

**Circulating texts: Challenging Zionist Myths Through Narratives of Creative
Palestinian Resistance and Solidarity**

by

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Abstract

Through (re)presentations in news media, art, pop culture as well as educational and other institutional contexts in addition to our own personal storytelling, stories shape how we make sense of our lives and what matters to us. Dominant stories of the imagined nation are told and retold often without question. But narratives which counter hegemonic storytelling also exist and continue to be passed on. Despite attempts at erasure and silencing in mainstream accounts and historiographies, contesting narratives which challenge oppressive ruling relations carry on. In this paper, I consider how narratives that expose and oppose dominant settler colonial myths are practices of *creative resistance*. Echoing Barbara Harlow (1987:7), I posit creative resistance not in opposition to, but alongside other forms of resistance such as armed struggle. Through this study, I theorize the concept of creative resistance against the logics and materiality of settler colonialism to examine three modes of narrative performance as political practice in the work of Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA)-Carleton as part of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, Rafeef Ziadah's spoken word, and performances by the Freedom Theatre project in Jenin, Palestine. In exploring the stories of these creative projects, this study conceives of narratives as sites of struggle that are significant in the telling of history and therefore crucial to resistance.

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“I have lived a refugee while you took my home” – Rafeef Ziadah

Chapter 1 Introduction

Through the interweaving of Zionist myths of nation, identity, and security, Israel presents itself as *the* national homeland for all Jewish peoples – a land under constant threat of annihilation by Palestinians who are discursively constructed as demographic and security risks¹. The telling of the Zionist ethno-national story renders Jewish Israelis as the natives of the land while it simultaneously depicts Palestinians as Arab enemy others (Abdo and Lentin 2004:23; Said 1992:5). In doing so, it delegitimizes Palestinian claims to indigeneity while casting them as security threats. The circulation of Zionist texts² thus works to condone Israel’s racist mechanisms and techniques of separation, externalization, and containment of Palestinians inside and outside of the 1949 green line. Yet Palestinians have consistently challenged Zionist narratives only to have their stories left out of dominant discourses on the creation of the settler colonial state of Israel and its continued colonization practices. Although Palestinians have documented their existence and experiences through oral, written, and visual mediums prior to and following the *Nakba*³ (Bardenstein 1998:14; Saloul 2008:5), Palestinian narratives are excluded from the discussion of Israel/Palestine by much of Western⁴ academia as well as by the mainstream film, art, music, and news media institutions (Abdo and Lentin 2004:23-24; Abdo

¹ Sections of my introductory chapter and chapter six appear in an article entitled “Relations of ruling in the colonial present: An intersectional view of the Israeli imaginary” in a special issue on Race, Racialisations, and Racisms in the *Canadian Journal of Sociology* (2013 Vol 38, No 4 at <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/CJS/article/view/17940>)

² I use an expansive definition of texts which includes spoken and written texts following the Critical Discourse Analysis approaches of Teun Van Dijk (1993) and Wodak and Reisigl (2003). See also Susan Slyomovics in Ronit Lentin (2010: 29). According to Lentin, Slyomovics “shows how memories become texts and how words shape the past”.

³ The term al Nakba (Arabic for “the Catastrophe”) marks the establishment of the settler colonial state of Israel in 1948 as experienced by Palestinians and as understood in Palestinian collective memory. It continues to represent the ongoing, present-day processes of colonization.

⁴ Drawing from Stuart Hall’s conception of the West as an idea, concept, and discourse, I follow Linda T. Smith (2012:46) employment of the term “for imagining a set of complex stories, ideas, historical events and social relationships”.

2008:174; Al-Hardan 2008:249; Khalidi 1997:18; Lentin 2010: 6; Pappé 2008:152,160). These omissions regulate public knowledge concerning Palestinian struggles against Israeli colonization, occupation, and apartheid which, in turn, limit greater public discourse on the question of Palestine. Akin to Foucault's (1990:27) notable assertions on the discourses of sexuality, Palestinians are talked about through the authorized discourses of Israel.

The framing of the situation of Israel/Palestine through (religious) conflict, ethnic tension, peace process, security and terrorism discourses elides the reality of Israel as a settler colonial state. Indeed, discussion of Israel through the lens of settler colonialism remains contentious within some Western and much Israeli scholarship (see Zureik 2011:5; also Collins 2011: 35). Undeniably however, the Zionist project of *Eretz* Israel is one of colonization which premises the survival and vitality of the state's Jewish settler population upon the removal and absence of the racialized Indigenous Palestinian other. The logics of ethnic cleansing and genocide or what Patrick Wolfe (2008:105) coins "the logic of elimination" is a historically continuous "structural feature" endemic to all settler colonial projects that includes the elimination of Indigenous people through the erasure of language, culture, traditions, and communities as well as through mass killing. This type of project is never about situational discriminations or circumstantially racialized practices; instead, as Wolfe argues (2008:103), settler colonialism is based upon the expropriation of land from Indigenous populations for the erection of a "new colonial society". Israel has unremittingly pursued its settler colonial project in Palestine, with its distinct forms of occupation (Zureik 2011:4) and apartheid (Davis 1987), through state discourses and practices of separation, fragmentation, and physical violence, including the forced expulsion, exile, imprisonment, murder, massacre, and political assassination of Palestinians as well as the continual confiscation of Palestinian land (Masalha 2012). The rationalizing Zionist narratives used to justify these enduring discriminatory and

racialized settler colonial processes abound in the West; nevertheless, despite the pervasiveness of Zionist stories, contesting Palestinian narratives which expose the violence of Israel's settler colonial project continue to be told through the talk of resistance and solidarity movements.

1.1 Overview of Project

My project follows Ihab Saloul's (2008) noteworthy doctoral study on the importance of narrative performativity in the creation of diasporic Palestinian cultural identity and the telling of Palestinian history. While Saloul (2008:140) highlights the significance of "deep narratives" (i.e., those "grounded in the past *Nakba*") of Palestinian history that have been silenced in the Zionist construction of Israel, I emphasize the link between documenting and narrating creative Palestinian resistance and solidarity as vital to identifying, unsettling, and overcoming injustices of the state. I extend Saloul's research to map and archive narratives which challenge dominant foundational and civilizing Zionist myths of *Terra Nullius* and "making the desert bloom" in an attempt to transform public discourse on Israel/Palestine and establish material changes on the ground. I also take into account the social relations between current-day narratives of Palestinian resistance and solidarity and earlier anti-colonial texts to interrogate what Saloul (2008:1) refers to as "the 'deafening silences' of so-called world opinion"⁵ with respect to Israel's brutal treatment of Palestinians.

⁵ Saloul (2008:93n) claims that "while recent historiography of Palestinian catastrophe has shown a growing awareness of the importance of recording the events of 1948 from the perspective of those previously marginalized in nationalist narratives – peasants, women, camp refugees, poorer city dwellers, and Bedouin tribes – there is still little documentation on *al-nakba* as experienced and remembered by the non-elite majority of Palestinian society". Moreover, he claims that "Ethnographic approaches to the 1948 *nakba* are problematic in that they often remain locked within what can be called a narrative about a history of identity. In other words, while the ethnographic approach has offered an important means to unearth concrete evidence and information *about* the historical expulsion of Palestinians, it often paid little attention to *how* the "uprooting" itself makes the narratives produced by the Palestinian subject meaningful to this subject's everyday condition of displacement and exile. To put it differently, the question scantily asked is how does the Palestinian subject's narrative of the *nakba* of 1948 affect our understanding of his or her narration of the ongoing catastrophe of the Palestinians? (Saloul 2008:174)". In this ethnographic project, I consider the effect of uprooting on subjective Palestinian narratives as well as on narratives about the historical expulsion.

In so doing, I examine the intersection of transnational⁶ narratives of Palestinian resistance and solidarity as a political practice. I explore the ways in which each narrative is at once an act of resistance as well as of solidarity due to the relations of power between the settler colonial states of Canada and Israel in addition to the complicity of each state in the other's colonial project. While recognizing the significant differences between the concepts of resistance and solidarity in the former's connection to liberation struggles and the latter's shared social justice aims, my articulation of resistance, discussed in more depth in Chapter 2, encompasses forms of action that actively oppose structural and systemic oppression and discrimination. Furthermore, my understanding of solidarity, which I look at more fully in Chapter Three, is rooted in political practice understood and expressed through an anticolonial and decolonizing epistemology that takes its direction from those belonging to the directly affected communities in question.

1.2 Research Questions and Data

This study seeks to effect change in the conceptualization of Palestinian political struggle and solidarity, to interrogate historical simplifications of Israel's portrayal as victim, and to address Israel's image and representation of itself as a liberal democracy (Abu El-Haj 2010; Abu-Laban and Bakan 2008; Dalsheim 2007; Falah 1996; Ghanim 2008; Weizman 2007). Furthering Saloul's (2008) study which probes and documents the possibilities for transnational cultural citizenship in the retelling of the *Nakba*, my project examines and chronicles ways in which both Palestinian resistance and solidarity narratives challenge Zionist systems of knowledge and their related social practices to explore the following questions:

1. In what ways are Palestinian resistance and solidarity efforts affected by the logics of Israel's hegemonic Zionist narrative of racialized ethno-national exclusion?

⁶ I use the term transnational rather than international following Chandra Mohanty. Mohanty (2003:240) maintains that the discourse of the international establishes the West as normative while the remainder of the world is made "other".

2. What stories are being told through different creative forms of Palestinian resistance and solidarity efforts?

3. How do these stories attempt to reshape, counter, challenge, and possibly transform Israel's dominant story?

To consider my three central research questions, I examine contemporary Palestinian resistance and solidarity narratives from within Palestine and throughout the Diaspora. This multi-sited ethnographic study combines discursive textual analysis with open-ended interviews, and participant observation to document, interpret, and archive the intersection of selected transnational narratives from the solidarity group Students Against Israeli Apartheid-Carleton (SAIA) as a part of Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in Ottawa on unceded Algonquin land, spoken word performances from Rafeef Ziadah (2009; 2011) - a contemporary Palestinian poet in exile - as well as the narratives from the Freedom Theatre project in Jenin's refugee camp in the Occupied West Bank.

