

**INFINITE RECORD:
ARCHIVE, MEMORY, PERFORMANCE**

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THE PROJECT

Karmenlara Ely and Maria Magdalena Schwaegermann

The archive, if it can be said to be anything at all, is an uncanny potential, like the stage itself. After three years of engaging with *Infinite Record: Archive, Memory, Performance*, “archive” for Norwegian Theater Academy at Østfold University College now refers to a phenomenon of attention. *Infinite Record* has amplified the demand to listen to the present, and by responding we can carry forth, transform, or release the resonances of the past. This project informed our engagement with the topic of performance and memory such that the notion of “archive” for us now also implies methods of relation, repetition, embodiment, listening, and care, as well as polyphonic acts of overwriting, erasure, and letting go.

At NTA in Fredrikstad, Norway we educate acting and scenography students in contemporary theater from the undergraduate to post-graduate levels. Students work closely together to generate new original theater works informed by compositional strategies found in music and architecture. Our practices are based in research, in seeking relationships and potentials produced by theater, and in investigating how performance can engage with both a space and the public via the senses while simultaneously stimulating critical discourse and thought. For almost 20 years the education has invited groundbreaking international guest artists to create unique projects in conjunction with the students.

The early archive of NTA was represented by project records, heaps of photos, videotapes, and traces of performances locked in a storage closet, without much order or framing. We didn’t know what to do with all this data, so it became the starting point for *Infinite Record*, which led to our current explorations. We asked ourselves: What is the legacy of NTA? What do the principles of archiving have to do with the ephemeral arts and an education that seeks to explode traditional patterns of learning? Is our archive something to organize, care for, or forget? We realized that at some level we were asking, as contemporary theater makers, what we had to do with history, and what history had to do with us.

So we invited resident artists and institutional partners to help us answer these questions by exploring the dynamics of memory and archiving in their own works, as a way to enter into the next chapter in our development as an academy responsible for its own legacy. This book is a reckoning and reflection on the three years we spent investigating our archival impulses. This book does not serve as a history of NTA, but rather offers a collection of findings on developing approaches to archive, memory, and performance. The accumulated research found herein — our “listening” — has been very informative in guiding subsequent ways to map our own history as a school as we approach our twenty-year celebration in 2016.

The archive as a phenomenon of reckoning, storage, and engagement with time is a crucial obsession for many theater makers. What we mean by “archive” is complex: we at once refer to the marking of history, the trace of things, and also to any values that trouble us in our march towards death and disappearance. Memory plays a crucial role in how we process our practice. For instance, an actor brings to his or her training embodied histories, legacies, and circles of relation. Through exchanges with the public they shed old bodies and acquire new identities. A scenographer develops new spaces in response to what is there and what is not there. Both artists are working in dialogue with the demands of time, history, and the politics of shared space. Texts play a decisive role in what we consider to be our inheritance as makers. Texts are perforated. They are breathed, spoken, eaten, changed, and exchanged.

This book documents a collective effort to approach memory and archive — a complex matrix of discourse — by means of diverse, opposing, and conflicting methodologies. What NTA values most in the artistic research paradigm is the invitation to interfere with hierarchical knowledge systems. Michel Foucault,

1 Cf. Deleuze, Gilles. "Intellectuals and Power." *Counter-Memory, Practice*. Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973. Pp. 205-217. [Originally in French as "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir: Entretien Michel Foucault-Gilles Deleuze." *L'ARC* 49 (1972): 3-10.] Print.

2 Cf. Eds. Brandt, Bettina, and Valentina Glajar. *Herta Müller: Politics and Aesthetics*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. Print.

