Countless Centers
Liber Amicorum for Freddie Rokem

מרכזים עד אין ספור
גבורות לפרדי רוקם

Unzählige Mittelpunkte
Liber Amicorum für Freddie Rokem

ed. by
Ruthie Abeliovich
Ira Avneri
Daphna Ben-Shaul
Nikolaus Müller-Schöll
Matthias Naumann

Neofelis

Ruthie Abeliovich / Ira Avneri / Daphna Ben-Shaul /
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INTRODUCTION

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> The universe has lost its centre overnight, and woken up to find it has countless centres. So that each one can now be seen as the centre, or none at all. Suddenly there is a lot of room.[1]
> Bertolt Brecht: *Life of Galileo*

"Each one can now be seen as the centre, or none at all" – that is the social lesson that Brecht has his Galileo Galilei draw from the Copernican turn away from the Ptolemaic worldview. In his reading of Brecht's *Galileo*, Freddie Rokem reminds us of this, and thus of that secret agreement between past generations and our present, which is the philologist's highest duty, that of translation. Translated into our present day, one might write: No kings! But also no first or last word, no origin and no foundation. It is not such secure knowledge that interests him, but rather the principle of change, the continuous work on the ever-new view of the familiar.

1 Bertolt Brecht: *Life of Galileo*, transl. from the German by John Willett. London: Methuen 1980, p. 8.

Freddie's career can be defined as a rare combination of intellectual rigor, wide-ranging curiosity, and a distinctive gift for building institutions and cultivating scholarly networks. Having originally studied philosophy and comparative literature, he soon turned to theatre and performance studies, bringing with him a sensitivity to language, history, and aesthetics that would shape his scholarship throughout his career. Freddie's scholarship explores the intersections of theatre, philosophy, and history. Central to this scholarly legacy are two of his influential books: *Performing History. Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (2000) and *Philosophers and Thespians. Thinking Performance* (2010). In *Performing History*, Freddie juxtaposes theatrical treatments of the French Revolution and the Holocaust in Europe, the United States, and Israel to examine how performance acts as a witness to otherwise almost inexpressible pasts. *Philosophers and Thespians* engages with dialogues, competitions, and border-crossings between the discursive practices of theatre and philosophy through analyzing historical or fictional encounters between philosophers and theatre-makers. These studies exemplify Freddie's multiple or 'countless centers' – his comparative and interdisciplinary approach, dissolving boundaries between textual analysis, performance theory, dramaturgy, and intellectual history. Beyond his own writings, Freddie has been a vital connector and convener, nurturing networks across Europe, North America, and Israel. His collaborations with scholars in history, philosophy, and cultural studies, as well as with theatre directors, highlight the breadth of his interdisciplinarity. His mentorship has shaped a generation of theatre and performance researchers.

This *Liber Amicorum* is conceived as both a tribute to and an extension of Freddie's intellectual legacy, highlighting the many dialogical dimensions of his work. The volume is organized around three thematic constellations that reflect central aspects of his scholarship: *Re-Performing Histories*, which examines the ways theatre engages with memory, myth, the reappearances of

collective identities, and the reimagining of the past; *Dramaturgies and Hermeneutics*, which centers on artistic and critical methodologies shaping both canonical and marginal theatrical traditions while exploring hidden (or secret) codes, offering new interpretations that can also function as an applied dramaturgy; *And Philosophy*, which explores the intersections between performance, aesthetics, and philosophical inquiry through interintellectual encounters as well as conceptual constellations.

Contributors to the book include former students, colleagues, family and friends from various disciplines across the humanities, underscoring the breadth of Freddie's scholarly influence and reflecting the networks he has helped to foster. The structure of the volume reflects these organizing principles, grouping essays and creative interventions into sections that mirror the theoretical, methodological, and generational dialogues prompted by his work. Together, the contributions form an interdisciplinary conversation that not only honors Freddie's achievements but also demonstrates how his ideas continue to generate new avenues of inquiry. In this way, the volume embodies both retrospective recognition and forward-looking engagement with theatre's role in the humanities.

שְׁנֵינוּ
THE TWO OF US

Galit Hasan-Rokem

When the editors of this volume asked me to join in their introductory words I initially hesitated, since I have not really shared their limitless labor of love in producing this *Liber Amicorum*. But upon second thought I bowed to their wish since they have done everything so well and right that I accepted their invitation to add to my 'official' text for this book another one, of a more intimate character, a poem. *The Two of Us* was written during the days of the COVID-19 epidemic, while Freddie was also bravely and with the help of superb professionals and the support of good friends, struggling with a serious health crisis. A time of testing, a time of trial, a time of intimacy unbound. A time for a poem of true love.