1.2.2 Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA)-Carleton

To demonstrate the ways in which SAIA seeks to creatively counter Israel's dominant Zionist ethno-national story at Carleton and in Canada on Turtle Island⁷ more generally, I present a genealogical account of SAIA's solidarity and resistance work from the group's formation in 2008 until today in Chapters Four and Five. The direction taken by SAIA as a solidarity group

⁷ While I use the term "Turtle Island" throughout my study, I want to call attention to the problems with it as expressed by Mike Krebs and Dana Olwan (2012: footnote 5). In their work on solidarity in a settler colonial state, they explain the usage of the term and their reasoning for employing the term: "Though originally rooted in the belief systems of indigenous Algonquin and Haudenosaunee people, 'Turtle Island' has over time also taken on a distinct 'pan-indigenous' meaning as a way in which to conceptualise the continued existence of indigeneity in North America. We have thus chosen to use Turtle Island at times to describe the traditional land of indigenous people living in what is now 'Canada' to reflect the need to challenge the legitimacy of the settler state that we live in/under (as opposed to the highly problematic and paternalistic language of 'Canada's indigenous people'), which is additionally necessary when taking into account that the traditional territory of many indigenous nations stretches far across both sides of the Canada-US border. We recognise that this pan-indigenous use of 'Turtle Island' is also problematic and not universally recognised among indigenous people (both within and outside of the Algonquin/Haudenosaunee traditions from which the term originates), but within the ongoing project to redefine our indigeneity and how we reassert our rights to this land it is currently the most useful anti-colonial term".

emanates from Palestinians within Palestine, including Palestinians from '48⁸. The call to boycott, divest and impose sanctions against Israel until it complies with international law originated from over 170 civil society organizations in Palestine. Through a discussion and analysis of online posts, radio podcasts, newspaper, video as well as broad-based, in depth, and semi-structured interviews with nine SAIA members from February and March 2012, I document and examine the narratives that SAIA creates and circulates around Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) a central component of the group's work.). As a participant in SAIA from 2010 up to 2014, I also draw on my own experience and the experiences of those with whom I engage in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

In Chapters Four and Five, I demonstrate how SAIA's work is both in solidarity with the Palestinian call for BDS and a form of resistance itself. In (re)telling⁹ lesser known stories about Israel from the perspective of Palestinians and in contesting the labeling of SAIA's work as anti-Semitic, the group has been compelled to challenge the status quo which has sometimes meant having uncomfortable yet critical conversations with people whose understanding of Israel does not include Palestinian narratives of the *Nakba* or the continued Zionist occupation and colonization of Palestine. Chapter Four maps the beginning of the group's work and the events that occurred in the lead up to Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) while Chapter Five focuses on the narratives of the first IAW at Carleton University in March 2009. Through its solidarity events and collaborations with other on-campus as well as off-campus groups, SAIA is invested in the (re)production of knowledge and knowledge practices to alter the way that people understand the on-going colonization of Palestine. It also exposes the similarities between Israel and Canada as

⁸ '48 is the term used by Palestinians to refer to the geographical space colonized by Israel in 1948; it is also used to refer to the people who remained within historical Palestine but outside of the West Bank and Gaza following the 1967 occupation.

⁹ Throughout this work I use the prefix (re) to bring attention to the fact in presenting/producing again what already has been presented/produced another layer of interpretation and analysis is being added to that which is already present.

two settler colonial states to make connections with Indigenous struggles within Turtle Island that go beyond borders and indeed, contest colonially established state boundaries.

1.2.3 *Spoken Word*

Rafeef Ziadah is an active proponent of BDS and has participated in Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) events in Toronto and the UK; however, my rationale for choosing to focus on her spoken word narratives is based only in part on her connection to IAWs. My principal motivation in deciding to look at Ziadah's work is that the stories she tells are exemplary of what the renowned Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani termed "exile" (*manfa*) literature (Kanafani in Harlow 1987:2). Ziadah's spoken word expresses her personal experiences as refugee and exiled Palestinian transcending borders and boundaries through the transnational field of the Internet. Social media and the prevalence of YouTube videos have enabled Ziadah to access a wider audience than she would be able to do through conventional means and their popularity - witnessed through hits on YouTube numbering in the hundreds of thousands - has soared as a result¹⁰.

My textual analyses of Ziadah's (2009; 2011) spoken word and audio visual texts considers how her stories disrupt current understandings of Israel/Palestine. In Chapter Six, I discuss the poetry from Ziadah's first spoken word album *Hadeel* (2009) and her celebrated YouTube performance of "We teach life, sir!" which lays bare the horror of turning mass death into sound bites for the media. In examining these narratives, I also reflect on the ways in which they connect to previous texts or in Saloul's (2008) terms, how they are linked to deep-narratives to archive how these works attempt to seize authority over dominant Zionist discourses (see Noble 2006: 84 ft.10). As in the case of SAIA, Ziadah's work further contests the settler colonial states

¹⁰ see for example, Rafeef Ziadah <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKucPh9xHtM>

in which they are situated and make connections with global struggles which critique capitalism, neo/colonialism, neoliberalism and racism.

1.2.4 *The Freedom Theatre*¹¹

Following my discussion of Ziadah's work as representative of Kanafani's *manfa* literature, I demonstrate that the Freedom Theatre (TFT) is primarily a form of cultural resistance "under occupation" (*taht al-ihtilāl*) in the second half of Chapter Six. Like Ziadah's spoken word texts, I look at narratives from TFT to consider subjective experiences of everyday life; however, this time I take into account the stories that people living in the occupied West Bank say about their lives under conditions of displacement, dispossession, and occupation rather than the stories told by Palestinians in exile. The Freedom Theatre was cofounded by former armed resistance fighter Zakaria Zubeidi and the late Juliano Mer Khamis¹² a professional Israeli actor. Mer Khamis was the son of Arna Mer Khamis a Jewish Israeli woman married to a Palestinian man who during the First Intifada came to live in the camp to teach theatre skills to children as a form of therapy (TFT July 8, 2008; see also Fisek 2012:107). With the aid of the Zubeidi family and other local Palestinians, Arna Mer Khamis helped to establish the Theatre of Stones which was later destroyed by the Israeli military during the Second Intifada in 2002. The Freedom Theatre was built from the foundations of the Theatre of Stones as a mechanism of resistance against Israeli occupation and other forms of violence.

Having faced challenges from Israel as well as from the Palestinian Authority in addition to Palestinians who oppose elements of the Theatre's aims, the Freedom Theatre uses radical performance (Madison 2010) to call upon the audience to consider the complexity of the settler colonial project. I use the Theatre's website, video excerpts, online and print news reports, and

¹¹ I use the Theatre and the acronym TFT interchangeably with the Freedom Theatre.

¹² Juliano Mer Khamis was murdered outside of the Freedom Theatre in the earlier morning of April 4, 2011. His murder has yet to be solved.

social media posts to show how TFT project (re)presents: 1. corruption/collusion power relations between occupied and occupier; 2. psychological, physical, and epistemic violence connected with settler colonialism; 3. resistance against occupation and colonization; and 4. counter narratives that demonstrate everyday life for Palestinians within the West Bank and Gaza. I begin with a brief historical account of the Freedom Theatre to provide some background into the purpose and people behind this project. I subsequently discuss some of the major professional performances put on by TFT both in Palestine and elsewhere using video excerpts and media coverage of: *Animal Farm*, *Sho Kman?*, *Fragments of Palestine*, and *the Siege*. I consider responses in relation to these performances from interviews with Theatre members that are accessible online to discuss how and why the Theatre community persists in their work and commitment to TFT. I then briefly discuss one of the other projects that is an integral part of TFT's work; namely, The Freedom Bus. In mapping some of the struggles that the Theatre faces, I show how TFT creatively resists Israel's ongoing colonization of Palestine while simultaneously fighting for liberation as Palestinians. Significantly, TFT also expresses solidarity in its contestation of race, class, and gender norms. In challenging and altering what Fanon (2004 [1961]) refers to as the "colonized mind", the narratives of the Freedom Theatre are both decolonial practices for those within and outside the West Bank and anticolonial processes.

1.3 Theorizing Counter Hegemonic Narratives in Present History

My project understands narratives as knowledge-practices that are central to the formation of social knowledge and public memory thus my thesis is based upon the assumption that language is critical to the creative struggles of social justice and solidarity movements as well as to cultural forms of resistance against colonization and racism. In theorizing counter narratives, my study is influenced by Critical Race Theory (CRT) approaches to narration which rest on the premise that storytelling functions both as a tool of collective memory for marginalized and

dominant groups as well as a method for opposing hegemonic power to challenge and transform dominant power structures. The telling of stories or counter stories performs an indispensable role for groups who have been marginalized enabling the creation of group bonds, cohesion and “shared understandings, and meanings” (Delgado 1995:64). Yet as Richard Delgado (1995:64) notes, stories are not only important to marginalized or oppressed groups, they also function to validate the supremacy of the dominant group and normalize their hierarchical positioning to “remind [the group] ... of its identity in relation to ... [others], and provide it with a form of shared reality in which its own superior position is seen as natural”. The narratives used to transform Palestine into an ethno-nationalist Jewish state (Bannerji 2003; Yiftachel 2006, 1997) depend upon a Zionist version of Israeli history made to appear natural and inevitable. Israel simultaneously invokes the past suffering of Jewish peoples through the “discourse of the sacred” (Mbembé 2003:27) while claiming the divine biblical right to the land of Palestine. The more secularly framed Zionist goal of an independent state, on the other hand, calls to mind the myth of a land “without a people” while it negates the historical presence of the Palestinian people by means of on-going land appropriation, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Although the reliance on religious as well as secular stories reveals a profound contradiction in truths told, this impossibility is obscured through the constant recollection of Jewish pain.