3 Müller, Herta. *Vater telefoniert mit den Fliegen*. München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2012.

in a 1972 conversation with Gilles Deleuze, defended art as a valid and independent form of knowledge that need not obey traditional scientific methods.¹ Foucault's case holds up because artistic forms have the ability, through their diversity, to evoke "other" knowledge, even knowledge that challenges the preconditions of knowledge. This is relevant to our pedagogy at NTA, as we train theater artists using sometimes serpentine, non-traditional processes, while inviting other disciplines into our spaces in order to challenge theater conventions. We often ask theater to resist or critique its own history, including the aesthetic and cultural power structures of the avant-garde.

Artistic research processes in Norway value experimentation, juxtaposed relations, and live encounters as proven values for spending time and resources. This is an alternative to familiar modes of marketable academic production. The act of critical reflection is therefore an essential part of our artistic research processes, where theory, expression, and other grammars arise out of a myriad of digestive mechanisms used to engage work (including work that is perhaps impossible to digest). An example of this is when we invite unfinished ideas from our seminar processes to be presented and explored publicly. This symposia situation is a collective learning experience where failure is welcomed, if not consciously invited. It is not just a "knowledge market." Artistic research and critical reflection might also mean dreaming together, without objects or objection. But this dreaming follows a trajectory or thread; it has a structure and a direction, a flow. *Infinite Record*, in its book form, is yet another framework for gathering these threads together. It is a situation, a network of human relations, and a reflection on encounters with time.

PERFORMING ASSEMBLAGE

This book also functions as a sculpted relief, the result being perhaps a performance of its own. A book almost always consists of interconnected letters forming words within a specific semantic framing that give meaning to the performative "stage" design emerging on the empty page.

The celebrated poetic work (Fig. 001) arrives from the German-Romanian writer Herta Müller, Nobel Prize laureate of 2009, points in that direction.² *Father is calling the flies*^{3,4} is a provocative example of



[Fig. 001]

performative writing that also functions as an “unreadable text.” It is approachable only through the interplaying facets of architecture (color, three-dimensionality, capitalization, context, archive). At the moment the letters/words are staged by the scenographic design of the author, the former content and context of the snipped advertisement pieces they arrive from are forever lost. But the text, seen anew, operates as solitary form—in relief, as performance—locating its new coordinates, so that it might live on as celebrated poetry.

The work has taken a journey “down the rabbit hole”⁵—a metaphor in the English language that serves as a threshold symbol for the entrance into a ‘grotesque world,’ “where the unconscious is entered, and archetypal realms are revealed” (158).⁶ It is frequently used when referring to a shift in one’s immediate environment, a shift so substantial that one’s concept of reality is challenged or even changed, resulting in the loss of objectivity. Entering archival work can be compared to venturing down the rabbit hole, searching for long lost contexts, re-establishing contexts by means of critical methodologies, experiencing the eternal loss by means of conscious and unconscious introspection. When one looks at Herta Müller’s piece, the multidimensional staging of the words behave like masked protagonists in a performance, but their archival identity is irretrievably lost. Coping with the loss of the absolute and re-assembling masks and memories from the fragmentation of a globalized world are recurring themes of *Infinite Record*.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THIS BOOK

The “process” of *Infinite Record: Archive, Memory, Performance* has ended, but this collection represents its afterlife. Not a comprehensive representation of the project but rather a collection of its potentials: here you’ll find traces, scholarly voices, performance writing, and artistic works. One could begin reading from anywhere in the book. The items, like the individuals responsible for them, do not agree; they do not seek harmony but are left to coexist. While there is a logic to the order of the entries, there are infinite equal and opposite resonances that arise through reading randomly. This is supported by the layout: we consider the book’s designer a scenographer. The book is conceptualized as a stage work with four “scenes”:

Scene I: *The Rabbit Hole*

Scene II: *Memory Mountain*

Scene III: *Wunderblock*

Scene IV: *No Escape*

We invite the reader to relate to the book as an interactive play where one can enter and exit the scenes at will.

time the wording is only a small part of the poem, and therefore in fact non-translatable (Maria Magdalena Schwaegermann).

5 The phrase "down the rabbit hole" owes its origination to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, written by the English author Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898) under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll.

