

City, Space and Literature

A Home at the End of the World: Eritrean and Sudanese Asylum

Seekers in Tel Aviv, Israel

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The Question of Choice

Bodies show the significance of their materiality through the choices that they make. Space, too, has a character that it expresses. These moments are sites—pointillism that forms the horizon—a world of possibilities that form the city. Tel Aviv is one such city, where the question of world, choice, materiality, body, space, character, expression, horizon, and possibility are raised most trenchantly in the life of its migrants. This exemplifies and embodies issues of belonging, home, and identity, as they seek out the embodied continuity of their life in the discontinuity of a new place. It brings together two worlds in the moments of their everyday in a body which is the site of vast cultural and national negotiations, narrating their story in another person's world. This new world changes that story simultaneously as new, migratory narrators augment a previously existing discursive space. In these ways, the city shows one's capability for choosing and the individual shows the city's capacity for choices as the body constantly modulates

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through environmental contours, showing itself in renewed formations of its materiality. Cities make bodies and bodies make cities.

This paper looks at how African migrants from Eritrea and Sudan are affected by “The Prevention of Infiltration Law” in Israel. It examines how these people who arrive seeking asylum are codified as *infiltrators* and move through various stages and spheres towards the distinction of being a full member of the citizenry, a place that they may never actually reach. Just as these ideas of nation and infiltration are written in the law and produce a specific subject, the environs of the city also speak out this complex narrative of national identity and infiltration in its street art. The law of the land is written upon its cities’ streets.

Additionally, this paper looks at two specific spaces of African life. They are the Holot Detention Facility in the Negev Desert and the African migrant communities residing in Southern Tel Aviv, interpreting them as stages where, after entering and seeking asylum, one is detained at Holot and branded as an infiltrator to then be released to start a life of tenuous citizenship in Tel Aviv (and as of August 2015, detainees were now prohibited from moving to Tel Aviv, presumably due to the very fact of its sustaining

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Eritrean and Sudanese community, as well as the city of Eilat, already notorious for its anti-Black racism).

In conclusion, this paper juxtaposes two challenges. The first, is the challenge of recognition for the African subject in Israel and the second is the challenge of bodily expression and joy for them in an, at times, repressive space. To argue these points, this paper engages with theoretical frameworks from Emmanuel Levinas and Maurice Merleau-Ponty on face to face encounter and phantom embodiment, respectively, to think through issues of migratory bodies in urban flux and on how recognized bodies achieve expression, thus engaging the question of habitation and home for mobile lives. To quote Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman on a ban of IDF soldiers from volunteering at Bialik-Rogozin, a Southern Tel Aviv school of African and Asian children (of migrant workers and asylum seekers, respectively): “charity should start at home”. But what is home, for whom is this a place, and when do we feel like we are there? To address this, finally, in questioning bodily freedom, a turn will be made to a public interview that I conducted with Mutasim Ali in September 2016 at New York University. Ali is the first Sudanese from the Darfuiran genocide to receive asylum status in Israel (June 2016) and now resides in Tel Aviv, the place that in a sense is home for

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him. In our conversation and in my discussion of it, I gesture towards Jean-Luc Nancy's description of life as one's potential to form their world (or home) and reflecting upon the capacity of these Eritrean and Sudanese migratory bodies in Tel Aviv to form a home at the end of the world.

Locals Only!: “The Prevention of Infiltration Law” and Street Art in the Urban Space

The information industry of legal discourse articulated by “The Prevention of Infiltration Law” projects a truth upon the unmediated body for their discursive performance. It *makes* them. In the case of the African asylum seekers from locations such as Eritrea and Sudan this truth is that of the “Infiltrator.” The codification of the subject into discourse both rejects the subject and simultaneously imbricates the subject in a process away from and thoroughly towards a narrative of citizenship. The economic industry of the 21st century urban cosmos requires docile and yet economically productive bodies in the citizenry for labor. The Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seeking body is intractably rejected by Israel and its cities such as (and especially in) Tel Aviv where the legal discourse takes hold by way of subversive street arts in the city's environs. There, these Eritreans and Sudanese are unwanted and still needed as asylum seekers (alternatively