שְׁנֵינוּ

לְבַד עַל הָאִי רוֹבִינְזוֹן וְשִׁשִּׁת
מְחַפְּשִׂים כְּבָר שָׁעוֹת אֶחָד אֶת הַשֵּׁנִי
הַאִם הָלַךְ לְחַטֵּב עֵצִים אוֹ לִשְׁאֹב מַיִם
מֵהַמַּעְיָן הַצָּלוּל מֵאֲחוֹרֵי הָעֵץ הַגָּבוֹהַּ בְּיוֹתֵר
לִפְנוֹת עֶרֶב יִפָּגְשׁוּ לְיַד הַמְּדוּרָה
יְסַפְּרוּ אֵיפֹה הִסְתַּתְּרוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם
יָשִׁירוּ כָּל אֶחָד אֶת שִׁירוֹ בִּשְׂפָתוֹ
יִלְחֲשׁוּ מִלִּים בַּשָּׂפָה שֶׁיָּצְרוּ לְעַצְמָם

כְּשֶׁנִּצָּתָה מְרִיבָה
כָּל אֶחָד שׁוֹמֵר עַל גַּבּוֹ מִפְּנֵי הַשֵּׁנִי
אוּלַי הַכַּעַס שֶׁלּוֹ עַז כְּשֶׁלִּי
כְּשֶׁגּוֹעֶשֶׁת תְּשׁוּקָה
וְיָד מוּשֶׁטֶת אֶל יַד עוֹר אֶל עוֹר
מִי יִשְׁאַל בְּכָלָל כַּמָּה עַזָּה הַחֶמְדָּה
שֶׁלִּי אוֹ שֶׁלְּךָ

בָּרוּחַ הַשְׁקָטָה שֶׁל הָעֶרֶב
קוֹל אֱגוֹזִים נוֹשְׁרִים אֶל הָאֲדָמָה
מוֹדֵד אֶת הַזְּמַן הֶעָבֶה הַדָּבִיק הַנִּמְשָׁךְ
חֲרִיקַת גֶּזַע מִתְנוֹעֵעַ בִּסְעָרָה
מַזְכִּירָה שֶׁגַּם לְזְמַן כָּזֶה יֵשׁ סוֹף

רוֹבִינְזוֹן כּוֹתֵב אִגֶּרֶת אֶל הָאֵינְסוֹף
שִׁשֶּׁת שֵׂר שִׁיר שֶׁנִּבְרָא כָּרֶגַע
יַחַד הֵם מְבַשְּׂלִים
וְאוֹכְלִים וּמְבַשְּׂלִים וְאוֹכְלִים

שִׁשֶּׁת שָׁלָה שְׁלוֹשָׁה דְּגֵי שֶׁמֶךְ מִן הַמְּצוּלָה
רוֹבִינְזוֹן קַלָּף מַעַץ מַצָּע לְכְתִיבַת שִׁיר גַּעְגּוּעִים
טוֹבֵל נוֹצָה בְּנוֹזֵל הַדְּיוֹנוּן וּמְחַבֵּר מִכְתָּב לְלֹא נִמְעָנִים

The Two of Us

Alone on the island Robinson and Friday
Looking for each other for hours already
Did he go to cut wood or draw water
From the clear spring behind the tallest tree
At dusk they will meet at the bonfire
To tell each other where they've been hiding all day
Each singing their song in their own language
Whispering in the language they created for themselves

When a quarrel flares up
Each one guards their back
Maybe his anger is as fierce as mine
When passion erupts
And hand touches hand, skin touches skin,
Who will even ask how strong desire is
Mine or yours

In the quiet evening breeze
The sound of nuts falling on the earth
Measures the thick, sticky, lingering time
The creak of a tree trunk swaying in the storm
Reminds that even a time such as this has an end

Robinson writes a letter to infinity
Friday sings a song created at this moment
They cook together
And eat and cook and eat

Friday caught three trout from the depths
Robinson peeled a pad off a tree to write a song of longing
Dips a feather in squid ink to compose a letter with no addressee

יַחַד הֵם צוֹלִים
וְאוֹכְלִים וְצוֹלִים וְאוֹכְלִים
וּמְשַׂחֲקִים בְּמַחְבּוֹאִים
כְּאַוַּת נַפְשָׁם
וְלִפְעָמִים בְּאֶרֶץ-אֲדָמָה וְתוֹפֶסֶת