6 Eds. Dougherty, Nancy J., and Jacqueline J. West. *The Matrix and Meaning of Character: An Archetypal and Developmental Approach*. Sussex: Routledge, 2007. Print.

URIEL ORLOW'S UNMADE FILM: A MULTIDIRECTIONAL ARCHIVE FOR PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI TRAUMATIC MEMORY

ASTRID SCHMETTERLING

Uriel Orlow's installation *Unmade Film* (2012–13) is a work in fragments. Drawing on images, sound, and performance, it is a collection of components — a precarious archive — of a film that has yet to be made. Set in Israel/Palestine, this work intrigues me in the context of the relatively new field of “transcultural memory,” which I have been exploring together with my students in recent years. The concept of the transcultural responds to the global circulation of mass media, which instantly transmit and transform events across social, linguistic, and political borders. With the help of various theoretical models — by Astrid Erll, Michael Rothberg, Andrew Hoskins, Anna Reading, Diana Taylor, and others — we have examined the ways in which memory unfolds across and beyond cultures.

The term transcultural, of course, reflects that memory does not just move across national borders but also between people within those borders, people of different social and cultural groups who share the same geographical locations. My students and I have been investigating how people accommodate divergent histories, memories, and sensitivities in the public sphere, and what happens when the same site of history triggers disparate memories in different groups of people. Do those memories compete and erase each other? Can they resonate with one another? One of the theoretical models guiding us was Michael Rothberg's notion of “multidirectional memory” which draws attention to the “dynamic transfers that [occur] between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance.”¹ In contradistinction to those who understand collective memories as competitive, as blocking each other from view in a struggle for recognition in the public sphere, Rothberg's model stands for the intercultural interaction of different historical memories that is “productive and not privative, subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing.”² Thus the concept of “multidirectional memory” speaks to historical relatedness without erasing differences, ultimately forging an ethics of transnational, comparative justice.

1 Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009. P. 11. Print.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

3 “The Reconnaissance,” in *Uriel Orlow: Unmade Film*. Zurich: Edition Fink, 2013. P. 113. Les Complices* Edition. Catalogue. My discussion of Orlow's *Unmade Film* is based on an installation I saw at the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris (May 3–July 14, 2013). Different versions of it were exhibited at Al Ma'mal, Jerusalem (April 9–April 26, 2013).

Les Complices*, Zurich (May 15–June 8, 2013), and John Hansard Gallery, Southampton (February 28–April 25, 2015). Each version of the installation came with its own catalogue, the articles of which at times differed.

4 Ibid., p. 110.

5 Ibid.

6 All quotes not otherwise identified are taken from the soundtrack of “The Voiceover,” 8-channel audio installation, 30’, 2012–13.

Most scholars writing about transcultural and multidirectional memory come from literary or media studies, hence my students and I are attempting to expand the field by approaching it through art and visual culture. I should emphasize here that I do not believe that art can illustrate theory, nor that theory can explicate an artwork. I think of the two as different forms of research nurtured by imagination and creativity, one operating on the level of concepts, the other affects, and both engaging in dialogue. It is thus in a ‘conceptual-sensorial’ conversation on multidirectional memory that I would like to involve *Unmade Film*.

The formal inspiration for Orlow’s work in fragments was Pier Paolo Pasolini’s documentary *Location Hunting in Palestine* (*Sopralluoghi in Palestina*, 1965), which follows the Italian director’s trip to the “Terra Santa” in search of authentic locations for the filming of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964). Disappointed with what he found in modern industrial Israel, he resolved to shoot the film about Christ’s life in Italy instead. Pasolini appears in the first part of Uriel Orlow’s installation, “The Reconnaissance” (Fig. 132), as a voice in a fictional exchange between him, Robert Smithson, and a third unidentified person. “I see a landscape contaminated by the present,” Pasolini says. “[T]he entire landscape is reshaped, disfigured by parallel architecture...I cannot envisage a photography of these places. It would be completely out of place.”³ Thus it is both the idea of the unrealized film, or more precisely, the impossibility of making the film in that place, and the defacement of the original landscape, that have informed Orlow’s project. Unlike Pasolini, Orlow was not searching for unspoiled biblical sites, but for Palestinian localities. The projected images that accompany the audio piece are of Lifta, located on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and of an uncompleted village near Ayn Sinya, in the governorate of Ramallah. Lifta is the only “depopulated” Arab village that was left standing after the war of 1948 with several buildings more or less intact and not repopulated by Jews. The village with no name in the Palestinian Territories has been left in a state of incompleteness because the Israeli authorities halted its construction for security reasons.⁴