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viewed as “infiltrators”) to perform two functions, the first being manual labor (construction, service industry, sanitation), but the second, and more important, is an abnegation of cultural politics that dialectically form Israeli identity. The presence of the stranger announces the space of the familiar, of home, of the nation and its citizens. By preventing infiltration, *society is defended* (as Michel Foucault would argue in his Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976), and by allowing infiltration, to then prevent it, I refer to his argument to pose that *society is created* as in this instance the Eritrean and Sudanese denizen is created as “infiltrators” of society who, conterminously, make the city. The halves of this dialectic wrestle and emerge simultaneously within the totality of globality, the chaos of home to the refuge of foreignness, which is a chaos of its own yearning for the refuge of home, all occurring in shifting tides on all of just one planet. Upheaval and stability are in tandem. Asylum seekers perform the menial labor of the city. However, the identity politics of culture marks the arbitrary and meaningful boundaries of geography, race, culture, body, and self as the subject seeking aid is simultaneously pathologized as contaminant of the social body. The capitalization and legalization of black flesh for labor acts as an impetus of urban growth, renewal, and life, building the urban skyscrapers, excavating

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and turning over land, cleansing city streets of the daily detritus of city life. Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers make the city and its limits. Even if we were to permit this narrative of the asylum seeker as “infiltrator,” they add something much more than simply being there in the city. They add to the culture and life of everyone, in the small and artful ways of writing the story of the city, like the narrations of street art offering an account of the visages in daily life.

Photographed across summer 2016, street art in the city of Tel Aviv speaks thoughts with its writings across surfaces like walls, dumpsters, and doors, saying: “I’M HERE BECAUSE THEY WANT CONTINUITY IN LIFE”; “People of Israel Live”; Israeli national flags in blue spray paint; “Fuck religion Fuck NATION”; the Magen David in various iterations; “LOCALS ONLY!”; “USA”; “OPPRESSED at LAST”; “GO HOME”; HONKY,”; “fuck GAZA”; “NOT GOOD!”; “hate”; “HANDSUP”; “HEBRAIC POWER”; ANTIFA ZONE”; ANTIFA”; De_th To H_m_n”; “PURE”; “PURE ANTIFA”; “SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL ANTIFA” (along with swastikas and communist stars); “Free PALASTIE” (which may be misspelled); “BDS” (accompanied by the sickle and the hammer); advertisement posters of women painted over with burqas, orthodox men leading their children (sprayed in white on the

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actual sidewalk); warnings that the “Occupation” is unable to be “Pinkwashed”; juxtapositions of well-fed white cats of the northern city to mangy black cats of the southern city, and other like images. These images show the streets as a site of national identity, political discourse, and an engagement of this space with the bodies that inhabit it and body, itself (the Star of David is often represented in the tattooing of bodies as national and religious identity is literally embodied in flesh). Street art and body art come to represent national art and a way of feeling in that culture. The streets and the body speak the law of the land.



Fig.1: photo of Allenby Street, Tel Aviv, Israel, June 2016.

The “*The Prevention of Infiltration Law*” was initially created by Israel in 1954 to enact a law after the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 to prevent and manage the unlawful entry of Palestinians across the newly

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created national boundaries. It was applied in 2013 to respond to the influx of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers. An “infiltrator” is defined as:

A person who has entered Israel knowingly and unlawfully and who at any time between the 16th Kislev, 3708 (29th November, 1947) and his entry was -

(1) A national or citizen of the Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi-Arabia, Trans-Jordan, Iraq or the Yemen; or

(2) A resident or visitor in one of those countries or in any part of Palestine outside Israel; or

(3) A Palestinian citizen or a Palestinian resident without nationality or citizenship or whose nationality or citizenship was doubtful and who, during the said period, left his ordinary place of residence in an area which has become a part of Israel for a place outside Israel.

