When I arrived in Madrid in mid-2004, I was hoping to spend some of my time learning about the Palestine solidarity movement in Spain.\textsuperscript{1} I was also anxious to see for the first time, in person, the canvas that is widely recognized as one of the greatest works of art of the twentieth century: *Guernica*, Pablo Picasso’s monumental homage to the Basque village that came under savage attack by German and Italian bombers during the Spanish Civil War. Little did I know that these two interests would quickly merge.

I had heard much about Picasso’s legendary mural, and I knew something about the events that had inspired it, so it was with great anticipation that I made my way to the Reina Sofia Museum, home to the *Guernica* since 1992. I was not disappointed, but I was surprised. Not by the bull and the horse—I knew enough about Picasso to know what those were about. No, what caught my attention was the almost unbearable tug-of-war between, on the one hand, the sheer expanse of the work and, on the other hand, the palpable sense of confinement that it embodied. What Picasso had created was a horrific scene contained largely within a single room. His placement of a solitary lightbulb on the ceiling of that room only heightened my sense that I was viewing a torture chamber—a sense, no doubt, that was related to the recent news of the outrages
committed at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In the bull and the horse, those iconic animals that have been the subject of so much critical debate in the literature on the Guernica, I saw reminders of the attack dogs used to frighten Iraqi prisoners. In the open, contorted mouths of Picasso’s human and animal figures I saw the faces of torture victims who spend hours, days, months, and years confined to the very spaces designed to contain their screams and break their spirits. More than anything else, though, I thought about the horror that must have gripped the residents of Guernica as they huddled in their homes or ran desperately through the fields trying to avoid the death that was coming from the sky.

What does this have to do with Palestine? A great deal, as it turns out. For one thing, the Spain of the 1930s and today’s Palestine have been the sites of two of the most significant global solidarity movements of the past century. During the Spanish Civil War, before and after the bombing of Guernica, thousands of volunteers from across the globe came to Spain to join the International Brigades in the struggle against fascism. Similarly, the years of the second Palestinian intifada (2000-present) have seen the emergence of numerous groups committed to active, nonviolent intervention in solidarity with Palestinians. The International Solidarity Movement (ISM), for example, has placed hundreds of activists (two of whom, Rachel Corrie and Tom Hurndall, were killed by Israeli troops) on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza with the goal of documenting Israeli repression and assisting Palestinians who are engaging in non-
violence resistance to land confiscation, house demolitions, and other daily aspects of Israel’s occupation regime (Sandercock et al. 2004, Stohlman and Aladin 2003).

In both of these cases, Spain and Palestine, people volunteered to join a local struggle because they correctly felt that something much larger was at stake. Solidarity movements of this sort are closely linked with the prophetic tradition: they are about bearing personal witness to injustice while working actively to produce a more just future. As such, it is not surprising that many of the most important solidarity movements of the past century—from Spain to the American South to today’s Palestine—have seen Jewish volunteers play central roles.³

It is in this deep concern with the future that the link with Guernica comes most clearly into view. The power of Picasso’s mural derives not only from the starkness of its black-and-white figures, but also from the viewer’s recognition that the mural, like the atrocity it documents, was prophetic. The village of Guernica was used as a testing ground for a new generation of aerial weapons that would later become standard features of global warfare waged increasingly from a distance. In this sense the figures on Picasso’s canvas, crowded into that single room as the bombs rained down, were the canaries in the coalmine that led immediately to London, Dresden and Hiroshima, and later to Vietnam, Beirut and Falluja. Tragically, the particular combination of terror and confinement that aerial bombardment visited upon the people of Guernica would arguably become one of the quintessential twentieth-century experiences.
The power of the Palestinian experience today derives, in a similar way, from its relationship to changes in the way political violence is exercised globally through the emergence of what Achille Mbembe (2003, p. 39) has called “necropolitics” or “contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death.” The difference is that we have scarcely begun to recognize the forward-looking nature of Palestine to its full extent. If anything, discussions of Palestine traditionally tend to emphasize its rootedness in an older world of colonialism, nationalism, and ethnic conflict, a world that—so the dominant narrative of “globalization” goes—is gradually being eclipsed. From this perspective, Palestine is more of a remnant, a stubborn theater filled with actors who can’t let go of the past. A close look at the issue of confinement, however, suggests that something more prophetic—that is, “diagnostic” of “what we are in the process of becoming” (Deleuze 1992, p. 164)—may be going on. From this alternate perspective, it becomes clear that Picasso’s *Guernica* is, in a profound sense, a Palestinian work as well as a Spanish one. The troubling legacy of confinement symbolized by Picasso’s mural has found its way to Palestine in a way that has implications for all of us.

**Global Palestine**

This article is part of a larger project exploring what I have called Global Palestine (Collins 2007). More than a simple location on a map, Palestine is an excellent
example of what Arjun Appadurai calls a “process geography.” For Appadurai (2000, pp. 6-8), such geographies are best understood as “precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction, and motion” rather than as “relatively immobile aggregates of traits.” They are closely related to the “imagined worlds” (an extension of Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities”) created by the movement of people across the boundaries of nation-states, continents, and regions (Appadurai 1996, p. 33).

