example, Christianity, Medicine, and Law – Susan Gal (2015) posits that these writings all share a key insight. That is, all these studies present communicative processes through which any object of translation is both changed and retains something, and these "connections and differentiations, as framed by metadiscourses, construct relations of power and politics" (Gal 2015: 225).

This key insight, that translation simultaneously preserves and distorts, can be brought to the fore once one considers language ideology. That is, the collection of beliefs concerning

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[35] As mentioned in the introduction, my own approach to translation was an attempt to balance between providing a literal interpretation and evoking a sense of the original.

[36] Particularly Asad's (1986) "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology"

language that a speech community express in order to account for particular structures and uses of language. For example, the arguments made by WASNS villagers to explain why it is that Hebrew is the dominant language, and why it is expected to be used more or less in certain speech events. It is language ideology that "regiments what counts as repetition or translation" (Gal 2015 227). Thus the villagers' habit of rolling off pleasantries in various languages can be understood as an act of translation or of repetition depending on the villagers' language ideology (or ideologies). This chapter aims to build on the analytical approach of Gal and others by considering the language ideology of the villagers in understanding the relations of power and politics constructed in translation, as well as the role of translators, which is also "shaped by ideology" (Gal 2015 233). Of particular relevance to the multilingual setting of WASNS are the insights offered by anthropologists on the relationships of power and politics that arise in settings in which multilingual individuals engage in translation in front of an audience of fellow multilingual speakers (Gal 2015; Jaffe 1999; Swigart 2000).

Analysing the use of translation as a tool to tackle inequality in WASNS requires attention to two elements of translation. First is the directionality of translation. This chapter will examine the role of translator as mediator, not only between languages of unequal positions, but also between audiences of unequal positions. Second is the substance of communication. This chapter will examine the tension between accusations of misrepresentation on the one hand, and expressions of frustration with hearing oneself repeated on the other. This frustration at being repeated is part of a constant dilemma, faced by bilingual Palestinian Israelis, concerning whether to favour content (having their message understood by non-Arabic-speaking Jewish Israelis) or form (being able to express themselves in Arabic). A good example to illustrate the many complex practices and beliefs about translation in WASNS is a SFP-facilitated discussion that followed a film-screening.

Translating in Practice: A Film-Screening and Discussion at WASNS

As has already been discussed, the School for Peace (SFP) hosts many events for villagers and people in its extended network. One such event, in the summer of 2014, was the screening of a documentary that had been recently produced by a village member. The people

arriving in the library that afternoon included village members and SFP graduates (a term applied to anyone who has attended a course run by the SFP whether within or outside the village). I recognised several SFP graduates from a course the SFP were running for Israeli and Palestinian mental health professionals as the previous month I, and a couple of villagers, had joined the group for an educational tour of Hebron/al-Khalil.

Once there were enough people to begin the film showing, it was time to rearrange the chairs. As mentioned in Chapter II, most events of this kind were arranged in a circle, but this time the usual circle was broken into two long rows spaced very far apart from each other. The reason for this change was that the designated SFP translator — who provided the Jewish Israelis with a simultaneous translation of the Arabic-language film — felt that he could be heard best if sat behind the row of non-Arabic speakers when translating to Hebrew. The row of Hebrew-speakers was placed as far behind the front row of Arabic-speakers as possible so that the simultaneous translation would not disturb their viewing. Afterwards I remarked to a Jewish Israeli villager how interesting it was that the whole seating needed to be altered because of the gap in language knowledge and she replied that some non-Arabic speakers, including her husband, had not even turned up to the event because they did not think they could follow a film in Arabic, translated or not.

The film, a documentary about Palestinian hunger strikes in Israeli prisons, opened with a dramatic set of scenes that followed a Palestinian entering an Israeli prison, being forcibly strip searched, and suffering several other psychological and physical abuses. This was followed by interviews with several male prisoners and one female prisoner, as well as very visceral reconstructions of the interviewee's experiences of abuse in prison and hunger strikes, particularly one that followed the biological process of starving oneself. All the actors in the reconstruction were Palestinians, even those playing Israeli prison officers, because these parts of the film were shot in Gaza. Interspersed between interviews and reconstructions were info-graphics detailing the number of prisons and prisoners since 1948, the number of hunger strike cases, and those who died, and what happens inside one's body during a hunger strike. There was also a comparative case study of the hunger strike in Northern Ireland.

After the film – and a short break for Iftar (we were one week into Ramadan) – the chairs were arranged in a circle again in order to discuss the film. There was supposed to be a video 'Q & A' session with the Gazan co-director of the film over skype. However, there was no Internet available in his area of Gaza at the time, something which apparently occurs every time there is unrest in the region, and the IDF had begun an aerial attack on Gaza the night before in response to rockets. Despite this it was decided that the Q&A will go ahead as Adel, an SFP staff member, found a slightly awkward-yet-workable solution to the communication issue. Adel phoned the Gazan co-director on his mobile and, as people from the group asked questions, he repeated them in Arabic down the phone. Occasionally people would call out adjustments to Adel's Arabic translation. After asking a question, Adel would quickly turn on the speaker-phone and hold the mobile up to a microphone as the Gazan director gave his answer, which was subsequently translated into Hebrew by Amin, the designated SFP translator who had been translating the film earlier. In one case, Sima – a Palestinian villager – insisted on asking her question in Arabic, which Adel dutifully repeated word-for-word on the phone, but as Amin began to provide a Hebrew translation for what Sima had said, she insisted on providing the Hebrew translation herself. Most of the Q&A focused on the process of cross-border co-directing, and thoughts about the future of both the film and the situation. The conversation ended with well wishes and the hope that one day a Q&A like this one could be held face to face.

After the Q&A, Adel rejoined the circle and a discussion began in Hebrew, however the designated translator for the evening was on hand to provide translation (into Hebrew) if people wished to express themselves in Arabic, provided that the Arabic speaker left a sufficient pause. As many of those in the circle had some past or present connection to the SFP, they were aware of this customary translation practice (of leaving a pause). However, at one point when the producer of the film was speaking in Arabic and left a pause for translation, Sara, a villager who is not really connected to the SFP, asked her a question in Arabic. At this point, another SFP staff member quickly interrupted to tell Sara that she needed to wait for the translator to translate what the producer had just said into Hebrew. Sara looked taken aback and did not repeat her question after the translation had been given, nor did she receive a reply. These kinds

of meetings show that the SFP have rules for speaking in a group that, while respected, are not completely known to all the villagers, and even when they are known, are not always followed without incident. While there is a learned inclination to leave pauses and to wait for translations there is also a strong desire to keep to the flow of the conversation. Indeed many of the objections to translation that I heard during my fieldwork were based on perceived disruption to the flow of conversation, and thought.

Sima, who had translated for herself earlier, began her contribution to the discussion with a defiant statement in Hebrew "I can translate for myself". She continued, in Arabic (and then repeating in Hebrew), to draw attention to the role of gender in Palestinian experiences of Israeli jails and their return to society afterwards. This sparked off a discussion about the one female ex-prisoner interviewed in the documentary and difficulties faced specifically by women ex-prisoners on their return to their community. The gender discourse was cut short by Sabir, a Palestinian village member who is often vocal and direct about his opinions, who argued that focusing on gender, and individual experiences, detracted from the most shocking element of the film; the scale of the wider prison issue expressed through statistics.

Finally it was the turn of Amin, the designated translator, to step out of his translator role and contribute to the discussion as a fellow film-viewer. He began to talk, in Hebrew, about some books and writers he would recommend in relation to topics that had been raised during the evening, but before he could finish he was interrupted by Sabir, who joked that Amin was not translating himself. Amin acknowledged the joke with a short laugh but still obliged the request by repeating what he has just said in Arabic. He stumbled over the words slightly as he tried to remember exactly what it was he had just said in Hebrew; throughout the evening he had been writing down what was said simultaneously so that he could provide as accurate a translation as possible, but he had not done that for himself.

Several tensions can be observed in this short vignette. First there is the role of translator as mediator between audiences who cannot understand each other in one moment, and audiences that can understand each other in another. In the SFP context, this mediating role is complicated by the fact most Palestinian Israeli facilitators also provide impromptu translation

when there is no designated translator or if the situation requires it (such as Adel translating for the Gazan director because the skype call was made on his phone). The use of a translator did not always sit well with bilinguals, who preferred to translate for themselves, and have complete control over the content of their speech. Sima, who can speak Hebrew and Arabic, wanted to speak as directly as possible to the Gazan director by asking her question in Arabic so that Adel would repeat her exact words, rather than translate her. Then she wanted to translate her own question herself rather than let Amin mediate her message to the Jewish Israelis sitting in the room with her. Second, and related to this first tension, is the simultaneous power and vulnerability of the translator. Adel had control over the communication with the Gazan director on the one hand, but on the other he was subject to criticism from all the bilingual Palestinian Israelis in the room at WASNS, who could assess his linguistic skill. Third, are the other inequalities that translation practices reveal (such as those between genders or generations). The SFP engage in translation in order to address a language asymmetry in their society but, it also opened up the possibilities of establishing a hierarchy of linguistic skill among Palestinian Israelis — like the judgements made about Adel's ability by other Palestinians — or aggravating equal representation of gender. It is significant that Sima did not want Amin to translate her point about women's experience, especially as she anticipated the response some men would have to her raising the issue (as Sabir eventually did). Sima is involved in women's rights NGOs and writes articles specifically addressing gender relations within the Palestinian community. It is probable that she found it jarring that her thoughts and arguments about women in the Palestinian society, which she made in Arabic, would be translated to half the audience (the Jewish Israelis) by a man.

Acts of Translation to Promote Equality

In the event just described, translation was necessary for the Jewish Israeli villagers to understand the Arabic documentary and for them to participate in the Q&A with the Gazan director. But they also used translation to allow the bilingual Palestinian Israelis a chance to express themselves in Arabic. Due to the language asymmetry in Israel discussed in Chapter I, there is often pressure on Palestinian Israelis to speak in Hebrew in conversations with Jewish

Israelis because their Arabic will not be understood. Even with translation there can be pressure from Jewish Israelis just to speak in Hebrew.

Hebrew was the dominant language in the strategic meetings mentioned in chapter III. At a couple of these meetings the group was also joined by representatives of Palestinian NGOs from the West Bank. In these cases one of the Palestinian Israelis would translate, although other Palestinian Israelis would offer up words and phrases to correct or supplement these translations. There were hardly any statements made in these events which were not heard in Hebrew, and on several occasions people were chastised for breaking the translation protocol by engaging in Arabic discussion without leaving a pause between comments for the translator to offer the Hebrew. The focus of meetings was on discussing socio-political issues and planning tangible responses to these issues, and many of the Israeli participants saw speaking Hebrew as the most efficient way to do this.

Participants of these meetings were aware of this view on language in terms of efficiency. When a few regular participants planned a joint Israeli-Palestinian conference for an Israeli, Palestinian and international audience, they made several accommodations. The organisers arranged for several translators and offered audience members headsets that could be tuned in to a live simultaneous translation from an Arabic, English, or Hebrew speaker. Many of the Hebrew-speaking audience had not taken these headsets at the start because most of the conference had been in Hebrew. This decision went without note until a Gazan speaker, who was taking part in the conference by phone, asked if he should deliver his talk in Hebrew or Arabic. At this point I heard a Jewish villager shout out from behind me that the speaker should speak in Arabic because it was his language, but the majority of the Hebrew-speaking audience grumbled at this decision because they had not taken headsets at the start. A short delay followed as these audience members got up to get and set up their headsets.

SFP staff have put a lot of thought into addressing such instances of linguistic asymmetry. In an essay entitled 'Language as a Bridge and an Obstacle', two SFP staff members, Rabah Halabi and Michal Zak, build upon Bourdieu's contention that language should be seen as "an instrument of action and power" (Halabi and Zak 2004: 120) as well as

communication. Halabi and Zak then argue that language is "first and foremost a symbol of identity and culture" (*ibid*). SFP staff thus acknowledge the importance for Palestinian Israelis to be able to express themselves in Arabic, because of the affective quality of speaking in one's mother-tongue as well as being able to give Arabic a place in the conversation. For this reason Adel, the SFP facilitator once said:

> "When I facilitate I speak in Arabic and then in Hebrew, regardless of what
> stage the group is at. I, personally, when I speak, or present something, I do
> both [Arabic and Hebrew introductions] to open a hatch, a kind of opening
> for whoever wants to speak Arabic."

By speaking Arabic, even to make a simple introduction, he has communicated that in this space Arabic can and will be spoken. The tendency to say a comment in Arabic then repeat it in Hebrew (or vice versa) is one I noticed among many of the bilingual villagers (including the Jewish Israelis that could speak enough Arabic to do so). This repetition is an everyday phenomenon, even when people simply say good morning. Villagers often opened their speeches with a welcome in Hebrew, Arabic and occasionally English in a wide range of contexts including: a wedding party, the opening of a new gallery in the village, a film and discussion session, small yoga and dance clubs in the village, and parties held for religious festivals. Just as Adel's aim was to "open a hatch" for Arabic, these speeches introduced the events as multilingual spaces. There was also an underlying political point that the village as a whole was an equally Arabic and Hebrew place, as was the intention in naming the village twice (in Arabic and Hebrew).

To press for translation when there is no 'need' (as some perceive it) is a political act. Linguist anthropologist Alexandra Jaffe has noted that when it is generally accepted that translation is undertaken in order to make words accessible to people who cannot understand the original, then an act of translation "that openly violates this pragmatic, communicative function acquires a certain metalinguistic force: it insures that the translation will be "read" as a political statement" (Jaffe 1999: 42). Forcing the Jewish Israelis in the conference to put the effort into picking up a headset so that the Hebrew-speaking Gazan could speak in his native tongue

brought the power-dynamics underlying the linguistic asymmetry to the fore, briefly making it a subject of conversation.

The Difficult Position of Translator

As we saw in the film-screening, while translation is practiced with the aim to create equality between Arabic and Hebrew – and thus Palestinians and Jews – it can actually exacerbate other inequalities and draw out power dynamics beyond those between two language groups. This tension surrounding translation maps onto translators themselves, as was perfectly described by Adel in a lecture to Jewish and Palestinian Israelis on a group facilitator course (note: I translated the following from Hebrew, and Adel used the Hebrew word *Aravim* (Arabs) as short-hand for Palestinian Israelis):

> "The task of a facilitator, the task of an Arab facilitator, is to translate and there are all kinds of implications — I've said this in the past, it's important to say it in two more sentences — the Arab facilitator is really not in an easy position. He is the subject of all kinds of repercussions in all kinds of ways. In youth workshops [referring to the workshops SFP run for Jewish and Palestinian high school youth], predominantly in youth workshops, and also sometimes with grown-ups: "ah he didn't translate right", "ah you didn't translate all that was said" or "why are you stirring?", etc. The Palestinian facilitator can be more dominant but he has a double role, as he must also be 'attentive' because many times he needs to translate something and then they catch him, as if unawares, so he needs to be very focused on what is being said and so on… and also he is meant to facilitate. Those here that will go on to facilitate, from the Arabs, need to be careful not to fall into the role of the translator because it is a very tempting position with a lot of power."

These repercussions Adel mentions are a result of both the power and vulnerability of the translator. One reason translators are in a vulnerable position is because their linguistic ability is under scrutiny. Sometimes the ability of a bilingual translator can upend existing hierarchies;

such as the powerful positions bilingual children have when translating for their parents at clinics (Collins & Slembrouck 2006) or bilingual members of local communities that work and translate for global NGOs operating in the area (Hanson 2007). However, because Palestinian bilinguals translate in the presence of other bilingual speakers, they are subject to judgement; this is often the case when the dominant language is not the one bilinguals associate with themselves culturally or politically (Jaffe 1999; Gal 2015).[37]

It is not only translators' linguistic ability that is under scrutiny. Translators' intentions and motivations can be suspected of failing to 'correctly' pass on the message, hence the accusations of 'stirring' to which Adel referred. Translators are vulnerable to the accusation of changing the message precisely because of their potential power over communication. In the example Adel gives, his control over the message, as a translator, is compounded by his relative power over the youth, as an adult and as a facilitator. The powerful role of translator also exacerbates the power dynamics between genders. When Sima was making a point about how Palestinian women suffer more than men both in jail and on their return to society, it was important to her that the message would not be mediated by someone else, especially a man. The stakes were too high for the potential misinterpretation of a point that was clearly important to her, and it was reasonable for her to suspect that she would receive a less-than-favourable reception to her argument (as Sabir indeed did object to the focus on gender) so she felt the need to take full responsibility for it.

The tension between female translatee and male translator can be better explained in a more elongated ethnographic example, a description of a literature lecture by a female academic at a SFP workshop for Israeli and Palestinian literature teachers. This lecture took place about half-way into a year-long course to train the teachers how to teach the literature of the 'other' in translation. The guest lecturer was invited to speak on Palestinian women writers. When SFP run projects 'across the border' in partnership with a Ramallah-based Palestinian NGO,

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[37] In the context Jaffe writes about — Corsican speakers who translate French language texts for a mainly bilingual readership — the politicised nature of translation, which is aimed at raising the position of one language, conversely creates inequality among its speakers. One reason that translation was problematic for the Corsican-speakers Jaffe writes about is that both translators and readership are more proficient in French, which is the dominant language. There is therefore a potential for embarrassment or tension between Corsican-speakers, particularly when there is an intergenerational aspect, because their aptitude for Corsican can be brought into question (Jaffe 1999: 42)

translators are needed because neither group understands the other's language. Thus, alongside the Jewish Israeli SFP group facilitator and the Palestinian group facilitator from the partnering Palestinian NGO, there was a Palestinian Israeli whose sole job was to translate.

The lecture took place in an unassuming meeting room on the ground floor of a hotel in a Palestinian town near Bethlehem. A board-room-style table stood in the middle of the tiled floor and a whiteboard adorned the wall opposite the window, underneath it a small desk and side table supported a tray of tea, coffee, and biscuits. The Palestinian Israeli professor of literature, who is also a writer in her own right, arranged her papers at the head of the table while people began to settle into the chairs that lined the three walls opposite the whiteboard. No one but the lecturer sat at the table in order to create a large circle. The assembled group included the Jewish Israeli group facilitator from the SFP and the Palestinian facilitator from the Ramallah-based NGO, a Palestinian Israeli translator, the lecturer, myself, and the course participants. The Palestinian participants comprised of high school teachers, students of education, and a gentleman with a connection to the Palestinian Ministry of Education; the Jewish Israeli participants comprised of high school teachers, students of education, lecturers at educational colleges, and a Palestinian Israeli with an interest in literature. This was the fifth in a series of monthly meetings and it was clear that several participants had established social bonds as they chose to sit down next to each other.

For the benefit of the lecturer it was decided that the event would begin by everyone introducing themselves — their name, connection to education, and reason for being on the course — in Arabic or Hebrew. Each introduction was followed by a slight pause in order for the designated translator, Amin, to provide the corresponding Hebrew or Arabic translation. I chose to introduce myself in Hebrew and explained that I had arrived with the SFP, but that I was also there as a researcher, working on a PhD project about language and political relations. A pause was left and sure enough I heard my words repeated back, pretty much word for word, in Arabic; the similarity in Arabic and Hebrew sentence structure meant that the words even appeared in the same order (Arabic and Hebrew share many grammatical rules). Then the lecturer introduced herself in Arabic and Hebrew, already subverting the role of translator,

explaining that her topic that morning would be women writers in Palestinian literature. Picking up on my introduction, perhaps due to mine being nearly the last, she turned to me and said in Hebrew (as she was partly addressing me) that it was a very interesting point about the relationship of language and politics. She explained further that it is strange how she, a Palestinian, is used to delivering lectures on Palestinian literature in Hebrew and often provides Hebrew translations of the poems and prose she covers, because Hebrew is the dominant language at Israeli universities. As the lecturer had been speaking in Hebrew, Amin, our translator, offered Arabic translation for the benefit of the Palestinian participants.

The lecturer began to deliver her talk – tracing out three generations of Palestinian women writers over the last century – in Hebrew while Amin translated. This did not run smoothly as the lecturer had not really been leaving enough pauses for Amin to jump in with the Arabic, sometimes she self-translated by switching into Arabic herself, and yet other times interjected Amin's translation to offer a different Arabic word or phrase that she found more fitting. Becoming increasingly aware of – and visibly frustrated by – the stop-and-start nature the talk was taking, the lecturer stopped to explain (in Hebrew then Arabic) her unease: 'I'm in a situation where I hear myself twice'. After a few more awkward trials of self-translation (or repetition) it was decided that the usual translation process should be followed for the sake of retaining a flow to the lecture.

This was a scene I was used to seeing. Palestinian Israelis found it strange or even irritating to have themselves translated, sometimes correcting the translators' choice of words, sometimes translating themselves before the translator had a chance to step in, and sometimes refusing to be translated at all. In the above case it is understandable that a lecturer on Palestinian literature, who was already painfully aware that she thought and wrote about Arabic content in Hebrew, is even more conscious of this issue when faced with an audience of Palestinians from the West Bank. Arguably her need for control over the Arabic phrasing of her Hebrew words is even more important as it is part of her legitimacy as an expert in Palestinian literature. As a woman lecturer and writer, she may well have found it jarring that her thoughts and arguments about women in the Palestinian literary cannon were being translated to half the

audience by a man. This was made clearer to me when the lecturer later engaged in a somewhat heated discussion with one of the male Palestinian teachers about gender issues in Palestinian society, and again she cut out the translator by speaking directly to the Palestinian course participant in Arabic. The translator is bestowed a kind of power in this context – because of his control over the content that is communicated and what is presented – that is not removed from the different relations of power that exist between the assembled group beyond this particular speech event.