(israellawresourcecenter.org)

In as much as Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers would have to travel through the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt to unlawfully cross the border to enter Israel, they fit the legal definition of “infiltrator”. Yet because of the 1951 Refugee Convention, Israel recognizes the danger that a return to Egypt or

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to their home countries would exact. This is what constitutes the liminal positioning of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers in Israel. Unlike the usage of the law against Palestinians to force their return home, it extracts and expels them from the state, in the case of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers, the law industrializes the body in situ by the law in stasis, and their presence is intractable. The Eritrean and Sudanese migratory body is simultaneously asylum seeker and infiltrator, constituted by the legal discourse of being simultaneously rejected by the state and held in place by international convention. Affected by these dual and opposing forces as global policies retain the unwanted body on the national stage, in enacts an ironic twist as a law to prevent infiltration codifies infiltration as such, restricting the body from achieving refugee status and citizenry. The law makes the body, as law of the land becomes law upon the body. Arab bodies are repelled, Black bodies are held, choosing liminality in Israel over forced conscription (often until death) in Eritrea or ethnic cleansing by Arab groups in Darfur. These migratory Africans make up less than one percent of the total nation, composed by technologies of biopower as a population, a Foucaultian “subrace,” (Foucault 61) scattered throughout the nation, but primarily in residence in Tel Aviv (and especially the Southern part which

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takes up names like Little Eritrea and most importantly, Little Africa, showing juxtapositions of nation and urban) as well as in Eilat.

In January 2013, Israel completed an Egyptian border fence and in December 2013 opened up the Holot Detention Facility for African asylum seekers after the 2013 application of “The Prevention of Infiltration Law” upon African bodies (so the law as ‘letter’ becomes codified into the law as ‘site’ in the formation of this detention center to prevent infiltration of African asylum seekers into Israel). First in word, now in deed, the prevention of infiltration takes on an existential reality. The Holot Detention Facility serves as the space for Africans without visas to be held for up to a year in the attempt to both restrain their movements in Israel, investigate their identity (for links to terrorist or hostile organizations), and deter their stay in Israel to preserve a Jewish state. However, this stance conflicts with Jewish ideals of charity towards others, the law both defines Judaism as Israeli state and repels Judaism as Jewish law in the relation to state and religion in this tenuous balance. Law industrializes (by way of the detention of one’s faculties) the body in place (in situ of the desert), as Holot becomes a “hollow” of the African cosmos, nearly a city in its own right as a subculture and life in the barest of sense builds, thrives, and persists, “physical

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space...made up of monotonous vistas, vast horizon enveloped in a sort of silence, calm, deceptive peace: indolence, the dead time of life” (Mbembe 179). After spending a year in Holot, asylum seekers receive the “temporary visitors status” visa that has to be renewed every 2 to 3 months and a bus ticket to the Central Bus Station in Southern Tel Aviv where the streets tell them by ways of its subversive graffiti, “LOCALS ONLY!” and “GO HOME” amongst other notions of citizenship, national identity, and the antithesis of belonging. Even with the eventual prohibition of going to Tel Aviv, the change is important and symbolic of how “The Prevention of Infiltration Law” notes Tel Aviv as a site with a growing community of African asylum seekers. The state of life for African asylum seekers is constantly in flux, constantly unstable, the very rule of law, itself, is always migrating from points of adherence to which the asylum seeker can direct oneself, a north star of law that shifts through the cosmos, never giving direction, but instead, always, a law without the ability to be followed, a rule without guide, strewing the body through space as it tries to do what it is told to do while the letter of the law in this nation shifts its words, making the state unknowable to the subject seeking asylum and constantly building borders from which it is cast out. The law is without direction to follow. The body is unendingly repelled.

Holot Detention Facility and Ethics of the Body

To mark this turn in which the African asylum seeker is sublimated to liminal moments, legal discourse codifies the identity of the subject as a social threat and therefore legislative and juridical (as disciplining) industry turns the asylum seeker into infiltrator, extricating the social body from international conventions on the status of refugees (i.e. if one is other than being a refugee, they are exempt from those rights of humanity). “The Prevention of Infiltration Law” literally makes the body migrate from international discourse into national law. Though this narrative of “infiltrator” is initially productive in this important moment, this paper seeks to set forth the various stages of movement that the body undergoes after this transition from asylum seeker to “infiltrator” to explore the mechanism of the industrializing of the body, its malleability, and the moments that compile the milieu of citizenship, a milieu that is productive and yet also reductive and restrictive.