There is little doubt that the worldwide Palestinian diaspora, beginning with al-nakbah (the dispossession of 1947-48), has created just such an “imagined world.” The refugee camps in Lebanon and other surrounding countries are the most (literally) concrete locations where this world is actualized (Khalili 2007; Peteet 2006). By their very nature, the camps are spaces where violently deterritorialized pieces of Palestine are precariously brought together to await a return that never seems to come. The long odyssey of the fedayeen (Palestinian guerrilla fighters) from the late 1960s to the early 1990s—stopping variously in Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and other points throughout the wider region—contributes another narrative thread to this transnational Palestinian tapestry.

Like the members of any globalized community, Palestinians who live in exile (al-ghurbah) carry with them memories and markers of the homeland. Keys to family homes, land ownership documents, photographs, identity papers, oral histories, experiences of traumatic border crossings—all of these and more, as Edward Said (1986)
above all so eloquently demonstrated, are part and parcel of the global Palestinian experience. Moreover, as their community remains focused on its anticipated territorial reconstitution, Palestinians on the “outside” have always found ways of maintaining direct connection with those on the “inside,” whether through radio broadcasts or the poignant “calling walls” and “shouting fences” at the borders that separate them from one another. More recently, internet technology has enabled the construction of new linkages through projects such as Palestine-Family.net, a clearinghouse for genealogical, geographical, and cultural heritage information about Palestine.

Yet Palestine has long loomed large in the global imagination in other ways as well: as a focus of religious and political pilgrimage, a model of resistance, a signifier of “terrorism,” and a testing ground for counterinsurgency, just to name a few. In recent years Palestine, a common (if often empty) theme in the speeches of Arab nationalists for decades, has become increasingly central to the rhetoric of what Olivier Roy (2004) calls “globalized Islam.” As Devji (2005) demonstrates in his analysis of jihadist discourse, prominent Islamists such as Osama bin Laden often invoke the Palestinian struggle even as they emphasize the overriding importance of the larger (global) jihad. This discourse, in turn, exists in complex articulation with the concerns of ordinary Arabs and Muslims who get access to images of Palestinian suffering through the reach of global satellite media. All of this, combined with the solidarity movements discussed above, contributes to the dynamic “process geography” of Global Palestine.
With this in mind, I argue that today’s Palestine amounts to a sociopolitical hothouse where new structures of repression, resistance, and solidarity are being grown before our very eyes. While not wishing to deny any of the local specificity that helps define the Palestinian struggle, I argue that Palestine may also be understood as a kernel of truth onto which is inscribed the ongoing history of an entire global system. In viewing Palestine in this less “absolute” and more “relational” way (Harvey 2006), I am drawing on Walter Benjamin’s powerful notion of the monadological fragment. For Benjamin, each work of art is monadic in relation to the larger idea of Art in much the same way as a cell contains the genetic coding of the larger body (Gilloch 2002, p. 40). Elsewhere, Benjamin (1978) illustrates the intricacies of “triangular time,” a particular understanding of temporality that has deep resonance for Palestinians (Borcila 2007; Collins 2004; Khalili 2007; Swedenburg 1995).

Viewed in Benjaminian terms, Palestine represents a kind of geopolitical hinge that opens both forward and backward in time, marking a dynamic collision point for multiple pasts and multiple futures. Looking to the past, the continuing state of emergency in Palestine bears the traces of a range of global historical processes: the horrors of total war, culminating in Auschwitz and Hiroshima; the post-WWII decades of decolonization, nuclear deterrence and violent superpower proxy wars waged throughout the Global South; and the gradual emergence of a global corporate-military war machine. Yet for all of the history weighing it down, Palestine also contains many
images of the future—indeed, of many futures ranging from the utopian, binational (or even post-national) world of the “one-state solution” to the dystopian world of permanent, high-tech warfare where states kill instantly, preemptively, and with impunity.

In thinking through these issues, I have benefited from a sustained immersion in the opaque, elliptical, and fascinating world of Paul Virilio, whose work treats the linkages among architecture, war, technology, and power. The prophetic nature of Virilio’s writing makes it an especially useful framework for understanding Palestine’s global significance. His own references to Palestine are few in number, yet in each case he succeeds in shining analytical light on the forward-looking nature of the Palestinian struggle and its linkage with global processes ranging from Cold War-era “deterrence” to the ascendance of neoliberalism to the institutionalization of a struggle between state and non-state terrorism. Recent developments in Palestine, including and especially the consolidation of an increasingly sophisticated system of Israeli control over the lives of Palestinians living under occupation, only reinforce the need for us to leaven our understanding of the situation in Palestine with a dose of Virilio’s considerable insight.

Confinement: Colonization, Incarceration, Acceleration

Virilio’s work is especially evocative when applied to the contemporary politics of confinement that prevail in Palestine. Having begun his career in the late 1950s with
a study of bunker architecture, and having suffered personally from acute claustrophobia, Virilio has long been interested in the theme of confinement. Yet whereas conventional interpretations tend to view confinement primarily as a function of overcrowding and literal enclosure, Virilio’s \textit{dromological} (from the Greek \textit{dromos}, or race) approach adds an overlooked element: the role of \textit{speed} and \textit{acceleration} in producing forms of material, psychological and existential confinement that cut across the full spectrum of social life. In this sense, confinement is best viewed as a kind of Foucaultian \textit{dispositif} (social apparatus) that gathers and produces ways of seeing, speaking, exercising power, and generating subjectivities.