The potential accusation of "stirring" or betraying a message – that Adel faced directly, and was implied in Sima and the literature lecturer's respective reactions to Amin's translation – is inherent to the practice of translation because translation can never quite produce an equivalent. This is a problem inherent in the very nature of translation. It has been established in the field of translation that equivalence between source and destination language cannot be achieved; translators may choose the degree of equivalence, and different degrees are necessary for different kinds of text (Bassnett & Lefevere 1998). Building on a similar premise, Viveiros de Castro (2004) argues that a translator is always in some way betraying the source message by explaining it through the conceptual framework of the destination language, using analogy and metaphor, rather than truly introducing the underlying meanings of the message. Better, Viveiros de Castro argues, to challenge the conceptual toolbox of the translator and force the 'alien concepts' into the destination language (2004: 5). The premise underlying Viveiros de Castro's notion of betrayal is that there is a movement from source to destination language that seemingly goes in only one direction and produces a somewhat static result. When Adel, or any other Palestinian Israeli, is translating for fellow bilinguals the process is never that linear because the bilingual audience can interject with suggestions, corrections, or accusations that the message had been changed. Such fluidity makes it hard to pinpoint which conceptual tools are being used when and by whom. Moreover, Palestinian Israelis spend so much time talking and thinking in Hebrew and Arabic, and switching between the two, that it would difficult even to split out two separate conceptual frameworks.

The Dilemma of Substance or Form

We have seen how a 'bad' translation is one that betrays the original, or misinterprets or entrenches some underlying inequality, but a 'good' translation can be perceived to be so accurate that it is experienced as a frustrating repetition. Palestinian Israelis who want to express themselves in Arabic in conversations with Jewish Israeli friends and colleagues often feel like they are repeating themselves. As Aqila, a Palestinian Israeli villager who also taught Arabic and English at the village primary school, put it:

> "Just imagine I'd say a sentence in Arabic and then I'd translate the same
> words into Hebrew, or say it in Hebrew and say the same words in
> Arabic. It's so boring, so mechanic, it's not real, it's empty of emotions. I
> am not a parrot, I'm not repeating things for the sake of repeating. So I
> mix languages"

The experience of repetition can be boring, and frustrating, especially in the case of Palestinians who are translating their own words because the Jewish Israelis did not have to make the effort to be as bilingual as them. Yet others view repetition as a tool; it can be deliberately employed to make a point, as a rhetorical style, or it can be used in learning or teaching a language; a point linguistic anthropologists have pursued (e.g. Moore 2011). One could also argue, like Giles Deleuze (1994 [1968]), that repetition opens up an opportunity for creativity, for subverting established rules; to create irony one can completely change the meaning of an utterance or a piece of writing simply by transferring it to a different context. The repeated bilingual chant of "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies" at a rally, for example, has the power to create a sense of solidarity among the chanters that transcends any one iteration of the phrase. The WASNS habit of beginning almost any event by greeting attendees in both Arabic and Hebrew, despite the fact that all present (Jewish as well as Palestinian) would understand both, has the rhetoric effect of 'opening a hatch', as Adel put it. The act of repetition sends the message that both languages are welcome and thus allows Arabic speakers to express themselves in Arabic, which has an affective quality. Aqila's statement, however, suggests that repetition can be seen as paradoxically stripping away the emotional power of the utterance

which was only made possible by having a translation at the ready. As we saw above, providing translation in SFP events was precisely the process that made it possible for Palestinian Israelis to feel free to express themselves in Arabic, and, as some argued, better convey a sense of their emotion and strength of thought. At the heart of these two differing positions is a focus on whether repetition can be a source of difference. For Aqila, repetition is not about difference, she feels that she becomes a parrot. If, however, one takes the Deleuzean view that repeating an utterance or piece of text in a different context makes a difference because difference is key to repetition, then repetition can be seen as a productive rhetorical device that delivers a message through the form of speech; repetition can be used to emphasise a point or 'open a hatch'.

The quote from Aqila above took place in the context of an interview I conducted with her. We had been speaking about the position of Arabic in the village, and Aqila's disappointment that her Jewish Israeli friends and neighbours had not made an effort to learn Arabic, meaning that she would either speak in Hebrew or not be understood. I had just asked Aqila about how she dealt with the dilemma of form over content. That is, whether to speak in Arabic – with all the important social and political messages that doing so sends – at the expense of the content not being understood by Jewish Israelis, or to speak, or repeat oneself, in Hebrew. With adults, Aqila said, she had to make a judgement – depending on the context and her feeling at the time – whether it was more important to have her point understood or to make a statement by speaking in Arabic. Whereas, in the school classroom, where half the students are Jewish Israelis and the other half Palestinian Israelis, Aqila preferred to avoid translation, which in her opinion was just repetition.

Aqila also explained that she discovered it could be empowering to speak a language others do not understand, because she has them at a disadvantage. Sometimes she would jokingly insert the name of a Jewish Israeli friend or neighbour into an Arabic sentence, knowing they were in earshot, and then refuse to translate to make the point that, if they want to understand they should learn Arabic. Sometimes Palestinian Israelis in SFP workshops also ask the facilitator/translator not to translate because they wish to discuss an issue among themselves rather than with Jewish Israelis. In short, while translation was adopted as a practice to tackle

inequality, sometimes the decision *not* to translate could be a source of momentary empowerment.

For many of the Palestinian and Jewish Israelis I lived and worked with, translation was a tool to create an equal space for Arabic and thus address a power imbalance, whether this was to challenge the dominance of Hebrew or to start a conversation about the power imbalance that underlies that dominance. This was not an easy task and there was no one answer as to the best use of translation. As can be seen from the literature lecture, sometimes repeating oneself in another language was more comfortable than hearing oneself repeated in someone else's words. As we have seen, some people are acutely aware of the power inherent in the role of translator, as well as the many accusations one can be subjected to when undertaking the responsibilities of the role. Every occurrence of translation, then, had to be renegotiated according to the particular situation, and the people involved.

This chapter began by asking how translation practices are used to address inequality, and found that there was always an unsatisfying balancing act between several objectives and challenges. In their article on the issues of language in SFP workshops, Halabi and Zak conclude with the Arabic proverb: "we cannot straighten out a man's shadow when the man himself is bent" (Halabi & Zak 2004: 140). That is, the tensions concerning which language to use, and what role translation plays, are connected to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. WASNS villagers, like SFP staff, are on an ongoing search for solutions to language asymmetry, yet they know that the asymmetry cannot be fully resolved unless the causes for it are addressed. The only escape from all the various dilemmas concerning the use of translation as a tool to challenge inequality is for Jewish Israelis to be as bilingual as the Palestinians, thus allowing for the code-switching approach Aqila prefers. It is to the endeavour of achieving bilingualism that I now turn.

Chapter V: From Bilingualism to Code-Switching

Early one evening in June 2014 a chattering crowd was forming on the primary school grounds in the village. School children (most of whom do not live in the community itself but commute from nearby villages) and their families, teachers, and several community members gathered on the grass between the two buildings that constitute the village primary school. Rows of plastic chairs had been laid out on the sloping grass, facing the temporary stage that had been set up at the lowest point to create the feel of a miniature outdoor theatre. To mark the end of the school year the sixth grade class was putting on a play. The play followed two siblings on their search for the 'perfect family' and, after meeting various families, they eventually conclude that their own family was the best for them all along. At this final point they discover the village primary school where they can learn both Arabic and Hebrew, a theme that was built up as the play unfolded. Throughout the play the children's lines alternated between Arabic and Hebrew, and some children even code-switched within their lines. One particularly poignant moment of this code-switching was in a scene near the end of the play. In the scene, a Jewish character meets a Palestinian character who introduces himself in Hebrew, and the girl playing the Jewish character replies, in Hebrew, 'sorry I don't understand Arabic'. At this point the audience bursts into laughter. Code-switching reflected the school values of equality and came through in the educational style of the teachers, like Aqila, who preferred to organically alternate between languages rather than simply translate themselves. Fluid language alternation is complicated by the difference in aptitude among listeners; the Palestinians students have a much higher aptitude for Hebrew than their Jewish classmates have for Arabic, as has already been discussed. This meant that, while the 'Arabic' line above was delivered in Hebrew with some intentional humour, the choice to deliver some lines in Hebrew rather than Arabic could equally have been due to the language level of the students. A further irony is that the girl playing the Jewish Israeli would have actually understood the line had it been delivered in Arabic, as it was a simple introduction requiring only a basic, and common, level of bilingualism.

The villagers are in a complex position. They want to give Arabic an equal space in the village to counter the structural inequality that has led to Hebrew's dominance in Israel as a whole, and yet they cannot escape those structural inequalities themselves. Among the first generation this inequality between Hebrew and Arabic is complicated by the fact that some Jewish Israeli villagers do not feel that they need to know Arabic in order to achieve equality. The second generation, however, all learnt Hebrew and Arabic at the primary school, but the Palestinians still have a much better grasp of Hebrew than their Jewish friends have of Arabic. On many occasions I noticed friends in the second generation switching to Hebrew because one Jewish Israeli had joined a conversation in a mostly Palestinian Israeli group, or that the Jewish Israeli would reply to Arabic questions and statements in Hebrew. The ways in which this unequal language acquisition plays out in ordinary exchanges can lead to ethical reflection. Sometimes this came through in the form of humour, mostly teasing, other times in explicit reflection on embarrassment at lack of Arabic knowledge on the part of Jewish Israelis.

As we saw in the conclusion to chapter IV, the only way to avoid the various pitfalls of translation is to foster bilingualism. Since founding the school in 1984 the villagers have been trying to achieve this through providing a bilingual education. The founders of the primary school wanted their children to learn together and, in the early 1980s, there were no schools in Israel that Jewish and Palestinian Israelis could both attend. It was decided that it would be both a binational school (commemorating and teaching both Palestinian and Israeli national and cultural events) and a bilingual school. The second generation of the village was to become a bilingual one, proficient in both Arabic and Hebrew, as part of the villagers aim to make the village a bilingual space. This effort to create a bilingual space in WASNS is bolstered more widely, for all generations, through acts of translation; whether formalised within meetings, or the appearance of both languages in written materials from signs to e-newsletters. Despite these efforts and although some of the Jewish Israelis have a high aptitude for Arabic, Hebrew is still the dominant language in many verbal exchanges. Part of the reason for this is the dominance of Hebrew in Israel more generally, a dominance which these attempts at bilingualism are in fact trying to overcome. As already discussed in Chapter I, there are several social, economic and political reasons for Arabic's linguistic marginalisation, but here we are concerned with what

effects this asymmetry has on a community aiming for equality. How do the villagers, particularly the second generation villagers that learned both languages, make sense of the continued linguistic asymmetry? What are the linguistic behaviours that such a bilingual ideology has inspired?

To address these questions this chapter will first explore the emotional reactions villagers had to the question 'what is the place of Arabic in the village' and their explanations. I will suggest that such an intense awareness of all the socio-political reasons why language asymmetry persists, within a community where bilingualism is part of the overall ideology, informs moments of explicit ethical self-reflection about language use. The chapter will then turn to the linguistic practices that unintentionally resulted from the attempt to create a bilingual space, and the role these practices play in WASNS social life.

The Place of Arabic in WASNS

When asked about the place of Arabic in the village, the overwhelming response of the villagers I met was dejection and frustration. Some Palestinians that I interviewed about the place of Arabic in the village expressed disappointment in Jewish Israeli friends and neighbours that had not tried to learn Arabic. As Aqila, the teacher mentioned above, explained to me, when Jewish Israelis pupils or fellow villagers did not make an effort to learn Arabic it felt like a humiliation and a sign of disrespect, because Arabic was more than just a language for her. As Aqila put it, "this is my language; my language means my honour, my ego, my tradition, my everything." As we already saw in Chapter IV, the purpose of making an equal space for Arabic is not just to help balance power dynamics but also to provide Arabic speakers with the opportunity to express themselves by drawing on the affective value of their first language. Even the Palestinian Israelis who felt their Hebrew was stronger because they were used to using it in professional or academic capacity still argued that Arabic allowed them to express themselves in a way they could not in Hebrew. Given this affective, and personal, quality of language, one can see why Aqila would feel disrespected when people who she is supposed to have good social relationships cannot appreciate the importance of the language for her.

Jewish Israeli villagers also reacted strongly to this question about the place of Arabic in the village. "It's a painful topic, I think it comes up all the time," answered Efrat, a Jewish Israeli villager, "it's very frustrating, it's frustrating that the Jews do not reach the level of Arabic they need to reach." When I first met Efrat, months before that interview, I was attempting to explain my research as generally being about people's attitudes to language and how that relates to power dynamics. At the time Efrat and I were sitting with a group of Palestinian and Jewish friends in their early-to-mid twenties, who had all been through the village primary school in their youth. Efrat immediately said I should make a note of the fact that when there are any Jewish Israelis present in the group everyone reverts to Hebrew because it is 'the language of the majority'. This indeed was observable at start of the very same evening in which our conversation took place. Four of Efrat's Palestinian friends had been talking amongst themselves in Arabic, switching occasionally to English when volunteers joined in, but as soon as Efrat arrived that evening the conversations switched into Hebrew. As more friends arrived, and people broke off into smaller conversations, I noticed that Efrat's friends, Ahed and In'am, spoke to her in Arabic and she would reply in Hebrew. I asked Efrat why she responded to Arabic in Hebrew, and she replied that she was embarrassed to speak Arabic and that her Palestinian friends had made fun of her for speaking it badly in the past. The tone of her voice was not completely serious as she was partly teasing her friends, who were sat on either side of us, and obviously listening in. This is indicative of the joking nature of second-generation relationships, in which everyone teases each other about almost anything (explored further in Chapter VII). The topic of the teasing was both language and teasing itself, by implying that her friends made too much fun of her Arabic speaking attempts.

Efrat's use of the phrase 'language of the majority' indicated that she was aware of all the socio-political reasons that language inequality persists, as discussed in Chapter I. Much of the literature on bilingual education in Israel highlights the main challenge to bilingual projects as the economic and social necessity of Hebrew (Bekerman 2005; Mor-Sommerfeld, Azaiza, & Hertz-Lazarowitz 2007). In his study of bilingual schools, Bekerman (2005) found that both the Palestinian Israeli and Jewish Israeli parents chose to send their children to bilingual schools for a range of ideological reasons, specially a concern for equality and mutual understanding. Yet

they viewed the usefulness of languages in terms of social and economic benefit. Jewish Israeli parents of children at bilingual schools often conclude that Arabic is too hard to learn to fluency because it is under-used in wider society. Palestinian parents come to similar conclusions, favouring bilingual schools for the level of Hebrew that their children can expect to obtain. This attitude to language in turn affects both the children's attainment and the structure of the curriculum.

Bekerman notes that, when English lessons were introduced to bilingual schools, they gradually occupied more of the hours originally allocated to Arabic teaching (Bekerman 2005:10). Schools were responding to pressure from both Jewish and Palestinian parents who valued English language skills as a gateway to global employment and higher-education opportunities (Bekerman 2005:10). A Jewish Israeli WASNS villager, Irit, drew on this kind socio-economic reasoning in her analysis of the place of Arabic in the village during an interview conducted for the communications department:

> "what's really pushing you to make sure that the Jews speak Arabic if they don't have to speak Arabic? You can manage fine [in Israel] without Arabic… But it's crucial, it's essential, I cannot imagine my life without Arabic. I really don't know how it's not mandatory. And, you know, language is a very important thing, because Jews speaking Arabic… the context of it here in Israel is a [military] intelligence/security context. Many times when I speak Arabic, Palestinians who don't know me go "oh are you Palestinian?" and I say no, so they go "oh so you're intelligence, that's why you speak Arabic." There is no way this switch [can] happen in people's minds to realise that I speak Arabic not for intelligence purposes. In the Middle East you're supposed to know Arabic and the fact we're treating this as a language of security…. I think that is the hardest thing to implement in schools, that switch, that you should know Arabic to communicate, you know Arabic because you need it, you know Arabic because it is a bridge, you know Arabic because it is essential to the Middle East."

It is clear that Irit, like Efrat, is aware of all the socio-political reasons why Hebrew dominates bilingual spaces, particularly one's need for Hebrew to 'get by' in Israel. Accepting that these socio-economic factors had a strong bearing on the success of bilingual education projects, I asked Irit why linguistic inequality was still a problem in a village where learning Arabic was such an important part of social life, particularly for the second generation. Irit's answer was that many Jewish Israelis felt they would make a mistakes in Arabic because they did not practice it enough, which was embarrassing because their Palestinian Israeli friends could speak Hebrew so well, and sadly not enough of the second generation Jewish Israeli villagers were willing to put the emotional labour into overcoming such embarrassment.

There are many reasons why Jewish Israelis in the second generation could find themselves uncomfortable speaking Arabic. As Irit mentioned, it may feel silly or frustrating to struggle through a language one cannot fully grasp with full knowledge that one's conversational partner can understand a language you are much better at. Hebrew also offers the most 'efficient' delivery of content as it is the most collectively proficient, and, as the Israeli idiom goes, *lama lishbor et hashinayim* (literally 'why break the teeth'). There could also be embarrassment simply as a point of pride; not wanting to be made fun of for making a mistake. This kind of embarrassment is concerned with the accuracy and efficiency of language use, but the socio-political context (and potential cause for) such inaccuracies is also source of embarrassment itself.

Most villagers could, almost unprompted, launch into an analysis of their linguistic behaviour in terms of a wider landscape of political inequality, just like Irit and Efrat above. This awareness suggests another potential source of embarrassment for Jewish Israeli, or even shame, about not speaking enough Arabic. The fact Palestinian Israelis learnt to speak Hebrew with such fluency while the Jewish Israelis simply did not 'need' to learn Arabic for life in Israel was a reminder of the unequal experiences they had of life in the country. While this may not have been a source of embarrassment for all, it was one of many ways in which structural inequality created small persistent ruptures in friendships. Along with language, I noted other un-ignorable issues, such as army service or the very blatant racism that Jewish Israelis saw

their Palestinian Israeli friends face when they went out to cities like Tel Aviv or Jerusalem together. Unequal linguistic knowledge was a further, more constant, reminder of the inequality so evident at the 'flashpoint' topics of army service or unsubtle racism. It was common for villagers to feel implicated in the wider socio-political landscape, for reasons discussed in Chapter II, and we can relate this to what Veena Das (2015) has described as complicity in a world of injustice and inequality. This sense of responsibility, Das finds, is a sad acceptance by most that grand ethical objectives are unobtainable, leading in turn to a focus on what are deemed more attainable concepts (for example "non-cruelty") grounded in relations with others in our day-to-day lives (Das 2015: 116).

Ultimately, the second generation Jewish Israelis I talked to felt guilt about their lack of ability in Arabic because they were aware of the social importance of knowing their friends' language. This is what Irit was driving at as she actively tried to reframe what necessity is, hence her stress of the word 'need'. 'Need' in her explanation is not just about being pragmatic – to get a job, to be understood at the clinic, and so on – although she did list the practical benefits of being able to communicate with non-Hebrew-speaking Palestinians. Above and beyond this, Irit is presenting 'need' in terms of what it means to be a social being; Arabic knowledge is necessary for social actions such as bridging (between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians) and belonging to the Middle East. Indeed, despite the language asymmetry among the second generation and their awareness of it, all the Jewish Israeli second generation stressed that they felt Arabic was part of their identity. The second generation did not simply learn Arabic and Hebrew at primary school, they were immersed in each other's languages through all the social interactions they took part in and witnessed in the village. Jewish and Palestinian Israeli children would spend time at each others' homes growing up and would hear Arabic and Hebrew as it was spoken, sharing each other's colloquialisms

The efforts made by some Jewish Israelis in the village to learn Arabic, and the efforts to raise all the Jewish Israeli children in the village to be as bilingual as their Palestinian Israeli friends, are made to achieve more than just equality. Knowing each other's languages allows Jewish and Palestinian Israelis to really engage in talk across differences; reaching a level of

social intimacy that is essential to the project of WASNS. As Bruno Hussar, the village founder, put it in is his autobiography: "if we want to rediscover the intimacy that once existed in this land between Arab and Jew, it is vital that more and more Israeli Jews learn Arabic" (Hussar 1989: 98). Intimacy with other languages was most evident in the practice of seemingly spontaneous moments of code-switching in social events, like the winter party at the Pluralistic Spiritual Centre, described below.

Code-switching at a Village Celebration

Early one evening in late December 2014 I was busy placing tea-lights on the path to the spiritual centre. I had agreed to help Ofra, a Jewish Israeli villager greatly involved in the spiritual centre, to set up the Christmas/Hanukkah/Mawlid al-Nabi winter party. It was already dark and whatever light that still emanated from the nearby houses, and the centre itself, was blocked out by the tall trees that line the path. Despite the late hour, well-past the early-evening 'start' time, the party had not really begun as no-one in Israel-Palestine arrives on time to social events. As a few villagers eventually trickled in, I met them whilst running about relighting the short-lived tea-lights. One of these villagers was Sigal, one of the earliest members of the village, who has been involved in the primary school and in the weekly dance sessions that will be discussed in Chapter VI.