Threats to public discourse and the production of Palestinian knowledge include the physical destruction of documents by Israel, including “official records, archives, historical art, crafts, and other important possessions” (Slyomovics 2007:51). The demolition of the Palestine Liberation Organization’s Research Center and Archives in Beirut in 1982 is one of the most well-known cases of Israel’s archival destruction (Harlow 1987:7; Massad 2006:161) while more recently the archives in Ramallah as well as every Palestinian Ministry and official building in the West Bank were demolished during the Second Intifada in 2002 (Slyomovics 2007:51).

Altering the story of Palestine to establish Israel's "right" to the land occurs not only through geopolitical and material practices, however, but also in culturally symbolic ways. According to Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmed Sa'di (2007:11):

The [most] debilitating factor in the ability to tell [Palestinian] ... stories and make public their memories is that the powerful nations have not wanted to listen. Without lips, of the political sort, Palestinians could not make themselves heard over the louder story, the one that for Europeans had been vigorously put forth for decades before the Nakba, the one framed in terms of the powerful imagery of redemption, the one told by European Jews who stressed their alliance with the cultural and political values of the West, whether in terms of national independence, democratic organization (for Jewish citizens only), or civilizational mission, like 'making the desert bloom.' The Palestinians, a stateless and dispersed people, were, after the Nakba, up against a strong state with outside support, military might, and official archives.

Israel's renaming of place (Masalha 2012; Suleiman 2004) known as the "Judaization of land" (Kanaaneh 2009:72; Yiftachel 1997:98), violently erases Palestinian presence while it suppresses official Palestinian history. These processes include the eradication of Arab villages through their physical destruction as well as in the Hebraicization of Arab villages and street names (Masalha 2012; Suleiman 2004:162-165). In addition to the material dispossession of land and property, displacement of peoples, and the creation of a considerably large refugee population with all of the socio-economic consequences that result from these practices, the Zionist methods of erasure or "memoricide" (Masalha 2012; Lentin 2008) of Palestinian history, collective memory and existence are central to the aim of colonial rule that naturalizes notions of settler nationality and citizenship belonging.

While counter narratives play a crucial role in the formation of collective memory in building community through consensus, common understandings and ethics, these stories also serve an equally important "destructive function". As Delgado (1995:65) argues, stories and counter stories can contest widely held but nevertheless disputable public knowledge to "shatter complacency", and ultimately challenge structures of power and transform them. Narratives can

therefore also expose what Thomas Ross (1995: 38) refers to as “the violence of the word”. They “can show that what we believe is ridiculous, self-serving, or cruel. They can show us the way out of the trap of unjustified exclusion. They can help us understand when it is time to reallocate power. They are the other half - the destructive half - of the creative dialectic” (Delgado 1995:65). Ronit Lentin (2008) shares a similar perspective in her work on commemorating the *Nakba* :

This juxtaposition [between Palestinian and Zionist histories], illustrates what Edward Said (1980) saw as the ... dialectic contestation of the right to what both Jews and Palestinians call ‘the land’, though even when they are aware of Palestinian claims, Zionists put their own claim on a higher level. If we follow Said, this dialectic encounter means that it is fruitful to theorize Palestine in tandem with theorizing Zionism and the state of Israel. [...] Debates on the place of the memory of the *Nakba* past stand at the heart of the ‘memory boom’ in relation to the Palestinian question regarding homeland, rights, entitlements, refugeehood, against which Israelis position Israeli-Jewish victimhood (and at times also the divine Jewish right to the land) as an opposing narrative.

Narratives are thus also sites of struggle and crucial to resistance in the telling of history. As Barbara Harlow (1987:7) asserts: “The struggle over the historical record is seen from all sides as no less crucial than the armed struggle”. Lorenzo Veracini (2010: 96) echoes this sentiment in his work on settler colonialism: “Narratives and their ability matter. Narratives are a fundamental part of everyday life and their construction constitutes an act that allows nations, communities, and individuals to make sense of the world” while Shari Stone-Mediatore (2003:4) claims “the value of narrative to political thought remains largely unexplored”. The resistance and solidarity narratives archived and examined in this work share a commonality that underpins each of the stories told: the Israeli state is a settler colonial project that depends upon violence against the Indigenous Palestinian population to ensure its continuation as a Jewish homeland. The ability for Israel to carry on its settler colonial project unabated relies also upon discursive ideological and material support from other powerful states. The aim of my study is to chart and examine the

possibilities for counter narratives to transform the dominant “mindset” (Delgado 1995:64) on Israel and alter the hegemonic support it receives from the West.

1.4 Notes on Research Methods and Approach

My study brings into play a number of ethnographic, and intersectional feminist approaches which enable an examination of power relations and positions of social, epistemic, and political privilege. My work is particularly informed by feminist sociology and anticolonial solidarity models which highlight the need for intersectional and decolonizing analyses that are critical to understanding and countering the myths of the Zionist construction of Israel. Below, I describe some of the most central theoretical concepts, tools, and approaches used in my study while in subsequent chapters I engage in a more comprehensive discussion on the possibilities for creative (and cultural) resistance and solidarity.

Through a Foucauldian “history of the present”, I deploy a method of archive/ing not as a passive collection of records from the past but as “an active and controlling system of enunciation” (Noble 2006: 84). I (re)present contemporary narratives that contest and interrogate the hegemonic Zionist stories that have been mythologized and promulgated in the Western mainstream, even in the midst of considerable evidence to the contrary. As Denise Gastaldo and Dave Holmes (1999: 232) point out, “Writing present history acknowledges that any discourse can only be understood in the context of historical development of a given society and in the embodied expressions of power relations among its members”. In pointing to the dissymmetries, disequilibriums, injustice, and violences perpetrated by the Israeli state on the Palestinian people “despite the order of laws, beneath the order of laws, and through and because of the order of laws” (Foucault 2003:79) creative Palestinian solidarity and resistance narratives contribute to a counter history that has the potential to be truly revolutionary in overcoming Zionist claims.

Narrative research leads to the development of a rich data set which enables the exploration of narratives themselves, how they are produced, what they mean, and how they are “silenced, contested or accepted” (Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou 2008:2). The remapping of narratives is crucial to challenging accepted notions of truth and social memory. This technique can bring in stories which have been stifled to provide “alternative visions ... of collective reality” (Marcus 1995:106). As George Marcus (1995:109) states:

Processes of remembering and forgetting produce precisely those kinds of narratives, plots, and allegories that threaten to reconfigure in often disturbing ways versions (myths, in fact) that serve state and institutional orders. In this way, such narratives and plots are a rich source of connections, associations, and suggested relationships for shaping multi-sited objects of research.

To facilitate my discussion and analysis of contesting narratives, I draw on Stephen Duncombe’s (2002:8) definition of cultural resistance to define *creative resistance and solidarity* as a political knowledge-practice which creates a “free space” to challenge and transform the ideological and material hold of dominant power through novel “language, meanings, and visions of the future [as well as places of community, networking, and organizational opportunities]”. Like Maria Casa-Cortes, Michal Osterweil, and Dana E. Powell (2008:46), I contend that knowledge-practices can intervene in the complex, contentious political field and challenge dominant ways of thinking which can lead to material changes in ways of doing.

1.4.1 Mapping Relations of Power and Practicing Solidarity

My study benefits from Dorothy Smith’s (2005) sociology of institutional ethnography which works to illustrate how individual lives are shaped by social relations of coordination and control. Her emphasis on “relations of ruling” provides the means to make apparent the connections between relations of power that extend past the experiential enabling me to explore power relations in the particular context of Israel/Palestine. Likewise, Chandra Mohanty’s (2003:242) pedagogical feminist studies and activist model, which is informed by Smith’s

sociology, assists my analysis by highlighting “mutuality” and “coimplication” of power relations within different communities on a transnational level. Critically, as antiracist feminist scholars and activists contend, solidarity is a practice that necessarily involves recognizing the commonalities of our struggles. This does not mean a sameness in experiences but rather an acknowledgement that some of us benefit from the work that we are doing as a part of the continued systems of oppression that are integral to settler colonialism and as such we must actively work not just to recognize but also to trouble and transform these systems and structures.

A central question which surfaces in my study that seeks not only to map resistances to power but to be in solidarity with Indigenous struggles against colonialism concerns how one furthers a decolonizing, anticolonial approach as an activist and academic researcher of Palestinian solidarity and resistance within the settler-colonial state of Canada. According to Mike Krebs and Dana Olwan (2012:159), engaging in meaningful global solidarity with the Palestinian people which also addresses native struggles for sovereignty and self determination requires a structural analysis that interrogates gender and race to center Indigenous alliances. To this analytic grouping, I include the categories of class, citizenship, sexuality, and dis/ability which are key to settler colonial projects. In much the same way, Nahla Abdo (1993:36) observes that “feminist epistemology is not the private property of one specific culture” and that while “forms of struggle may vary historically and culturally, true feminist solidarity must cross all arbitrary boundaries” to clearly express political commitment grounded in the feminist values of antiracism, anticolonialism, decolonization, as well as class and gender equality. Importantly, the academy must be recognized as a site for struggle and resistance since it is fundamentally linked to neoliberal and colonial order and reproduction (Lewis 2012: 230; Collins 2011:35-36). As Adam Lewis (2012:237) states: “We must rethink our collaborations, our contexts, our privileges and our practices, and conceive of them ethically in anti-colonial terms as a process

that is never complete”. Although mapping power relations within the academy is especially significant to my discussion of SAIA in relation to the administration’s ceaseless attempts to silence the group, it is also a concern for my project more generally since Western and Israeli academic institutions as purveyors of knowledge are largely complicit in the circulation of dominant Zionist and other settler colonial myths.