As Deleuze (1992, p. 161) notes, Foucault’s work pushes us to consider new \textit{dispositifs} that might emerge not through the privileged existence of dominant social groups but rather “through the marginalized existence of the ‘outsider’.” What sort of confinement apparatus is emerging in Palestine? We might begin with the simple observation that the prevailing conditions in Palestine are the long-term products of a specific type of colonization. Whether in Palestine, South Africa, North America, Australia, or elsewhere, settler-colonial movements share a common territorial politics that is built upon what Patrick Wolfe (2006) calls a “logic of elimination.” What distinguishes settler-colonialism from other, more strictly administrative forms of colonialism is that the former “destroys in order to replace” (Wolfe 2006, p. 388).
In spatial terms, following Wolfe, we can say that settler-colonialism *closes* (or *encloses*) *in order to open* and vice-versa. The language of colonization and occupation reveals much about the mentality behind such a strategy; one thinks, for example, of the “opening” and “closing” of the North American frontier. Zionism’s self-fashioned mythology offers a botanical twist, speaking of the “blooming” of the desert under its new occupiers. Israeli soldiers working in the West Bank during the first intifada (1987-1993) spoke of “cleaning up” or “mopping up” the streets after demonstrations as if preparing to close up shop for the night (Collins 2004). The clearest illustration of the logic of (en)closure, however, lies in the tendency of settler-colonial projects to produce ghettos, reservations, bantustans, “homelands,” and other forms of racialized confinement as a way of “opening” expansive and comfortable space for settlers and their descendants.

In order to justify such practices of elimination and obscure their rootedness in political economy, settler-colonial projects routinely employ exceptionalist ideological constructions (“City on the Hill,” “light unto the nations”) in order to present themselves as brave ambassadors of “progress” and “civilization.” The specific role that such projects have collectively played in long-term global processes of capital accumulation still awaits sustained analysis from scholars. A truly world-historical analysis of settler-colonialism, for example, might reveal new possibilities for deconstructing the dominant rhetoric of “globalization,” a rhetoric that Virilio skillfully
turns on its head. What is often celebrated as the “opening up” of a globalizing world through communication and transportation technologies is, on his account, the cutting edge of a process of creeping claustrophobia:

We are confronted with the phenomenon of confinement. Michel Foucault analyzed the great imprisonment in the eighteenth century with the closing of asylums, the disciplinary politics of the Great Enclosure. But the Great Enclosure isn’t behind with Bentham’s Panopticon, it is ahead of us with globalization. And I would say that this is the grey ecology. Besides the ecology of substances, the green ecology, there is an ecology of distances. The telluric contraction of distances, the pollution of distances, as I call it—not the pollution of nature but the pollution of distances in nature—this will make the Earth uninhabitable. People will suffer from claustrophobia on the Earth, in the immensity of the planet....Tomorrow we will go to Montreal or Tokyo for three dollars, for nothing. And then? How far can we go? That’s what I always say: to what point? When are we going to understand the notion of closure? The world is limitless? No. It is increasingly closed and contracted. In a sense, these places will all equal nothing. Incarceration will become a mass phenomenon, an apocalyptic phenomenon. (Virilio and Lotringer 2002, p. 63, emphasis in the original)
In Palestine, incarceration—a specific tactic within the larger strategy of settler colonization—is already a mass phenomenon. This is true, of course, in the prisons, but in a more profound sense it is true in every town, village, and refugee camp and in the highly surveilled and increasingly fragmented spaces between them (Clarno 2008, Halper 2000, Mbembe 2003, Weizman 2002). And lest we think that this is a recent development, it’s worth reminding ourselves that incarceration has always been a constitutive element of refugee camp life. In 1990, on my first visit to Palestine, I journeyed to Dheisheh Refugee Camp outside Bethlehem to visit the elderly parents of a friend I had met while at university back in the U.S. I remember perfectly that the camp was surrounded by a fence, and that I had to pass through a narrow turnstile in order to enter. While there was no Israeli military presence at that particular moment, there was no mistaking the intent and the implication of the limited access: Dheisheh was a confined community. The natural population growth that has taken place since the camps were created more than a half-century ago has only intensified the effect of these spatial arrangements. Residents of Dheisheh Refugee Camp, reports Rozalinda Borcila (2007), “speak of a chronic lack of solitude, privacy, silence, especially for young girls who are often confined to overcrowded living quarters.”