After my tea-light duties, I headed to the patio that connects the two buildings that make up the spiritual centre. One building houses a hall, kitchen, and bathrooms, the other, Ofra's office and a smaller hall that was being used that evening for a children's art activity. The connecting patio space usually serves as a reception and dining area, and is partly protected from the elements by a canopy. This evening more chairs and tables had been added to the usual collection of furniture; two long wooden benches and a selection of plastic garden chairs and circular tables. A long buffet table had been placed against the wall of the smaller building and was laden with food that Nazem had arranged to be brought from the village guest house. Mingling in this outside area, were the villagers' guests; a local community of French-speaking nuns, two monks from the monastery across the valley, and a French journalist. Entertaining these guests were some of my colleagues from the communication office as well as George and

Ayman (the heads of two of the village's committees), and one of the village founders, who is a native French speaker. I heard a mixture of languages as conversations switched between English, French, Arabic and Hebrew.

Whilst guests and villagers mingled on the patio, children took part in an art activity the school art teacher (also a village member) had prepared in the smaller hall. Aqila, the languages teacher, watched the children and spoke to them in a tone so particular to primary school teachers, that encapsulates both a sense of praise and instruction. Just as in the classes she teaches, Aqila switched between Arabic and Hebrew; she was equally likely to ask *su hadha* as *ma zeh* ('what is this?' in Arabic and Hebrew respectively) regardless of the identity of the child whose artwork she was asking about.

Eventually, quite a crowd had gathered on the patio, about fifty people, and there were many familiar faces. One villager had bought and prepared possibly the largest turkey I have ever seen, and it was placed in all its crowning glory at the centre of the buffet table. After a short jokey exchange between some of the men about how to best carve the turkey it was served, and the feast began in earnest.

At some seemingly arbitrary point after the dinner, Ofra, with the help of Nazem and others, indicated that we should all make our way into the larger hall to start the various ceremonies. Chairs had been set up in the hall in semi-circle rows, facing the band who sat on cushions on the floor. Once everyone was more or less settled, Ofra took the microphone and, in her characteristically soft and measured mode of speaking, welcomed everyone in Hebrew, Arabic and English, a common practice in WASNS (as was discussed in chapter IV). She then gave a short speech about light banishing darkness, building on a similar theme from the previous year. Ofra used darkness as a metaphor for recent turbulent times in Israel-Palestine without going into too much detail. Everyone present was aware of the latest 'dark moment' as the war in Gaza had continued through-out the summer, and the escalating violence and racism within Israeli society had occupied everyone's lives for months. Ofra spoke in Hebrew but would translate every other phrase or so into Arabic, as she found the words to do so. This translation did not disturb the flow of the speech (a concern many often have with translation)

partly because of Ofra's delivery style, which had many natural pauses, and partly because the speech was relatively short. In closing, Ofra asked everyone in the room to turn to people sat near them and greet them in whatever language they preferred in that moment.

After Ofra's speech George and Ayman also gave brief speeches, delivered in Arabic and Hebrew. Ayman, who was serving as chair of the municipality that year, had made speeches in most of the village events I attended. The village does not have a mayor and there is another role, that of general manager, which represents the village on municipal issues in the regional council. Ayman performed a kind of mayoral role within the community, giving speeches at events such as these was a large part of that, and always struck me as rather mayoral in character. He is one of those very jovial charismatic kinds of people that shakes everyone's hand and asks how they are even if they are just acquaintances and he might not have even remembered their name. The rhetorical style of Ayman's speeches also suited that of a village mayor. In his speech for the last event that took place at the spiritual centre a couple of months previous (to celebrate the Jewish and Muslim New Year), he noted how the village community used to celebrate all the children's birthdays together in the 'good old days', and how he wished to see a return to that communal spirit. His speeches, no matter what the event, usually came back to the theme of community unity, and, fitting his character, also contained a few light-hearted moments. On the night of the winter festivities, Ayman accidentally translated 'light banishes darkness' in Arabic to 'darkness banishes the light' in Hebrew, and, after both his audience and he himself picked up on this mix-up, he laughed, and as if waving something off, continued, 'or lightness banishes the dark'.

The event just described was much more informal and unstructured than the speech events this thesis has covered thus far. There was a general plan of how activities were to unfold and who was expected to speak, but the actual order and content of these activities and speeches tended to evolve as the evening went on. The social atmosphere was very relaxed, and so too was the approach to choosing languages to speak in. There are three aspects of code-switching at this party that are worth highlighting. First, that the languages being used included French, German, and English as well as Arabic and Hebrew; this reflects the multilingual nature of

WASNS's international guests as well as the villagers themselves. Several Palestinian Israelis, for example, had a high aptitude for German because they studied at German universities. Second, the ease with which villagers like Aqila, Ofra, and Ayman switched between Arabic and Hebrew, without concern for achieving a total balance or making sure every word was understood. Third, as was seen in Ayman's jovial speech, that code-switching could also be a source of humour.

Code-switching as a Source of Humour

Ayman's mix-up between light and dark revealed that switching from one language to another could have humorous results. Often code-switching was used deliberately to make people laugh. A good example of this use took place in one of the many 'hang-outs' of the second generation. A volunteer and I had joined a group of Palestinian villagers, and their friends from the nearby city of Lydda, after we had all participated in a demonstration against home demolitions. Several conversations went on at once, some about the events of the evening, others about what food to order as people were hungry. Amidst this cacophony of conversation, Sanah, a WASNS villager, exaggeratedly called out:

> niftax ***du-siya/x/***

> we'll open a dialogue…

> niftax *al-bab*

> we'll open the door…

By stressing the last word of each phrase to the point of silliness, and punctuating both words by holding her hands open and apart for added emphasis, Sanah's delivery evoked a familiar scene in Israeli speaking culture. I often encountered such appeals to 'open a dialogue,' whether in an office setting or informal social occasions; it is a phrase that is particularly present in dialogue projects like the ones Sanah's parents' generation set up at WASNS. Code-switching is essential to the humour here, as Sanah, who was speaking mostly in Arabic, used the familiar Hebrew word for dialogue/discourse (דו-שיח — du-siya/x/) to playfully mock the

dialogue culture of her upbringing. It is not entirely clear, however, where the code-switching begins and ends, because the verb 'we'll open' is almost exactly the same in Arabic (niftax — نـفتح) and Hebrew (nifta/x/ — נפתח). The only major difference in the pronunciation of these two words is the final letter: the Arabic Ha (ح) is a voiceless pharyngeal fricative — it sounds like a breathy 'H' in English — and the Hebrew Het (ח) is usually a voiceless uvular fricative — it sounds similar to the Liverpudlian pronunciation of 'ck' at the end of words like 'back'. The phrase — 'we'll open a dialogue' — could thus be interpreted as being entirely in Hebrew by a Jewish Israeli audience who do not know Arabic, especially considering that some Mizrahi Israelis pronounce the Hebrew letter Het like the Arabic letter Ha.

This particular code-switching based joke, like most I encountered in the village, was delivered to an audience that had enough knowledge and familiarity with both Arabic and Hebrew to pick up nuances in pronunciation. Indeed, I would regularly hear people in the village play with the pronunciation of words in this way, mostly emphasising the 'Arabic' pronunciation of certain letters when speaking in Hebrew. This language play is not limited to villagers. For example, not long after Sanah's joke that evening, one of her friends from outside the village announced she had just ordered pizza by stating '*az ezmanti bizza*', which is 'so I have ordered' in Hebrew, followed by an 'Arabic' pronunciation of 'pizza' (itself a loan-word to both languages). Sanah's friend was playing on a stereotype that Arabic speakers replace 'p' letters with 'b', something that none of the Palestinian Israelis I met actually do, including Sanah's friend. Without the exaggerated *bizza*, Sanah's friend would have just been speaking in Hebrew, humorously putting on an 'Arabic' accent created enough of a linguistic difference to suggest a code-switch.

As numerous linguistic anthropologists have convincingly shown, languages are made to appear as bounded entities through language ideologies, and processes like translation, when the reality of language use is far more amorphous (Gal & Woolard 2001: 1; Gal 2015: 3-5). Humorous code-switching, like that exhibited by Sanah, can both create a sense of linguistic boundaries as well as challenge their existence. Arabic and Hebrew have quite a few similarities, and moments like these humorously differentiate languages that are not entirely

separable. Perhaps the second generation of WASNS used language in this way because of their bilingual education, with teachers like Aqila constantly moving between languages. Linguist Aura Mor-Sommerfeld (2002), in her study of bilingual education in Israel, has identified an interesting phenomenon resulting from such pedagogical approaches, which she calls 'language mosaic'. 'Language mosaic' refers to both the process in which the children learn and incorporate a second 'non-native' language with their own, and the product of this process, for example the tendency of children to write words using a mixture of Arabic and Hebrew script (Mor-Sommerfeld 2002: 99). In later works Mor-Sommerfeld has shown how such practices of "interlanguage" are essential to the "practical inter-culturalism" displayed in bilingual schools in Israel similar to the school at WASNS (Mor-Sommerfeld, Azaiza, & Hertz-Lazarowitz 2007: 55); that is, they create spaces out of the encounter of languages and cultures. These approaches, Mor-Sommerfeld argues, are importantly opposed to 'liberal-multicultural policies' because, "while multiculturalism reinforces separation between ethno-cultural groups, inter-culturalism re-articulates the in-between space by making it relevant" (Mor-Sommerfeld, Azaiza, & Hertz-Lazarowitz 2007: 60). I argue that, by making jokes out of the boundary creation between Arabic and Hebrew in instances of exaggerated pronunciation, villagers like Sanah are engaging in this kind of inter-culturalism.

Palestinian Israeli code-switching also draws from a wider trend of code-switching humour among Arabic-speakers. Due to the diglossic nature of Arabic there are many opportunities to play with code-switching. Studies have shown how switching from *Fusha* (Modern Standard or Literary Arabic) to spoken Arabic can be used to indicate humour (see for example, Albrini 2011). In countries where Arabic is in constant contact with other languages, like French, code-switching has been used for humorous effect; by drawing attention to the socio-political tensions that underlie the differing attitudes to both languages (see for example Caubet 2002 on the use of code-switching by Tunisian, Moroccan and Algerian comedians).

Code switching is particularly prevalent among Palestinian Israelis speaking Arabic because of the amount of Hebrew words that have entered the vocabulary through regular use. As we saw in chapter one, Hebrew and Arabic are both official languages in Israel but, in

practice, only Hebrew is essential for getting by. Whether it is a visit to the local health clinic or the bank, navigating the transport system, seeking a profession, or attending university, all require Hebrew in practice. The kinds of Hebrew words that get integrated into spoken Arabic indicate these uses of Hebrew. To illustrate this, linguists Mohammad Hasan Amara and Bernard Spolsky (1986) conducted a pilot study to gauge how Hebrew words were being integrated into spoken Arabic in a village of Palestinian citizens of Israel by asking them to list the first ten words that come to mind when a particular topic domain is mentioned (Amara and Spolsky 1986: 46). They found that Hebrew words were used prominently in talk about health, electrical appliances, and transport, but did not figure at all in talk about kinship (*ibid.*).

While I did not conduct such a study in my field-site, I did notice a similar tendency among my Arabic-speaking interlocutors, as I noted spoken Arabic phrases like 'look at the **budget**' and 'I was at **college** today' included Hebrew words (in bold). However, just like their Jewish Israeli friends, the second generation Palestinian villagers also picked up certain colloquialisms and a sense of spoken Hebrew through their close friendships with Jewish Israelis and their families. Linguists note that bilingual code-switching not only indicates skill in two languages, but is reliant on a level of intimacy with both languages (Caubet 2002: 234), which second generation WASNS villagers definitely experience. Perhaps if Amara & Spolsky's study was imitated at WASNS we would find Hebrew words in the kinship 'domain' of words. Unlike the village Amara & Spolsky chose, which was exclusively Palestinian citizens of Israel, Palestinian Israelis and Jewish Israelis in WASNS interact with Hebrew speaking friends and, in some cases, kin. I did hear some social terms make their way into Arabic conversations in the village. For example two Palestinian friends talking in Arabic about a good friend that had done one of them a favour used the Hebrew word '*gever*' (literally meaning 'man' but also implies 'great man' or 'proper man' when used colloquially) in the place of the Arabic word '*zalameh*' (literally meaning 'man' but also implies 'great man' or 'proper man' when used colloquially).

The first loan words one would notice between Arabic and Hebrew are those that appear most often in conversation. Two key examples are the Arabic word '*y'ani*' and the

Hebrew word '*takhles*', which I often heard used by both Hebrew and Arabic speakers. *Y'ani* literally translates to 'it means' and can be used in the same way as the English phrase 'that is to say', or the colloquial use of the drawn-out "I mean…" in order to stress a point. In fact, the founder of WASNS writes in his autobiography that *y'ani* "comes up often in conversation, colouring statements. A word for all seasons, somewhere between yes and no. Only the tone of voice can convey its exact meaning, only the initiated can grasp it" (Hussar 1989: 98). Its pliability can account for both its ubiquity – being applicable to many situations – and why many cannot find a satisfying singular translation for it. For both these reasons, it is not surprising that *y'ani* cropped up in English or Hebrew speech. The Hebrew word '*takhles*' derives from a Yiddish pronunciation of the Hebrew word '*takhlet*' that literally translates to 'purpose' but is often used in a similar way to the English phrase 'to get to the point' (Galdi 2013). As with '*y'ani*', '*takhles* 'can be used in many different situations and it is difficult to find a translation that quite encompasses all of its possible meanings. It was a loan word I often heard used in spoken Arabic, both within and outside the community I lived in. In fact it is so present in Palestinian Arabic that some Jewish Israelis I have spoken to about the word thought it originated from Arabic. Due to their many social uses, *y'ani* and *takhles* made their way into Hebrew and Arabic speech of Jews and Palestinians that often interacted together and would hear all the various uses of these words.

Words like *y'ani* and *takhles* work as they are employed because the speaker understands their role in continuing the flow of conversation, and expect that their conversational partner will have the same understanding. As Hussar put it "only the initiated can grasp it". The ability to use these words, and play with them, is indicative of intimacy with the language and its social use. Such play is built on an understanding of the sense of certain words beyond literal interpretation, and with that in mind, we can now turn to the topic of phatic communication.

Phatic Communication and Language of the Heart

Phatic communication, as defined by Malinowski (1930 [1923]), is speech that serves as a social action rather than as an expression of thought. A good example of phatic

communication would be the greeting ritual. It is these kinds of expressions that have been easiest to adopt from one language into the other. Even a Jewish Israeli who could not really speak Arabic would recognise '*sabah al-kheir*' as 'good morning' when my colleague Dina would make her morning greetings in the office. Adoption of phatic expressions like these — from Hebrew into Arabic and vice versa — have perhaps more to do with years of social interaction between Hebrew and Arabic speakers than with concerted efforts at bilingualism, even if the latter is a contributing factor. The swapping of phatic expressions in other's languages was most present in unstructured speech events like the winter party at the spiritual centre, in which people were more concerned with expressing good wishes and greetings of welcome rather than conveying literal messages.

Early on in my fieldwork I was invited to sit in on an interview that Ofra was giving about the spiritual centre and her role within it. It so happened that, on that particular week, a woman interested in writing about the spiritual centre for her Masters' thesis was volunteering at the centre and Martin, who was interning at the village offices with me at the time, had also approached Ofra about an interview so that he could write something for a German newspaper. Ofra, like many members of the community, was used to getting many interview requests and was happy to get as many done in one go so all three of us were scheduled in together. I had just attempted to explain my research as being "about language, and how people think about language" and Ofra, immediately interested in what I meant about language, proceeded to share her understanding:

> "Do you mean about words? If you ask me about the spiritual centre, my
> answer is about language of the heart. This is the title I would use,
> "language of the heart". It doesn't matter what language you speak, do
> you vibrate the language of the heart? Is it a true conversation? Is it
> coming from a true place that wants to create communication and create
> compassion to each other? I care about you, I hear you, I can listen to
> your story, listen to your desires. This is language in my understanding"

Given the circumstances of this interview, Ofra's main aim in her answer was to represent the spiritual centre. Responsible for many of the Spiritual Centre's activities, it was not always easy to separate Ofra's character from the aim of the events at the spiritual centre in its 'pluralistic spiritual' capacity. Ofra was also always keen to point out that the full name of the centre was the Pluralistic Community Spiritual Centre because the building was used for community events, such as festive parties and lectures by village members. Although only a relatively narrow group regularly attended spiritual activities at the centre, these community events tended to engage the whole village.

The group of people who are most often involved in events that take place at the spiritual centre also place importance in other kinds of communication (through art, music, food and so on). It is often argued that these other forms of communication are better at sustaining relationships than speaking is (more on this in Chapter VI). It is interesting that in a space where people place less importance on speech as a form of communication and relationship-building, there is much more opportunity to speak, and hear, Arabic. There was much more Arabic heard in the many conversations people were having on the patio than in the strategic meetings discussed in previous chapters, and in the ceremony section of the community event. All these conversations were shaped by the individuals within them, which could easily include some of the Jewish Israelis that speak or at least understand Arabic, or simply a group of Arabic-speakers. There was also more English, French, and occasionally German spoken because of the international nature of the guests, which could also contribute to lessening the dominance of Hebrew in this setting. In short, the more informal setting, the more organic and less fraught bilingual processes felt.

Code-switching was a key element in many informal conversations between friends and neighbours. This could be seen within sentences – like Aqila talking to the children doing the art activity – or in alternating turns in a conversation – Aqila could talk to Sigal in Arabic and Sigal, understanding Arabic but feeling more comfortable with Hebrew, would respond in Hebrew. In an interview with Sigal, she defined bilingualism by giving an example of the daily walks she takes in the forest with her European husband; he speaks his first language and she

speaks in hers. Both understand each other, and both feel they can fully express themselves. This is similar to the bilingualism displayed in the play with which this chapter opened. It is perhaps no coincidence that both Aqila and Sigal are involved with the school, as there seemed to be an approach to bilingual teaching (at least from what I saw during the time I was there) that preferred code-switching over translation. That is, teachers would embed words and phrases from Arabic or Hebrew into a Hebrew or Arabic sentence rather than deliver a sentence in one language and then repeat it in the other. Proponents of this method believe that children are more likely to pick up the second language if they have to understand certain words and phrases in context, rather than wait to hear a translation. Some teachers, perhaps focusing more on content than form, argue that this approach confuses the children.

We have seen, in Chapter I and elsewhere, that there are disagreements in the village concerning the best method of conducting encounters to achieve the overall aim of equality. For the more politically active members, and those involved with the School for Peace, talking through difference involves acknowledgment of inequality and differences. The kind of conversations that are deemed productive in that context are those that lead to actions which challenge inequality. Other villagers can find such approaches too reactionary, and unworkable in many contexts. The people I met at the Pluralistic Spiritual Centre subscribed more to the encounter approach that focuses on shared humanity, in which differences, even in the languages one speaks, are not important. We have seen how the criticism levelled at approaches such as these is that they do not allow for discussion, and the effective challenging, of inequality.

There may have been some institutional and ideological encouragement for code-switching, yet much of what I observed during the Pluralistic Spiritual Centre event described above was simply part of everyday social interaction in the village. Any villager could engage in code-switching or phatic communication in another language any time without thinking too much about it. The only times I noticed that this behaviour was met with some form of judgement, itself never explicit, was when the exchange seemed contrived. For example, an overly cheery '*keif halek*' ('How are you?' in Arabic) delivered by a Jewish Israeli villager to

someone they were not close to, in the wrong context, could receive an unenthused reply. This is perhaps less to do with the choice of language and more to do with the precarious nature of everyday interactions. It is with this precariousness in mind we now turn to dialogue without words; exploring both the belief held by some of my interlocutors that speaking is the greatest risk to the outcomes of encounters, and the communicative power of not speaking at all.

Chapter VI: Dialogue without Words

"There are two kinds of dialogue, the dialogue [in which] no one will listen to the other — each one will listen to herself or himself — and the other one, which the important thing is to listen, not just to talk. To listen and to do, to do this effort, to really understand and so on, because you are reaching a gap and you will meet in the middle, so each one can put effort in order to reach the other. And actually when I reach you easily, I will reach myself inside, it goes like that, so it doesn't matter if it is by art, or by music, or by speaking, or, you know, just being in nature, whatever, the dialogue... the tools will be different but it's the same."

— One of the early Palestinian Israeli villagers of WASNS

"The moment you are talking in dialogue, things enter into it like the need to convince, the need to show how right one is, and the anger comes out "this happened to my grandmother..." "this is what they did to my uncle", and then dialogue can be really difficult, dialogue of speaking (arguing or conversation). Dialogue with others that isn't connected at all to speaking, to logic, but rather to the body and the soul/spirit, these are the meaningful ones. These are the real ones"

— One of the early Jewish Israeli villagers of WASNS

So far this thesis has explored the ways in which ethical judgements are made in speech, particularly how my Jewish and Palestinian Israeli interlocutors have found ways to talk through difference. All this ignores another part of social life, the non-linguistic elements of linguistic interactions and interactions which are not linguistic at all. It is nothing new to state that close relationships are played out and developed over many different kinds of encounter, and the relationships between villagers are no different. Firstly, villagers do not only talk to each other in committee meetings and discussion circles; they talk over shared meals, walks through

the nearby forest, or – in the summer of 2014 – while watching the World Cup together on plastic chairs on the lawn by the pool. Secondly, and not unique to friendships in the village or the region, not-talking was comfortable among close friends; for example, friends in the second generation listening to music together, or focusing on the television, during a natural break in conversation in an evening hang-out, or a group of villagers taking part in a weekly dance session in which talking was sparse. These moments are interesting because, in a community that values dialogue — where the ability to talk through differences is strongly linked with the ability to address inequality — concern for non-verbal forms of dialogue can become a point of contention. How can Jewish and Palestinian Israelis fully celebrate and overcome difference without talking through it? More importantly how can they address an unequal social structure, that makes up the wider socio-political context in which they live, without words?