In archiving the narratives of SAIA, Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre that work to expose Israel’s racist segregation, occupation, and colonization, I examine the links between them as well as their affirmation of the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions campaign to add to the documentation of resistance and solidarity stories that in a Foucauldian sense attempt to seize authority over dominant Zionist discourses (see Noble 2006: 84 ft.10). In writing about creative Palestinian solidarity and resistance, I also show how these acts of storytelling work to make connections to Indigenous struggles against settler colonialism elsewhere. The stories told by SAIA, Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre point to common differences in Indigenous peoples’ experiences of colonialism across transnational borders revealing mutual struggles and resistance to dominant discourses and systemic exploitative and oppressive governing settler colonial rationalities in Palestine and on Turtle Island. As Peter Gose (June 17, 2013) makes clear, rather than “solidarity as charity” we then see a “solidarity of linked struggles”. Mapping these relations of power brings to light “the international circulation and perfection of racist practices of settler colonialism” through practices and processes of surveillance and detention as well as differential citizenship such as the use of identification cards and travel permits witnessed in Canada’s Indian reservation system, the Bantustans of South African Apartheid, and current day Israel (Gose June 12, 2013).

1.4.2 Conducting a Multi-sited Ethnography of Narratives

As a researcher-activist, I explore creative Palestinian resistance and solidarity narratives not as *objects* but as analytical *subjects* in the contestation of illegitimate power. While there are numerous ways to conduct multi-sited ethnographies, I utilize the technique of “following the story” to trace what may be called the “phenomenon” of Israeli settler colonialism (see Marcus 1995:106-110). My research draws connections between multiple sites through what Marcus (1995:110) terms a “strategically situated ethnography” to show how these creative narratives contest the rationalizing logics of Zionist discourses that are (re)produced in mainstream Western society. The objective of strategically situated ethnographies is to understand through a local context how the local and the global are inseparable. As Marcus (1995:110) explains:

The strategically situated ethnography attempts to understand something broadly about the system in ethnographic terms as much as it does its local subjects: It is only local circumstantially, thus situating itself in a context or field quite differently than does other single-site ethnography. [...] The key question is perhaps: What among locally probed subjects is iconic with or parallel to the identifiably similar or same phenomenon within the idioms and terms of another related or “worlds apart” site? Answering this question involves the work of comparative translation and tracing among sites, which I suggested were basic to the methodology of multi-sited ethnography.

Taking up John Collins’ (2011:141; see also Marcus 1995) reading of Marcus, I consider the stories of SAIA and Ziadah as they “travel through the circuits of the [neoliberal apartheid] system” while I study the Freedom Theatre “with an eye to illuminating how the entire system is, in effect, contained within that place”. To map the ways in which these narratives connect as critiques and contestations of settler colonial power, I follow Lila Abu-Lughod’s (1990:42) suggestion to invert Foucault’s maxim: “where there is power there is resistance” to look at *resistance as a diagnostic of power*. I trace the central themes (see Marcus 1995:105) of nation, identity, race, class, gender, and security presented in these counter hegemonic stories to investigate how they creatively expose and rewrite Israel as a settler colonialist project.

Although differences between settler colonial projects exist, Collins (2011:31) argues that all rely on similar logics “rooted in the modern dynamics of state formation, racialization, capital accumulation and genocide” and “the major ideological justifications ... [of ‘imaginative geographies’]”. Employing Wolfe’s framework for examining settler colonialism, Collins (2011: 31-35) details four main logics of settler colonialism that work in tandem with one another: 1. the logic of elimination (or genocide), 2. the logic of the frontier, 3. the logic of exceptionalism, and 4. the logic of denial. I use these logics in addition to the theoretical concepts of race-thinking, apartheid, bio/necropolitics and ethno-nationalism described below as a means by which to examine the thematic patterns articulated in the counter narratives considered in this study.

1.4.3 Conceptual and Theoretical Approach

Settler colonial logics are fundamentally tied to what Hannah Arendt (1973 [1958]) identifies as “race-thinking”. Based on the uncontested notion of a hierarchy of races or “the *ideology* of race”, race-thinking associates “dignity and importance” to the idea of racism to move the conception of hierarchical race difference beyond that of a matter of opinion to the political construction of knowledge and nation-state building (Arendt 1973:158-161). Rooted in white supremacist ideology, race-thinking is central to apartheid policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination (see Articles 1-19 International Convention 1973: 75-77). The concepts of biopolitics/necropolitics (Foucault 2003; Ghanim 2008; Mbembé 2003) and ethno-nationalism (Bannerji 2003; Yiftachel 2006) provide crucial points of analysis in understanding and examining how apartheid is practiced in the Israeli context. The biopolitical regulation and control of life, (e.g., through marriage, health, birth control, access to medical care, education, employment and so on) is at the heart of the logics of exceptionalism while the necropolitical regulation of death (e.g., assassinations, administrative detention, arrest and torture) is central to

the methods and rationalizing logics of elimination. In its regulation and control of bodies that are deemed to matter or marked as threats, the colonial state merges the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics or the management of life with necropolitics (thanatopolitics) or the management of death (Ghanim 2008; Mbembé 2003). Reversing the order of the Foucauldian conception of demographics linked to optimization, Himani Bannerji's (2003) understanding of ethno-demography provides a useful way to examine Israel's bio and necopolitical practices.

According to Bannerji (2003:97), the concern with cultural and numerical ethnicity used to manage and control "majority" and "minority" populations in ethno-nationalist states such as Israel is "inherently and intrinsically genocidal/ethnocidal" and necessarily connected to women. Rather than ending with the genocidal objectives of the state, her analysis begins with the state's control of the female sexual body in the reproduction and elimination of the other- something that Ziadah directly addresses in her work.

According to Collins (2011:32) *the logic of elimination* is enacted through methods of exclusion including forced migration, confinement, coercive assimilation, and mass killing. This logic denies the identity of the colonized and their connection to the land, makes claims to the land while refuting the existence of the Indigenous people, and dismisses "the legitimacy of their resistance" in labeling struggles against colonial forces/colonialism as acts of terror/terrorism (see Collins 2011:32). The logic of exclusion is present in Zionist discourses that predate the establishment of Israel from its ethnic cleansing policies and practices of "transfer" (Masalha 2012:28; see also Kanaaneh 2002:28-29; Pappé 2007) to current-day practices of land expropriation in '48, particularly with the Bedouin in the Naqab (Nasara 2012), but also in Jerusalem and the West Bank (Masalha 2012:254). The narrative which discursively marks Palestinians as an alien/stranger population rather than as natives with irrevocable binding rights to the land began with Zionist myths that "Palestinians did not exist" or that Palestine was "a

land without a people” (Golda Meir and Israel Zangwill respectively in Said 1992:5, 7). In contemporary times, the pervasiveness of othering discourse which characterizes Palestinians as alien extends to all areas of media and scholarship including feminist discourse (Abdo and Lentin 2004:23-24; Abdo 2008:174; Al-Hardan 2008:249; Khalidi 1997:18; Pappé 2008:152,160; Puar 2011). While attempts to silence and erase Palestinian experiences and histories limit the production of these situated knowledges, the discursive representation of Palestinians as terrorist others controls the manner in which Israel/Palestine are discussed and the racialized policies and practices that are implemented and to a large extent accepted in Israeli society and the international arena.

Israel implements elimination techniques of confinement through the imprisonment and detainment of political prisoners, the occupation of people’s homes, and the restriction of movement for Palestinians throughout the West Bank with numerous checkpoints as well as walled in towns such as Qalquilya. Israel’s denial of mobility for Palestinians is even more extreme in the case of Gaza which is often dubbed “an open-air prison” (Collins 2008:562; see also Reinhart 2004). The state’s use of racialized discourse (Abu-Laban and Bakan 2011; Ghanim 2008; Goldberg 2008) facilitates the execution of Israel’s apartheid policies that segregate communities from one another and limit or prevent mobility, including access to food, water, and education. The continued territorial fragmentation of Palestine which is most evident in the West Bank continues to see increased settlements with separate road systems and tunnels and bridges for Jewish settlers and Palestinians (Abujidi 2011:315-319; Korn 2008:121; Weizman 2007:179-181); meanwhile Gaza is completely sealed off and the delivery of basic goods is severely limited and oftentimes prevented altogether (Ghanim 2008:77; Korn 2008:117). The movement of Palestinians inside and outside of West Bank enclaves is restricted (Ghanim 2008:66, 76; Korn 2008:123) and in the case of Gaza movement is near impossible

(Ghanim 2008:77; Korn 2008:117). The apartheid wall cuts deeply into West Bank territory in order to engulf the expanding illegal settlements, and absorb resources such as water and fertile agricultural land (see Weizman 2007:161-179).

Rather than techniques of assimilation, Israel uses a variety of methods to achieve its genocidal aims. The state's approaches to reproduction for Palestinians in '48 are meant to gradually eliminate the population like those promoted to Indigenous, poor, and women of colour in other colonial contexts (Kanaaneh 2002:27; Mohanty 1991:17). Although Israel actively promotes the birth of Jewish Israelis (Yuval-Davis 1996), the state's advocacy and sponsorship of family planning clinics and advertisements seek to curtail Palestinian births. Given that the purpose of Israel's colonial project is to limit, remove, and eliminate the Palestinian population, the regulation of the biopolitical through family planning cannot be viewed as benevolent or benign. In the West Bank and in Gaza, Israel also utilizes more direct forms of necropower to realize its racialized demographic goal of a Jewish state. Mass arrests as well as assassinations of resistance fighters are common in the West Bank and Gaza while indiscriminate bombing has resulted in the deaths of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza.