“Buildings that have fallen into ruin,” Pasolini’s imaginary unidentified interlocutor suggests, “mingle with buildings that rise into ruin before they are built...in this countryside, in these villages...everything is burnt. Burnt in material and in spirit.”

“Our presence here is so harsh,” Pasolini adds. “Touching the plants, leaning against the trees embarrasses me; I almost have a sense of disrespectfulness.”

“Don’t try to reach the place,” Orlow’s Robert Smithson responds, “imagine it instead.”⁵

And so we are led to the next segment of the installation, “The Voiceover,” an 8-channel audio piece in which a male voice with an Arab accent invites us to imagine Deir Yassin, the actual focus of Orlow’s *Unmade Film*. We are transported to the top of the village, now part of Jerusalem, a patch of rusty earth and pine needles surrounded by evergreen bushes, almond and carob trees. We almost can sense the warmth of a spring afternoon and the smell of clean air. Standing about 800-meters above sea level, we have a wide view of the land that used to be part of the village, located in the middle of the corridor between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Our guide then takes us to the remains of the monastery—*deir* is Arabic for monastery—a grey brick wall almost a thousand years old. He speaks about the history of the hamlet, beginning with the Crusades, when Jews and Muslims unsuccessfully fought the invading Franks together, before moving through the Ottoman era, during which it became a prosperous Muslim village with limestone houses clustered around a *hara* (square), and ending with the British Mandate period, when Deir Yassin grew uphill and eastward. We follow the guide down a gravel path and notice the buildings, their ornate façades, domed roofs, arched doors and windows, their sand colored stones—the newer ones uniformly cut, the older ones rough, weathered, and furrowed. “A landscape of time on a single stone brick,” says our guide.⁶ The buildings are now part of the Kfar Shaul Mental Health Center, and the guide points out the different wards to us: the D ward for chronic schizophrenia patients, which occupies two large Palestinian houses—“By the way,” he tells us, “don’t mind the cries of the patients”; the B ward for less severe cases, such as patients afflicted by the so-called Jerusalem syndrome—religious delusions and obsessions—in which the center now specializes; over there, the Outpatient Center occupying a large



[Fig. 132]

house with a courtyard and horse stables, which used to be the *han* (inn) that belonged to the *mukhtar*, the head of the village; further on, the Emergency Room, located in the former mosque and school.

We finally arrive at the Medical Administration, housed in an ornate building with tall double-arched windows and flowerpots that used to belong to one of the ruling clans of Deir Yassin. It is not known which of the clans that ran the village's limestone quarries owned the house. "A lot of information is lost," our guide informs us, "but terrible stories reside in those stones." One of them is the story of the village baker and his son who were making sesame bread when right-wing Zionist militias raided Deir Yassin at dawn on April 9, 1948 and threw them into their oven. Another story is that of Hayat Bilbeissi, a teacher, shot while providing first aid to a man who had been attacked by gangs in the street. There is also the story of the Zaharat family, of whom twenty-seven members were killed after grenades were thrown into their house.