Attitudes towards non-verbal communication in WASNS, and *HaSmol* more broadly, can be mapped on to the critical stances often taken in early styles of encounter projects. As discussed in Chapter I, these early encounter projects were based on the premise that simply bringing two groups of people in contact with each other can have positive effects. Correspondingly, the village's School for Peace has over the years moved from the 'contact hypothesis' approach – which was used to foster personal relationships – to a 'group encounter' approach – which treats every encounter project as a microcosm of Israel-Palestine and encourages participants to reflect on the ways their group identity has affected their behaviours and attitudes (Halabi & Sonnenschein 2004: 376). Given the depth and complexity of the issues covered in the 'group encounter' approach, it seems necessary to focus on verbal communication. Meanwhile, encounter projects that still focus on fostering interpersonal relationships make much more use of non-verbal interactions, like sport, music, art or dance. The concern among members of the *HaSmol* is that it is hard to see how non-verbal communications can really address the core socio-political issues necessary to instil self-awareness in the participants of their role in the wider conflict.

Over the last four chapters, I have shown that careful attention to language use played a great role in everyday exchanges as much as in structured speech events, yet, that does not

mean the villagers are unconcerned with the non-verbal aspects of their interactions. Even the SFP, the site in the village where critique of non-verbal based approaches is strongest, still uses elements of non-verbal communication to break the ice at the beginning of the courses run for Jewish and Palestinian Israeli teenagers.[38] The village's pluralistic spiritual centre is one site in the village where one is most likely to encounter the use of non-verbal communication as a tool for peace and equality on its own. For example, some encounter projects at the centre use art as a means of communication. I sat in on one such art encounter, which was part of a longer programme designed for a group of Jewish and Palestinian teenagers from the south of Israel. First, the teenagers were invited to use a variety of materials – paper, cardboard, recycled items etc. – to construct and decorate a miniature room that they felt reflected themselves. Afterwards, the group all sat together and several participants volunteered to explain their creation to the rest of the group. As often occurs in Jewish-Palestinian encounters in Israel, the dominant language was Hebrew as the bilingual Palestinian participants were keen to speak directly to their Jewish peers, even if they were not entirely confident in their Hebrew. The facilitator in the art workshops drew attention to this linguistic behaviour, just as would be done in an SFP workshop. A criticism often levelled at projects that focus on shared activities is that it does not deal with difficult issues of inequality and sensitive political narratives. However, some people who engage in these kinds of projects believe that activities such as art are an alternative way to broach these topics. In an online report entitled "Art as a Language of Communication", one encounter facilitator, Dyana, summarises it thus:

> "Art is a magical, wonderful tool of communication, which facilitates
> cultural contact with a strong and positive human touch. It penetrates the
> very soul of a person and fills it with feelings for justice. This person will
> begin to see the other as his equal, with the new vision he has acquired
> while they were creating art together — a vision that differences between
> people only add to and enrich our lives." (Dyana in WASNS 1998)

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[38] The SFP uses the 'photolangage' method, encouraging conversation by getting the participants to choose images, and then explain their choice.

This quote evokes values of justice and equality, which are central to the village project, and also harks back to founder Bruno Hussar's dream that the village would become a space where difference is celebrated and "each would find in this diversity a source of personal enrichment" (Hussar 1989: 103). Taking the 'human touch' approach does not necessarily relegate differences in favour of human universals such as creativity or artistic expression. As we have seen, encounter projects that take more 'humanistic' approaches are often criticised for presenting differences as incommensurable to the point that issues such as inequality and justice cannot seriously be broached, but Dyana is here presenting art as another means by which people can understand and then become committed to social justice.

I argue that many of the non-verbal dialogue encounter projects villagers run are in some way trying to distill the experience of sharing a life together at WASNS. As I showed in Chapter II, villagers are partly motivated to live out their utopian ideals in the day-to-day because of their commitment to social relationships within the village, relationships that are established through verbal and non-verbal communication. Sometimes non-verbal interactions can create intimacy where speaking has failed, as indicated by the Jewish Israeli quoted at the start of this chapter. How does non-verbal communication contribute to the village? And, what can it reveal about the ethical potential of everyday interactions in general? To answer these questions, this chapter will begin with an ethnographic account of one kind of non-verbal dialogue, a weekly dance session. I have chosen this for two reasons. Firstly, the people attending the dance sessions were more open to reflecting on non-verbal dialogue (the two women quoted above were both involved in the dance sessions). Secondly, because recent analyses of dance as a site of community creation, rather than just reflection of social life, provide a useful frame with which to understand the place of non-verbal communication in social life. Consequently, I will argue that friendships across difference in WASNS are sustained and tested over chains of interactions, each interaction with the potential to release the 'emotional energy' (to borrow Randall Collins' term) that motivates people to engage in future interactions, and the values that underlie them.

Dialogue through Dance

Every Tuesday evening a group of five to ten – composed of villagers, a few volunteers, and some people from the neighbouring kibbutz – would get together for an hour of exercises carefully curated by Ety, a Jewish Israeli villager. I attended about 25 of these weekly dance sessions, and it is worth stating that these sessions form some of my fondest memories of WASNS due to the welcoming and homely atmosphere I found there. This chapter will aim to elucidate the mechanics that underlie such warm atmospheres, which I argue grew out of an existing collection of friendships and played an essential part in the dynamics of those friendships.

From my first dance session I sensed that it was a relaxed space where one would not be judged for the way they danced, at least not in a way that anyone would ever be aware of. It was a welcoming environment, and, although there was a handful of core regulars, throughout my year of participation we were joined by a variety of villagers, men and women, Palestinian and Jewish, from teens and twenty-somethings born and raised in the village to retirees of the founding generation. Even the chair of the municipal community – the same de-facto Mayor who yearned for the 'good old days' in his winter party speech – joined one of the sessions I attended. Most importantly, the dance sessions also drew people who felt they were at the margins of the village at times.

The warm atmosphere fostered at each session begins before any actual dances. As people trickle in to the smaller hall of the spiritual centre they greet each other as one expects of good friends. Sometimes there is the more banal "how are you?" but there are also targeted questions based on knowledge of each other's lives, "are you feeling better this week?", "how is that project going?" Sometimes a hug is offered without any words as one person already knows about an issue upsetting the other, and the other knows the hug-offerer knows. This was an intimate space, where the group could and would share excitements, express their sadness, and congratulate and comfort each other accordingly.

The small room, and the way it is prepared, helps creates an intimate atmosphere. First, a circle of LED lights in the ceiling would be turned down to their lowest setting.

Meanwhile Ety would set up a stereo on a chair in the corner of the room with a small lamp nearby so as to read the carefully prepared playlists that will soundtrack the session. A large rectangle of carpet would be set up on the wooden floor by unfurling several rugs that are usually kept in two curtained niches on either side of the door. It was by these niches that people would leave their shoes and boots, safely out of the way, together with keys, phones and jackets.

Every session would feature a slightly different combination of exercises that drew on Ety's pedagogical experience and knowledge of dance and theatre. Ety has a collection of meticulously prepared playlists, all lasting about an hour, which is the length of a session. The amount of time, energy, and emotional investment in creating these exercises and playlists was clear, occasionally formed a topic of conversation. This investment in preparation, and importantly the recognition and vocal appreciation of such effort, further helped create a good mood in the room. The collection of music in the playlist was also a social object. Ety drew greatly from her husband's music collection and he, as a music aficionado, was happy to discuss pieces of music with curious dancers and also listen to their recommendations or thoughts inspired by such conversations. The music was always a diverse mix that featured songs from across the world, and across at least six decades, in Hebrew, Arabic, English, Swedish, and French. Importantly, the tracks also varied in tempo and tone, which allowed for different kinds of exercises. The first track or two were usually at a slow pace and we were invited to dance in a way we felt would best warm us up for the session ahead. For the first piece of music the whole group would amble about, removing shoes, greeting each other, and each person warmed up for the session in our own way. The session would then start in earnest when the second track began to play and Ety would explain the first exercise. The exercises used each session, and their order, varied from week to week, as did the playlist. The following description is a composite of different activities in order to give a sense of a typical session.

At my very first dance session I was joined by two German volunteers, also new to the sessions and my housemates at the time. We began with an exercise in which we danced in pairs and had to introduce ourselves as we danced, switching partners throughout the song. I later realised that this use of speaking was rare and likely for the benefit of introducing the three new attendees (the two volunteers and myself) to the regulars and vice-versa; the next week we

would do a similar partner swapping exercise with no words. Many of the partner-based exercises acted as a kind of non-verbal conversation. One exercise was actually introduced as being "like a dialogue" in which we had to conduct a conversation through movements alone. Taking turns in a conversation without words is a complex practice, particularly as this is not a typical way of communicating and thus there are no recognisable cues for dance partners to pick up on. Making the conversation flow relied on reading one's partner to guess when they had finished, or allowing certain overlaps in action. The music also provided cues, a change in tempo or a pause served as useful points to end a turn. One did not necessarily have to make their movements match the music, although I found that helped inspire the next move. Other partner-based exercises included taking turns to mirror each other; although this was easier because it was made clear from the beginning that one would take the part of the mirror for a whole track and then swap for the next.

A partnering exercise could easily be followed by an exercise involving the whole group. There was one exercise inspired by the Oud, a lute-like stringed instrument often used in Arabic and Mizrahi/Sephardi Jewish music. The group would form a semi-circle resembling the belly of the Oud and each person would have their turn to move across the diameter, resembling the string. The idea being that each person came up with a simple motion that was mimicked by the rest of the group, like the notes plucked on the Oud string echoing in the belly of the instrument. The practice makes everyone aware of their movements and aware that the rest of the group are concentrating on those movements. There is a temptation on such an occasion – perhaps particularly British in my case – to hide behind a veneer of irony to protect oneself from scrutiny, judgement, and perhaps ridicule. However, one got the sense that judgement and ridicule were unlikely, due to the deeply accepting atmosphere constructed in the sessions.

These sessions were not the only spaces for dance in the village of course; I saw many of the participants dance at village-wider parties for instance, often with a similar confidence even without the overtly supportive atmosphere of Spiritual Centre encounters. There was undoubtedly a confidence-building and community-bonding element to the classes that fed into village life more broadly for the participants. This positive feedback worked both ways I believe, in that the village's particularly strong social bonds and emphasis on bridging

difference facilitated this kind of socially intimate activity and allowed social inhibitions to be lowered more easily.

As well as group and partner-based exercises there were also solo activities, such as dancing with one's shadow. They required focus on both our own physical presence, and that of our fellow dancers as we weaved between each other. One exercise built upon this awareness of our own and others' presence, shifting from a single person to a group activity. In that exercise, which often took place during the last or penultimate track. we were given the collective aim to form a circle by the end of the track, but we had do so with our eyes closed. At the start one would dance as one usually dances alone, wandering through the room, except this time with arms away from one's body. This usually feels like a long time. Eventually hands and arms brush against each other and there is a momentary sense of success, then the search for another hand, but this time taking into account the person you are connected to has their own flow of actions that may be leading them in other directions. At this point the joint endeavour picks up steam and within what feels like seconds there is another link in the chain. One cannot know for sure, without peeking and breaking the rule, whether their pair of connections have found their other pairs, but can guess from perceived changes in the weight of the forces moving through the left and right hands. Every time we did this exercise we had formed a full circle by the end of the track. Some may 'cheat' a little to aid the process, though the exercise remains effective all the same.

As we will soon explore, co-presence – being physically in the same place and focusing on the same activity or object – is essential to interaction rituals. The presence of others in dance sessions was evidently important to the impact these sessions had for the participants. When a particularly well-attended dance session finished, the regulars would always comment on how much energy there was that week. The need for others taking part can be read in several ways. People partly took part in the dance sessions for social reasons; the regulars were friends who met each other socially throughout the rest of the week and dancing was one of their shared activities. Another reason for taking part in dance sessions was for personal health or psychological reasons, to feel better, to 'let go'. The energy they felt due to the presence of others fed into that process.

The warm atmosphere I have described had several ingredients, from the physical setting, to the pre-existing friendships among the regular attendees, to the nature of the exercises themselves. Now we have examined the physical setting, and before addressing the nature of friendship, we can now turn to the meaning and nature of these dance exercises as an interaction ritual.

Dance as Interaction Ritual

Can we understand these dance sessions as more than a result of the good Jewish-Palestinian relations fostered in the village, or are they themselves part of the process? The growing field of dance anthropology provides a useful analysis with which to approach this question because it suggests that dance is indeed more than a reflection of social life, but actually contributes to it (see Kaeppler 1978; Grau 1985; Reed 1998; Plancke 2014). Carine Plancke's application of Randall Collins' 'interaction ritual chain' to the analysis of dance is of particular relevance here because it both helps to explain the emotional energy evident in the dance sessions I took part in, and to understand how these sessions tied in to a chain of non-verbal interactions that make up friendships. While this section focuses on dance as a form of interaction ritual, and thus as much a site for ethical reflection as verbal forms of dialogue, I will argue below that this analysis shows how other non-verbal interactions can be taken as dialogue as well.

It is worth restating here that dance sessions in WASNS catered both to villagers who were very engaged in the institutions of the village and those who no longer felt served by the verbal approaches to dialogue in the village. The dance sessions provided villagers with a space to live out the village ideals, but not in the conventual way. Applying Victor Turner's processual analysis of ritual performance to dance, as many dance anthropologists have done, shows how dance has the ability to "revitalise social structure" (Plancke 2014: 654). To borrow Turner's terms, dance sessions at WASNS can be seen as creating group cohesion through anti-structural common action, as it is not the approach most villagers would take – it does not involving talking about difficult political issues and can be interpreted as more humanistic – but it is reinforcing the structure of the village ideal of equality and good relations between Jews and

Palestinians. Difference is still celebrated and highlighted in the dance sessions through the Arabic and Hebrew music chosen and the different styles of dancing the participants engage in. Equality is also an underlying aspect of the dance sessions; every member plays an equal part in the exercises, and their mutual friendships promote equality. The dance sessions were not only anti-structural moments relative to the village mainstream they are also a rarity in Israel-Palestine. Here is a space where Jewish and Palestinian Israeli men and women dance together every week as equals. In her work on Congolese dance, Plancke suggests that the power of dance is the communitas invoked by "space of common action occurring beyond strict social differentiations" (Plancke 2014: 658), and argues that it is Randall Collins' microsociological analysis of interaction ritual that can help to explain the mechanics of how such communitas is created in dance. Particularly important is Collin's theory of entrainment, that is emotional energy released from being involved in the same activity in the same physical space at the same time. Collins draws on Erving Goffman's model of interaction rituals. These rituals rely on a "co-presence" — people involved in the interaction are physically in the same space (Collins 2004: 23) — that becomes "focused interaction: as all involved put their attention to the same action or object" (*ibid.*: 23). We can see this happen in group exercises in dance sessions; for example, in the Oud exercise everyone's attention is on mimicking one action, or in the final example in which everyone concerted their efforts to forming a circle. Collins points out that such interaction rituals, as described by Goffman, feature entrainment; that is the "pressure to keep us social solidarity" (*ibid.*: 25). Collins argues that the entrainment, the emotional drive to take part, builds on the mutual attention, which in turn builds on participants' drive to continue to take part.

Collins' dialogic mechanisms of mutual attention and emotional entrainment map on well to the group activities described above. We can also see this mechanism at work in the exercises designed for pairs in dance sessions, such as mirroring one's partner, or engaging in dialogue through dance movements. Both partners are physically involved in joint activity, which releases emotional responses (e.g. joy at the potential humour, or pride at having successfully mimicked a move) that keep one engaged in the mutual activity. Although not obvious at first glance, Collins' mechanisms can also be seen at work in the solo exercises, as

every dancer moving across the room is aware of other dancers weaving around them. I would argue that this is engaging in what Goffman described as 'civil inattention', the ability for strangers in public streets to acknowledge they have seen each other but know they are only open to certain kinds of engagement, such as asking for directions (Goffman 1967:145). When dancing alone in the solo exercises, one is aware of others but it is understood this is a solo exercise and so people are only open to particular kinds of engagement, perhaps a smile or head-nod, until the nature of the exercise changes. Throughout the dance session the group switches between these three kinds of activity, and so different intensities of mutual attention. In some cases, like the exercise in which the group needs to form a circle with their eyes closed, the solo focus shifts into a group one. This shift is possible because the individual dance moves are designed to make one aware of one's movements.

As mentioned above, Ety's exercises drew on several sources when preparing exercises, and one inspiration was theatre exercises; like those devised by Augosto Baol in order to make people aware of their bodies.[39] Baol's exercises are designed to draw the participant's attention to their physical responses to labour in order to "feel the 'muscular alienation' imposed on his body by work" (Baol 2013 [1979]: 127). Thus these exercises are designed to help bring about a kind of class consciousness through movement.[40] Baol introduces the idea that systems of oppression and inequality can be challenged by awareness of the physical body. The WASNS dance sessions were never directly talked about as a means of challenging inequality or dealing with difference through dance, and people chose to take part for a variety of reasons. These sessions were, however, a part of a series of activities that a group of Jewish and Palestinian friends engaged in as part of life in an intentional community that aims to challenge systems of inequality. Even if not specifically stated, their political purpose, or at least social effects, can be readily inferred.

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[39] Interestingly, a contemporary of Paolo Friere, who the School for Peace draws on in its method

[40] Baol gives an example of the different muscles used by an office worker, sat at a desk all day, and a guard who walks on patrol, but to give a more holistic example of how work effects one he compares a cardinal at the Vatican to a general who "must talk as someone who gives orders, even if it is to tell his wife that he loves her" (Baol 1979: 128). These exercises are the first stage of a four stage process in which a spectator can transform into an actor, thus making theatre available to those beyond the bourgeois elite.

Randall Collins' theory of interaction ritual chains is "a theory of momentary encounters among human bodies charged up with emotions and consciousness because they have gone *through chains of previous encounters"* (Collins 2004: 5) [my emphasis]. These 'previous encounters' are both those of a similar kind – i.e. previous dance sessions – and those involving the same people. Collins argues that activities such as dance require participants to have a knowledge of the necessary symbols, either from prior participation or having these symbols explained at the time. Everything from the etiquette of nineteenth century dances to the unspoken rules of the mosh pit, carries an idea of good or bad dancing. Being able to perform with skill, enacting the right symbols, is a way of communicating membership of a group (*ibid.*: 154). WASNS dance sessions were not quite like this because Ety rotated the exercises, and would always introduce them by giving everyone the instructions, whether or not they had been attending for ages or one week. One could not, in this circumstance, be more or less adapted, more or less aware of the rules, because these rules were repeated for everyone at the start. Every now and again a particular dancer would be commended for their skill, but the only fixed "manners" were taking part in the exercises. More significant than any learned skill was perhaps the emotional energy built up through repetition of familiar moves and on recognising familiar pieces of music through repeated visits. The symbols acquired and used in dance sessions are not limited to the dancing. As discussed above, the dance sessions were an intimate space where support and conversation needed only allude to prior shared experiences or knowledge of some issue. These allusions were only possible and interpretable because the dance participants had engaged in other kinds of encounters, and these encounters form a chain of which dance sessions are just part.

Although I noticed a welcoming atmosphere from the very start of my participation in the dance sessions, my sense of this increased markedly after the first few months. At the time I attributed this to the lack of volunteers taking part that meant that the use of Hebrew and Arabic rather than English, leaving an impression that I was now privy to the dance sessions as they were before the three foreigners had joined. Yet, the closeness I felt for my fellow dancers had perhaps more to do with with how well I had gotten to know them through social interactions outside the sessions. For example, some of us had attended the same Arabic lessons together; I

had helped translate documents and other odd-jobs for a project two other dance regulars were working on; and I had attended various members homes, either just for tea, Friday night dinner, or festivals like Christmas. Over time I got to know my dancing peers well, and was able to pick up on unspoken cues because I had shared those experiences, or had learnt about them in other encounters. Dance sessions held emotional energy and mutual attention because they were part of a chain of encounters, a chain that formed the processual and dynamic nature of friendship.

We have examined the welcoming atmosphere of the dance classes, and their provision of a kind of dialogue still open to those perhaps tired of talking. This was dialogue without words, and beyond the formal institutional projects run in and from the village. Friendships fostered and reflected in the dances, helped in turn to reaffirm and enhance commitment to the utopian ideals that are more explicitly articulated by those formal institutions. Dance offers a kind of momentary break from both regular and more-formal village activities, and reinforces the values of interaction, if the interaction is successful. As other anthropologists have shown, the activities that friends share often offer up moments of ambiguity that allow for reflection, which is neither completely in line with institutional or anti-institutional perspectives and relationships (see for example Rapport 1999).[41] Before exploring this further is it important to first note that friendships in WASNS are not centred around any one activity or location (cf: Nigel Rapport 1999; Graham Allan 1989; or Robert Paine 1969).