With the benefit of hindsight, we can now see that the entire trajectory of the Israeli occupation has been one of extending these carceral arrangements outward from the camps to the Palestinian population as a whole through the increasingly
widespread use of roadblocks, checkpoints, curfews, closure, and various types of literal imprisonment. Yet recent history tells us that the occupation has also been a testing ground for modes of rule that are less obviously spatial in their execution. Israeli anthropologist Jeff Halper (2000) famously coined the term “matrix of control” to describe the “interlocking series of mechanisms, only a few of which require physical occupation of territory, that allow Israel to control every aspect of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories.” This matrix includes not only the application of force and intimidation by the military on the ground, but also the application of what Halper calls a “web of bureaucracy” within which the lives of Palestinians are circumscribed. As a consequence, all Palestinians living under occupation—whether they live formally in camps or not—have found themselves hemmed in from all sides by laws, orders and practices that effectively overdetermine their lives, their movements, and their very identities.

As the reality of this matrix gradually emerged after the Oslo accords, Palestinians understandably began to refer to their situation in South African and Native American terms, warning that their country was being turned into a series of disconnected “reservations” or “bantustans.” After Ariel Sharon came to power in 2001, the Israeli system of spatial regulation became increasingly sophisticated and calibrated. The most visible development was been the creation of the wall that shadows the 1967 Green Line, snaking into the West Bank in order to effect a unilateral
annexation of the territory occupied by Israeli settlement colonies (Dolphin 2006, Sorkin 2005). Much like the more general process of confinement, this particular construction project is best viewed as a system whose impact cannot be exhausted by a look at its “absolute” spatial characteristics. The very term “wall” is a misleading simplification as the project also includes high-tech surveillance equipment, land confiscations, dramatic alterations of the political and economic environment, and a far-reaching set of psychological consequences for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

What the example of the wall tells us is that like any dispositif, the kind of confinement that prevails in Palestine must be understood as possessing a capacity that is enormously productive (in the neutral sense). Journalist Naomi Klein (2007) argues that the wall is only one chapter in the story of how Israel has reorganized its economy around its emerging status as a world leader in the production of “hi-tech fences, unmanned drones, biometric IDs, video and audio surveillance gear, air passenger profiling and prisoner interrogation systems - precisely the tools and technologies Israel has used to lock in the occupied territories.” Far from creating a disastrous drain on what has often been viewed as an artificial, U.S.-subsidized economy, Israel’s ongoing control over Palestinian territory is now providing the raw material for a project of what Klein calls “turn[ing] endless war into a brand asset.” Other countries, including the U.S., are paying close attention: Israeli technology is already figuring prominently in
the construction of the new “security fence” along the U.S.-Mexico border as well as other projects within the post-9/11 Homeland Security economy.

The intensification of confinement in Palestine has also generated remarkable new bodies of creative work on the part of artists and activists, both Palestinian and international, who seek to comment on changing spatial arrangements and their emotional and political implications. One famous example is the work of Banksy, the British “guerrilla graffiti artist” who created nine stenciled images on the concrete of the Israeli wall in 2005. During the same year, a collaborative exhibition called *Mirando a Palestina* (Looking Towards Palestine) featured the work of more than a dozen Palestinian, European, and American photographers (Collins 2005). Whether in Diego Lopez Calvin’s image of Palestinians projecting a movie onto the wall, Peter Fryer’s treatment of the barriers created by grinding rural poverty among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, or the stunning work of Palestinian photographer Rula Halawani, the exhibition provided a provocative visual commentary on the everyday politics of confinement.

The growth in collaboration between Palestinian communities and international solidarity activists since 2000 has also coincided with the escalating process of confinement in general and the construction of the wall in particular. By engaging in large-scale land confiscation in places such as Bil’in, a West Bank village located between Ramallah and the Green Line, the Israeli state has created specific focal points
for solidarity work. The local and international activists, in turn, have seized upon the opportunity to use these locations as testing grounds for new forms of grassroots action. Once an unremarkable agricultural village with a population of 1800, Bil’in now hosts an annual international conference and features prominently in the burgeoning, media-savvy world of Palestine solidarity activism.

**Gaza: Dromocracy in Action**

Perhaps the most striking response to confinement, however, came in January 2008 when residents of Gaza living under a suffocating Israeli blockade briefly managed to break out of their imprisonment by blowing holes in the wall separating Gaza from Egypt. Thousands of Gazans were able to cross the border and purchase needed supplies for a few days before Egyptian officials, bowing to American and Israeli pressure, moved to refortify the border.

Such a development is hardly surprising, for it is in Gaza that Israel’s policy of collective confinement and incarceration of Palestinians has reached its apotheosis. Darryl Li (2006, pp. 39-40) notes that the Strip, which constitutes a mere 1.4 percent of British Mandate Palestine, now holds one-quarter of all Palestinians living under Israeli control. With this in mind, he argues that Gaza illustrates how the “operational mantra” of Zionist settler-colonialism (“maximum land, minimum Arabs”) has generated its own corollary: “maximum Arabs on minimum land.” Unable to
physically remove large numbers of Palestinians from the territory entirely, the Israeli state has instead chosen to use Gaza as a laboratory in which to test out a range of spatial control mechanisms including “closure” and the creation of “buffer zones.” As Li points out, these actions, along with the Israeli decision to remove Jewish settlement colonies from Gaza, have been accompanied by a rhetoric of “disengagement” as a way of reframing public discourse on the present and future of the conflict. In particular, he suggests, this strategy of rhetorical confinement aims to head off the growing chorus of voices calling for a single, democratic state for Israeli Jews and Palestinians alike.5

The rhetoric of “disengagement” is a geopolitical rhetoric that effects a form of discursive confinement, emphasizing the two-dimensional world of traditional maps and borders while hiding deeper structures of power and control. The rhetoric is misleading even in a two-dimensional sense, for it diverts attention from the question of who controls land and sea access to the territory from which Israel has supposedly “disengaged.” A fuller understanding of the situation, however, requires that we take a broader view of power and consider the possibility that Gaza may be a case of dromocracy (the rule of speed) in action. Employing Virilio’s dromological approach, in short, helps us understand how the confinement of the Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, derives not only from geopolitics, but also from chronopolitics.