The first stage, upon crossing the Egyptian-Israeli border, is being captured by IDF soldiers and detained in Saharonim Prison where the entrants are processed. The asylum seeker is imprisoned, first, as criminal. After that, they are then moved to the Holot Detention Facility where they

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stay for twelve months. This stage is essentially and simultaneously with and without traction because the asylum seeker subjects oneself to the fixity of being imprisoned in order to initiate the movement towards release into society. They are held in order to be free. They chose an abnegation of choice. It is detention. It is Holot.

In ethical *stasis* at the Holot Detention Facility, the “infiltrator” is unable to move, unable to act. The repression of the body evokes the repression of movement, the body remembers a time when it *could* move. Imagine the trauma of fleeing the genocide at home to be imprisoned in a foreign land without choice, without an ethics of identity. From these ethics of the body’s engagement with citizenship opens the space in which a politics of recognition can be established. An ethics of freedom or, more aptly put, *freeing*, exemplified through the stages of transition of the Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seeker, a narrative continuity in freedom, of life, appears as (un)/freedom. This dueling dialectic plays out in the utopian/dystopian city and world. This dialectic of the quest for freedom from North Africa (Eritrea and Sudan, even Ethiopia, where Jewish Ethiopians can make *aliyah* but still face racism in the society) can be extended to Israel and ultimately the United States through the narrative bridge of Black Lives

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Matter which has been taken up in both transnational and multi-national dynamic connections. Through such movements relating to Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions in an international politics regarding the American racial protest, life in Tel Aviv for the African asylum seeker evidences a mimeographed narrative of ethics for the 'Black' body. The experience and embodiment of Blackness in the Holot Detention Facility in Israel is replicative, mimetic, and identical to that fundamental experience globally. *Where can black bodies move? Where can black bodies travel? Where can black bodies be free? In what cities? In what spaces? In what places? The life of detention at Holot is akin to the life of Blackness everywhere.* What happens when Blackness is immobilized?

The Holot Detention Facility can be visited by anyone. But only the exterior may be seen. Only detainees may enter the gates of the facility into its interior, a border that only "infiltrators" may cross. Visitors and detainees meet in its surrounding desert space in its location deep in the Negev desert. Desert is home to the face to face encounter between free and unfree, national and infiltrator.

In my first trip, in June 2016, it was brutally hot as shadow preceded body, dust was the land, horizon was prison, bodies herded, roads were

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circles, the sun beat down, men struggled to survive, the body was elongated and quartered by the pull of time, we stood, we waited, body to body, waiting, stated, “UN WE NEED FREEDOM” in words scrawled on the side of a dumpster outside of Holot. 3300 men are held at Holot. Many to a room. The time at Holot, itself, was disorienting, different from waiting because although one thinks that their time will be limited to the 12 months, there are always changes and caveats, it’s waiting, but with an uncertainty of knowing when and how that wait will be elongated and what it will become. It’s different from being there and passing time as it is time that passes you.



Fig.2: Holot Detention Center, Negev Desert, Israel, August 2016.

Asylum Seekers in Tel Aviv

From the Holot Detention Center there is then the transit of the body via the Central Bus Station and the stationing of the body in its homelessness in Levinsky Park. It’s important to start by looking at the Central Bus Station

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which is the first place that a detainee will go to after being released from Holot which promises the possibility and opportunity that Tel Aviv offers. Getting a bus ticket from the middle of nowhere to a particular somewhere ushers the body through the vast space of the Negev desert into the specific urban place of Tel Aviv. And yet being in the Central Bus Station is its own place of waiting as it takes on the feeling of being the nexus where all parts of Israeli life eventually collide. Floors of empty stores with reflecting glass windows, long halls of exits and departures for the many bus lines, colorful escalators up and down the various levels, crossing and layered, zigzagging and mixed. What is particularly unique about the Central Bus Station when compared to bus stations in the central part of any other city is the way in which it represents the Israeli society, IDF soldiers sit and wait for their departures to serve across the nation, a nation in which everyone must be part of the army. This is a place where all citizens who serve will eventually sit and wait and go through. Everyone who is part of the nation stations their body in this place, in the situatedness of transit, in waiting here. All of the members of the nation move throughout the country via the Central Bus Station of Tel Aviv, where citizen and infiltrators wait, together. Such a thought puts into stark relief the ways in which asylum seekers make this