Friendship as an Alternative Dialogue

Dance sessions are of course just one example of many types of interaction in the community, and it is to other types of largely-informal interaction that we now turn to examine their relationship to dialogue. Beginning with the dance session regulars, other activities brought together elements of this same set. Walking around the main circle road of WASNS on any given day, one could easily run into dance participants returning from a walk in the nearby forest; or Sigal and Aqila having tea on their neighbour's patio. Dance session regulars also

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[41] In many ways these dance sessions could be compared to the dominoes sessions Nigel Rapport (1999) described in an analysis of friendship in a UK village. Just as Rapport notes that sitting to play dominoes offered an ambiguous break from village institutions. As Rapport puts it: "the conscious playing with ambiguity, uncertainty and ambivalence which friendship affords, whereby a distinct perspective on the world and its relations (neither institutional nor anti- or non-) is entered into" (Rapport 1999: 115)

worked on projects together, and attended events that were significant to each other; either moments of joyful celebration, like Christmas parties, or the more sombre solidarity of memorials. It was these shared activities, moments, and plans, that people discussed in the opening and closing moments of the dance sessions. These shared experiences and knowledge did not need to be discussed at all because enough people present were already aware of all the details; hugs and half-allusions were enough.

In WASNS close friends were as welcome in the 'private' space of home as family members. While visiting a friend for dinner one evening, a neighbour walked into the kitchen looking for my friends' mother. After a brief chat the neighbour left and my friend jokingly told me not to be shocked by such behaviour because it is part of 'Arabic culture' to feel free to walk into the homes of close friends.[42] This comment was not meant to be taken seriously. As will be seen in the next chapter, many jokes shared among the second generation are based on statements that seem to reify culture as an explanatory device for behaviour or attitudes (ie "Jews do this" "Arabs do that"), but ironically undermine the notion that culture or identity can be so easily defined. The joke here was also intended to tease me for stereotypical British sensibilities, assuming my shock at a non-family member freely entering the family home.

Villagers would share property, eat together, and judge those deemed kin and like kin by the same standards. The like-kin attitude was most clear among friends in the second generation, who had grown up together in the village. Whether this was between friends — like a group of female friends in the second generation swapping clothes and feeling so at home in each other's parental homes that they could rifle through the kitchen cupboards — or between members of the second generation and the entire family of their friends — included in each other's family meals and festive occasions. It was not uncommon to see some first generation women playfully chastise second generation villagers they knew well in the same way they chastised their own children.

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[42] Incidentally, on a linguistic note, the word for relative for Arabic or Hebrew speaker is associated with someone who is close, both in location but also in terms of intimacy. The similarly-rooted words *qarib* (قريب) in Arabic and *karov* (קָרוֹב) in Hebrew both hold the double meaning of 'relative' and 'close'. Both words are based around the semitic letters *Qaf/Quf* (ق and ק in Arabic and Hebrew respectively), *Reish* (ر and ר in Arabic and Hebrew respectively) and Ba/Bet (ب and ב in Arabic and Hebrew respectively).

The sharing of food was also an important part of social life in WASNS. Every major communal village event involved some aspect of sharing food and, during Ramadan, communal evening events would be timed in a way that allowed for the incorporation of an Iftar meal. Invitations for events in the Pluralistic Spiritual Centre often included a potluck meal as part of the activities. Sharing food and eating together was also another activity that the regular attendees of the dance sessions engaged in outside of dance sessions; whether that was occasionally having each other over for tea, or inviting each other over for dinner or tea to celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Passover, or attending the afore-mentioned Iftar meals. As already seen in chapter II, in the early years of the community, shared meals and activities were more common because people were more involved in all aspects of village life — particularly the primary school and School for Peace — and both buildings and infrastructure were rudimentary in comparison to the suburban oasis that the village resembles today, which made sharing meals and amenities more necessary. It is perhaps not surprising that the majority of those involved in the dance sessions, and the friendship group of which the regular attendees where part, were those who had been some of the first to join the village.

All the shared activities so far described – dancing, shared meals, celebrations, commemorations – constitute a social life that is in part shaped by the nature of an intentional community. People chose to live together in the village because they value the effort to reach out across differences, so it is not surprising that they apply this value to their friendships, and the small size of the community helps foster close relationships. However these friendships, and the chain of interactions that constitute them, are not consciously developed like a dialogue project, and do not need to adhere to any particular theoretical model concerning how best to talk through difference. As we will see in the following chapter, it is through the friendships among the second generation that a shared way of speaking (and joking in particular) developed 'naturally' (as my interlocutors put it).

As the two women that opened this chapter explained, sharing food, music, or pastimes is a way of doing dialogue without words, because one is engaging with others and internalising something that is outside and different to oneself. Recalling the quotes at the beginning of the chapter, some believe these forms of dialogue may even have more power than

talking. Collins' model of interaction ritual chains shows how this power is created and reinforced through emotional entrainment. One way to understand the emotional energy that sustains a group of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis' commitment to living together, despite and in spite their differences, is to consider their friendships as a series of interaction rituals. Just as Collins' ritual chains provide a good explanation of the mechanics behind the collective effervescence of dance, it can also explain the mechanics keeping together friendships from interaction to interaction.

If we see dialogue with words as reference to the institutional, and thoroughly theorised, projects that directly address structural inequality and difference, and dialogue without words as a dynamic process in the margins, then Collins' interaction ritual model provides an insight into the power of the marginal processes. In the case of alternative forms of dialogue, Collins' model can also show how people find ways of sustaining their dialogue across difference when they do not feel convinced by existing dialogue projects. Collins' model is useful in addressing the question of how a social movement that aims to bridge difference can thrive in contexts where there are strong institutions aiming to fortify and separate those differences (see. Robbins 2009).[43]

While we can usefully apply Collins' concept of interactional ritual chains without making a wider claim against social structures, we cannot fully understand interactions in WASNS without acknowledging the structural inequality in Israel-Palestine and the villagers' awareness of it. In WASNS, villagers' Palestinian and Jewish identifications are relevant, they are part of a social project that has to reify those two identities in order to deal with the very real differences between them, particularly inequality. This shows that some structural issues play into friendship. The impact of structural differences on friendships, and then how these differences are processed, was clear in an anecdote shared by Ronit, whose quote opens this chapter, about a time in the early days of the village when a friendship influenced a change in

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[43] Joel Robbins (2009) has shown that one can apply Collin's concept of interactional ritual chains without making a wider claim against talk of social structures. The fact that Collin's work allows one to "keep some of the power of Durkheim's insights concerning religion without having to bring on board his model of society" makes it "a promising theoretical approach to carry forward in pursuit of theoretical frameworks suited to the analysis of emergent socialites that are such an important focus of contemporary research" (Robbins 2009: 64). For Robbins a focus on the dynamics of ritual action was useful in addressing the question of how one religious movement (Pentecostalism) could thrive in contexts where other social institutions had failed.

perspective and behaviour. Ronit had noticed that her good Palestinian friend Abir has been avoiding her, and was colder towards her in their interactions. Asking Abir what was wrong, Ronit discovered that Abir has been upset by a public notice Ronit had left on the village noticeboard, inviting everyone to her house for a Yom Ha'atzmaut party. Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, celebrates the end of the 1948 war, which is a victory for Jewish Israelis. For Palestinians, Yom Ha'atzmaut is a painful reminder of the losses they and their families suffered in 1948, and continue to suffer. Abir's reaction to Ronit's invitation, made in good faith but with lack of awareness, led to a discussion between them and other villagers about the emotions and politics surrounding the national day. From then on Ronit would mark the day privately so as not to upset her Palestinian friends. In this recounted story Ronit's acknowledgement of Abir's perspective, as a Palestinian, and consequent decision to not publicly celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut was first led by her concern for Abir's feelings as her friend. Crucially this story of dialogue, of talking through difference, began with not talking. A feeling that was expressed without words marked a change the nature of Abir and Ronit's usual encounters. This leads us to the topic of silence.

Productive Ambiguity: Wordless Encounters and the Ethics of Friendship

In WASNS, like any community, talking can result in social ruptures, and arguments – not necessarily about Israel-Palestine, in fact in most cases I witnessed were not about politics at all – and can lead to avoidance, or not-talking. In the cases that these ruptures where resolved, it was due to a commitment to close social relationships. A second-generation villager, reflecting on the disagreements she had seen her father have with other villagers, described such conflicts as 'like those between brothers'. This simile was invoked by many others in the village, sometimes as a source of humour. This implied that the arguments could be both very personal and dramatic, but also that the underlying closeness of the relationship was not so easily shifted by such arguments. Community life is not approached the same way as a dialogue project, one could find even the staunchest advocates of direct, even antagonistic, dialogue encounters, happily mingling at social village events, like watching the World Cup together. The villagers are all sensitive to issues of inequality, injustice, and the value of differences, but they do not

always have to talk about it to be aware. Their commitment to these shared values, as seen in chapter II, is connected to their commitment to their social relationships. Social relationships which are formed, tested, and reformed over a variety of encounters.

Silence, by which I mean here specifically the act of *not* talking, can communicate a whole host of emotions and social cues. In the wider social context of Israel-Palestinian interactions, silence has been the cause of misunderstanding because perceptions of its social meaning are influenced by different structural positions. In Jewish-Palestinian dialogue encounters Palestinian silence is often rooted in, and misinterpreted by, Jewish Israelis due to different structural positions. (see for example Ifat Maoz 2005). Palestinians, conscious of their minority positions may use silence because they do not feel they can express political opinions in such public contexts.[44] The Jewish Israelis, as members of a majority group, do not consider that structural inequality because they do not have to (as was discussed in Chapter I) and therefore interpret silence through their own ideas about speaking norms, usually leading them to conclude that Palestinians are simply refusing to contribute. Of course this conclusion may be correct, and silence is used as a form of resistance. It is worth considering that Jewish Israelis also have a notion that political and social topics may only be broached within a circle of trusted, or close, relations (as seen in Katriel 1991). Silence can be a result and expression of distrust or fear (or combination of both) as has been seen in reticence met by those chronicling Palestinian memories of historical events (see, for example, Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmed Sa'di's (2007) edited 'Nakba' and Ted Swedenburg's (1995) 'Memories of Revolt')[45].

The interpretation of silence is not a simple task. Despite their close relationship Ronit still had to verbally ascertain the meaning of Abir's silence. I can think of two other villagers I got to know well in the village, that had a habit of leaving silences that left their conversational partners uneasy, their unease either manifested by responding with silence while wondering what the silence meant, or trying to fill the silence themselves. Whether this silence was

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[44] As seen in Bourdieu's (1984) 'right to speak', the feeling that one is not able to talk of politics in public can be rooted in a cultural construct that suggests which groups can and cannot address political talk.

[45] The consequences of silence, and of breaking the silence on certain topics, are a feature in tense socio-political context in which conflict has a powerful presence both physically and in people's memory. See for example Veena Das (1997) Kay Warren (1993) and Linda Green (1994).

deliberate was not interpretable from the silence itself. The ability to create the silence, to impact upon their conversational partner with it, did indicate a status of respect that both these interlocutors held among many others in the village, a status not related to their gender (one is male the other female) or national identity (one is Jewish Israeli the other Palestinian Israeli). The appropriate response to, and use of, silence in this case can be seen as what Goffman has called 'deference'; that is particular behaviours in interactions that "represent ways in which an actor celebrates and confirms his relation to a recipient." (Goffman 1967: 56)". While deference is about communicating a particular status of oneself and the other, this status need not reflect a clear hierarchy. Deference can be shown to mark the status of friendship. Everyday friendly interactions include status and interpersonal rituals such as "the little salutations, compliments, and apologies which punctuate social intercourse" (*ibid.*: 57), including silence.

In the case above it was the lack of talk that communicated to Ronit that something had affected the friendship and required addressing. Ronit's understanding of that silence was contingent on a norm of communication that Ronit and Abir had established over their many encounters. As linguistic anthropologists have shown, the interpretation of silence can unveil the principles of language use in that social context (Basso 1970; Hymes 1986: 40). These principles influence a speaker's behaviour and the selection of linguistic choices open to them depending on the social context, including the social relationship between the speaker and other participants (Basso 1970: 214). Ronit's understanding of Abir's silence, and her decision to respond to that silence by ascertaining what was wrong, is based on Ronit's conception of her relationships with Abir as that of good friends and the expectations of behaviour that follow such a social relationship. It is this interpretation of verbal and non-verbal exchanges that makes them a space of ethical judgement as one must consider how they relate to the other, and how that relationship shapes expectations of behaviour both from themselves and the other (see Keane 2017).

While there may be certain internal rules in interactions, it does not mean that friends always know how to respond. Even if I understood after a while not to be worried about the silences created by my two interlocutors, I was not always sure I was responding the right way,

and despite Ronit and Abir's friendship, silence still had to be explained. Silence is inherently ambiguous, and thus conducive to moments of reflection; whether one reflects upon the right way to behave in that moment; thinks about how one relates to the person/s with which they are interacting. In such cases where an awareness of the structural issues affecting Jewish-Palestinian relations has been fostered, one may even reflect, in a moment of silence, on whether they have indeed been dealing with difference, and fulfilling their moral goals.

Friendship, like silence, is also ambiguous. Activities among friends, as seen in the dance sessions, are neither a complete break from, nor do they conform to, the mainstream of village life. Friendships can be both similar to kinship, or be posited against kinship; one can indeed be both kin and friend. As the status of friendship is not always certain, one cannot always be sure how to confirm such a friendship through their actions. The encounters that make up a friendship form a process and "through the ambiguities and ambivalences involved in establishing and keeping friendships alive, we learn about how others see us and therefore, in some sense, how to view ourselves." (Bell & Coleman 1999: 1). Ambiguous encounters between friends are thus potential sites of ethical evaluations. In the following chapter we will see how one kind of ambiguous encounter, that of joking relations and the sharing of dark humour, can be a site to work through notions of difference and inequality, and the right ways of addressing them.

Chapter VII: Dark Humour as a Shared Language

Guy: We have a lot of dark jokes.. He will come to cut up this orange for me and..

Samir: And I'll say "careful that the knife doesn't accidentally…eh…" [smiling]

Guy: that the knife doesn't accidentally fly at me, [Samir laughs] so I'll need to neutralise you with the weapon I don't have, but…

[both break into laughter]

The above is an excerpt from an interview that two friends — Guy, a Jewish Israeli, and Samir, a Palestinian citizen of Israel — gave to an Israeli news programme about how they cope with the turbulent political events in Israel-Palestine. The news programme was filmed in October 2015 during a spate of violent incidents involving stabbings and shootings that left many Palestinians and Israelis dead or seriously injured. Guy and Samir were playing on the general narrative followed by mainstream Israeli media in reports on the stabbing and shooting incidents that autumn, which the viewers of Israeli news would have been keenly aware of. The general narrative was that a Palestinian wielding a knife was shot by the Israeli army during or after a terrorist attack; stories in which Palestinians were shot because they had a knife, or appeared to have a knife, with dangerous intent were also folded into this narrative. In this joke Guy is playing the part of the Israeli soldier who must "neutralise" a potential terrorist and Samir, plays the part of a potential terrorist whose fruit-cutting knife transforms into a weapon.

The point of the joke is not to make light of death and violence but rather to draw attention to the absurd notion that Guy or Samir would be violent towards one another simply for being Palestinian or Israeli; slyly the joke mocked the premise of the news programme itself, which was that friendships between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis were somehow more odd than violence. The joke also acknowledges that, outside the village, Samir does face racism and Guy really did undertake army service. The joke was one expression of how these facts about their lives in Israel do have effects on their friendship. Humour here was a way of talking

through difference; in this case the difference is the supposed roles the two are expected to play in Israeli society because of their Jewish or Palestinian identity.

It is notoriously difficult to both explain the mechanics of a joke without spoiling its humour, and thus to convince a reader that the humour was intended and understood by others as humour (Carty & Musharbash 2008). In the case of 'dark humour'[46] it is particularly important to explain how and why a joke was found funny, as it can be seen as shocking or aggressive without explanation. While watching this interview, I thought back to the first time I met Guy, Samir and their group of friends, and the warning 'hartza'ah' (lecture — in hebrew) Samir gave me and several young Germans who had come to volunteer at WASNS. Their humour is very dark, Samir explained, and it was important to set this out from the start. Later, several friends from the village would tell me jokingly that they had scared off some volunteers with their humour in the past. This 'dark humour' that Samir warned us about was often described to me by villagers as a 'shared language'. A shared language that grew out of friendship, in which the cues for what is and is not funny are (re)formulated over the chain of interactions that make up that friendship. The humour both rests on a sense of affinity and finds its source in difference, like the joke above that defiantly mocked the notion of reified Jewish or Palestinian identities, which have no bearing on lived relationships, but also acknowledges that such labels, of being Jewish or Palestinian, have given the two friends different and unequal experiences of Israeli society.

One central tenet of friendship, both in general lay understanding and in some anthropological literature, is the presumption of equality. This presumption of equality has been challenged in previous studies (see for example Rezende 1999). Among the Jewish and Palestinian Israelis that grew up together in WASNS equality was indeed stressed as a main component of their friendship, they grew up as equals and perceive each other as equals. Within the village there is an equality in terms of opportunities, in socio-economic status, in access to positions of authority. However, beyond the village Palestinian Israelis face racism, both

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[46] The term 'dark humour' is problematic for several reasons, as Donna Goldstein points out in the introduction to 'joking out of place' (Goldstein 2003). I use it in quotation marks because it is the term my interlocutors used to describe a particular style of humour between friends that touched upon socially and politically sensitive issues.

explicit and implicit, that their Jewish friends do not, and are disadvantaged in work, in education, and in social life. This inequality beyond the village sits uncomfortably with the equal space they have created for themselves within their friendships. In some moments this leads to reflection, such as we saw in chapter five when Jewish Israelis are embarrassed that they cannot speak Arabic as well as their Palestinian friends can speak Hebrew because, as part of the majority group in Israel they have not had the same need to acquire the language of the other.

One way in which this awareness about inequality was addressed by the second generation was through the joking relationships they had developed, and their own particular brand of dark humour. This is similar to joking relationships that have developed in other places in the world where, within one space, friendships of equality are fostered between people who may face inequality outside. For example, schools in the UK, where students' friendships bridge over socio-economic statuses, ethnicities, and religions that may affect the way wider society treats them (Evans 2010; Winkler-Reid 2015; Winkler-Reid 2016), or in industrial workplaces where humour plays on potential intergroup tensions and inequality (Sanchez 2016; Wise 2016).

In the community of Palestinian and Jewish Israelis I lived with, humour played a large role in many interactions. Whenever there was an issue that affected the relationship between conversational partners (due to anything from politics to personal rifts) that issue always had the potential for humour because there were no clear demarcations of when one crossed the line. The limits were only ascertained in the joke-telling moments themselves. Some jokes 'failed' because the interpersonal issue they touched upon was not found to be a source of humour by some of the individuals involved. Samir's friends generally prefer to drag difficult topics to the forefront of conversations, through their 'dark humour', rather than let them bubble away in the background causing potential awkwardness. That is to say, for Samir and his friends, humour was an important means of coping with difficult topics and their social effects. It has often been noted that understanding a sense of humour is central to understanding a social world (Davis 1979; Apte: 1985; Carty & Musharbash 2008). Although, many forms of light humour exist in the village (for example, the humorous uses of code-switching as discussed in Chapter V), this

chapter is particularly concerned with a certain sense of 'dark' humour that served as a 'shared language' among a group of Jewish and Palestinian friends. Because of its centrality, humour serves as a good entry point to explore the kinds of issues that affected the relationships between these Jewish and Palestinian Israeli friends, and how these issues were reinforced or challenged in conversations. This chapter explores the role of humour in sustaining such relationships. To do so I will first briefly explain the nature of friendships among the second generation of the village, and the challenges they face, then I will return to the mechanics of their humour, and the limits of its use.

WASNS Friendships: Growing Up 'Together with the Village'

The nature of friendships among the second generation of WASNS, and the humour they share, is shaped greatly by their experience growing up together in an intentional community. As one friend from the second generation put it: "my personal history and story have a direct connection to WASNS because I grew up together with the village." I learned from villagers' recollections that in the early years there was a strong communal feeling, as family events were celebrated with the whole community, and children were to an extent raised together. As the community is so small and the majority of the second generation began to socialise with each other at pre-school age, the friendships between some of them were at the same level of intimacy as that among siblings, and they would often describe each other as being like brothers and sisters. The intimacy of these kin- like friendships and the shared experience of life in a unique community meant that villagers have many experiences in common.

The friends in the second generation also had their own way of speaking, encouraged by their upbringing to think critically and question information given to them, being able to confidently debate issues and show a high-level of political awareness from remarkably young ages. While the second generation generally held the same values as their parents – equality and the need to talk through difference – their friendships were a process of working out a slightly different and evolving way of aiming for those values. This evolution of first generation ideology into second generation practice is common in intentional communities, and has been

noted in Israeli kibbutzim (see for example Spiro ; Cohen & Rosner 1970; Evens)[47]. The first generation began from the point of difference and inequality that had to be bridged and rectified. The second generation grew up with each other as equals and shared a strong link because of their upbringing; the real impact of difference and inequality would affect them after their relationships had formed.