More than a hundred villagers were murdered in this massacre perpetrated by one hundred and twenty fighters of the extremist breakaway paramilitary forces Irgun and Lehi during the violent conflict between Arabs and Jews (and during the Arab siege of Jerusalem) following the United Nations General Assembly's vote in favor of the Partition Plan for Palestine in November of 1947. During that period, towards the end of the British Mandate, the Zionist leadership, faced with the prospect of the invasion of Palestine by Arab armies, prepared to gain control over the land allocated to them in order to establish a Jewish majority that would justify the foundation of a Jewish state before the international community could change its mind. Part of this effort was the occupation and destruction of the "enemy population's" villages, which could serve as bases for Arab militias or which "constitute[d] a serious obstruction on any of the main transportation arteries."⁷ As the stories from our guide showed, the attack on Deir Yassin was particularly horrific. It was therefore publicly condemned by the Haganah, the main Israeli paramilitary organization, as well as the Jewish Agency.⁸ Yet it has to be seen, in Tom Segev's words, "as a product of the Zionist principle of separation and the dream of population transfer."⁹ The families of Deir Yassin and their Jewish neighbors of nearby Giv'at Shaul had actually made a non-belligerency pact during the period of conflict. Evidence suggests that both sides had kept to their agreement and even attempted to help each other out. The total disregard for such arrangements of peaceful co-existence on the part of the Zionist leadership, as Ariella Azoulay argues, testifies to "the determination of the nation-state machinery

7 "Israeli War of Independence: Plan Dalet (March 10, 1948)." Jewish Virtual Library, June 16, 2015. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Plan_Dalet.html>. Also cf.: Morris, Benny. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. 62–65. Print.

8 The main paramilitary organization of the Jewish community in Palestine was the Haganah, which operated between 1920 and 1948 and subsequently formed the core of the Israel Defence Forces after Independence. The Haganah was aligned with the Labor movement and under instruction to merely defend Jewish settlements and not carry out counterattacks against Arab communities. Those who favored counterterrorism against the Arabs and a militant stance against the British authorities broke away from the Haganah and founded the extremist underground organizations Irgun (1931–1948) and Lehi (1940–1948). The Irgun is well known for the 1946 bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, where the central administrative and military offices of the British Mandate authorities were located. Both organizations were jointly responsible for the

9 Segev, Tom. *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*. Trans. Haim Watzman, London: Abacus, 2001. P. 508. Print.

10 Azoulay, Ariella. *From Palestine to Israel: A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947–1950*. Trans. Charles S. Kamen. London: Pluto Press, 2011. P. 11. Print.

11 Ibid, p. 160. Also cf.: Pappé, Ilan. "The Historical Context of Deir Yassin," *Uriel Orlow: Unmade Film*. Zurich: Edition Fink, 2013. P. 25. Les Complices* Edition. Catalogue; Benny

12 The *minbar* is the raised pulpit from which the *imam* delivers sermons, while the *mihrab* is the semi-circular niche that indicates the direction of Mecca, i.e. the direction of prayer.

13 *Score for an Unmade Film* was performed at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, Ramallah, on April 9, 2013. The composers and musicians involved were Tareq Abboushi, Maya Khaldi, Dirar Kalash, Stormtrap, Tala Khoury, and Donia Jarrar.

14 "The Staging," HD Video, silent, 9'30", 2012; based on a workshop developed with

to destroy completely any possibility of creating a [mixed] civil society."¹⁰ Thus in spite of denouncing the massacre, the *Haganah*, and a few months later the Israeli Air Force, used it as a warning—"Remember Deir Yassin"¹¹—to pressure Arabs from other villages into fleeing. As a consequence, over four hundred villages were depopulated during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

The inhabitants of Deir Yassin first fled to Ein Karem, relates our guide. He has meanwhile shown us around the former mosque—where the *minbar* and the *mihrab*¹² are still visible—and is now taking us up to the roof from which we can see Ein Karem, at present a Jewish neighborhood in Jerusalem, and according to Christian tradition, the birthplace of John the Baptist. "The attack was from three sides," he explains, "and only left this as an escape route. After that, the refugees continued to Bethlehem and in the direction of Jordan. Some Yasinis stayed in Beitin, near Ramallah." One story that the guide does not recount is that of the fifty-five orphaned children of Deir Yassin, who were taken by truck to the Old City of Jerusalem and left to fend for themselves. They were discovered by Hind al-Husseini, who sheltered them in a convent and then took them to her grandfather's mansion in East Jerusalem. There she founded an orphanage and school, *Dar El-Tifel Al-Arabi* (Arab Children's House), which still exists.