רוֹבִּינְזוֹן מְחַבֵּר סִפּוּרִים
שֶׁמִּסְתַּיְּמִים בִּסְפִינָה מַגִּיעָה אֶל הַחוֹף הַקָּרוֹב
וּשְׁנֵיהֶם מְטַפְּסִים עַל סֻלַּם חֲבָלִים לַסִּפּוּן
שֵׁשֶׁת שָׁר שִׁיר עַל חֹשֶׁף שֶׁעוֹטֵף אֶת הַחֲרָדָה
מִן הַמִּסְתַּתֵּר בַּסְּבַךְ וּמִתַּחַת לְגַל הָאֲבָנִים הַגָּדוֹל

לִפְעָמִים מַבִּיטִים זֶה בָּזֶה וּבְעֵינֵיהֶם שְׁאֵלָה
הַאִם כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי מִשְׁתַּנֶּה עִם הַזְּמַן
גַּם כְּשֶׁשּׁוּם דָּבָר אַחֵר לֹא מִשְׁתַּנֶּה
וּבַלַּיְלָה חוֹבְקִים אִישׁ אֶת גַּב רְעוּתוֹ

וְחוֹלְמִים עַל אֵלֶּה שֶׁאֵינָם
אֵלֶּה שֶׁמֵּעֵבֶר לַיָּם
וְאֵלֶּה שֶׁמֵּעֵבֶר לִזְמַן

They roast together
And eat and roast and eat
And play hide and seek
To the fill of their heart
And sometimes King of the Hill and tag

Robinson composes stories
Ending with a ship arriving at the nearby shore
And they both climb a rope ladder up to the deck
Friday singing a song about darkness that cloaks the fear
Of what hides in the thicket and under the big heap of stones

Sometimes they watch each other and their eyes ask
Do I change like you with time
Even when nothing else changes
And at night they embrace each other's backs

And they dream about those who are absent
Those beyond the ocean
And those beyond time

Warm thanks to Itamar Francez for help with the translation.

RE-PERFORMING HISTORIES

CROWD SCENES AND THE THEATRE

Sharon Aronson Lehavi

I am often asked how and why I became a theatre researcher. Today, I can answer that the art of theatre has taught me and continuously enables me to look at human situations in their complexity and multi-perspectivity. This route has many beginnings, but surely one of them was in Freddie's seminar on "The French Revolution in the Theatre" that I was fortunate to be part of as an undergraduate student at the Department of Theatre Arts at Tel Aviv University in 1995. Freddie's seminar was one of my first encounters with an academic framework that invited and encouraged original thought, curiosity, discussion, and the kind of open-mindedness that whoever chooses a profession in the arts and humanities is seeking.

At the time, Freddie was working on his book *Performing History. Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*. As is well known, in this work he developed his theory about the theatrical witness, who watches and sees history unfolding in front of their eyes, reflecting on and communicating to the spectators a performative reiteration of events that have taken place in the past, but on the stage gain and regain a multiplicity of meanings and implications:

> The actor as witness and hyper-historian is not only dependent on a specific knowledge about the historical past, the "real" that he or she

> brings to the spectators. The way in which the witness appears on the stage and communicates with the spectators – the aesthetic dimension of his or her appearance – is also of central importance for the creation of a theatrical discourse performing history.[1]

This discursive dialogism underlies the methodology that Freddie set out in this book for understanding the theatrical stage as a vantage point from which aestheticized repetitions and representations of the past can refer to a complex matrix of time dimensions. In addition to conjoining the past and the present, however, the theatre thus also refers to a / the future that is yet to come, if only for the reason that the present moment on stage is already the future of the past that is being performed. This conceptualization of the multiplicity of time dimensions that is so deeply inherent to the art of theatre, appears in numerous forms in Freddie's works, especially in his analyses of and insistence that we pay close attention to Horatio's question about the Ghost, the theatre, or history: "What, has this thing appeared again tonight?" (*Hamlet*, I.1.19)[2], as well as in his work on Walter Benjamin's performative description of Paul Klee's *Angel of History*.