The first challenges to their friendship arise when they start secondary school. As the village only has a primary school, all the second generation had to attend secondary schools in nearby towns. It was there that they first encountered a wider society that did not treat differences in the way that was natural to them. Many of the second generation (both Jewish and Palestinian) went to a majority-Jewish high-school where the Palestinians encountered racist bullying and the Jews were faced with bemused questions like "aren't you afraid to live with the Arabs, don't your Arab neighbours throw stones at you?". In the village primary school a space was given to learn and celebrate the festivities of three religions, while the high schools they go on to only focus on one. In the primary school they were used to hearing two languages, Arabic and Hebrew, while the high-schools they go to only focus on one. In the primary school, great efforts are made to incorporate and openly discuss two national narratives about the history of Israel-Palestine, while the high-schools they go to follow the dominant Jewish Israeli narrative. Back in the village, and among themselves, second generation friends could find others who not only shared their values, of celebrating differences and promoting equal relations, but also shared their experience of finding themselves in a society that did not work in the same way.

Another issue that puts pressure on second-generation friendships is the mandatory army service Jewish Israelis are faced with at the age of 18. Army service, due to its influential role in later career opportunities and the simple fact that it takes up the time of most of the country's 18-21 year olds, is a huge reminder of the different experiences that the Jewish and Palestinian friends have in Israel, as seen in Chapter I. As the Jewish Israeli goes off to begin

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[47] Cohen & Rosner describe the tension of the second generation perfectly: "the revolutionary struggle of their parents has little meaning for them, they struggle with a different problem: to endow their own life with meaning within the setting of a revolutionary movement, the course of which has in fact not been set by themselves" (Cohen & Rosner 1970: 76).

their army service, their Palestinian friend begins a course at university where the majority of their classmates are about three years older and have a shared army experience to discuss.

The Jewish Israelis have great pressure on them to serve: pressure from their high-school peers, from the family beyond the village, from Israeli society in general, from the threat of military jail if they refuse to serve and are not permitted to engage in national service instead, and from their own awareness of the positive implications army service has for future employment. On the other hand they have grown-up in a village that is opposed to war and violence, and, if they join the army, they would be taking part in an institution that could get them involved in violent interactions with Palestinians and in actively supporting the occupation of the West Bank and blockade of Gaza.

For the Palestinian villagers – who are not allowed to serve in the army, even if they wanted to – the army service topic is a difficult one because they understand all the pressures their Jewish friends are under, but they also cannot understand how a person who grew up among Palestinians in a peace village could opt to join an institution involved in violence against Palestinians. More than this, they feel let down personally when it is their close friend that makes such a decision. Many of the Jewish Israelis that serve are painfully aware of the hurt their army service might cause for their peers, and I heard stories of Jewish Israelis that would change from their army uniform into civilian clothing before entering the village out of respect for their friends and in order to not stoke such sensitivities. All these issues that affect the friendships were potential topics for 'dark jokes' and it is to the mechanics of this humour to which I now turn.

Mockery in Joking Friendships

A lot of the dark humour I witnessed between the second generation of WASNS was couched in a general kind of mockery that exists between these friends. Much like the joking relationships defined by Radcliffe-Brown in his seminal paper on the topic, the relationships between friends in WASNS are those in which mockery is permitted, and sometimes required (Radcliffe-Brown 1940: 195). In Radcliffe-Brown's analysis permissible mockery emerges in

relationships that combine both social disjunction and conjunction; a potential for conflict but also a shared aim to avoid that conflict. Taking Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functional approach as a point of departure, some theorists began distinguishing between kin and non-kin joking relations (Apte 1985: Handelman & Kapferer 1972), with kin joking relations portrayed as formalised and dependent upon one's structural position (e.g. as a cousin or mother's brother), and non-kin joking relations portrayed as spontaneous and person-specific (based on that person's characteristics and shared activities). Yet more recent works (see for example De Vienne 2012) have convincingly shown how kin and non-kin joking relations can be thought of more usefully as two ends of a spectrum rather than opposing types. This approach is more suitable to an analysis of the joking relations found in my field site, where the lines between kin and non-kin were not so clearly defined and thus acceptable joking behaviour between friends, kin or across generations was not so clearly defined either.

Mockery between friends in the second generation played on the same elements that shaped their friendships; shared knowledge and recognition of the knowledge others had about oneself. I would argue that this kind of mockery or teasing was also a way of making people feel included in a group of friends. I soon learnt this for myself as friends would mock my British accent and mannerisms, or made jokes that played on my role as researcher, or on my being a Jewish Israeli. One evening, when planning a road trip with two friends, Amal and In'am, Amal asked where I would like to go. Amal and In'am had been throwing around place names and debating the merits, or lack thereof, of different interesting places, but Amal simplified my options into two regions, "South to the desert, or North?" I thought for a moment and decided rather enthusiastically that I would prefer the North. Amal, not missing a beat, exclaimed "You're such an Orientalist!" The North of Israel is predominantly populated by Palestinian Israelis. In her chastisement Amal, a Palestinian Israeli, was mocking my choice, as a British anthropologist and/or a Jewish Israeli, to go North as one founded on an orientalist interest in Arabic cities. The joke partly mocks an element of my character but is also an expression of a shared understanding; the joke was made on the assumption that I (a) understood Israel's geography and (b) the use of Orientalism as an analysis of Israeli-Palestinian relations. Acknowledging the joke, I decided to build upon it and attempted a humorous

narrative about how I and some German friends had behaved awkwardly at a henna party Amal had also attended the night before. I replayed a hyperbolised dialogue in which a German friend and I came to the conclusion that all possible actions were orientalist, and how the decision neither to take part in dancing nor to stand and watch left us stuck in a doorway looking back into the room between people's shoulders, a more absurdly voyeuristic position than all the others we had discounted. Amal laughed and asked if the henna party would form part of my research; imitating the action of writing in a notebook she proclaimed "this is how the Arabs celebrate..."

Humour, here, was a way of discussing and making sense of the political issues that can transform the differences easily accommodated in friendship into those that test the premise of equality on which friendships are built. How one manoeuvres between what can and cannot be joked about, what is and is not funny, is also a way of ascertaining how best to deal with differences. When friends teased each other about personal habits and traits they would also use ethnic humour. In a party or hang-out scenario both the Jewish and Palestinian Israelis would be equally likely to mock a friend (whether Jewish or Palestinian) for being 'too Jewish' or 'too Arab'. These assessments of Jewishness or Arabness would often be deliberately absurd, such as accusations that a Palestinian villager was too Jewish because they preferred pet dogs to cats or because they enjoyed eating humous with a range of foods humous is not usually paired with. These jokes highlighted the absurdity of stereotypes in general and could also play in tongue-in-cheek fashion on well known stereotypes, as the friends were well aware of malicious uses these stereotypes had in other contexts in Israel-Palestine. It was clear in this joking relationship that ethnic based humour was never malicious in use because the distinction between the two 'opposing' groups that existed outside this community were not present inside it.

The vast literature on ethnic humour often looks at the rise of ethnic humour in multiethnic contexts as a way of stressing belonging to one group by expressing difference with another (Apte 1987; Ehrlich 1979). This difference is usually presented negatively, particularly in a context of conflict. Among the Palestinian and Jewish friends I knew, however, ethnic-based mockery both presented the supposed differences between them, and served as a

manifestation of what was shared; the joke itself could only have been made because they were friends to begin with, and the style of the joke was understood. Researchers of ethnic humour (Apte 1987; Ehrlich 1979) have shown the various ways in which the context of a given ethnic joke changes its nature. A joke that plays on Jewish stereotypes, for example, has a different meaning when told by a Jewish individual in an 'in-group' (among only Jews) setting than an 'inter-group' one (among a mixed group) or by a non-Jewish individual in an 'in-group' or 'inter-group' setting. The friends in the second generation had grown up together, and were so well versed in each other's language, culture, religion, and political narratives that ethnic jokes about Jews or Arabs were told by all from an 'in-group' perspective, and were accepted as such. Jewish/Israeli and Arab/Palestinian jokes could be shared because the Jewish Israelis were perceived by their friends as Palestine/Arab enough to tell jokes about Arabs/Palestinians and the Palestinian citizens of Israel were perceived as Jewish/Israeli enough to tell jokes about Jews/Israelis. These were jokes that pointed to supposed differences but the jokes were a reflection of a very unique shared experience.

Villagers told me that people from outside the village where often shocked when they heard Jewish and Palestinian villagers share seemingly racist jokes that are usually kept to the safety of a Jewish or Palestinian-only audience. As Amal explained it: "If somebody listened to us from the outside they would think 'these guys are absolutely anti-Semitic' or 'they're absolutely anti-Palestinian'. Y'know, these things can happen, but if you're friends with us I think you do catch up on the point."

Jokes about ethnicity also spilled into jokes about the political situation because of the slippage that often occurred in informal speech between the terms 'Arab' and 'Palestinian', 'Jew' and 'Israeli'. Often when the Palestinians would explain a particular socio-political issue to the volunteers — like the recurring clashes over holy sites in Jerusalem/al-Quds or racism against Arabs in Israeli society — they would look over at me or wave jokingly in my direction when they mentioned actions by 'the Jews'. Usually when these kinds of jokes occurred the speaker was simply involving me in the conversation, as well as drawing attention to the fact they knew I was there, thus affirming that these accusations against 'Jews' were meant in jest

and not actually connecting me personally to violent clashes or acts of racism. On occasions when their Jewish friends also joined the conversation, they were subject to the same mock accusations

The humour that served as a shared language for the WASNS friends was dark because it touched upon taboo topics; topics that had the greatest potential to offend sensitivities because they were antithetical to the ideal of the village, such as the military action featured in the joke that opened this paper or the racist stereotypes, which ethnic humour mocks. So far I have only shown examples in which mockery within particular joking relationships was delivered, and was understood by its audience as, humour. Sometimes, however, jokes did not have an entirely humorous effect and it is to such a 'failed' joke I now turn. It concerns one of the most potentially divisive topics, army service.

The Ambiguity of 'Dark' Humour: Considering a 'Failed' Joke

The second generation villagers discussed all the difficulties and dilemmas associated with army service openly and heatedly in their teenage years, when the call-up letters first arrived. Whether a Jewish Israeli villager ultimately decided to object or serve, these initial conversations were important moments. Many recounted to me the conversations they had when they or their friend received their first call-up letter, but it does not end there. The army service topic resurfaces many years later in casual conversations, not necessarily intentionally. For those that served, the army was an all-encompassing part of their life for almost three years; they have friends from the army that have carried through to civilian life, and they have army skills and experiences. In terms of casual conversation, they have countless 'one time in the army...' stories to fit into a variety of conversations that have nothing to do with the army directly. A conversation on almost any topic could lead to a reference to their time in the army, sometimes throwing them into a conversation that they were not prepared for.

One such exchange emerged on an evening when a group of Jewish and Palestinian friends – all in their twenties and post-army – came to hang out at the volunteers' house. Most of them studied in the same year at primary school and then went to the same Jewish Israeli

high school; a few had even lived together during their university years. The friendship group had not met each other for a while – they had been away at university, working outside the village or traveling – and tonight was a chance for them all to catch up.

This was the start of the weekend and conversation had been light hearted; the focus was on films and TV shows, recent travels, music, and private jokes. Eventually the topic turned to pests as one volunteer recounted the array of insects we were encountering in our rooms. Everyone swapped horror stories; the village is right next to a forest so it's a source of many scorpion, spider and snake-related tales. Then Roy, a post-army Jewish Israeli, contributed a story about cockroaches he encountered in army barracks. Roy had spent a lot of time over the last few years stationed in army barracks (many of which are in the desert) so naturally his field of reference in all things insect-related would be the desert creatures encountered on base. He was as likely to recall an insect encounter at the base as one of his Palestinian friends were to recall an insect-related encounter in the village. It did not matter what point Roy was making about the cockroaches because the group had already focused on the context of the story rather than the story itself. One of the volunteers asked whether soldiers can use their guns on pests, and Roy, taking the question more seriously than it was intended, replied that he would have been court marshalled for that. At this point Roy's Palestinian friend Masoud cut in, grinning with an exaggerated enthusiasm, 'yeah you have to save all the bullets for the Arabs right?' This is typical of Masoud's particular brand of dark humour; a hyperbolised delivery of a phrase so shocking that it has to be a joke even though it often disguises a serious point. Roy, playing along at first, replied in a sarcastic tone, 'yes that's exactly what they tell you in training.' 'Really?' Masoud drops his grin at the possibility it could be true. 'No.' There the conversation died out as someone turned to another topic.

Unlike the jokes in which I was the stand-in for all the ills of Israeli society, this joke was not based on the subject being separated from the political issues, here the joke played precisely upon how Roy was implicated in Israeli state actions. This joke also stood in stark contrast to those I had seen between Masoud and the Jewish Israeli friends he had made from outside the village about their role in the army, as those jokes actually did successfully open up

deeper conversations about the army. It was clear Roy was not ready to engage in a discussion about the army that evening; it struck me that it was more likely he recalled a story that just happened to take place during his service rather than an intention to discuss army service and all the complications that entails. Masoud did not necessarily wish to begin such a conversation about Roy's decisions and moral dilemmas when he made that joke, and did not press the matter further at the time. What Masoud's comment did do, however, was to draw the assembled group's attention to the violent nature of an institution being referred to in a light-hearted conversation.

Perhaps the key to this failed joke is that both Masoud and Roy had not had, in that moment, the right level of intimacy to read each other, thus missing sarcastic cues or not sensing whether it was the right time to joke with the other. As mentioned before, friends in the second generation described their brand of dark humour as a shared language; this relies on their ability to interpret each other's reactions and sensitivities at any given interaction, which is based on the cues one reads due to the intimacy fostered across the chain of interactions that makes friendship. To make mockery out of the most potentially divisive topics is not an uncommon phenomenon in multicultural, multi-ethnic environments, whether it is the work-place or school. Jokes about race for example, can potentially create strong social bonds in these contexts, if they operate with an ironic frame that is understood by all present. In all these contexts humour about race and other potentially offensive topics can be volatile; read the situation correctly due to an existing intimacy and that intimacy can be strengthened by sharing the joke; read the situation wrongly and the intimacy is tested.

Humour has an inherent ambiguity, it requires the joint interpretation of tellers and audience; sometimes allusions are made that are not picked up on, sometimes allusions are inferred that were not intended, and sometimes it is uncertain whether a situation or comment is indeed humorous or not. Like Masoud's sarcastic comments, if no one reacted like it was a joke then it came across as serious. A situation's definition as humourous depended on the joke-teller, who was not certain themselves which side of humour and seriousness his comment would fall until it was said, and the audience of the joke, who could react in humour or seriousness. It is

perhaps this inherent ambiguity of humour that makes it such a perfect medium to express the uncertainties within relationships themselves. The friendships between the villagers are equal and understanding but they also belong to two groups that are afflicted by conflict and inequality. Here in this village that inequality and conflict are to a large extent suspended, but not entirely. So far I have shown the ways in which the use of humour reflected relationships between joking partners, but Masoud's sarcastic quips suggest some of the functions humour might play within those relationships. With Masoud's sarcasm and its uses in mind, I now turn to the uses of humour in coping with conflict.

Coping with Conflict: The 2014 Gazan-Israeli 'War'

Mary Douglas, building on Freud, saw humour as an 'anti-rite'; humour can temporarily de-stabilise social structures and conscious controls are relaxed (Douglas 1968). For Douglas, the enjoyment of a joke lies in momentary freedom for the unconscious to "bubble up without restraint" (Douglas 1968: 364). This relieving element of joking is at the heart of much literature on the role of humour in coping, by which I mean humour's use as a social and psychological mechanism to make sense of, and to temper, the emotional effects of conflict. Also taking their cue from the work of Freud, some theorists have presented humour, particularly dark humour, as a form of survival strategy, a comic relief for those in traumatic circumstances, and have pointed to Jewish humour as an example of this (e.g. Oring 2003; Davis 1979; Goldstein 2013). Some WASNS villagers also made this point about Jewish humour. For example, one villager, Ofer, put it: "for humour in Judaism there is a central element in coping with pain, so you can see that characteristic in humour, but it is also really definitely a resource to also touch the pain 'in a more subtle way'." The literature on joking in the Israeli-Palestinian context tends to focus on the coping function of humour. Tova Gamliel's (2004) paper on dark humour in an Israeli old-age home, for example, links the macabre humour of her Israeli interlocutors to the large literature on Jewish joking tradition. Ben-Ari & Sion have also drawn attention to the particular kind of humour that develops among Israelis in army service. Similar accounts exist of dark humour for Palestinians: for example, Sharif Kanaana's (1990) paper cataloging jokes about the intifada made in the West Bank during and

after the first intifada. This literature on the coping functions of humour overlaps with the literature on ethnic humour, particularly concerning self-derogatory humour, in their shared arguments that humour can be a form of expression for minority groups. 'Dark humour' helped my Palestinian and Jewish Israeli interlocutors cope with conflict in various ways, and this is best illustrated by the jokes they made during Israel's conflict with Gaza in the summer of 2014.

The summer of 2014 was a tense and depressing time in Israel-Palestine. At the end of June the bodies of three Jewish Israeli youths, kidnapped a couple of weeks earlier, were found in the West Bank. Shortly thereafter a Palestinian youth from East Jerusalem was kidnapped and killed by right-wing Jewish Israelis, in the context of an increasingly racist and violent atmosphere. By July the Israeli army's missions into the West Bank (to find the kidnappers of the three youths) had escalated, and unrest, both in West Bank and Gaza, resulted in several rockets fired from Gaza into the south of Israel. Israel retaliated by bombarding Gaza with air-strikes and the 2014 war with Gaza began; a war that left over 2,000 Palestinians and over 70 Israelis dead. Living in a small village in central Israel the experience of all these tense and depressing events was surreal. The village was far enough away from Gaza for the Iron Dome (Israel's missile defence system) to target most, if not all, the rockets headed in the direction of the village. On several occasions one could see the rockets explode in the sky above, on impact with Iron Dome missiles. Despite the feeling that there was no immediate danger, people would still take each air-raid siren seriously, and the very sound of an air-raid siren can induce a kind of momentary panic, something I discovered the one time it sounded when I was not near a shelter.

It felt as if the village was in the eye of a storm. Never too far away from any of the dangers of the conflict to be unaware of them, yet, far enough from danger to know we were relatively safe in comparison to others in Palestine and Israel. People tended to voice their worries for the safety of others; friends and relatives in Gaza, friends and relatives in places like Jerusalem (where many acts of civilian violence and racism occurred even before the war), and children across Israel that were frightened and confused by the air-raid sirens. This resulted in a strange attitude among everyone in the village, a balance of fear and depression about war, but

also a kind of guilt, never fully expressed, at feeling this fear in the knowledge that others had it worse.

In the midst of this eerie tension, most nights many villagers gathered socially by the village swimming pool to watch the World Cup games or they would just meet at someone's home to eat, drink and socialise. Humour at these events would range from very dark sarcastic quips to flippant remarks about the situation — for example, one friend noted that the air raids had stopped in time for a particularly interesting World Cup match because Hamas were probably watching it too.

One evening a group of WASNS friends gathered on the patio of Masoud's house, together with some friends that were visiting from Sweden. There was talk of going to Tel Aviv to watch one of the World Cup games in a pub, although this was unlikely to happen. Tel Aviv plans were often discussed but rarely acted upon. The group sat a while chatting about shared memories from the last time the Swedish friends visited, a funny story about Masoud and Rashid's childhood antics, and so on. Eventually the topic of discussion turned to the current political situation as there had been an air-raid earlier and one friend, In'am, humorously retold a story about some panicked American tourists she had run into earlier. She replayed all the tourists' questions about the Iron Dome and how far their current location was from the border with Gaza. As she animatedly delivered the narrative some of the young men in the group joined in, mocking and imitating the tourists from her story. In'am and her friends took air-raids as seriously as necessary, by heading to the shelters when the siren sounded, but they were also keen to not overplay the danger. For a group of young people that has witnessed countless civilian clashes, an intifada, wars, and the everyday appearance of soldiers in public spaces, the tourists' shock at a singular air raid seemed rather funny.

While the group discussed the air-raids, Masoud received a call and left for a while, later explaining that the call was from his grandmother, who was warning him to stay home and stay safe because of the racist attacks on Arabs that were happening in Israel. Racism against Arabs in Israel was a real threat, and considering our distance from the border with Gaza, Masoud and his friends were more likely to encounter racist attacks than they were rockets. Yet,

when Masoud shared with us his grandmother's worry it was both to share with us his affection for his grandmother and her worries, and also had a hint of the same mockery previously levelled at the absurdity of rockets and the danger they posed.

These jokes did not mean that Masoud and his friends took racism lightly, many had experienced racism themselves. Only a few days later the same group did make it out to Tel Aviv. After the night out, on a main street at 2am, we walked past a group of young drunken Jewish Israeli men who, unaware of our presence, were dancing around in a circle chanting a prevalent racist slur. It was an intimidating scene, as the men happily chanted in a busy street, unchallenged by any passers by. We gave the men a wide berth and crossed over to the other side of the road, where Rashid gave a matter-of-fact explanation for our European friends, translating what the men had been chanting. In contrast to their parents — who expressed worries about their children's safety throughout the summer — Masoud, Rashid, and their friends responded to racism with a mixture of indignation and contempt, that came through in their jokes as well as their behaviour in the face of racism.