Closely linked to the logic of elimination, *the logic of the frontier* brings into play (biblical) territorial claims connected directly to spatial politics (Collins 2011: 32). Framed around an expansionist view of territorial acquisition and settlement, this logic invokes the notion of security to justify further conquest. As Collins (2011:33) so aptly puts it, "the frontier becomes the site of heroic figures and events (e.g., the Afrikaner "Great Trek," the westward migration of North America's European settlers and the reclaiming of biblical territory by Jewish settlers) that form the iconic bedrock of nationalist mythology". As is well-documented in much of the literature on Zionism, Jews made up one-third of the population and owned less than seven percent of all the land of Palestine prior to the *Nakba* (Davis 1987:22; Falah 1996; Khalidi

2001:12; Pappé 2007:29-30; Yuval-Davis 1987:39). To secure a land base for the Jewish population to form the state of Israel, Zionist forces destroyed over 500 Palestinian towns and villages, and forcibly removed, exiled, imprisoned, murdered, massacred, and assassinated Palestinians (Davis 1987; Falah 1996; Masalha 2012; Pappé 2007). The violence of the frontier does not end with the destruction of physical space and expulsion of people, however. It also includes the renaming of place as discussed in section 1.3 which plays a vital role in the violent erasure of Indigenous territory and ways of life.

Tied directly to the frontier is *the logic of exceptionalism*. This logic is based on the idea of settlers as *the* “chosen people” constructed often through metaphors of Manifest Destiny (Collins 2011:33). Based on notions of superiority, settlers understand themselves as unique and their colonial mission is as necessary and “even altruistic” (Collins 2011:34). Since Zionism sets Israel out to be the Jewish homeland for Jews regardless of where they reside and/or claim citizenship, there is a perceived need to make Jews the majority of the population (Davis 1987: 9). Israel uses law and religion to discursively construct a racialized framework of citizenship and nationality that attempts to legitimize the practice of differential citizenship rights, property and land theft as well as ethnic cleansing. Through complex legal and religious structural systems and institutionalized practices, Israel’s division between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis establishes differential racialized categories based on ethnic and religious groupings (Abu El-Haj 2010:29; Kanaaneh 2002, 2009; Yuval-Davis 1987:39). The most evident examples of Israel’s racial rule are found in its distinctions between citizenship and nationality, and the inequitable laws for entrance and land ownership. This is especially apparent in Israel’s Law of Return and the Law of Absentee Property.

While the Law of Return enables any Jewish person who immigrates to Israel to be granted automatic citizenship and nationality, under the Law of Absentee Property, Palestinian Arabs

who were forced to leave their homes as a result of the *Nakba* are denied the right to return (Davis 1987:26; see also Abdo 2011:40). Classified as “absentees”, they had their homes, lands, and property confiscated (see Fischbach 2011; Leibler 2011). This includes Palestinians who remained within Palestine but were internally displaced - paradoxically labelled “present absentees” (Said 1992:105; Schechla 2001:20-22; see also Masalha 2012:6). Over 750,000 Palestinians were made refugees with the creation of the state in 1948 (Masalha 2003:259) and again following the *Naksa*. Now numbering approximately 5 million, not including the internally displaced which would bring the total to about 11 million (Masalha 2012:14; see also Feldman 2012), they continue to be refused entry in violation of the internationally recognized Right of Return (Abu-Laban and Bakan 2008:651; Lentin 2004:par. 2.4).

The denial of the Right of Return for Palestinians figures into what Collins describes as *the logic of denial*. Collins (2011:35) draws on the critical work of Stanley Cohen to identify four forms of denial that are “active and influential in settler societies which by definition are built upon hidden structures of violence that extend into the present”. These include: 1. Literal denial, 2. Interpretative denial, 3. Implicatory denial (i.e., “denying neither the facts nor their conventional interpretation but rather ‘the psychological, political or moral implications that conventionally follow’”), and 4. Cultural denial (see Cohen in Collins 35; see also Lentin 2010:10). The Zionist project utilizes all four aspects of denial. It engages in literal denial of Israel as a settler colonial state, interpretative denial of the state as liberal and democratic, implicatory denial of the “transfer” of Palestinians as necessary (see Benny Morris for example), and cultural denial through appropriation of place, clothing, and food as Israeli rather than as Arab and/or Palestinian. The academy as noted in section 1.4.1 plays a central role in perpetuating the logic of denial (see Abdo 2011; Masalha 2012:149; Nadeau and Sears 2010; Puar 2011; Sheehi 2010:267).

The narratives examined here point directly to the logics of settler colonialism outlined above. Through their stories, SAIA, Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre discursively and performatively contest the language and practice used in the Zionist construction of Israel, often employing irony and satire to draw attention to incongruities of power (Delgado 1995:65). SAIA's work on IAW exposes Carleton's complicity in the death of Palestinians through investment in companies which profit from war. This profiteering reveals the duplicitous position of the university which feigns neutrality in the situation of Israel/Palestine. Ziadah's poem "Shades of anger" meanwhile connects the language of demographic threat to the bio/necropolitical aims of the state. As she proclaims: "But you tell me, this womb inside of me will only bring you your next terrorist... You tell me I send my children out to die/ But those are your 'copters, your F16s in OUR skies". While within Palestine, the Freedom Theatre's performance of *The Siege* connects Israel's actions at the Church of Nativity in 2002 to past and present exile of Palestinians to demonstrate both logics of elimination and denial.

1.5 Contribution

The contributions of my research are fourfold: Firstly, I show how the creative resistance and solidarity narratives of SAIA, Rafeef Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre work to expose Israel's racist segregation, occupation, and colonization policies and practices of the past and present. I utilize Hannah Arendt's (1973) concept of race-thinking and an apartheid analytic lens to analyze these projects. This is significant because the synthesis of Israel's exclusionary state measures with the political ideology of race-thinking is not widely discussed by Israeli or Western academics and little scholarly work has been done to consider this possibility. Although talk of Israel as a state of exception is part of the accepted political discourse within Israeli society (Pappé 2008:149-152), and studies on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine began to gain circulation in the 1980s through the work of Israel's "new historians" (e.g., Avi Shlaim, Benny

Morris, Ilan Pappé - see Masalha 2012:148-204), examining the Zionist goal of the Israeli state through the rubric of racism and racialization is fairly recent (see Goldberg 2008; Lentin 2004:par. 2.2).

In a different but related way, the classifying of Israel's separation policies and practices as apartheid or apartheid-like has been fervently contested by supporters of the state. This has led to state and institutional attempts to quell criticism of Israel and/or Zionism, including efforts to equate these terms with being Jewish/Jewishness/Judaism and therefore making critique of the state or Zionist ideology tantamount to anti-Semitism¹³ (Abu-Laban and Bakan 2012). My exploration of resistance and solidarity narratives which tell the on-going story of the *Nakba* demonstrates the inaccuracy of the label of anti-Semitism in this context and leads me to further interrogate the normalization of the Israeli state within the Western purview and what appears to be a refusal of the West to circulate the stories of Palestinians inside and outside of what is considered Israel proper. While research in the field of literary studies has shown the political importance of the suppression of narratives of creative resistance that expose Israel's Zionist settler colonial project, including the work of Barbara Harlow (1987, 1996), Ihab Saloul (2008), and Anna Ball (2012), little sociological research has explored this silencing.

Finally, in presenting a diversity of anticolonial and decolonial Palestinian narratives from an anticolonial and decolonial feminist perspective, my work unsettles stereotypes of the "other's" mode of agency and resistance to show how these narratives contribute to counter

¹³ This includes attempts to limit criticism of Israel through measures such as the July 7, 2011 report by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA), Carleton University's Commission Report on Inter-cultural, Inter-religious and Inter-racial Relations (2012) and within Israel through the prohibition of the word *Nakba* "in educational curricula", the withholding of funds from NGOs that employ the term in *Nakba* commemorations, and the "ongoing discussions" over having Palestinian Christian and Palestinian Muslim citizens of Israel declare an oath of loyalty to Israel as a "Jewish, Zionist, and democratic state" (Zureik in Abu-Laban and Bakan 2012:321).

discourse and knowledge production against the Israeli logics of “othering”, exclusion and exceptionalization while creatively disrupting the accepted discourse of Israel as a liberal democratic state. I examine the role of gender, the state, race, class, and sexuality in the narratives of resistance and solidarity that seek to counter, contest and transform the hegemonic making of the Israeli nation. To attend to intersections among nationhood, race, gender, sexuality and economic exploitation in the context of colonialism, nationalism and global capitalism, I utilize a model of transnational feminism (Mohanty 2003; see also Alexander 2005; Kaplan 1994). This approach is useful to my analysis as it highlights the connections and interrelations within and between local and global contexts to question the social, political and economic connections to colonialism, nationalism, and capitalism that exist within and throughout these dimensions. My theorization of feminism therefore also includes an active commitment to anticolonialism, antiracism, and decolonization on a global scale. In emphasizing the need for an anticolonial stance that is anti-statist, since the state necessarily depends upon hegemonic-masculinist notions of patriotism, top-down hierarchal structures and patriarchal relations, my study focuses on the link between relations of ruling and relations of power to contribute to feminist theorizing that seeks to transform discursive material experiences.

1.6 Organization of Chapters

In Chapter 2, I theorize the concept of creative resistance drawing on the work of Lila Abu-Lughod (1990), Anna Ball (1987, 2012), Stephen Duncombe (2001), Frantz Fanon (2004), Barbara Harlow (1996), D. Soyini Madison (2010), and Sherry Ortner (1995). I posit creative resistance not in opposition to, but alongside other forms of resistance such as armed resistance. While my use of the term includes cultural resistance, it also encompasses narratives of resistance that are not informed by culture. I discuss the use of BDS as a creative form of

resistance, and link the use of theatre and spoken word to what Walter Benjamin coined the “Tradition of the oppressed”.