Official Israeli defense policy has always been based on the fear of a lightning-quick attack by its Arab neighbors who, the argument runs, could overrun a country
whose sheer smallness reduces reaction time to a matter of seconds. Yet it is Israel, time and again, that has demonstrated its possession of the weapon of speed, whether in the 1967 Six Day War or in any of its “pre-emptive” strikes. Much like the U.S., Israel has achieved military supremacy through mastery of the skies. Anyone who has spent time in Palestine or Lebanon knows how quickly an Israeli F-16 fighter jet or helicopter gunship can appear as if out of nowhere, bringing intimidation in the form of a sonic boom or death in the form of a missile strike. In recent years we have seen how attacks can be accelerated further, and also miniaturized, through the use of booby-trapped cell phones that kill in the time it takes to say hello.

Such tactics illustrate the organic relationship that has always existed among technology, acceleration, violence and confinement. Seen from one perspective, satellite technology “opens” the world by enabling the rapid circulation and exchange of information; seen from another, it envelops the world and makes everyone a potential target of war waged from orbital space. Google Earth is, in this sense, the public face of the postmodern war machine in the same way that cheap nuclear energy to power consumer appliances was the public face of the age of superpower “mutually assured destruction” (MAD). The difference is that this time around, there is no time to “duck and cover.”

As Li (2006, pp. 48-50) argues, air power has played a pivotal role in the changing regime of control in the Gaza Strip, allowing Israel to blanket Palestinians
with a thick web of surveillance while using air-to-ground missiles to carry out assassinations. It is not for nothing, then, that may of Israel’s strongest critics—including those inside Israel (Reinhart 2004)—have begun to describe the occupied territories as open-air prison camps. The defining characteristic of Palestine in 2006 is what Sylvere Lotringer, Virilio’s periodic interlocutor, calls “confinement under an open sky” (Virilio and Lotringer 2002, p. 75).

Perhaps this is what architect Eyal Weizman (2002) had in mind when he coined the phrase “politics of verticality” to describe the three-dimensional system of Israeli control over the Palestinian territories. This system includes a complex combination of strategies including roads and tunnels, hilltop settlement colonies, control over underground aquifers and sewage systems, and dominance of the air. Even if the Israeli-Palestinian “peace process” miraculously bears fruit, this “politics of verticality” will have already transformed not only the facts on the ground, but also the facts above and below the ground.

If we stop here, however, we will miss the full importance of the dromological perspective. As Virilio is quick to point out, our inattention to the centrality of speed handicaps our understanding of power in general. “People say: ‘you are too rich,’ but no one ever says: ‘you are too fast,’” he dryly notes. “But they’re related. There is a violence in wealth that has been understood: not so with speed” (Virilio and Lotringer 1997, p. 36). Indeed, wealth and speed are intimately linked:
Every society is founded on a relation of speed. Every society is
dromocratic. If you take Athenian society, you’ll notice that at the top
there’s the hierarch, in other words the one who can charter a trireme.
Then there’s the horseman—the one who can charter a horse, to use naval
language. After that, there’s the hoplite, who can get ready for war, “arm
himself”—in the odd sense that the word armament has both a naval and
a martial connotation—with his spears and his shield as a vector of
combat. And finally, there’s the free man and the slave who only have the
possibilities of hiring themselves out or being enlisted as energy in the
war-machine—the rowers. In this system (which also existed in Rome
with the cavalry), he who has the speed has the power. And he has the
power because he is able to acquire the means, the money. The Roman
horsemen were the bankers of Roman society. The one who goes the
fastest possesses the ability to collect taxes, the ability to conquer, and
through that to inherit the right of exploiting society. (Virilio and
Lotringer 1997, pp. 49-50)

As with ancient Rome, so with the contemporary world of neoliberal globalization.

Social acceleration (Scheuermann 2004) is an often unacknowledged motor enabling the
growth that is so axiomatic to the global process of capital accumulation. Global
capitalism is dromocratic at its very core, rewarding the merchants of speed even as it
interpellates ordinary citizens into a positive feedback loop of acceleration and confinement.