Drawings of these events are part of "The Storyboard," another component of Orlow's unfinished film. Presented as a booklet, the drawings were created by current pupils at the school during a workshop with the artist. Removed from the original traumatic event, yet most probably affected by ongoing traumatic occurrences in their own lives (one girl's drawing appears to feature contemporary missiles, rather than 1940s grenades), these children tell the story of Deir Yassin's orphans with a mixture of sadness and lightness that works in counterpoint to the other elements of *Unmade Film*.

"The Storyboard" forms a contrast to the somber score, which is haunted by painful memories, voices, and pierced by cries. It was collectively improvised by a group of Palestinian musicians and performed in Ramallah in 2013.¹³ The installation of "The Score" consists of audio and visual elements with each musician and each movement presented separately on a screen, thereby repeating the fragmentation of *Unmade Film* and enacting the impossibility of representing the story of Deir Yassin as an unbroken narrative.

"The Staging," too, reiterates this sense of rupture that suffuses *Unmade Film*. It is composed of a series of video-recorded *tableaux vivants* set within a white arched space typical of Arabic architecture. Two men and a woman with their backs turned to one another stretch out their arms. One man lies on the floor while another is holding him down with his foot as a woman looks on. One man covers another's mouth with his hands as a woman hides in a niche. These scenes were developed in a workshop that Uriel Orlow and theater practitioner Frances Rifkin held in Jerusalem and Ramallah.¹⁴ Rifkin based the workshop on director Augusto Boal's *Image Theatre*, having trained with the Brazilian cultural activist and founder of the Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal's method engages theater as a consciousness-raising pedagogical tool, one that utilizes still images to explore both abstract concepts and concrete events beyond the confines of language, paying attention to small gestures. Three men and a woman in a circle bend towards each other until their heads almost touch. A woman sits on the floor crying as two men tower over her. Two men and a woman lie on the floor with their eyes wide open. A woman lies on the floor in the fetal position; two other women and a man kneel or stand next to her, covering their faces in anguish (Fig. 134). Embodied memories of trauma that haunt us across time. "Haunting," Orlow wrote, "is both temporal rupture and unstable representation; haunting is a form of dispossession but also a form of return; haunting points to unfinished business—the extension of the past into the present."¹⁵

A few months after the massacre, the deserted village was cleaned up, and in 1951 the Kfar Shaul Mental Center was founded. "Not all the patients were ill," reveals the guide. "They were Holocaust survivors. They were broken." One of those patients was Uriel Orlow's great-aunt. Having survived Auschwitz, she immigrated to Palestine, where she had a breakdown in the early 1950s. She was taken to Kfar Shaul and lived there for more than thirty years until her death. Orlow remembers visiting her regularly in his childhood during family holidays to Israel.¹⁶

“The Stills” that the artist produced for *Unmade Film* are permeated by a sense of desolation and loneliness. Photographs of broken chairs scattered around the grounds of the center (Fig. 133) and shabby institutional communal spaces palpably convey the pain and isolation of those whose ability to live life was destroyed in the concentration camps. In this component of *Unmade Film*, it is the place itself that speaks. By observing it closely in its present state, Orlow reveals it to be haunted by traces of the past. This links it to many of the artist’s other works, the camera carefully exploring spaces and surfaces so as to allow a place to evoke its own history—be it a swimming pool in a former synagogue in Poznan, or Café Odeon in Zurich, a meeting place for émigrés during the World Wars, or the town of Mush, a site of massacre during the Armenian genocide of 1915. And finally Kfar Shaul, haunted by the Holocaust and the massacre of Deir Yassin. This is what drives the project: the desire to make visible the traces of both traumas.