Chapter 3 focuses on solidarity. In light of my research, I reflect on Ghassan Kanafani’s (as quoted in Harlow 1987:3) assertion that: “No research of this kind [history of resistance] can be complete unless the researcher is located within the resistance movement itself inside the occupied land, taking his testimony from the place in which it is born, lives and is propagated: the lips of the people”. I talk in depth about approaches to examining solidarity from earlier stages of my research that have continued to guide my work (Abdo 1993; Graeber 2009; Juris 2008; Mohanty 2003; Smith 2005). I discuss ways in which I think it is possible to move beyond binaries of “insider” versus “outsider” and “researched” versus “researcher” to a solidarity of meaningful ally-ship through political commitment. Here I bring in works that have most recently influenced my view of solidarity as a political practice to “get beyond rhetoric of positionality”. These works present challenges and possibilities for how one can do academic and also activist research that attempts to be decolonizing and anticolonial as a settler in the settler-colonial state of Canada (Krebs and Olwan 2012; Lewis 2012; Smith 2012; Waziyatawin 2012).

In Chapters 4 and 5, I archive and examine narratives of SAIA as a form of solidarity and resistance. Drawing on the conceptual approaches to solidarity and creative resistance outlined in the previous chapters, I write a present history (see Gastaldo and Holmes 1999:232; Noble 2006:84) of SAIA’s work culminating in the first Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) in Ottawa to show how the group demonstrates both solidarity with the Palestinian call for Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) and resistance to the threats against its efforts and its members. Additionally, I consider how IAW helps expose Israel’s Zionist race-thinking and apartheid practices. I also raise questions about the repression that SAIA has faced on campus including

the poster ban, assault of individual members, and the university's Commission Report on Inter-cultural, Inter-religious, and Inter-racial relations to talk about how resistance is also a crucial part of SAIA's solidarity work. I connect recent Canadian government attempts to impede critical discussion of Israel to institutional efforts to prevent the same. Chapters 4 and 5 present my understanding of solidarity as a political knowledge practice which takes its aim from those belonging to the directly affected communities in question based on a notion of linked anticolonial struggles and shared values rooted in a commitment to decolonizing social justice.

Chapter 6 archives and examines creative solidarity and resistance in the work of Rafeef Ziadah and The Freedom Theatre (TFT). My discussion on Ziadah's spoken word looks at two interrelated questions: 1. "Is there a limit to what can be said when one is in exile?", and 2. "In situations of overwhelming asymmetries of power, is the need to speak as a collective greater than the need to show divides between Palestinians?". I talk about how Ziadah's narratives actively express "exile" (*manfa*) literature (Kanafani in Harlow 1987: 2) and solidarity with Palestinians as well as other oppressed peoples. In Chapter 6, I also chronicle narratives from the Freedom Theatre (TFT) as cultural resistance "under occupation" (*that al-ihtilāl*). TFT complicates the stories being told bringing class privilege, gender discrimination, and race into the fold of settler colonial critique. These narratives do not excuse the occupier nor do they diminish the devastation wrought on Palestinians as a result of the practices of the state, rather they illustrate how occupiers use existent class, gender, and race hierarchies to achieve their ends. Here, I talk about the risks that TFT faces from the Palestine Authority, and more conservative minded people in the area in addition to the direct threats it experiences from Israel. I consider Abu-Lughod and Sa'di's (2007: 22-23) position on why it is important to question narratives and the carrying of deeper historical truths. Both Ziadah's spoken word and TFT's narratives contest the settler colonial states in which they are situated and make connections with

global struggles which critique capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, neoliberalism and racism.

Chapter 7 concludes my study on creative Palestinian solidarity and resistance. My work contends that Palestinian resistance and solidarity narratives not only operate as a powerful counterpoint to the Zionist construction of a Palestinian ‘other’, but further enable the possible material transformation of Israel’s bio/necropolitical racist practices of separation, fragmentation, and violence. In examining this possibility, my doctoral research looks at how diverse strategies of narration are used to remember, (re)present, and resist Israel’s rationale of racialized exclusion and political violence through the stories that Palestinians and solidarity activists circulate: however, to move in the direction of halting the violent policies and practices of the Israeli state against the Palestinian people I argue that more must be done to counter the Zionist silencing and erasure of situated Palestinian knowledges which continue to be purposely censored in academia and beyond. I consider the significance in connecting settler colonial struggles in striving to achieve this end.

“The world has had enough of the ‘realistic’ approaches associated with the peace process; these only perpetuate hierarchical structures both within Palestine and beyond. Instead of writing timidly from within the prison of this oppressive dynamic, we need to write boldly from the exit.” - John Collins

Chapter 2 On Creative Resistance and the Permission to Narrate¹⁴

Storytelling is critical to our understanding of the world. Through (re)presentations in news media, art, pop culture as well as educational and other institutional contexts in addition to our own personal storytelling, stories shape how we make sense of our lives and what matters to us. They help us to make connections between our actions and the lives of others. Dominant stories of the imagined nation are told and retold often without question. But narratives which counter hegemonic storytelling also exist and continue to be passed on. Despite attempts at erasure and silencing in mainstream accounts and historiographies, contesting narratives which challenge oppressive ruling relations carry on. In this chapter, I consider how counter hegemonic narratives that expose and oppose dominant colonial myths are practices of *creative resistance*. Rather than a history of these forms of resistance, this chapter presents an understanding of creative resistance as a political knowledge practice. Echoing Barbara Harlow (1987:7), I posit creative resistance not in opposition to, but alongside other forms of resistance such as armed struggle. Through this study, I theorize the concept of creative resistance against the logics and materiality of settler colonialism to examine three modes of narrative performance as political practice; namely, in Chapters 4 and 5, I consider the work of Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA)-Carleton as part of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement while in Chapter 6 I record and discuss Rafeef Ziadah’s spoken word and performances by the Freedom Theatre project in Jenin, Palestine. In exploring the stories of these creative projects, this study

¹⁴ I take this term from Edward Said (1984) in his infamous article with the same title from the *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Barbara Harlow (1986) and Anna Ball (2012:1) also make reference to this term in their work.

conceives of narratives as sites of struggle that are significant in the telling of history and therefore crucial to resistance¹⁵.

While studies such as Harlow's (1987, 1996) focus on well-known literary or artistic figures who have been criminalized and targeted for their politically motivated art, such as the celebrated Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani¹⁶, this study draws attention to narratives as contemporary creative resistance practices. Instead of focusing on cultural resistance works from the past, the core of this project concerns the stories that artists and activists currently share to challenge Zionist narratives and transform public discourse on Palestine. Importantly, however, the narratives discussed in this work refer to and acknowledge the enormous significance of earlier resistance stories from artists such as Kanafani who was assassinated in Beirut on July 9, 1972 and Mahmoud Darwish who was imprisoned and put under house arrest between 1964-1970 for publicly reading his poetry in '48 Palestine. I link these anticolonial creative resistance narratives to resistance against neo/colonialism and neoliberalism more broadly in what Walter Benjamin (1973 [1955]: 258; see also Collins 2011:11) coined the "tradition of the oppressed". Recognizing the truism that history is written by the victor, Benjamin (1973:259) called for a historical materialist reading of the past "to brush history against the grain". He advocated for an understanding of history from the perspective of the oppressed rather than the oppressor. Benjamin's (1973:259) critique of fascism and its historical normalization in his essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History" lead him to write that "the tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule". According to Benjamin despite the exceptional state measures that the extreme right wing movement of

¹⁵ This project recognizes the significant differences between the concepts of resistance and solidarity. The former is indelibly connected to liberation struggles while the latter is based on shared social justice aims. This is discussed in more depth in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

¹⁶ Harlow (1996:34) recognizes that alongside artists who are renowned for their resistance work there are also many others who have been killed or imprisoned whose names are not well known.

fascism required, because of its link to the idea of progress, fascist ideology gained sway during the early twentieth century. Similarly, Zionist logics have utilized the discourse of progress in “making a desert bloom” and its concomitant reliance on mechanisms of erasure framed in terms of “state of emergency” to realize its settler colonial aims. Rather than being exceptional, declarations of a state of emergency are a common practice in fascist regimes, as Benjamin’s analysis makes clear, as well as in settler colonial contexts.

Settler colonial practices share a number of logics which utilize narratives of exception to justify racist practices of exclusion and separation (see Waziyatawin 2012). Like other Western settler colonial states, Israel’s discourses of security discursively construct a racialized framework of belonging and enemy others. Israel’s mechanisms of security, which limit access to jobs, building permits, travel permits, business licences, and the like, in addition to the highly militarized apparatus of the Apartheid Wall and checkpoints, ensure that the livelihood and nationalist pursuits of Palestinians are made difficult if not impossible (see Zureik 2011:22). Attempts to destroy or control Palestinian knowledge are also crucial to maintaining the dominant Zionist narrative and the myth of Israel as a liberal democracy. As Tamir Sorek’s (2011) work shows, the silencing and suppression of Palestinian memory extends beyond the surveillance panopticon of personal data collection to self-policing and self-censorship within Palestine. The censorship of oneself is the result of fear of being constantly observed by Israel and also by fellow Palestinians (Sorek 2011:126; see also Harlow 1996: 2; Lentin 2010:6; Kananneh 2002). Given the multifaceted grounds for the lack of Palestinian narratives in the mainstream, their absence is as important as their presence. Following Benjamin’s appeal, my examination of resistance narratives therefore considers not only the promulgation of Zionist storytelling in the West, but also Israel’s purposeful destruction and censorship of Palestinian knowledge as well as the complex nature of knowledge production resulting from the internal

struggles between Palestinian political parties that are enmeshed in this settler colonial context. The blurring of hierarchical relations of power between oppressor and oppressed is part and parcel of divide and conquer tactics. In documenting and examining narratives of creative resistance, this study explores how state of emergency and security claims are used by the state in an attempt to silence dissent. In doing so, I call attention to Israel's targeting of artists and activists for assassination, arrest, administrative detention and other practices of confinement and restraint - often justified under the rhetorical pretense of "security" - not as exceptional practices, but as tactics condoned by the state which are meant to suppress dissent and erase Palestinian stories.