When we add the dromological perspective to Weizman’s useful model for understanding the “politics of verticality,” it becomes clear that Israeli policy is already moving beyond horizontal and vertical territoriality to create what might be called a four-dimensional confinement of the Palestinians. Possession and deployment of the weapon of speed allows Israel to move rapidly in transforming the objective geopolitical situation while also shrinking the existential space in which Palestinians operate, boosting Israel’s role in the economy of an “apartheid planet” (Klein 2007), and enabling continued Israeli domination of Palestine’s economy. Shimon Naveh, a retired brigadier general who directs the Israeli army’s Operational Theory Research Institute, openly acknowledges the techno-logic behind this policy. “The main idea,” he confirms, “is that we can see and do what we please” (quoted in Ouroussoff 2006). Naveh is a key figure in the Israeli military’s increasing application of poststructuralist theory, particularly the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, to the strategic and tactical arenas (Weizman 2006). Within the system of control they are pursuing, the wall is simply the most visible of a wide array of measures through which Palestinian bodies are scanned, surveilled, identified, restricted, and assassinated. Armed with both high-tech weaponry and the dizzying language of French theory, Weizman argues,
the IDF is sending a chilling message to the Palestinian population: “You will never even understand that which kills you” (Weizman 2006).

Reading recent accounts of life under the occupation, one gets the sense that people are caught between two equal and opposite forms of confinement. On the one hand, they suffer through agonizing periods of waiting: at roadblocks on their way to school and work; in long lines at heavily-fortified checkpoints; in their homes under curfew; and in the bureaucratic maze that controls access to permits and other important documents. On the other hand, they are also subject to irregular and sudden periods of hyper-accelerated terror: when the army comes pounding at the door—or, as became the case in the 2002 invasion of Nablus, “walking through walls” (Weizman 2006); when the rocket or missile hits their neighborhood; or when they frantically try to bring in the olive harvest only to be attacked by vigilante Israeli colonists. Between the hammer of State violence and the anvil of endless waiting and restrictions on freedom of movement, the entire rhythm of life of a peasant and merchant society has been disrupted.

Nowhere is this clearer and more urgent than in Saverio Costanzo’s 2004 film *Private*, which chronicles in claustrophobic detail the occupation of a middle-class Palestinian home by Israeli soldiers. Seeking to use the house as a lookout point, the soldiers take over the top floor, forcing the family of seven to spend long nights locked inside a single room. The film’s brooding, often agonizing depiction of the family’s
determined attempt to go about their daily lives—getting ready for school, preparing and eating meals, building a greenhouse, visiting with friends, doing homework—is repeatedly interrupted by bursts of chaotic violence as the young soldiers, mostly bored but always on the edge of exploding, suddenly arrive to exert control over the situation. Meanwhile, the oldest daughter surreptitiously makes repeated forays upstairs, hiding in a closet to spy on the soldiers as they watch football matches, tease each other, and play music to pass the time.

Costanzo’s film, like the intolerable situation it allegorizes, reminds us that there are many ways to confine people. It is not just speed that produces confinement; rather, the one whose hand is on the throttle (literally and figuratively), with the option of speeding things up or slowing things down at will, is the one who controls confinement. Virilio uses an ancient image to illustrate this point, noting that the Pharaoh is often pictured with a whip in one hand and a hook in the other. The former is designed to accelerate the chariot, the latter to slow it down by pulling on the reins (Virilio and Lotringer 2002, p. 65). There is thus something Pharaonic about Israel’s well-calibrated settler-colonial occupation of Palestine. It is about more than old-fashioned control of territory; rather, in its development of cutting-edge techniques of rule, it seeks to create and maintain a much broader system of control that can only be called biopolitical.
The Speed Trap

Our inability to understand the full complexity of acceleration as a social phenomenon makes it difficult to develop strategies for pursuing justice in Palestine. Outside parties attempting to assist the “peace process,” for example, have a tendency to focus on traditional questions of borders and geopolitical sovereignty—lines on a map. U.S. President Bill Clinton did bring the third dimension explicitly into the discussion when attempting to negotiate the diplomatic minefield of Jerusalem’s Old City during the Camp David talks in 2000. His proposed solution was a vertical division of sovereignty, with Palestinians controlling the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif itself (with the exception of the Wailing Wall) and Israel controlling the space above and below in a prime manifestation of the “politics of verticality” (Weizman 2002). Even here, however, the dromological dimension of power remains hidden.

In this light, it is interesting to note that one of the key recommendations of a 2005 RAND Corporation study on the prospects of a future Palestinian state (Suisman et al. 2005) was the creation of the Arc, a high-speed rail network designed to move people and goods quickly along a corridor stretching from the Israeli city of Haifa to Gaza in the south. Despite its best intentions, this essentially neoliberal plan begins from the same premises as World Bank studies that seek to facilitate trade and growth by making processes of surveillance and border control more efficient. In each case, the assumption is that “freedom of movement” can be isolated from the larger structures of
power operating in Israel/Palestine and globally.\textsuperscript{8} From this technophilic perspective, acceleration is an unqualified solution rather than part of the problem. Yet from the dromocratic perspective of power, movement can be as productive (and confining) as lack of movement. To recall Lotringer\textquotesingle s observation quoted above, it seems that no matter how fast we may be moving, all of us are confined under the “open sky” of neoliberal, dromocratic global governance structures that are rooted in market and technological fundamentalism.