Back on Masoud's patio on that evening in July, and Inaam takes the conversation to a serious direction by raising her concern and frustration with the international media; she shares her observation that every small event that happens to Israelis is reported and little mention is given to the many deaths on the Palestinian side, or the acts of racism occurring within Israel. While the rest of us remain receptive but silent, Masoud retorts sarcastically 'well they're just Arabs'. Through this sarcastic remark, Masoud was making a serious point about inequality and racist attitudes towards Palestinians in Israel, but it also broke the silence that had been created by delving into serious issues.

Masoud's dry one-liners were actually often meant simply to raise a topic that was not being talked about, to approach issues it was difficult to approach seriously. A week or so previously I had interviewed him, along with In'am and Rashid, about how joking had made it easier for them to express serious issues. I asked whether it does always help, or whether they felt this joking tactic held them back, by trapping these serious issues in the realm of jokes and

safely out of serious discussion. Inaam and Masoud thought it helped because humour allowed them to talk about topics that are difficult to broach otherwise, but Rashid disagreed, saying:

> "Yeah maybe with friends, but I think, for me at least... Let's say at work I meet Jewish customers, and I know their opinions aren't as, like, tolerant towards Arabs and basically they would say something like 'Araboush', 'Araboush' is like a 'cute' name for an Arab, and... they say it for fun, as a joke, because they wouldn't say "hey you Arab" or something like that. I either wouldn't respond or I would just say something back to them in this kind of same level, like as a joke, and it's just like… I joke back because I don't want to start an argument, I just want to get on with my work day."

Several conclusions can be drawn from the jokes and reflections made by Masoud, In'am and Rashid. First their joking can be seen as a way of coping with their experience of the conflict. Jokes played on the absurdity of situations like sudden danger in a banal errand or tourists panicking over a routinised experience of air-raids. The kind of jokes they told were also part of a more general indignant attitude they had in the face of racism. In this way, Masoud's sarcastic quips can be seen as a form of resistance, both documenting the racism he experiences and limiting the power he allows it to have on his life by belittling it and those that propagate it. Masoud's use of humour was also a way for him to discuss difficult issues (including the conflict) among friends, when approaching the issues with seriousness was too awkward or had potential for causing a conflict in the conversation. For Masoud and Rashid, humour was a way of expressing a topic that was important to them to an audience that hey felt needed to know. They differed in their ideas about how broad that audience could be, as Rashid suggested the audience of the joke had to have a basic level of tolerance and understanding in order for a joke to add to that tolerance and understanding.

The inherent ambiguity of humour discussed earlier, in the 'failed' joke, matched with the unstable social context in which these 'dark' jokes were told, results in a wide range of social effects. With some friends, Masoud's humour could begin a difficult conversation that needed to have been had in order to deal with underlying issues of inequality or even conflict,

with others the humour could only reflect these tensions, perhaps even exacerbate them. Whether joking is a help or hinderance, for Rashid, depends on three inter-related things, first the closeness of their relationship, second, how much his conversational partner already knows and whether their opinions are tolerant, and third, if the situation restricts one's ability to argue. The joking relationships established within Masoud and Rashid's group of friends allowed them to air such jokes in a fashion that would be shocking if witnessed outside the village. However, the extent to which these jokes could then reaffirm the friendships had its limitations.

Humour as Way to Talk Through Difference?

For Masoud and Rashid, humour was a way of voicing a topic that was important to them, to an audience that they felt needed to know. They differed in their ideas about how broad that audience could be, as Rashid suggested the audience of the joke had to have a basic level of tolerance and understanding in order for a joke to add to that tolerance and understanding. Many of the villagers I interviewed about the use of humour made a distinction between its use within their community (comments such as 'that's just how we speak') and its ability to actually impact on a discussion or an audience's opinion. There was a tendency to downplay humour as a resource or tool, whether to suggest that the resource was limited, or that humour itself was not limited to being such a resource. Most of the interviews I conducted in the village concerned ways of speaking, given that the community places a great deal of importance on being able to speak about 'the issues'. Interviewees were thus keen to place humour in context, so as to emphasise that their ability to address complex and painful socio-political topics is *the* defining aspect of their way of speaking. The last section began with a quote from an interview with Ofer in which he stated that humour was "a resource to also touch the pain 'in a more subtle way", he went on to question, however, to what extent that produces a 'meaningful discussion'". Recently anthropologists have been expanding on Mary Douglas' analysis of humour to consider how it can be used to "change the situation" (Crichley quoted in Morton 2008). To what extent could humour fit in with the community's wider goal of implementing a social change, that is, creating a society that is equal and peaceful in a context of inequality and conflict?

Certain interlocutors I asked about 'dark humour', and humour in general, thought about the role it could have outside an 'in-group' setting, whether it could be useful in presenting difficult topics to those they feel needed to hear about them. While musing on how humour could be used to change or widen people's opinions, Ofer had this to say:

> "I wouldn't say that humour is the best way to affect people but it is definitely one of the ways. You know, for example, I think about the joint [Israeli-Palestinian] memorial day ceremony that we went to. It's an event I've always gone to and I think it's the activity that I've gotten the "harshest response" from the Israeli community [from outside the village] for being involved in. Really, "you should be embarrassed'", "you're degrading the soldiers that were killed" and "it's worse than treason", like, the harshest responses. I've always tried to explain to people that, first, the ceremony itself is full of honour for those who died because of the conflict, full of the hurt they and their close ones felt, and, second, the fact it gives space to the Palestinians means I feel it also gives a space for me. That is, that I don't feel I'm narrowing myself. And in all these conversations [with Jewish Israelis] it's always been really difficult. I really tried to convince one of my friends — she had a high rank in the army and is in reserve duty — and it didn't quite sit well with her […] There is a series by Sayed Kashua, a very talented Palestinian comedian and writer, 'Avoda Aravit' and in it his daughter is studying at a Jewish high school, so on Memorial day she sings one of the most classic songs of the memorial day, the song of the Palmach. She sings it and — of course she has a difficult experience taking part in the Jewish memorial day — and you can see as she sings she is instead thinking of the pictures of the Nakba and her family in the Nakba. My friend saw it — you know, it's a really great show, totally a sitcom, albeit one that touches on political topics, but totally a sitcom — she saw it and when it finished she immediately said "I'm joining you to the ceremony". It still wasn't simple, and it was a bit difficult for me to understand her — I sometimes understand

the views of more mainstream Israelis, but not all — as I saw almost all the way through the ceremony she held our friend's hand like she was on a rollercoaster. But it goes to show, she came, and it goes to show that when I spoke to her before [about attending the ceremony] her objection was decide"

Ofer's thoughts here require some unpacking. Firstly, he brought up the writer Sayed Kashua, whose work, as a columnist and sitcom creator, has already been the subject of academic research (see for example Hochberg 2010 or Kosman 2015). The sitcom 'Avoda Aravit', which Ofer references, is typical of Kashua's use of humour to bring the experience and narrative of Palestinian Israelis to a mainstream Israeli audience whose reactions to this kind of narrative could be aggressive without a humorous introduction.[48] Firstly, the tongue-in-cheek title plays on the racism underlying the Hebrew phrase *Avoda Aravit,* which literally means 'Arab labour' but is used to refer to second-rate work. Secondly, the show manages to broach major issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with dark humour. Thirdly, the central characters are more than just a medium through which the difficult experiences of Palestinian Israelis can be communicated to an Israeli mainstream audience, they are a counter to the underrepresentation, and misrepresentation, of Palestinian Israelis in mainstream media (mentioned in Chapter I).

For Ofer, Kashua's sitcom was useful because it helped convince a friend of his to join him at a joint Israeli-Palestinian memorial day service. The memorial service, which I also attended, was held every year on Israel's national Memorial Day. On memorial day many ceremonies are held across Israel to commemorate fallen soldiers and victims of terrorist attacks. The joint service broadens the scope of the memorial by including speakers from both Israel and Palestine who have lost loved ones, whether civilians or soldiers, due to the conflict. The format of the event gives equal space to Israeli and Palestinian stories as an Israeli speaker is followed by a Palestinian, who is then followed by an Israeli, and so on. The whole event is in Hebrew and Arabic, with simultaneous translation provided for those who require it.

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[48] Alongside his writing, Kashua also used to give talks in Jewish Israeli high-schools. Speaking to an interviewer about how he managed to broach difficult topics in these talks, Kashua surmised "I always start with a joke or a humouristic [sic] thing to say–and when I realize they are listening, then I can make them cry" (Kashua quoted in Greenberg 2013).

Humour was enough to bring Ofer's 'mainstream Israeli' to an event concerning Israeli-Palestinian peace and equality, but it was not enough to actually change her opinions. I turn now to ways in which humour was used within those kinds of structured Israeli-Palestinian events. One example of such an event is the dialogue workshop, in which Jewish Israelis and Palestinian citizens of Israel (or Palestinians from the West Bank) meet, often in their first encounter with the 'other side', and are led by a facilitator through a process where they get to know each other as individuals, then listen to each others experiences and opinions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Research on dialogue workshops between Israelis and Palestinians has shown that workshop participants develop an ability to speak with each other about these difficult issues and part of that is "being able to take the shouting with humour" (a workshop participant quoted in Maoz, Steinberg, Bar-On & Fakhereldeen 2002). This humour emerges only after a process in which a group of Palestinian and Jewish Israelis have been carefully led through political discussions in a method that prompts critical thinking about assumptions they have about the conflict and each other (a process that happened more 'naturally' for the second generation of the village). I found a similar propensity for humour about politics among the wider network of left-wing social activists in Israel and Palestine. While these individuals did not live in the village, they were engaged in work that meant they had gained a similar kind of critical awareness about the conflict and their differing experiences of it. Usually I met these individuals in settings such as planning meetings or semi-formal political discussions in which humour was used to air frustrations both with the topics they were discussing and the conversation itself. Below is an example of humour being used to air these frustrations at one relatively formal political discussion.

The strategic meetings discussed in Chapter III were mostly formal, with a set protocol and a facilitator making sure conversations were not derailed, but the discussion slipped into less formal exchanges and joking. In one of these meetings, to address the need for a long-term strategy, one of the meeting participants had devised an exercise for the evening. Writing on the flip chart "the moment before", she encouraged her fellow participants to first

think about what they thought would occur just before the end of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, and then to think what would need to happen before the moment before, and so on. The purpose of the exercise was to steer the conversation towards practical planning and away from the grand socio-political theorising these kinds of meetings have the potential to descend into. However, as the meeting progressed, some of the Jewish and Palestinian participants suggested the inevitability of violence right before change could occur, which sparked a conversation of grand theories about why and what the violence would entail. A Palestinian participant, agreeing that no final change would occur until there was a political shake-up, pointed out that the violence would be felt most by the Palestinian community, and alluded to the history of Sakhnin, a town in Northern Israel that has often been a site of violence between Palestinian citizens of Israel and the Israeli state. 'Surely,' a Jewish participant commented, 'it wouldn't end with planes over Sakhnin.' 'Of course not…' the Palestinian participant replied mockingly, 'it will be tanks.' The quip prompted the woman leading the exercise to bring the meeting's focus back on to planning a strategy. She draw attention to this consensus that was growing in the meeting about inevitable clashes, and asked what all this talk of clashes was aimed at, in terms of plans people had in mind. Was the fixation on clashes because people wanted to think on how to prevent them, or was the 'inevitability' people kept mentioning an indication that it was something they wanted to work towards. Given that, in the preceding conversation, it was suggested that the former was not possible and no-one wanted to actively seek violence, the conversation turned to a different topic of potential practical action. The use of humour here, whether intentional or not, provided the meeting's facilitator with an opportunity to bring the conversation back to "meaningful discussion", which, for the purposes of this meeting, was planning practical activities.

A day later I spoke to Nazem, one of the first-generation villagers who organised the above meeting, about his thoughts on the meeting. Nazem found these meetings frustrating because he felt they always went on a tangent; a talk about a media strategy, for example, would soon develop into theoretical discussions about media and its effects on society. Nazem made these feelings known in the meeting itself, just after the "moment before" exercise was explained he joked that 'if we start at "the moment before" none of us will be home by 10pm

[the end of the meeting]'. In fact, Nazem often used humour to bring a conversation back 'on track', both in meetings and in more informal social gatherings. For example if two people were beginning to get into a heated argument during a group chat he would often make some sarcastic comment that mocked both of them and re-stabilise the conversation. However, when I asked him about his thoughts on joking he, like the other villagers I asked, saw it as a way people spoke in village, stressing instead the importance of speaking directly and making plans that can be acted upon. One indirect way, then, that humour is useful for the process of social change is making sure that meetings do not veer off from the more practical planning kind of speech that would lead to the activities that make change.

So far we have seen humour's roles in social change as acting as an introduction to joint Israeli-Palestinian initiatives, keeping "meaningful discussion" going after it has already begun, making sure strategic meetings stay productive, and allowing for political discussions in general. Within the village, humour played a part in reaffirming the social changes that had already been achieved; namely, creating a community in which Jewish Palestinian Israelis lived together as equals. Some villagers expressed a kind of pride at this shared humour that was uniquely theirs. This is the sense I got from Adi, a Jewish Israeli, who moved his family to the village about a decade ago. One afternoon in August I sat with Adi and his teenage daughter on their porch after having conducted an interview on his opinions on the tensions in Israeli society and the conflict in Gaza. The interview was for the village communication department, as they were compiling an array of villager opinions to send out to various groups and individuals who support them around the world. Adi, out of interest, asked who else I had been asked to interview, and the list included his neighbour Maher, a Palestinian citizen of Israel. Learning this, Adi offered to phone Maher and see if he was available. As he explained the purpose of my interview task to Maher on the phone he added (in Hebrew) 'now don't be too anti-zionist', Adi then laughed at Maher's response and rounded off the conversation. Adi explained that Maher had replied 'yes I will say we should push you all into the sea', sarcastically referring to an oft-quoted phrase in political rhetoric by both Palestinian and Israeli right-wing politicians and extremists, particularly in times of conflict. Adi, who knows I am researching language use, pointed out to me that this kind of jokey conversation could only happen at the village and that

if he and Maher had had this exchange outside the village the response from listeners would be utter shock. Something Adi learnt when on a few occasions he did have such jokey exchanges with Palestinians friends amongst non-villagers.

Of course my interlocutors are not the only people who use dark humour. That political context, for example, is a topic for humour between the second generation is not surprising, given the joking relations I have describe above, and the same is true for their parents. Yet, as I have tried to show, the political context also emerges as a topic for mockery amongst Jewish and Palestinian Israelis who have spoken with each other about political and social issues in a particular way. Indeed, even within Israeli and Palestinian groups who do not interact with each other, there exist jokes about the conflict (as shown by Ben-Ari & Sion 2005 and Kanaana 1990). Both Israelis and Palestinian have such humour, and it is not shocking in itself. What, then, is special about the use of dark humour in the village? I would argue that the source of the shock at these joking performances was that these jokes were being shared by a Jewish and Palestinian Israeli; they were being perceived to be told outside of the safety of an 'in-group' setting, while, in fact, for the villagers, these jokes were being told in an 'in-group' setting. This point was put perfectly by Amal, who was in the same extended group of friends as Masoud, Rashid, Guy, and Samir. I had just asked her about this tendency Masoud and his friends had of using dark humour to discuss the difficult topics:

"For pretty much everyone in the village, and all the second generation…
their speech features dark humour. About our lives and about the 'issues', you
know, with a capital 'I'. So yeah maybe for the guys that's 90% their way of
speaking but for me it wasn't just that. But the dark humour it's not just a tool
to talk about something, it's also a language between us, it's one of our
shared languages. Because when we go outside the village, we know this is
not acceptable humour, this is not humour that somebody understands. If
you're standing next to a Jewish friend and you say [those jokes], you know,
people would stare at us like 'what is going on?' First people get shocked,
then they realise that there's something, you know, going on. So it's not just a

way to deal with things it's also a shared language that I think was created from our lives here."

When an individual new to the village — such as a friend made in an Israeli high-school, a cousin visiting from another villager or town in Israel, or a European volunteer — got to know the kind of relationships that existed between these Jewish and Palestinian Israelis the humour made more sense. While the content of these jokes about the political context, or about ethnicity, played on differences between them, the style and form were shared. Morton suggests that humour can make a 'change in the situation' if it goes "on the other side of the fence". While opinions differed among villagers about how useful humour was with people outside their friendship group, and especially those who were not as open to the views they held (eg. a Jewish customer at a shop), within their friendship groups the humour could play a social role precisely because it went "on the other side of the fence". It was this ability of 'dark humour' to express differences in a way that expressed something shared (the style of joking) that allowed 'dark humour' to play a role in changing or reaffirming relationships within the village. The fact that 'dark humour' was more prominent among the second generation of this intentional community shows perhaps the role it played in differentiating the way that this generation dealt with the issues in their friendships compared to the way their parents had in mind when forming the community. In this way their 'dark humour' was changing the situation in the village.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the use of 'dark humour' within a community of Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel. In considering the role this humour played, it is perhaps best to end with Amal's statement that "joking is not just a tool, it's a shared way of speaking". Humour was more than a way to cope with difficult circumstances, and more than a way of one group airing difficult topics to another, it was a shared way of discussing them.

These villagers were by no means the only people telling dark jokes to cope with the difficulties of life in Israel-Palestine, as mentioned earlier such jokes have been well documented in Jewish and Palestinian communities across the region. What, then, is special about the use of dark

humour in the village? I would argue that the reason outsiders were shocked at the villagers joking performances was that these jokes were being shared by Jewish and Palestinian Israelis; that they were being perceived to be told outside of the safety of an 'in-group' setting.

Humour that marked out differences between the Jews and Palestinians I knew was a 'shared language' between them because the way in which they marked their differences was the very thing that gave them something in common. The shared language of humour is so closely tied to the nature of friendship that revealing the mechanics of humour and its inherent ambiguity can shed light on the ethics of maintaining friendships.

The inherent ambiguity of humour allows it to be used to reassess and refigure relationships, making it central to the way these Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel continue their efforts to live "with the conflict". This was particularly tested in the extreme cases when tension was high due to a rise in violence in Israel-Palestine, or when issues such as army service put pressure on social relationships. However, such tests could also be more banal; one misjudged joke about a touchy topic during a hang-out could draw into question deeper issues about one's friendship, of what friendship entails, and how can one best deal with difference.

Conclusion

For the last forty years a group of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis has been attempting to talk through difference, and to live by the values of equality and peace. This thesis began by posing three puzzles raised by such an endeavour. Firstly, what kind of ideas about language do people need to have for it to make makes sense to emphasise talking as a tool for peace? Secondly, what kind of ideas about difference do they have, given the potentially negative implications of either emphasising or flattening out difference? Thirdly, what motivates people in social movements to *live* their ethical ideals in the everyday?

There is, of course, a great deal of overlap between these three puzzles. This overlap can best be illustrated by a short analysis of a small exchange that I witnessed several times, and in several variations, during my fieldwork. The exchange would begin with a villager or village employee – most often Jewish, but not always – referring to the village as *Neve Shalom - Wahat al-Salam* (using the Hebrew name first), only to be questioned by another villager – most often a Palestinian, but not always – whether their persistent reference to the village as *Neve Shalom - Wahat al-Salam* or even just *Neve Shalom* rather than *Wahat al-Salam - Neve Shalom* or WASNS was an indicator of their political stance. We see that by 'misnaming' the village, one's commitment to the values of the community could be called into question. The exchange draws on ideas about language, difference, and ethics, and cannot be fully understood without taking all three elements into consideration.

When the village was founded it was called *Neve Shalom - Wahat al-Salam.* Using both Hebrew and Arabic was part of a developing language ideology in the village, according to which both languages should be given equal space to ensure the equal representation of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis. Decades after choosing the name, the villagers decided in a general village meeting that the order of the words should be swapped so that the Arabic name came first. This decision, I argue, was part of a growing ideology about dealing with difference, in which it is not enough merely to represent differences but to acknowledge power dynamics. It is not enough to have both languages in the name; to acknowledge and address inequality one

needs to put the minority language first. As linguistic anthropologists have shown, language ideologies ascribe particular political and moral stances to speakers based on their language use, and this explains why the misnaming of the village can cause one's stance to be brought into question. Given that the name of the village, and the particular order in which the words are spoken or written, is based on particular shared ideas about language and difference, saying the name can be seen as an ethical act. That is, by correctly saying the village name in the right order, one is committing oneself to the shared ideology of the village.

Despite this complex interplay between language ideology, ideas about difference, and the everyday ethics of social movements, the initial three puzzles prove a useful heuristic with which to understand the struggles of the WASNS community, and the implications their struggles have for anthropological theory. Therefore, this conclusion will take each puzzle in turn, with the caveat that some points may cross over more than one section.

On Dialogue

In exploring the ways Jewish and Palestinian Israelis talk through difference, this thesis has repeatedly drawn on local concepts of dialogue. Villagers who shared their explicit views with me offered a range of definitions of 'dialogue', ranging from a simple synonym for 'talking' to all-encompassing theories of interaction. 'Dialogue is people talking,' as one second-generation villager pithily put it. At first this simple statement could be taken as a synonym alone, but it actually touches upon the first principle of the dialogue ideal in the village. Villagers were proud of their ability to talk through everything — that every topic was 'on the table' — and strongly believed that one should attempt to talk with anyone about anything. There was a shared belief among WASNS villagers that talking was always a better, and non-violent, option to solve conflict. The first puzzle this thesis posed was what kind of ideas about language do people need to have for it to make makes sense to emphasise talking as a tool for peace?