Without thinking in teleological terms, but rather cyclically or dialectically, we must ask ourselves, however, about the relations between these representations, repetitions, rehearsals, and reperformances. How similar are they to each other? How do they differ from each other? Do historical events have iconographies? What happens to symbols and icons that mark historical events as *historical*? How do social, political, and ideological phenomena and symbolic structures of the past resonate today? Does their meaning change over time? Or do the cultural knowledge and

1 Freddie Rokem: *Performing History. Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P 2000, p. 202.

2 William Shakespeare: Hamlet. In: Idem: *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells / Gary Taylor / John Jowett / William Montgomery. Oxford: Oxford UP 2021. All references are to this edition.

ideas that iconographies carry continue to inform our own conceptualization of reality? These semiotic questions require a phenomenological approach that is comfortable with the multiplicity, variety, irony, and contradictory perspectives that define the art of theatre.

It was for Freddie's seminar on the French Revolution in the theatre that I wrote a paper on crowd scenes, titled "The Crowd as Hero. The Narrative of the Crowd on the Historical Stage and on the Theatrical Stage", which I revisit here, in this tribute to Freddie, and through this theoretical lens. I remember being fascinated by the phenomenology of the crowd, its energetic faceless outpour, and its role in signifying what at the time, was axiomatic in this context: the relations between the ideals of the French Revolution and the principles of a democratic society. In the introduction to the paper, I wrote: "Is there anything more obvious to us nowadays than the demand of freedom, fraternity, and equality? Is there any doubt in the West about the justification of a democratic system in which each vote counts equally?" These questions, which seem a bit naïve today from the vantage point that is our 'stage', were written in the paper in order to problematize the performativity of the revolutionary crowd, a social phenomenon that contains contradictory elements. Now, a quarter of a century into the twenty-first century, looking back at the introduction of the paper is telling about the mindset at the time and also indicative of the instability of ideas and icons that seem to be stable.

My interest in the crowd as an actor, player, and performer led me to suggest an iconography and dramaturgy of crowd scenes by examining paintings, films, and plays that staged crowds in revolutionary contexts. I was able to offer two observations: 1) that there are recurring performative iconographies that typify crowd scenes; and 2) that there is an inherent ambivalence associated with the social phenomenon of the crowd. Iconographically, I noticed that the climactic moment of the crowd's revolutionary energy is often depicted or performed in relation to a symbolic structure, such as a building (the Bastille, the Winter Palace). The

performances themselves are characterized by a forceful faceless energy, and they exemplify moments of potentiality that can lead to change, but also to violence and chaos. Another performative iconography of crowd scenes is based on reperformances and reappropriations of rituals. For example, works that depict scenes of the planting of the "Tree of Liberty" and the dancing around it[3] reiterate performance practices of dancing around the Maypole and similar rituals. Reperforming popular traditions on the stage shifts attention from the narrative of the *sui-generis* individual dramatic (tragic) character to that of the community. Such reperformances of rituals are a way to introduce new meanings into collectively internalized, embodied practices and popular traditions, many of which are familiar to audiences across time and space. The performative reappropriation of popular rituals has become a central part of my own research on reperformances of religious subject matter and medieval practices in contemporary theatre.[4]

In addition to performative iconographies of crowd scenes in historical revolutionary contexts, a second observation is that there is an inherent ambivalence about the performativity of a revolutionary crowd. This ambivalence is marked not only by the tension between social order and anarchy, but also by the tensions inherent in social hierarchies and class distinctions. When is a revolutionary crowd conceived positively, and when is it viewed negatively? Who are the members of the crowd? What are the relations between a "crowd", a "mass", a "mob", the "folk", and the "people"? This duality remains a profound and unsettling social, political, and historical question, as is reflected, for example, in Adam Gopnik's recent review article in *The New Yorker*, titled:

3 Cf. for example Jean-Baptiste Lesueur's *Plantation d'un arbre de la Liberté* (1790–1791), Paris, musée Carnavalet.

4 Cf. Sharon Aronson Lehavi: *Performing Religion on the Secular Stage*. New York: Routledge 2023.

"What's the Difference between a Rampaging Mob and a Righteous Protest?"[5]

No simple answers, but these questions appear in numerous forms, discussions, and contexts long before as well as after the French Revolution and its representations. In Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, Coriolanus characterizes the crowd in monstrous terms, sarcastically asking the "unwise patricians", "have you thus given Hydra here to choose an officer" (*Coriolanus*, III.1.94–96)[6]. In *Hamlet*, Fortinbras, as Horatio tells Bernardo at the outset of the play, "sharked up a list of lawless resolutes" (I.1.97). Leading this "list" is what eventually enables Fortinbras to remain, together with Horatio, the last to be standing on stage, recapping the tragedy, and looking into the future. In *Philosophers and Thespians. Thinking Performance*, Freddie writes about this final scene of *Hamlet*:

> Fortinbras belongs to the world of politics, and his wars and conquests serve as the backdrop of the tragedy of Hamlet. They are obviously not the tragedy itself but history in its crudest and most violent form. However, only in the last scene of the play, when Fortinbras himself arrives, does this explicit historical / political presence cross the threshold of the stage, invading its core.[7]

I find Freddie's observation about the way "this explicit historical / political presence" crosses the threshold of the stage intriguing, in that it puts into question the relations between the theatrical and the historical: it is suggestive of the theatre itself as a "symbolic structure" and it calls attention to the question for whom are the 'doors' of the theatre, art, and culture open.

5 Adam Gopnik: What's the Difference between a Rampaging Mob and a Righteous Protest? In: *New Yorker*, November 18, 2024. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/11/25/multitudes-dan-hancox-book-review-the-crowd-in-the-early-middle-ages-shane-bobrycki (accessed: April 28, 2025).

6 William Shakespeare: Coriolanus. In: Idem: *The Complete Works*.

7 Freddie Rokem: *Philosophers and Thespians. Thinking Performance*. Stanford: Stanford UP 2010, p. 82.

In 1920, Tristan Tzara touched on this question in his "How to Make a Dadaist Poem?" (*Pour faire un poème dadaist*):

> Take a newspaper. Take a pair of scissors. Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your poem. Cut out the article. Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in a bag. Shake it gently. Then take out the scraps one after the other in the order in which they left the bag. Copy conscientiously. The poem will be like you. And here are you a writer, infinitely original and endowed with a sensibility that is charming though beyond the understanding of the vulgar.[8]

Tzara articulates the tensions between revolutionary avant-gardism on the one hand and avant-gardist elitism on the other hand. I believe this is an ethical question we, theatre people, should be aware of, making every effort we can to ensure the doors of the theatre are open as widely as possible.

8 Cf. Elmer Peterson: *Tristan Tzara. Dada and Surrational Theorist*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP 1971, p. 35. According to Peterson, whose translation of the poem I use here, Tzara's poem was read at the Galerie Povolozky in Paris on September 12, 1920 and subsequently published in *La Vie des Lettres* 4 (1921).

A STEP AWAY

REPLAYING THE 1967 IMAGE OF VICTORY

Daphna Ben-Shaul

"What place then," someone asks, "shall I have in the city?"
Epictetus: *Encheiridion* 24:5[1]

To Freddie with love

Within a constellation of 'real' and 'fictional', the performer or stage actor, whom Freddie Rokem dubs *the hyper-historian*, "is 'redoing' or 'reappearing' as something / somebody that has actually existed in the past",[2] while "functioning as a witness of the events vis-à-vis the spectators".[3] To elaborate further the intricate position of the hyper-historian, I shall discuss the historical staging and consequent visual and performative replays of an iconic aesthetic-political (and vice versa) image – one of the commonly called 'images of victory' representing Israel's triumph in the 1967

1 Adapted translation from Gerard Boter: *The Encheiridion of Epictetus and Its Three Christian Adaptations*. Transmission and Critical Editions. Leiden / Boston / Cologne: Brill 1999, pp. 300–302.

2 Freddie Rokem: *Performing History. Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P 2000, p. 13.

3 Ibid., p. 25.

Six-Day War. The original photograph, taken by Government Press Office photographer Ilan Bruner, featured on Israeli newspaper front pages and in dozens of post-war victory albums.[4]
Three men in military uniform occupy the photograph's foreground: IDF Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin (who would be elected prime minister for the first time some seven years later), Defense Minister Moshe Dayan (in uniform, although a member of government), and Central Command Chief Uzi Narkis (the only one not wearing a helmet). Photographed several hours after the Jordanian part of Jerusalem was taken over by Israeli forces, the three are seen emerging from the Lions' Gate, one of the eastern gates of the Old City of Jerusalem, en route to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall. Their feet raised in a step forward seem to confirm the push for the unification of Jewish-Israeli territory in a sweeping move from the western to the eastern side of the city, solidifying the removal of the municipal section of the armistice border line (the Green Line) that had divided Jerusalem since 1948.
The historical theatre of 1967 shaped consensual national memory in the immediate aftermath of the war. The artists who replay the image of victory, on the other hand, fulfill the role Walter Benjamin attributes to historical materialism, "to brush history against the grain"[5]. The division of duties is to be expected, but both generals and artists are re- and pre-forming past and future images. Does the historic photograph conceal its own defeat? And in what way are the failure and the opportunity to imagine an alternative 'victory' present in its replays? All this is tied to a stride that is only a step away from a fictionalized victory.