Thinking about the Holocaust and the Nakba together, though, is still an act fraught with controversy. If there are social groups who attempt to block each other’s collective memories from view, as Michael Rothberg puts it, then Israelis and Palestinians are prominent examples. Apart from fearing that discussion of the Holocaust in relation to other traumatic events might deny its uniqueness, Israelis regard the Nakba, in Ariella Azoulay’s estimation, as a “catastrophe from [the Palestinians’] point of view.” They see it as an outcome of the war that preceded the foundation of the Israeli state, collateral damage of the realization of a return to Zion—but not a catastrophe, as such.¹⁷ Through her writing on Israeli documentary photography, Azoulay has shown how much the Israeli state has done to erase traces of the tragedy imposed on the Palestinians and, where these are ineradicable, to educate its citizens in ignoring them. Kfar Shaul, for example, has no plaque memorializing the massacre of Deir Yassin that still resides in the mental health center’s stones. Only a few Israelis led by Zochrot—an organization committed to making the Nakba visible to the Israeli public through tours, lectures, workshops, and publications—gather there each April in commemoration. Kfar Shaul/Deir Yassin is thus a site where one event has erased another, one traumatic memory has superimposed itself on the other. The mainstream Palestinian response to the Holocaust, in turn, has ranged from total denial of the event, through indifference and an effort to minimize it as a “Zionist exaggeration,” to regarding Palestinians themselves as the “real Jews” and “ultimate victims” of Western history, victimized by “a second generation of Nazi victims” who defiled the memory of the Holocaust by “perpetrating similar crimes against the Palestinians.”¹⁸ Each side, as Ilan Gur-Ze’ev and Ilan Pappé argue, attempts to destroy “the collective memory of the Other through the construction of [its] own.” Each side “sees itself as a sole victim while totally negating the victimization of the Other.”

Orlow’s project, as I suggested above, creates a sensorial space in which to engage both collective memories together. Yet the film remains in fragments, not only because it is impossible to represent the story of Kfar Shaul/Deir Yassin as an unbroken whole, but also in order to resist equating one trauma with the other. Instead, it provides a multidirectional space in which both traumas can be considered without erasing their differences, yet also without denying their links. “Who would want morally to equate mass extermination with mass dispossession?” Edward Said asked. “It would be foolish even to try. But they are connected—a different thing altogether—in the struggle over Palestine which has been so intransigent, its elements so irreconcilable... We cannot co-exist as two communities of detached and uncommunicatingly separate suffering.”¹⁹

Unmade Film allows the two communities of suffering to communicate. Its “Script” takes us to psychiatric terrains. Based on actual case studies from a rehabilitation center in Ramallah, it cites the manifestations of trauma in torture victims: depression, dizzy spells, separation anxiety, loss of appetite, aggression, and poor self-control. Reading the text in English, Arabic, and Hebrew, one cannot help but compare those symptoms to those of Holocaust survivors treated at Kfar Shaul. As surprising as this may sound, in light of the prominent place the Holocaust has in Israel’s national discourse and its exploitation for political purposes, the suffering of Holocaust survivors, too, was not acknowledged.

The affect of loneliness that pervades Orlow’s “Stills” also conveys the artist’s sense that his

Frances Rifkin and actors Ibrahim Alhindi, Fida Ghneim, Hussam Ghosheh, Dirar Kalash, 17 Azoulay, pp. 9–10. In 2011, the Israeli parliament passed the so-called “Nakba Law,” Etienne Lopes, Aisha Majid, Aaida Poskute, and Diana Prim; additional cast: Erick Beltran, which grants the finance minister the power to reduce the budget of government-funded bodies, which allocate money to activity “that involves the negation of the existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people; the negation of the state’s democratic character; support for armed struggle, or terror acts by an enemy or a terror organization against the state of Israel; incitement to racism, violence and terror and dishonoring the national flag or the national symbol.” While this law is a violation of the

Martin Soto Climent, Tarek Knorn, Julia Rometti, Tamara Tamimi, and Tom Nicholson; additional camera: Issa Freij.