For the villagers of WASNS, the quest for peace is inextricably linked to the quest for equality, so one of the first linguistic issues they devote much thought to is the language

asymmetry in Israeli society (as discussed in Chapter I). The village has both Hebrew and Arabic names for the purpose of communicating equality, and all the institutions in the village are named in both languages as well. Achieving a balance of languages in conversation, however, is a far trickier prospect. One practice the villagers adopt in order to create a space for both Arabic and Hebrew in conversations is translation. As numerous linguistic anthropologists have convincingly shown, the process of translation actually reinforces the sense that languages are bounded (Gal 2015). The choice to translate rests on the premise that there are demarcated source and destination languages. In the context of WASNS, it is useful that translation has the tendency to establish such demarcations. As we saw in Chapter IV, providing Hebrew translation for Arabic-speakers, despite the fact that they are perfectly capable of speaking eloquently in Hebrew themselves, is seen by villagers as an important political act. Translation allows the Arabic-speakers to express a part of their identity, and means that an equal amount of Arabic can be heard in a conversation with Hebrew-speakers. Nevertheless, translation can actually serve to exacerbate the problems posed by linguistic asymmetry because it never challenges the underlying problem that Jewish Israelis have not made enough efforts to understand Arabic. Acts of translation can therefore serve to create complicated power dynamics among bilingual Palestinian Israelis (as we saw in Chapter IV). Translation also does not provide a solution to the dilemma faced by Palestinian Israelis as to whether they should favour content – having their message understood by non-Arabic-speaking Jewish Israelis – or form – not breaking the flow of speech, and being able to express themselves in Arabic with all the affective qualities of speaking in their 'mother tongue'. To fully appreciate all the language ideologies that circulate in the village of WASNS (and the wider community of *HaSmol* of which it is part), it is useful to discuss ideas about the content and the form of speech separately.

In some contexts, villagers placed more emphasis on the content of speech. As seen in chapters I and III, talk which does not address the underlying causes of conflict, and does not lead to joint action, is perceived as *talking for talking's sake* by many involved in *HaSmol*. If you are going to have a dialogue you need to address the uncomfortable issues of inequality, occupation, alternative historical narratives and so on. In WASNS, it was therefore important that every topic was 'on the table'. Villagers would also describe conversations as shallow or

deep, depending on the extent to which they reached the most painful topics about the conflict and its effect on their relationships. While talking can be a tool for peace, it is not just any talk that can do this, it has to be talk that deals with the reasons there is conflict in the first place.

In some contexts, villagers placed more emphasis on the form of speech, whether it was the language they chose to speak in, or the way in which they spoke it. One example is the Palestinian Israelis' decisions to speak in Arabic to, or around, Jewish Israelis that do not understand Arabic, in order to make a political point. In more relaxed informal social settings, like a party at the village's spiritual centre, the way in which one spoke was more important than the content being completely understood. As the then director of the spiritual centre put it, 'language of the heart' was the most important consideration, that is, the ability to communicate a sentiment rather than any particular message. Crucially, the focus on form of speech — at potential expense of content being understood — was more relevant for cementing existing good interpersonal relationships. The point of using phatic expressions, particularly those borrowed from one's second language (e.g. Jewish Israelis speaking in Arabic), is not to create peace and equality but rather to express the relationship built over the shared experience of advancing peace and equality (Chapter V). Similarly, humour was seen as a shared way of speaking that developed out of shared life in WASNS, rather than being a tool for peace itself (Chapter V). This perception that speaking develops out of relationships also applies to the use and understanding of non-verbal forms of communication. These other forms of communication also developed together with the social relationships in WASNS, because they could only be interpreted through shared knowledge. Silence, for example, could convey disapproval or shock, or an indication that one is listening, depending on the social context and the speakers involved. The sharing of food and music, communal walks, and dance could all be seen as positive communication as well, as long as the activity embodied the principle that dialogue is essentially the practice of expressing oneself and understanding another (Chapter VII).

As many villagers stressed to me, dialogue is as much about the right way of listening to others as it is about the right way of talking. Dialogue, in their view, is both about being honest and straight about one's opinions, and about being respectful of an interlocutor's point of

view. This resonates with widely held ideas about authentic dialogue in Israel-Palestine, such as *Dugri* and *Musayara*.[49] Successful dialogue does not imply unity – the villagers take pride in their ability to fiercely disagree. The point of doing dialogue is not to convince each other of their opinions or convert each other to their point of view, but rather to be able to listen and understand different points of view, and still live civilly and even amicably with each other. Practising dialogue can sometimes be agreeing to disagree, if one has at least tried to understand the other.

I have argued that people draw on more than one language ideology (as also shown by Gal 1989; Gal & Woolard 2001; Irvine & Gal 2000). The villagers, and people involved in *HaSmol* more broadly, come into contact with many language ideologies circulating both locally and globally. Jewish and Palestinian Israelis involved in dialogue projects were influenced by American academic works on dialogue to form their own theories and methods for effective talk (Chapter I). These Jewish and Palestinian Israelis also draw on local ways of speaking like *Musayara* and *Dugri*. We saw in Chapter III how the use of a dominant form of Dugri, that is a particularly antagonistic way of speaking, to express a counter-cultural argument, can come to the fore when those involved in the community of *HaSmol* consider ways to engage a wider Israeli public. The apparent irony of a counter-cultural message delivered in a dominant way of speaking, and the whole discussion about how to communicate with a wider 'public', raises questions about the relation between the circulation of language ideologies and the notion of publics. Linguistic anthropologists have shown that certain language ideologies actually create new publics – see, for example, Gal (2006) on the process of language standardisation in the EU. In Chapter III I showed how *HaSmol* create their own publics through the particular ideals and practices of engaging in meetings and rallies. Regardless of whether these new publics are as counter-cultural as intended, the sense of community created through such practices as consensus-building in meetings, or chanting in rallies, sustained motivation and commitment to a common cause.

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[49] The search for 'authentic' dialogue in Israel draws on local beliefs of how best to participate in society (Katriel 2004). Using Goffman's concept of 'face-work', Tamar Katriel illustrates a key difference between the Jewish and Palestinian Israeli participation principles of *Dugri* and *Musayara*. Essentially *Dugri* is about contributing to society by best presenting one's own 'face', while *Musayara* is about showing deference to the 'face' of one's interlocutor (Katriel 1986: 72; 111).

For talking to make sense as a tool for peace, the villagers needed to draw on a range of language ideologies, all usefully encompassed by the concept of 'dialogue'. Dialogue refers to the act of talking, different ways of speaking, and, perhaps most importantly, an ideal way of engaging with others, particularly when they disagree. To place dialogue in the lives of those who deal with difference, I have presented what dialogue means for these people and how it is practised in different social settings. In paying close attention to the social context of different "ways of speaking" (Hymes 1974; Hymes 1986a: 58) I have drawn on the vast work on ethnography of speaking. In some contexts, usually more formal speech events, it makes sense to focus on the content of speech. In other contexts, usually informal social gatherings where speech occurred, there was more of an emphasis on form of speech. Crucially, all the ideas held about language connected to ideas that circulate in Israel-Palestine more broadly, because villagers do not exist in a conversational bubble. It was when the villagers (and people involved in *HaSmol* more broadly) were engaged with, or considered engaging with, a wider imagined public, that the crossover and contradiction between different language ideologies was most pronounced.

On Difference

Thinking and talking about difference is central to life in WASNS. Indeed, any Jewish and Palestinian Israelis who want to work together towards peace and equality have to acknowledge differences between their two groups, because these differences have tangible impacts on their interactions. We have seen how these differences manifest through competing narratives and inequality (Chapter I). This thesis has contributed to the understanding of 'ethics across borders' (Mair & Evans 2015; Heywood 2015; Lambek 2015) by providing evidence of the ways in which power dynamics affect people's ideas about the nature of difference and affinity. We have seen how inequality and conflict in Israeli-Palestine means that any attempt to address difference is in danger of either normalising the inequality or reproducing the essentialised categories of Jews and Palestinians that underlie the conflict. Attempts at bridging differences at WASNS are therefore always a careful balancing act.

To address the negative consequences of flattening out difference, the School for Peace, the main site in which encounters with difference are theorized within the village, made a shift from interpersonal approaches to encouraging reflection on group identity. That is, the School for Peace takes the position that one's identity as Jewish or Palestinian has affected one's experience of, and attitudes towards, the conflict they find themselves in. Being aware of the effects of one's group identity is essential to taking on the moral responsibility necessary to positively affect the socio-political landscape (see Chapter I and II). Emphasising the difference between Jews and Palestinians is also essential to the village message that "two peoples can coexist successfully when there is acquaintance with and respect for each other's separate cultures" (WASNS 2009). Some villagers believe that the strength of their example – that Jewish and Palestinian Israelis can live together in peace and equality – lies in their ability to represent a wider Jewish and Palestinian Israeli society, anticipating any potential criticism from either the Jewish or Palestinian community that their social experiment is not replicable because the Jews and Palestinians who live in WASNS have strayed so far from their 'identity' to be representative. The problem with putting too much stress on difference is that Jewish and Palestinian identity can become essentialised – often a source of humour for the second generation (as shown in Chapter VII). This essentialisation can make the difference between Jews and Palestinians *the* difference by which all other differences are defined or subsumed; for example, the difference between languages as if they are bounded and separate, the incommensuration of historical narratives, or the expression of different opinions (on politics, social issues, or religion). By the same logic, expressions of other social differences can be seen as detracting from the main goal of achieving Jewish-Palestinian equality, for example Jewish and Palestinian women finding common ground about gender inequality can be seen as a distraction from the main cause (as seen in chapters III and IV).

One way to avoid the potential for normalisation and essentialisation often resulting from the two main approaches to differences is the process of dialogue. As already discussed, the ideal of dialogue is that partners both express themselves and make efforts to understand each other. By 'express themselves' I refer both to the expression of one's opinions (on socio-political context, on religion, on historical narrative) and to the expression of one's

'identity' (for example, the importance for Palestinian Israelis to speak in Arabic). Dialogue, within the community of *HaSmol*, designates certain positions as incomparable and thus these kinds of differences are not meant to be 'resolved', rather understood. By acknowledging the pitfalls of both emphasising and flattening out difference, members of *HaSmol* are always engaged in a process in which both approaches to difference are delicately balanced. Recent works on ethics across borders have shown how such a process of "incommensuration" can be used to create a sense of affinity through the expression of difference (Mair & Evans 2015; Heywood 2015). In the case of *HaSmol*, in particular, the affinity created through the practice of dialogue, results in both an emotional sense of belonging to the same community, and a shared ethic about dealing with difference that all its members can be held to (Chapter III).

One way in which the community of *HaSmol*, and the village of WASNS, try to best communicate differences is to create spaces where both Jewish and Palestinian cultures, narratives, and languages can be equally represented. As we have seen, the practices of translation and bilingual education are adopted in an attempt to balance language asymmetry by providing more opportunities for spoken Arabic in a Hebrew-dominated context (chapters III and IV). In the pursuit of language equality, it is useful for these endeavours to treat the two languages as incommensurate so one cannot be pressured into simply exchanging Arabic for Hebrew to be better understood by the whole group. Put another way, to elevate the status of Arabic in Jewish-Palestinian encounters it is important for all involved to accept that Arabic-speakers lose something of the meaning of their message if they have to deliver that message in Hebrew instead of Arabic. The focus on language is not arbitrary. Power dynamics play a great role in how Jewish and Palestinian Israelis deal with their linguistic differences particularly because one language, Hebrew, dominates most exchanges. Acts of translation, which is one way of dealing with difference, thus become embroiled in politics. As we have seen, Hebrew is the dominant language in Israel and in Jewish-Palestinian encounters, so providing translation (mostly from Arabic to Hebrew) creates a space for spoken Arabic in verbal exchanges (chapter IV). If the translation is seen as too different from the original, which all the bilingual Palestinian participants can assess, then a translator can be accused of altering the message, which questions the usual claim that translators are in a position of power. Meanwhile, if a

translation is not seen as different enough from the original, it can frustrate both Jewish and Palestinian participants that feel words are being unnecessarily repeated. Difference can be found in repetition of the message if one takes the stand-point that the change in language is itself sending a significant political message. Such a logic, that difference in form can be more important than potential repetition of content, is also applied to cases of code-switching or the borrowing of phatic expressions from other languages (Chapter V).

The existence of inequality does not prevent Jewish and Palestinian Israelis from finding humour in their differences, and the very notion of difference itself, especially if there is established trust between them. We saw this use of humour among the second generation, who learned about their differences after already forming friendships (Chapter VII). These friends had been thrown into a situation of diversity not dissimilar to the diversity one finds in schools and workplaces across the world. Humour across differences can sometimes reinforce racist categories or unequal statuses, but it can also challenge them if all participants share the same joking frame. It is also important that those in positions of relative power have an awareness of that position and that the people they are joking with have faith that that awareness exists. Crucially these relationships of trust are built through everyday social life in a process not particular to Jewish-Palestinian encounters. However, the extreme and difficult context of conflict brings this process into sharp relief in a way that can further the understanding of social life in other multi-cultural multi-ethnic contexts.

I have shown that WASNS villagers ideas about difference in their interactions is greatly affected by their awareness of power dynamics, which results in the nearly constant manoeuvring between the various pitfalls of emphasising difference, or affinity, and flattening out, or ignoring, difference. Throughout this thesis we have seen how the difference between 'Jewish' and 'Palestinian', as socio-political categories of person in Israel, has such a profound impact on the villagers of WASNS and *HaSmol* that all other kinds of difference are subsumed into these two categories. These differences include: the necessary incommensurability of two contradictory historical narratives; the boundedness, or not, of Hebrew and Arabic languages; the expressions of different beliefs and opinions; and any other differences between categories

of person, such as gender, religion, or ethnic origin. Meanwhile, two kinds of affinity have emerged. The first kind, a 'bad' kind, of affinity, is an emotional sense of common humanity created by designating all differences as equal, and thus irrelevant, in interpersonal interactions. This makes it almost impossible to deal with the inequality that limits these interpersonal relationships to begin with. The second kind of affinity, the 'good' kind, is an emotional sense of camaraderie developed between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis that address socio-political issues together. Crucially, the latter emotional sense is built on the understanding that there is a shared ethical stance, and thus assessments on socio-political issues are open to scrutiny if they ignore inequality.

On Ethics

Having established that the villagers of WASNS, like the wider community of *HaSmol*, have taken on a difficult and complicated set of utopian aims, the next step is to ask what keeps them motivated to sustain the endeavour from day to day. In answering this question, I have drawn on recent anthropological works that take everyday interactions as ethical sites. As argued in Chapter II, this literature offers an apt analytical tool to examine the interplay between two main motivations for the villagers, commitment to cause and commitment to relationships. As the village is an intentional community it is unusually easy to connect utopian values like 'self-knowledge' to self-awareness about the way one behaves in relationships within the village, because the village community is understood by its members as a microcosm of wider society, with shades of the same socio-politically issues that their institutions address (Chapter II).

In my analysis, I first explored the ways in which people were motivated by a sense of commitment to a cause. The institutions in WASNS, and the wider community of *HaSmol*, offer a utopian ethical aim to achieve peace and equality in the context of violence and inequality, as well as a set of practices and explicit theories of how one should personally act to achieve this aim. I have argued that the institutions of WASNS, and *HaSmol*, act as a moral system; a set of values and obligations that everyone must adhere to regardless of social context (Chapter II). As Laidlaw and Keane have shown, moral systems are just one aspect of ethical life, but are

nonetheless a useful analytical tool to explain how social movements are sustained. Having a grand aim – and set of practices to achieve it – helped sustain the Jewish and Palestinian Israelis dedicated to peace and equality at a difficult and testing time. During the Israeli-Gazan war of 2014 *HaSmol* sustained itself through meetings, rallies, and facilitated discussions (chapter III). In meetings for instance, Jewish and Palestinian Israelis were both consciously tackling political dilemmas — like what to do about the occupation — and less consciously reflecting on the political implications of their micro-social decisions. One's adherence to the rules of participation in such meetings – by limiting the length of one's contribution and giving space for others to speak – is a way of showing commitment to a shared cause. Involvement in *HaSmol* offers a utopian aim, and can instil a sense of personal responsibility for the shared project of change.

The thesis explored the ways people are motivated by a sense of commitment to relationships. In particular it has been useful to see relationships as a chain of interactions. Interactions are ethical sites because they draw on affordances beyond the interaction, not just in the sense they take place in a socio-political context but because they are part of a chain; inseparable from interactions before and after. Randall Collins' model provides a useful way of thinking about how friendships between the Jewish and Palestinian Israelis I met are formed and sustained by a range of interactions, from discourse to dancing, and keep people engaged in certain social groups and activities because of the emotional entrainment inherent to those interactions. Friendships are essential to the ethical project of living together "with the conflict". Collins's concept of interaction rituals (and Goffman's original theory) alone do not provide a useful way to theorise the connection between interactions and wider social structures, because the morals of interaction are created within and limited to the interactions themselves. Whilst useful for interpreting the internal dynamics of interaction chains, the framework does not effectively incorporate exogenous impacts like power, inequality, or racism. However, Collins' focus on the dynamics of ritual action are useful in addressing the question of how one kind of movement can thrive in contexts where other social institutions have failed (Robbins 2009). Analysing the interaction ritual chains that form friendships has been useful in understanding how a mixed group of Jewish and Palestinian Israeli men and women sustain a way of dealing

with difference that is contrary to dominant social forms in Israel-Palestine, and perhaps within their own intentional community as well (Chapter VI).

We saw in chapters VI and VII that the idea of friendship in WASNS is closely tied to the utopian values of the community, such as equality and dealing with differences. This could be seen in the sharing of dark humour between Jewish and Palestinian friends, in which jokes about difference could only serve to strengthen a sense of affinity if enough affinity existed for all participants to accept and understand the joking frame. The growing literature on friendship shows that by drawing out local concepts of friendship, one can better understand what it means to be a social being in that context. The inherent ambiguity of friendship means that every interaction could be a moment of bonding or breaking, and that moment can be the basis of reflection. Friendship can thus be seen as a quotidian ethical practice in which one not only (re)defines differences and their relevance, but also reflects upon one's sense of what it means to be a proper person. Friendship has its own internal rules and dynamics, that can be shaped from interaction to interaction, but does not exist in a vacuum.

Critics of everyday, or ordinary, ethics suggest that by finding ethics in even the most tacit – un-reflexive – motivations within interactions, one dilutes the concept of ethics to the point of meaninglessness. However, by drawing on Keane's concept of ethical affordances, I have shown that ethical life can only be fully understood by taking into consideration the tacit and reflexive motivations guiding the way one acts and speaks in everyday interactions. Just as a spur-of-the-moment dark joke could increase tolerance and understanding if these already existed to some degree, villagers' commitment to almost utopian values was sustained, and tested, on a day-to-day basis through commitment to actual lived relationships. Importantly, an analysis that incorporates both the tacit and reflexive ethical judgements in everyday interactions suggests how the decisions made in these everyday moments – within a context that fosters self-awareness – can shape the moral system in which they take place. This shift can be seen in the new way of dealing with difference that evolved 'naturally' among the second generation. On the one hand they mock the 'dialogue' and 'hippie' background of the village their parents established. Yet, on the other hand, they do still strongly believe in finding ways to

sustain equality and respect within the friendships that developed between them, as part of their shared experience of growing up in an intentional community.

By drawing on the theories of everyday, or ordinary, ethics my analysis of life in WASNS has contributed to the understanding of the motivations that drive social movements and intentional communities. I have shown how understanding the ethical motivations affecting people's everyday interactions does not mean that all is equally ethical, but that the ways in which these different motivations configure depending on the social context is crucial to understanding ethical life. By analysing the motivations that sustain involvement in progressive social movements on a day-to-day basis, this thesis has suggested how the values and practices of these movements can change and develop. Ethical decisions may draw on the established theories and practices of a moral system, but they are tried and tested in the everyday interactions that make-up social relationships. It is from these social relationships that new values and practices emerge; just as dark humour developed as a shared way of speaking among the second generation of an intentional community.

Looking Ahead

This thesis has built mostly on data collected in face-to-face encounters and structured speech events, in a more traditional approach to the ethnography of communication. Yet, as the planning and dissemination of the rally in Chapter III indicates, new media played an important role in both the creation of a public and the circulation of particular language ideologies. Linguistic anthropologists' increased attention to the formation of publics has been accompanied with more attention to the role of media, particularly new media, in the social coding of language use (Katriel 2011: 456). A further study would require analysis of these new media as sites of interaction in order to understand the way in which publics and language ideologies relate.

WASNS and *HaSmol's* engagement with the perceived 'mainstream' also raises a question about the limitations on approaches to difference. That is, at what point are different perspectives so extreme that they require a completely different kind of engagement? In this

thesis I have carefully examined the everyday ethics of talking through difference in a community that is devoted to such an endeavour, but what implications do these findings have for understanding interactions between people who do not even want to talk?

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