4 For a critical overview of 1967 victory albums, cf. Rona Sela: *Six Days Plus Forty Years /* שישה ימים ועוד ארבעים שנה. Petach Tikva: Petach Tikva Museum of Art 2007.

5 Walter Benjamin: On the Concept of History, transl. from the German by Edmund Jephcott. In: Idem: *Selected Writings*, vol. 4: 1838–1940, ed. by Howard Eiland / Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, MA: Belknap P of Harvard UP 1996, pp. 389–400, here p. 392.

The Trace of the Real

"Shall we call it visual fundamentalism?" asks Susan Buck-Morss apropos the reductive possibility "to see a photograph as purely symbolic, rather than as a trace of the real".[6] Unlike the hyper-historian concept, political aestheticization seeks to 'make history' rather than to expose its becoming. Imposing the image's symbolism over reality, it tends to ignore the acts of production outside the frame. However, even a story intended to glorify the ethos can expose how an image is staged. One such example can be found in Narkis' memoir, where he recounts how Dayan created the famed image of victory. The convoy of armored cars, transporting many journalists and photographers, arrived at the Lions' Gate after the battle. Dayan, who "possessed a rare sense of ceremony", stationed himself next to the gate. Then, as if sensing that something were missing, he called Rabin to stand next to him and, after a few moments, called out for Narkis to pose in front of the photographers.[7]

Historical theatre is auto-fiction, following in the footsteps of previous representations. One such representation is the Arch of Titus panel relief in the Roman Forum, showing the triumphal procession celebrating Rome's conquest of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The inverse reconstruction of 1967 brings into concrete existence Benjamin's observation that triumphal processions follow the steps of prior conquerors "over those who are lying prostrate" and carry the spoils they call cultural treasures.[8] The spoils are more than looted property, such as the candelabrum (menorah) taken away from the Jerusalem Temple and carried to Rome by legionaries in the Roman relief panel, but the very image that appropriates reality and repeats previous acts of appropriation.

6 Susan Buck-Morss: *Thinking Past Terror. Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left*. London / New York: Verso 2003, p. 26.

7 Uzi Narkis: אחת ירושלים [*The Liberation of Jerusalem*]. Tel Aviv: Am Oved 1975, pp. 253–255.

8 Benjamin: On the Concept of History, p. 391.

In the image of victory, the trace of reality is neutralized from the immediate spatial-temporal context of death and conflict, such as the bus that the soldiers burned down outside the Lions' Gate before charging through it. Alongside the broader context, the frame holds one detail – another soldier behind the three men who is looking back – that can be identified as its *punctum*. In Roland Barthes' terms, this figure evokes a counter-movement that 'pricks' the eye and goes beyond what the image permits.[9] Relative to the acquired code of the *studium*, this movement makes it possible 'to step back', or to voice doubts, not unlike the biblical character of Lot's wife, who was tempted to look behind her at the destruction of the city of Sodom.[10]

The identity of the officer looking back was discovered only in 1992 when graphic designer David Tartakover enlarged the original photograph and identified the man as Rehavam Ze'evi, also known as "Gandhi", who reportedly said he had missed his chance to become part of history because he was looking for snipers.[11] In later years Ze'evi became a right-wing politician who advocated the transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to other states (in other words, ethnic cleansing). The incapacity to name the punctum "is a good symptom of disturbance", writes Barthes.[12] Revealing the name of the man looking back disrupted the disturbance.

9 Roland Barthes: *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography*, transl. from the French by Richard Howard. London: Vintage 2000, p. 59.

10 In *Genesis* 19. A case of a counter-movement, literally implemented, is Shuka Glotman's short video, *The 1968 Military Parade Marches Backwards*, made in 1999 and included in an installation in 2017. Glotman manipulates a documentary film, shown in reverse, of the Israeli army parade in 1968.

11 Arik Bender: החמיץ את הרגע: סיפור התמונה מששת הימים [Missed the Moment. The Story of the Picture of the Six-Day War]. In: *NRG*, June 6, 2011. https://www.makorrishon.co.il/nrg/online/1/ART2/247/979.html (accessed: April 21, 2025).

12 Barthes: *Camera Lucida*, p. 51.