No discussion of dromology and dromocracy, however, would be complete without an acknowledgment that speed often operates as a kind of semi-autonomous force in politics. As tempting as it may be to view speed as simply another weapon in the overwhelming arsenal of the powerful, Virilio reminds us that as technology accelerates, human control over it becomes increasingly illusory. Much like war, which has a tendency to spin out of control and serve its own interests,\textsuperscript{9} speed can entice us into a trap: we believe that we are driving the car, but the reverse is equally true (Virilio and Lotringer 1997, p. 35).

The history of modern warfare is a history of steady acceleration that confirms this observation. Picasso\textquotesingle s \textit{Guernica}, with which I began, is a document of one key moment in this dromological narrative, the moment when fascism lifted the lid off a terrifying Pandora\textquotesingle s box: the wholesale bombing of civilians from the air. And part of what made the bombardment so revolutionary was the unprecedented speed of aircraft
like the new Messerschmitt Bf109B, later used by German pilots throughout World War II. Many of the other notable military inventions of the past century—from the German blitzkrieg to the atomic bomb to today’s satellite-guided weaponry—have been those that achieve a significant reduction in the adversary’s reaction time. As Virilio is fond of pointing out, the use of computerized controls has taken this process down to the millisecond, threatening to take the element of human reflection out of the equation altogether.

In military planning circles, much as in global capitalism, the importance of speed is virtually axiomatic, even if its semi-autonomous nature is often overlooked. This is certainly the case with the doctrine of “swarming,” an ancient concept that has attracted a great deal of attention from U.S. military planners in recent years (Edwards 1999). A second example is the idea of Rapid Dominance, introduced into the U.S. military lexicon in the 1990s as part of the defense establishment’s attempt to respond to the end of the Cold War and what analysts envisioned would be a public push for reduced military spending. Closely associated with the “Shock and Awe” tactic famously invoked in advance of the March 2003 U.S. assault on Baghdad, Rapid Dominance is a key element of the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), through which the U.S. military aimed to move partially away from its longstanding doctrine of “decisive or overwhelming force” and toward a greater use of new
technology to achieve “dominant battlefield awareness” (Ullman and Wade 1996, pp. xix-xx).

Ullman and Wade’s discussion of Rapid Dominance draws heavily on classical and modern examples from Sun Tzu to Desert Storm, all with an eye to identifying how best to “render the enemy impotent” (p. xxiv) through imposing a regime of “Shock and Awe.” The latter concept is defined explicitly with reference to the “comatose and glazed expressions of survivors of the great bombardments of World War I and the attendant horrors of trench warfare” (p. 20) and to “a level of national shock akin to the effect that dropping nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had on the Japanese” (p. 13). As the terminological shift from Decisive Force to Rapid Dominance indicates, speed is one of four central elements (in addition to knowledge, “brilliance” of execution, and control of the battle environment) of this new doctrine. The authors link speed with a series of techniques (“Paralyze, shock, unnerve, deny, destroy”) that suggest just how much the doctrine relies on the achievement of psychological effects (p. xxix). The goal, they repeatedly emphasize, is to demoralize the enemy and, ultimately, “to convince or compel is to accept our strategic aims and military objectives” (p. xxv).

Virilio’s notion of the “grey ecology,” which he articulates as a generalized terrestrial condition, comes back into play here as a specific outcome of the acceleration of warfare. In explaining this concept, he quotes Paul Morand: “Speed destroys colour:
when a gyroscope is spinning fast everything goes grey” (Virilio 1997, p. 59). It is only fitting that these words were uttered in 1937, the year of the destruction of Guernica. The “grey ecology” hints at the psychological disorientation produced in those who are on the receiving end of hyper-accelerated violence, but also at the moral disorientation produced in those who deliver it.

With their decision to adopt the tactic of suicide bombing during the last 15 years, Palestinian groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad have undoubtedly played a role in the process of acceleration. Suicide bombing in Palestine engages the Israeli state on the dromological level. The film Paradis New, nominated for an Academy Award in 2005, portrays this perfectly: the passengers on the bus about to be blown up have no more time to react than do the residents of Gaza have when an Israeli missile slams through the side of their building.

When we view the issue in this way, we can see neither terrorism nor the official violence to which it is responding can resist the deadly logic of acceleration. While the feedback loop that exists between state terrorism and non-state terrorism is beyond the scope of this article,10 the end result of this loop is not: civilians everywhere are subject to the tyranny of speed and, by extension, to the tyranny of confinement. If Israelis and Palestinians share anything, it is the experience of confinement. Israeli settlement colonies are intensely guarded and confined zones that have been militarized through their integration cooptation into the national security apparatus. From their carefully
selected location and design to the architecture of the houses, these “panoptic fortresses” are the ideal expression of a colonizing impulse that seeks to marginalize Palestinians, but does so by enticing its own people into “cul-de-sac envelopes” masquerading as ideal locations for the spiritual-national “regeneration of the soul” (Weizman 2002). Even the special network of “bypass roads” designed to move settlers quickly to their jobs inside Israel is double-edged, for the speed of the roads—undoubtedly a selling point for potential residents—simply makes a small territory seem even smaller. Living in what is already a garrison society in an ideological sense, Israelis may find that their superior technology brings only further claustrophobia. Not for nothing did the prominent Israeli dissident Michel Warschawski use the metaphor of an “open tomb” in the title of his 2004 book (Warschawski 2004).

