Sami Shalom Chetrit was born in Morocco and immigrated with his family to Israel at the age of three. In his literary and journalistic activities, he has tried to return to his Arabized roots. Illustrating this, for example, is his poem entitled “Who is a Jew and What Kind of a Jew,” in which he refers to the demise of the Arab-Jewish cultural option; he tries to express what he sees as the despair in the hearts of both the new generation of Arabized Jews born in Israel and those who have emigrated from Arab lands as children with their parents. In a conversation between an American female friend and the persona, the mask the poet assumes, she asks whether he is a Jew or an Arab. “I’m an Arab-Jew,” he responds. “I’ve never heard of that,” she exclaims. The speaker then tries to convince her that just as there is an American Jew or a European Jew, so too one can imagine the existence of an Arab Jew. Still, his American friend cannot seem to accept the existence of the category:

- You can’t compare, a European Jew is something else.
- How come?
- Because “Jew” just doesn’t go with “Arab,” it just doesn’t go. It doesn’t even sound right.
- Depends on your ear.
- Look, I’ve got nothing against Arabs. I even have friends who are Arabs, but how can you say “Arab-Jew” when all the Arabs want is to destroy the Jews?
- And how can you say “European-Jew” when the Europeans have already destroyed the Jews?615

In the following pages, I will try to show that Chetrit has in fact not returned to his Arabized cultural roots; rather, he has developed his own singularity which does not adhere to any specific stable identity and which is an inessential solidarity. To this end, I will examine Chetrit’s most recent significant

614 I would like to thank Amrita Dani, my research assistant at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University (2009–2010), for the illuminative discussions we had on Chetrit’s book.

615 For the entire poem, see Sami Shalom Chetrit, Shirim be-Ashdodit [Poems in Ashdodian] (Tel-Aviv: Andalus, 2003), pp. 50–53.
contribution to the discourse on the topic of Arab-Jewish identity, his book *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews* (2010). Although he sees Arab-Jewish identity through the lens of his own limited agenda, Chetrit nonetheless provides a useful and effective introduction to the “Mizrahi” political movements and draws the reader’s attention to a people who have been historically dismissed by both academia and popular perception. This recent book is actually a translation of Chetrit’s earlier Hebrew book *Ha-Ma’avak ha-Mizraḥi be-Yisra’el: Bein Dikkuy le-Shiḥrur, bein Hizdahut le-Alternativa, 1948–2003* (*The Mizrahi Struggle in Israel: Between Oppression and Liberation, between Identification and Alternative, 1948–2003*) (2004), which in turn was based on his Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Politika Mizraḥit be-Yisra’el: Bein Hizdahut ve-Hishtalvut le-Meḥa’a ve-Alternativa* (*Mizrahi Politics in Israel: Between Identification and Integration and Protest and Alternative*). The latter was written under the supervision of the late Professor Ehud Sprinzak and submitted in 2001 at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The names of the translators of the Hebrew book, Ammiel Alcalay and Oz Shelach, which do not appear (as is usual) on the title page but only in the Acknowledgments, remove any doubt that the book is a professional translation of the original Hebrew text.

Those who have published a study in one language and then decided to publish their work in another language know well that it is almost impossible to be satisfied by a mere professional translation. Every language has its own advantages and limitations, not to mention the fact that the Sources and References sections of a work will often have entries that are left in the original language and entries that are translated into the target language. Furthermore, when there is a significant temporal gap between the two versions, there emerges—as might be expected—the need to update the original study in the light of new sources and more recent studies. In the case of the English translation of Chetrit’s book, the translators have done excellent work, but could not cope with the task of updating it, especially against the background of the many studies published on the topic after the publication of the original work. Thus, there is basically no difference between the three studies—the dissertation (DS), the Hebrew book (HB), and the English version (EV)—and we can refer to them as three versions of the same study. HB is dedicated to the memory of Chetrit’s teacher Ehud Sprinzak, while EV is presented as being “in memory of Sa’adia (sic!) Marciano, a Black Panther.” There are some minor additions in EV; however, on the whole, almost ten years after Chetrit had completed his original study, no significant changes had been made to the manuscript. There is no discussion of the vast additional body of literature on Arab-Jewish or “Mizrahi” issues published during the first decade of the twenty-first century. In fact, EV