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place the first space in which their bodies participate after Holot. Their bodies travel through a place which is the place where bodies go, *to go*. In juxtaposition to the Holot Detention Facility, the Central Bus Station is a place of eventual mobility, Holot is a place of eternal wait, a juxtaposing of bodies that get to move with bodies that are forced into stasis. The contradiction of this is that all Israeli citizens go to the Central Bus Station from various parts of the country to then be redistributed, while asylum seekers make this their first destination for inevitable distribution amongst the country. For citizens, it is a destination, a “coming from” and for infiltrators it is a point of exit, “going to”. The migratory body moves from the extremes of being held at the liminal space to being shuttled in a bus, mobile, fast, contained, destined, towards the Central Bus Station. In interviews with various men of the Wadi Hawar community center for Eritrean and Sudanese people now in Southern Tel Aviv, it is often came up as a “joke” that one gets into the Central Bus Station to get lost and are able to only find their way out after hours of searching. The place is massive, a city unto itself, taking up the entire block that it holds, with so much to it, it almost sucks one in with its food court—a *mélange* of competing ethnic food items from around the world, centralized in this space in the city containing

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stores of general daily needs for people in a lower income group. Many empty floors with empty rooms (but at the same time, too, there is the vibrancy of life), like pockets of space within the space of the terminal.

After the detention of Holot, the terminal, the movement of the bus, the confusion of the bus station, comes homelessness. After leaving home (Eritrea, Sudan), and making a 'home' in a detention facility, without the national language or much money, many end up going to Levinsky Park where they live, homeless, waiting for someone to pick them up. Levinsky Park is diagonally across from the Central Bus Station. Without far to go, one goes from the waiting in the desert to the waiting in the park. A police station, children's outdoor toys, a basketball court, palm trees, grass, areas to sit, some people are there, listless, under the influence of drugs and alcohol, some are sharp and mindful. The park is a place of life and of congregation. It has that added air of danger as all parks do. When I spoke with various men from Holot about the park where they would live in the rainy winter and the sweltering summer, it was believed that in spite of having come so far from home, to have landed in detention and then to become homeless, this homelessness had a certain safety to it. To think that one is safer away from home, itself, is a form of protest, to protest the living conditions of 'home' by

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choosing homelessness in a foreign land, to choose a place elsewhere, to choose Levinsky Park in Central Tel Aviv.

This park is also a place of actual protest. Where in June 2016, signs gathered like street art and heralded, words in many languages, including English, saying things such as “THE DICTATOR IN ERITREA MUST BE TRIED FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY,” and “THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE VOICELESS PEOPLE OF ERITREA,” “ERITREA IS RULED BY FEAR NOT BY RULE,” “JUSTICE MUST COME FREE ERITREA,” “STOP SLAVERY IN ERITREA,” “ISSAIAS TO ICC”. The place of the park had become a place of protest and the crowds, neatly organized, moved throughout the streets, like street art in their own right, holding the art of these words and being art as a group with turquoise caps in the colour of the Eritrean flag with its crest in gold and white tee shirts printed with demands for freedom the march went all the way up to the building of the Delegation of the European Union in neighboring Ramat Gan. Voices made their demand to stop the genocide, to stop the war, unified, chanting, holding signs, raising fists, singing, calling, repeating, rallying, bringing light to the darkness of the situation, moving from the park into the streets of the city. Levinsky Park, this central place in the city had taken on the mantle of being

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the origin of its African voice, a place where people could come together and grow. Flags of Israel and Eritrea flew together as protestors waved them from Levinsky Park through the city streets of all Tel Aviv up to the European Union located in the neighboring municipality of Ramat Gan.