As I move throughout this chapter, which provides a conceptual methodology for my study, I discuss questions that arise in researching resistance and provide a working definition of creative resistance as a political knowledge practice that I use in my work. I then explain the significance of employing an intersectional approach to this complex multi-sited ethnography, and discuss several works that have utilized intersectional analyses in studying resistance in the Palestinian context. Next I talk about how social memory is implicated in public discourses on resistance, and what is needed in order to transform the ways in which we understand and speak about Israel and Palestine. I follow this with an exploration of the concept of radical performance as a tactic of creative resistance. I end the chapter by linking creative resistance to solidarity, which I discuss in more depth in Chapter 3. I also mark the end of this part of my study by looking forward to the application of my theoretical understanding of creative resistance to the works named here.

2.1 Creative Resistance: A Working Definition

While the definition of what constitutes resistance is disputed since acts in opposition of power may be read in different ways, for example, the same act might be construed as resistance or

survival (Ortner 1995), I nevertheless consider resistance a useful category from which to look at power. In this respect, as noted in Chapter 1, I follow Abu Lughod's (1990:42) inversion of Foucault's idiom on power to look at resistance as a diagnostic of power¹⁷ (see also Ortner 1995). Examining resistance as an analytic of power enables the study of intricate power relations, including the complex and at times contradictory ways in which social power is exercised. My articulation of resistance encompasses creative forms of narrative action that actively oppose structural and systemic oppression and discrimination. To facilitate my discussion and analysis of contesting narratives, I adapt Stephen Duncombe's (2002:8) definition of cultural resistance to provide a working definition of *creative resistance*¹⁸ as a political knowledge-practice which creates a "free space" to challenge and transform the ideological and material hold of dominant power through novel "language, meanings, and visions of the future [as well as places of community, networking, and organizational opportunities]". Although my use of the term creative resistance includes the understanding of cultural struggle in the sense of shared nationality, ethnicity, and language, it also encompasses narratives of cultural resistance that are informed by resistance to oppression and colonization in the name of a shared value system of social justice. D. Soyini Madison (2010:3, emphasis in original) defines acts of social justice as: "*creating a means and space from whatever elements or resources are available in order to resist or subvert the strategies of more powerful institutions, ideologies, processes*". Madison calls these acts tactics "in the service of human rights"; however, my work looks at resistance as a means of decolonization and a struggle against colonialism and neoliberalism that uses human rights discourse, in the case of the BDS movement, but also examines narratives of resistance that move beyond the rhetoric of human rights. Linda T. Smith (2012:47), following

¹⁷ An important difference between my study and Abu-Lughod's work in her article is that I focus on the transformative possibilities of resistance whereas she did not.

¹⁸ In my introductory chapter I include creative resistance alongside of solidarity to incorporate the breadth of my project. In this chapter I theorize creative resistance. I examine solidarity in the next.

Ashis Nandy, argues that colonization is a “shared culture” for both colonized and colonizer, and that due to the colonization process the language and knowledge of colonization similarly frames the political decolonization struggles for all colonized peoples. This is key when looking at the expression of solidarity in the narratives of Ziadah with respect to the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. While I agree with Smith’s view of shared colonial culture between colonizer and colonized with respect to the colonial project, this study explores the narratives of those who share a common culture in the sense of anticolonial and decolonizing values.

Some scholars, like Sherry Ortner (1995), argue against the idea of textual domination. Indeed, Ortner (1995:188) contends that texts ability “to distort or exclude the voices and perspectives of those being written” gives them more power than they actually have. Her argument, however, fails to account for the fact that many people’s stories have not been made publically accessible due to structural and systemic discrimination linked to relations of power. It is not simply a coincidence that the voices of Indigenous peoples all over the world remain out of the mainstream. Although there is no absolute silencing of marginalized peoples and resistance to oppression is always occurring, Ortner’s (1995:190) argument appears to dismiss the work of others too readily in an attempt to uphold the claim that there is a multiplicity of voices which “force themselves” into the accounts of others. I do not dispute the fact that this multiplicity exists; however, I think it is crucial to recognize that there is a concerted effort to keep particular narratives in public discourse to maintain current structures of power. By doing so, we are better situated to acknowledge the lengths that people go to resist colonial oppression. Rather than romanticizing the lives of colonized peoples, this assertion of resistance demonstrates how the colonization of Indigenous peoples relies on destroying their knowledge practices and ways of living. Pointing to the very real differences in how Indigenous peoples and their colonizers understand and experience life is not about constructing idealistic notions of the past, but about

recognizing the concrete attempts by colonizers to devastate and obliterate Indigenous ways of being. According to Fanon (2004:6), what is necessary to challenge the colonial world “is not a rational confrontation of viewpoints. It is not a discourse on the universal, but the impassioned claim by the colonized that their world is fundamentally different”. Smith (2012:36) similarly links knowing the past as a critical pedagogy to the process of decolonization: “To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing”. This is vital to the creative resistance narratives that I look at in this study. In the following section, I discuss concerns about idealizing resistance in more detail and articulate my approach to studying creative resistance that captures the complexity of relations of power.

2.2 Approaches to Studying Resistance

Like Smith (2012) and Maria Casa-Cortes, Michal Osterweil, and Dana E. Powell (2008:46), I contend that knowledge-practices can intervene in the complex, contentious political field and challenge dominant ways of thinking which can lead to material changes in ways of doing. My study of creative resistance convenes a number of ethnographic, antiracist, and anticolonial feminist approaches to examine relations of power and positions of social, epistemic, and political privilege from an intersectional framework. All ethnographies-regardless of ethnographic meaning- share in the use of the self “as the instrument of knowing” (Ortner 1995: 173; see also Marcus 1995). The “ethnographic stance” which is an intellectual positioning as well as a physical one according to Ortner (1995:174) is possible to achieve through a commitment to “thickness” or as George Marcus (1995) contends, by contextualizing one’s study. Context is crucial to any study as it helps set out the parameters of the research with respect to the claims that one makes and the arguments put forward. Using an intersectional approach which demands context helps to avoid “sanitizing” the politics of the subaltern that can

be prevalent in ethnographic studies that look only at resistance from subordinate-dominant relations of power (Ortner 1995: 177). Not only does avoiding “prior and ongoing *politics* among subalterns” idealize resistance, Ortner (1995: 179) argues that “individual acts of resistance, as well as large-scale resistance movements, are often themselves conflicted, internally contradictory, and affectively ambivalent, in large part due to these internal political complexities”. The tendency to ignore the complexity of relations within resistance is a problem not only within ethnographic studies, but also in other research areas such as literature and history which are of significance here. In a similar critique of subaltern studies, for instance, Peter Worsley (1984:4 in Harlow 1987: 5) claims that while “histories of colonialism written by imperialists ignore ... [how] history is the story of what the White man did, nationalist historiography has developed a contrary ... legend of ‘national’ resistance which omits the uncomfortable fact of collaboration”. My project recognizes that resistance cannot be reduced to a simple discussion of oppressed and oppressor, but it also acknowledges the larger context of structural phenomena which requires a nuanced look at relations of power.

There are indeed members of the colonized world who benefit from the colonial project and collaboration is a necessary part of the discussion, but even collaboration requires a deeper analysis of the structures that enable some colonized people to benefit to the detriment of most others. The practices of “compromise” between colonized and colonizer expose the common interests between elite members of the colonized world and their colonizing counterparts (Fanon 2004:23, 24). The significance of class, gender, race, sexuality, and ability within colonized groups cannot be understated. Differences in access to power existed before colonization, but they are exacerbated under colonial regimes. Fanon (2004:15) speaks to this when he writes about how the colonial world is a compartmentalized world in which colonial subjects learn to limit their dreams and turn on one another. An inverted intersectional view of resistance makes it

possible to look at silencing within communities of resistance as well as outside of them, including the Palestinian Authority's dominance and oppression of its own people and the political and social dynamics between political parties such as Fatah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) as well as power relations within families.

The contention in exposing internal politics, as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1995) explains, is that this information can be harmful to communities who are already negatively stereotyped since it can be used to reinforce accepted violent representations of these groups in the mainstream. This fear, which Crenshaw (1995:362) notes is both “misguided” and “understandable”, limits the discussion of important struggles within these communities. Yet as Crenshaw makes clear in her study on domestic violence in communities of colour, it is the failure to present other stories in dominant discourses rather than the exposure of internal violence in these communities which is most damaging since differential experiences are ignored in favour of a uniform portrayal of experiences. As she states, “The problem ... is not so much the portrayal of violence itself as it is the absence of other narratives and images portraying a fuller range of black experience” (Crenshaw 1995:362). It is therefore crucial to examine internal politics because they are deeply connected to external politics. There is no definitive line between these since the impact of practices and policies outside communities necessarily affect what occurs within communities. The way in which these matters are talked about is significant, however.

The studies of Nahla Abdo (2011, 2008), Ronit Lentin (2011), Simona Sharoni (2012, 1995) and Julie Peteet (1994) on gender in Israel-Palestine provide good examples of the complexities of resistance within communities under colonialism. According to Abdo (2008:180), settler colonial states attempt to exert control by threatening female resistance or

cementing male-dominated family power structures. While Israel has strengthened clanship loyalties (Sa'ar 2006:402) to achieve the latter goal of sustaining patriarchal systems, Abdo shows how the state's treatment of Palestinian women political prisoners uses societal gender norms in an attempt to suppress Palestinian resistance. As she states:

The complex relationship between Palestinian social values, family unity, women's image and position on the one hand, and Israeli state policies on the other is best highlighted through the narratives of Palestinian women political prisoners. It is worth noting that in almost all the interviews conducted, the state has tried to present the female subject in discord with her family, using various methods of torture, fear and threat in an attempt to force the women to submit. (Abdo 2008:180)

Both Lentin (2011) and Sharoni's (2012: 120-121, 1995:38) studies speak to the ways in which nationalist struggle can push the questioning of gender norms more so than conventional feminist critiques. Changes in social attitudes towards women who are survivors of rape and other sexualized forms of violence challenge the fear tactics of Israeli rule that attempt to quell Palestinian women's involvement in resistance¹⁹.