15 Uriel Orlow, *ibid.*

16 Thal, Andrea and Uriel Orlow. “Ein Gespräch zu *Unmade Film*.” *Uriel Orlow: Unmade Film*. Zurich: Edition Fink, 2013. P. 11. Les Complices* Edition. Catalogue.

freedom of expression and civil liberty, it has – contrary to its intentions of suppressing its mention – probably raised awareness of the Nakba in Israel.

18 Gur-Ze'ev, Ilan and Ilan Pappé. "Beyond the Destruction of the Other's Collective Memory: Blueprints for a Palestinian/Israeli Dialogue." *Theory, Culture & Society*. 20.1 (2003): 93–97.

19 Said, Edward. "Bases for Coexistence." *Al-Ahram Weekly*, November 15, 1997, available on <http://radiobergen.org/palestine/said-1.html>. Accessed June 1, 2015.

great-aunt and the other survivors at Kfar Shaul “had been pushed aside and completely forgotten by society.”²⁰ Weak victims did not fit into the agricultural muscular society that the Zionists, who had turned their back on the Diaspora, wanted to create. Tom Segev’s research in Israeli archives has revealed that the response of the Jewish community in Palestine to the destruction of European Jews was far from compassionate. During the 1930s, when Jews were desperate to escape from the Nazis, the Jewish Agency leadership in Palestine continued to insist on its right to select immigrants in accordance with the needs of the new society and repeatedly complained that the Agency’s representatives in Berlin were handing out immigration certificates to sick and needy people who were incapable of working and state-building. Only very belatedly (in the early 1940s) did the leaders of the Yishuv, the Jewish settlement in Palestine, make an effort to evacuate Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe, but, according to Segev, always with the interests of the Zionist cause at heart — Jews were needed to justify the foundation of a Jewish state. However, those who survived the horrors of the camps were at times greeted with suspicion, assumed to have acted in egotistical, corrupt, or immoral ways in order to remain alive. And yet those who were murdered were denounced for having gone to their deaths “like lambs to the slaughter” instead of finding “in their souls the courage to defend themselves.”²¹ The inevitable sense of guilt over the Yishuv’s failure to save Jews during the Holocaust was repressed and turned into aggression against the victims. And even though Jewish suffering was exploited in the establishment of the new state, it was not really acknowledged in the encounter with its survivors. As Idith Zertal put it: “Zionism’s work of mourning (Freud’s *trauerarbeit*) for the Jewish catastrophe still remains to be done.”²²

Grappling with all those complex histories that converge on the site of Kfar Shaul/Deir Yassin, Uriel Orlow felt unable to make a completed film. Instead he has created a fragmented multidirectional archive for Palestinian and Israeli traumatic memory, an archive of stories, images, texts, movements, and sounds that “emit a call to listen...again and again.”²³

[Fig. 133]





[Fig. 134]

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- 20 Thal and Orlow, "Ein Gespräch zu Unmade Film," *Uriel Orlow: Unmade Film*, Les Complices* Edition, p. 11. Print.
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- Also cf.: Rose, Jacqueline. "Holocaust Premises: Political Implications of the Traumatic
- Frame – With Judith Butler." *The Last Resistance*. London and New York: Verso, 2007. Pp. 214–222. Print.
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- Fig. 001 Herta Müller, *Vater telefoniert mit den Fliegen*, München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2012, p. 77, coloring: different colors as originated from each of the collaged wordstripes with their original background and font colors as follows: brown, yellow, grey, black, white, blue, green, turquoise, purple, and gold.
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Infinite Record: Archive, Memory, Performance

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