Asylum seekers establish a self-sustaining being and a relationship between the self and the community by claiming a presence in the community. This happens in the space of growth, in the Wadi Hawar community center. Here, close to the promenade of sex workers, cell phone shops, Eritrean and Sudanese restaurants, barbershops, and other stores is a place where the community is able to come together and work on the project of communal learning. In this communal learning, there are opportunities to learn Hebrew and to learn English and to develop a variety of skills. Wadi Hawar is an important place because it is the beginning of where the community is able to do the things that they need to do in order to get together and make everything that they need to make in this space. The center is the beginning as a community goes from being detained in the outskirts of the country in Holot to building itself a knowledge base within the cultural center of Tel Aviv. Wadi Hawar reminded me of a place in Holot where plastic chairs and faded bookcases under the shade of a canopy out in

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the exterior, desert space of the facility became the place for learning had been built. Within that space, people were able to learn. It takes so little to inspire growth, and that spirit had come with them from Africa, it was preserved at Holot and manifested itself at Wadi Hawar, in the part of the city named Little Africa. Simple, functional, clean, basic, Wadi Hawar was located near to the Central Bus Station (which was near to Levinsky Park). A simple building that costs the community a lot to rent with the small funds that are generated from everyone who contributes to the center. A small area of the park, tucked into the deeper spaces of the neighborhood, Wadi Hawar (named after a valley in Sudan), is also in a small valley here in Tel Aviv, tucked away, where the feeling of retreat and sanctuary prevail, where the loudness of the Central Bus Station and Tel Aviv as a whole quietens down just briefly, and where conversations of freedom and unfreedom, learning of music, studying English and coming together take over. Every time one is engages with this aspect of the African migrant community, it becomes ever more evident how richly they have made for themselves a space in this large place of Tel Aviv. To think that people can come together in one of the most complex cities/spaces on the planet and form, in ways, against the wishes of the other citizens, a place of their own is never more evident than here at

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Wadi Hawar. That is something which you see in the scenes of its life as all of it becomes these clear ways in which the placement and presence of furniture and tools demarcates space and conveys the intentions of everyone present there. All that learning takes are a few strokes of a marker on a whiteboard and the word of the teacher to make the inspirational moment begin.

There is another side to this experience, one that is more uncertain. The labor available to the African migrant community is one that is of engaging with jobs that are probably in a broadly different realm from the ones that they had at home. Or maybe they're exactly the same jobs that they had at home, but here, there is little choice. Sanitation, construction, manual labor, and work in the service industry seem to be the type of work that is available to most of the people who are from the African migrant community. This is where the dialectic of life in Tel Aviv is particularly formed. On one side of the coin, asylum seekers are held at Holot, a place that challenges their spirit but on the other side when they are freed to Tel Aviv, they are the backbone of a really crucial workforce that materially makes and creates the city. These forms of labor are literally the things that make the city, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, *African*, engaged in terraforming, turning Israel

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into skyscrapers, moving its rubbish, doing the work and physical labor that makes the city run and grow. Not jobs that are ever too desirable, nothing that will ever enable movement upwards, it's all from the periphery, but right within the city. This gives an insight into how the subject is industrialized by law which concretizes the irony of being undesired by the nation, but needed by the city. In the process of their industrializing, they are choosing to make Tel Aviv. They are choosing to make Israel. They are choosing the essential character of this place, to both reify and define that, as being a city, a nation, of migrants. This is the identity of this place, a place of liminal lives.