Despite important differences in terms of freedom of movement, then, it is clear that Israeli Jews and Palestinians all are victims of an acceleration machine that seems incapable of producing anything more than destruction, isolation, and lost hope. As Virilio reminds us, we are all implicated in the workings of this machine; with our “militarized” identities, we are all “civilian soldiers” in the dromocratic army (Virilio and Lotringer 1997, p. 26). Moreover, the conditions of confinement that are confronting Israelis and Palestinians have their analogues in communities across the world, from the overlooked and demonized “megaslums” of the Global South (Davis 2006) to the North American gated communities, full of SUVs (mobile gated
communities) and surrounded by the discourses and practices of “homeland security.”

In this sense, the most important global significance of Palestine may be that it points us toward one of the central (but unacknowledged) strategic questions of our time: If Marxism helped us politicize wealth, and feminism helped us politicize identity, how do we politicize speed?

Notes

1. This article draws on an earlier publication by the author (Collins 2007). For useful comments during the writing process, I would like to thank Tarak Barkawi, Kenneth Church, Andy Clarno, Ross Glover, Lisa Hajjar, students in my Global Palestine seminar at St. Lawrence University, and an anonymous reviewer for Globalizations.

2. Like Harry Fisher, author of a fascinating memoir of this period, many of the brigadistas who came from the United States were committed labor activists for whom solidarity was not an abstract concept. In Fisher’s case, the practice of solidarity was deeply rooted in his experience of living through the Great Depression and building formal and informal coalitions around issues of social justice. In one memorable passage, he describes the spirit of solidarity that prevailed during a hunger march from Milwaukee to Madison, Wisconsin, a spirit that continued once the group reached its destination. “The first night we camped out along a lake, not far from the University of Wisconsin,” he recalls. “Many students joined us, as did a large group of American
Indians from the northern part of Wisconsin. We stayed up all night going from one group to another, listening to discussions and singing songs. Food was plentiful. The trade unions, churches, Communist Party, Socialist Party, and American Legion supplied us with food, coffee, and beer” (Fisher 1998, p. 9).

3. At least one-third of American *brigadistas*, including a majority of the women volunteers, were Jews who clearly had multiple reasons for opposing the spread of fascism (Carroll 1994, pp. 17-18). The ISM in Palestine was co-founded by an Israeli Jewish activist (Neta Golan), while CheckpointWatch, set up to monitor the human rights of Palestinians at the hundreds of military checkpoints set up throughout the West Bank and Gaza, is made up exclusively of Israeli Jewish women (Keshet 2006).

4. Those who favor separate Israeli and Palestinian states often deride the “one-state solution” as naïve and unworkable. Binationalism, however, has a long history in Palestine/Israel; Martin Buber was an early proponent, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) held to its goal of a “secular, democratic state” for Jews and Arabs until the mid-1970s. In recent years, as Israeli colonization has increasingly taken on an aura of irreversibility, we have seen a resurgence in discussions of the binationalist ideal and the “one-state solution” (Abunimah 2006, Judt 2003, Makdisi 2007, Sussman 2004, Tilley 2005).

5. One of the most provocative interventions in recent discussions of power and violence, Giorgio Agamben’s concept of *homo sacer*, has direct implications for our
understanding of this process. Agamben (2005, p. 14) identifies the camp as an “absolute space of the exception” and elsewhere argues that the normalization of the “state of exception” has gone hand in hand with an “unprecedented generalization of the paradigm of security as the normal technique of government.” For a useful reading of Agamben’s work as it applies to Palestine, see Gregory (2004, pp. 117-138).


7. Were he still alive today, Deleuze surely would appreciate the irony. More than 30 years ago, he commented on the forward-looking nature of Israeli policy. “The Israeli-Palestine model is determinant in current problems of terrorism....The worldwide understanding among states and the organization of a world police force with worldwide jurisdiction, currently underway, necessarily leads to an expansion in which more and more people are classified as virtual ‘terrorists,’” he wrote. “We find ourselves in a situation analogous to that of the Spanish Civil War, when Spain served as laboratory and experimentation for a still more terrible future. Today the state of Israel leads the experimentation. It is establishing a model of repression that will be converted for other countries” (quoted in Surin 2003, pp. 896-897).

8. The authors of the RAND study acknowledge that their purpose was not to explore how a Palestinian state might be created, but rather to explore the mechanisms necessary to ensure that such a state, if created, would be viable. The study also leaves
aside the question of the Israeli settlement colonies, currently home to 400,000 Israeli Jews who have been systematically integrated into the militarized world of their government’s settler-colonial project (Weizman 2002).

9. I refer here to the classic formulation of Karl von Clausewitz, who describes the process by which wars that begin as limited undertakings tend to move in the direction of total war. For a useful explication of these issues, see Barkawi (2005).

10. See Collins (2007) for a discussion of how the state’s decision to wage a “war on the milieu”—Virilio’s phrase for a war waged directly on civilians and on the natural and built environment that ensures their survival—pushes subaltern groups to wage their own war on the metropolitan “milieu” (shopping malls, buses, restaurants, etc.).

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