Facial Recognition

As political economies of life in Tel Aviv attend to shifting geographies, demographics, policies, and resources offer limited hope, one can but turn to subversive arts in the everyday, rupturing moments, juxtaposing the Black experience everywhere with the Black moment here. With that, this paper looks to the face as an ethically arresting and demanding site of speaking to power. Spray paint and marker render and transform the issues of race in Tel Aviv through the manifestation of artistic and transcendental matter in the very environs of the urban landscape. Street art in Tel Aviv envisages the political face of blackness, black lives transubstantiate through the nearly

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ephemeral and yet simultaneously demarcate presence of Black imagery in the habitus of the city. The hiddenness of Black lives in the Holot Detention Facility is reversed as artistic presence and facial recognition in Tel Aviv (political recognition, interpersonal recognition, and the recognition of Black faces in urban street art). Whereas Holot presents itself as an unethical space, the city presents itself with ethical possibilities, as citizens of Tel Aviv and subsequently the Israeli social body have to also make the choice within the space of the city as to whether they are going to recognize the other as a citizen. This, as for Levinas, occurs primarily in the home and in spaces of habitation. The question, then, is can the asylum seeker make a home in Tel Aviv?

This project examined the effect of the legal discourses of “infiltrator” status and its resultant treatment of African asylum seekers in Tel Aviv. Israel as a productive industry of the “asylum seeker’s” subjectivity and embodies it as located in a liminal position, making the “space” of the “Black” body a productive “place” for Israeli identity, defining their cultural status by way of *face* and *skin* and *language*. The state also produces a discursive ‘truth’ of identity in which the medium of the body is both habituated and is the habitus of this knowledge, characterized as discipline, house of

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punishment and stigma. This bodily making is both surficial and in-depth, outer and inner.



Fig 3: photo from Allenby Street, Tel Aviv, Israel, June 2016.

As Tel Aviv is both the cultural and economic center of Israel, it is also the industrial and manufacturing center of the mediated 'Black' body, a dual site of literal and figurative production, co-narrating and co-constituting each other. The actual performance of economic labor in the global economy of Tel Aviv is coterminous with the existential performance of political labor in a nation, evidentially, still crafting the borders of its self, trenchantly, in the specific site of this city. In this city, the asylum seeker seeks continuity in their life narrative *and* an ethically 'good' life in looking for the ways in which the city space configures possibilities and bodies fight through their narrative possibilities. This paper accomplishes this by questioning the rightfulness of

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“The Anti-Infiltration Law” and its disregard for what this paper argues are rights of existence in humanity’s path towards *being* with regards to literal and figurative movements of the body in space and that we can engage with the question of one’s freedom through thinking about the extent to which one’s body is granted this movement in the contexts of detention, transit, and community or the choices that one can make within these categories. Without the recognition of the Black face, Israel misses its ethical duty, and yet the Black face is richly present both corporeally and imagistically.

Joy/Erotics and the Phantom Body

Furthermore, this paper also thinks through the question as to *why* “Anti-Infiltration Law” exists in Israel, its genesis, and its *reason*. These three vectors of detention, transit, and home establish movement and its possibility as a precursor to joy (joy in detention, joy in movement, joy in habitation). They ethically jut against each other as the information industry produces a legal discourse of infiltrator. This paper additionally points towards a politics of *joy* for all theories of knowledge and ethics of embodied subjects asking the question through the tensions of motion and rest, what are the ethics that springs out of this juxtaposition, how joyful is your body?

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As Maurice Merleau-Ponty states in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, “We are imprisoned in the categories of the objective world, in which there is no middle term between presence and absence” (93). In this case, when can we choose *joy* as an option? When can we choose to be present or to be absent? Are these choices available in detention? Thus, this paper strives towards an ethics of the Asylum seeker, ‘Infiltrator,’ Citizen that thinks through the ideology of joy with regards to its spectrality, and that even absence in the spatiality of complicated places where space, itself, is refugee to the essence of its own proper being, is part of the cosmopolitan project of world-making and globalization.

In the context of the everyday, I would like to refer to a quotation from an interview with Mutasim Ali, the first and only Sudanese from the Darfurian genocide to be granted asylum in Israel, on the question of (un)freedom and its narrative dialectic. In an interview that I conducted in September 2016 at New York University, even after being granted asylum, Ali states that he “...is still not free.” In conclusion I would like to cite Jean-Luc Nancy inquires in *Creation of the World or Globalization* in relation to the migrant’s identity, that, without freedom, what is one’s ability to make a world? When the most mobile body is unable to move then, how can any

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body move? How can any body form a world? How can any body form a home, a home at the end of the world?

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