In contrast to the way women political prisoners have influenced normative societal views on gender, Anna Ball (2012:29) observes how male-dominated Palestinian national resistance narratives from prominent writers such as Mahmoud Darwish, Abd al-Raheem Mahmoud, and Tawfiq Zayyad (see Ball 2012:30, 31) have used women's bodies as metaphors for the colonization of land. Ball (2012: 31) points to Joseph Massad's critique of the Palestinian Nationalist Charter which reproduces tropes of traditional gender roles as illustrative of maintaining patriarchal norms:

Massad notes that this highly binarised construction of traditional gender roles is embedded in the Palestinian Nationalist Charter, where ... Palestinians are described "as the children of Palestine, viewed as a mother". Envisioning the land as maternal and women as symbolic enactors of this 'mothering' discourse, Massad states that nationalist

¹⁹ Sharoni (1995) recounts the story by Nahla Abdo who writes about *Um al-Asirah* the proud mother of a Palestinian woman imprisoned during the intifada (Abdo, 1991 as cited in Sharoni, 1995:38-9). As Sharoni (1995) notes *Um al-Asirah* (literally "the mother of a woman prisoner") is the term used for women who are proud of their daughters imprisoned for political activism (see 38, and superscript 12).

discourse constructs women as “*manabit*’, or the soil on which ‘manhood, respect, and dignity’ grow”. As iconic guardians of national dignity and cultural identity, women come to perform a symbolic function that affirms patriarchal control of Palestine through their highly traditional supporting roles as wives and mothers.

The symbolic representation of Palestinian women’s bodies as the land of Palestine presents women’s experiences and value as inherently tied to fertility and reproduction. At the same time, Ball (2012:30-31) argues that the depiction of the violence of colonization as rape reinscribes patriarchal gender norms of the masculine protector and feminine victim. Yet the significance of land to anticolonial struggles and to women’s experiences is critical. As such, the symbolism of Palestinian land tied to the image of woman cannot be reduced to reproducing patriarchal norms in a totalizing way. According to Fanon (2004:9), “for a colonized people” land is “the most essential value, because it is the most meaningful”. Settler colonialism eliminates land as a “means of survival, productive activity, public socialization and a resource for future security” (Abdo 2011:22; see also Smith 2012). Home demolitions, forced removal from “unrecognized villages”, and restrictions to movement severely impact the lives of all Palestinians, but have a particularly negative effect on women as they are often forced for socio-economic reasons to move into patriarchal familial situations (see Abdo 2011:23). Feminist theorizing on citizenship in Israel/Palestine, which Abdo (2011:38, 39) identifies as missing, could offer insight into how gendered tropes in storytelling reify power imbalances, resist colonial oppression, or possibly do both. The use of gendered stereotypes raises important questions about how resistance narratives deal with relations of power within colonized communities.

The above studies provide good examples of the complex treatment of gender in research. In highlighting these studies, however, it is important to note that my project does not assume that gender is always the most significant starting point of analysis or that it is always relevant (see Siltanen and Doucet 2008:179). To avoid simplistic binary positioning and the normalizing

(or naturalizing) of individuals or structures, I take up Chandra Mohanty's call to examine particular intersecting relations of power. Mohanty (2003) emphasizes the complexity of the interdependence between theory, history, and struggle to argue against the notion that power relations are reducible to binary oppositions of oppressor versus oppressed. Her model seeks to locate "common differences" in particular histories and culture and to map these relationally across borders to reveal mutual struggles and resistance to dominant discourses and systemic exploitative and oppressive governing rationalities (Mohanty 2003:244). A number of scholars (see Ortner 1995:178; see also Mohanty 2003, 2013) have misread Mohanty's early essay "Under Western Eyes" (1988) as attempting to limit critical enquiry of power within "Third World"²⁰ contexts; however, this reading of the text fails to recognize her appeal for an analysis within as well as outside of identity categories to look at common structures and systems of inequity. While Mohanty critiques white Western feminism that recenters white understandings of colonized Third World women as monolithic through "a certain mode of appropriation and codification of 'scholarship' and 'knowledge' about women in the third world" (Mohanty 1988: 61) which lacks a class analysis and aims to "save" women in places often deemed backward and uncivilized, she similarly extends this concern to scholars in the Third World who ignore class and cultural norms (Mohanty 1988:62). As Abdo (2011:99) argues in her discussion about the

²⁰ In her later work, Mohanty (2003) proposes using Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash's (1998) "One-Third/Two-Thirds" paradigm combined with the language of "Third World/South" and "First World/North" rather than simply Western/Third World which she uses and explains in a footnote in this earlier work. According to Mohanty (2003:227), the One-Third/Two-Thirds model "focuses on quality of life as the criteria for distinguishing between social minorities and majorities ... [to draw] attention to the continuities as well as the discontinuities between the haves and have-nots within the boundaries of nations and between nations and indigenous communities [in both the North and the South]. This designation also highlights the fluidity and power of global forces that situate communities of people as social majorities/minorities in disparate form". Yet while the One-Third/Two-Thirds designation incorporates an analysis of power and agency, Mohanty (2003:227) contends that it fails to attend to "the history of colonization that the terms Western/Third World draw attention to". While I agree in principal with Mohanty's choice to use the combined paradigms, I find the usage wordy and prefer to employ the terms Western/Third World or North/South in conjunction with a particularized context-based approach which analyzes gender, race, class, and other social categorizations. Despite my decision to forgo the One-Third/Two-Thirds model, Mohanty's discussion of terminology underscores the imprecision of analytic language and the need to examine the concepts used to frame and analyze struggle.

need to ground the cultural and material history of a people in the “settler colonial and racist polity” in which they are situated: “What marks truly progressive and critical feminists is a clear stance not only on gender patriarchy but also on class, race and anticolonial principles”.

Harlow’s (1996:28) discussion of Amilcar Cabral’s revolutionary political resistance in Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde illustrates how in connecting class consciousness and liberation anticolonial struggles we can also move “beyond nationalism” to an “internationalism”. Without an intersectional analysis as outlined by transnational feminists such as Mohanty as well as earlier works by Critical Race Scholars like Kimberlé Crenshaw (1995), however, the very crucial aspects of gender, race, religion, citizenship, sexuality, and ability will remain missing from discussions of colonial resistance.

In this multi-sited ethnography, I trace the story of Israeli settler colonialism through both oral and written narratives of those contesting illegitimate power. I show how these creative narratives counter and resist the rationalizing logics of Zionist discourses that are (re)produced in mainstream Western society by drawing connections between multiple sites through a “strategically situated ethnography” (Marcus 1995:110). Strategically situated ethnographies attempt to understand through a local context the interconnection between the local and the global. I therefore probe what is similar, different, or the same between resistance to Israeli colonization in the work that SAIA does and that which is narrated by Rafeef Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre. This interrogation enables me to translate and trace what is shared or what Mohanty would call the “common differences” among the various multiple sites. All tell the story of Zionist colonization, all resist, all express solidarity, all struggle to be heard, but these creative resistances are also unique and conveyed in different ways. Each focuses on aspects that are most significant to them.

In actively archiving different creative resistance narratives, I also highlight the possible dangers in (mis)/(re)presentation. As Smith (2012: 37) underscores in her study, there is a potential harm and violence in writing, interpreting, and (re)presenting Indigenous struggles. Smith's discussion on the dangers of writing are in reference to Indigenous peoples writing their own stories. This danger is multiplied when the writing is from a position outside partly based on who tells the stories and for what reason. I address issues of positionality and (re)presentation more fully in my discussion on anticolonial and antiracist feminist solidarity in the following chapter. I move now to talk about the significance of social memory on public discourses of resistance.

2.3 Social Memory and the Transformation of Public Discourses

Social memory is both spatial and temporal. It is formed through social practice in a particular space constructed through a certain perspective of time as either static or dynamic. Social memory relies on symbolism, or what David Kertzer (1988:9) refers to as 'ritual' which he defines "as symbolic behaviour that is socially standardized and repetitive". As Kertzer (1988: 12) argues, humans are not simply rational creatures, "[e]ach society has its own mythology detailing its origins and sanctifying its norms". Since the nation is invisible, people create an image of what it is using symbols and symbolic myths, but these symbols have material impacts on our lives (Kertzer 1988:12). Put another way, one could say that the practice of storytelling is more than symbolic as it impacts "instrumental, behavioral, and ideological, cultural, social, and political processes" (see Abu Lughod 1990:41). Ronit Lentin (2010:42) links symbolic standardization and repetition in the construction of social memory to social practice and political action. Like Lentin (2010: 22), I am interested in the social construction of memory, public narrative, and performance of commemoration rather than the psychology of individual memory; however, while Lentin examines how Israeli public discourse and the construction of

social memory utilizes the Holocaust as “unresolved grief transferred ... to the melancholic loss of Palestine” (2010: 43), I focus on narratives as practices of resistance that seek not only to remember the past but to expose the myths which continue to dominate Zionist rationale for the colonization of Palestine. Through these narratives, moreover, I explore how the continued *Nakba* is embedded in Israeli structures, institutions, and reinforced through relations of power.

Saloul (2008:3) argues that “little attention has been paid to the cultural memory of *al-nakba* and its relevance for narratives of exile”. Like Saloul (2008:6), I am “interested less in the particularities of *al-nakba* – what happened, where and why – than in the fact that this catastrophic loss has not ended, but endures to this day” and what creative responses have resulted from this ongoing process of colonization. As Benjamin (1973:257) puts it: “To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was’ (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger”. To trace the links between resistance narratives, I similarly engage in the questions that Saloul’s (2008: 3) study asks:

What are the cultural-political significations of memories of *al-nakba*? How can we conceptualize contemporary memory practices that are structured, though not determined, by a past history? And how can we take those practices into account as articulations of power relations without neglecting the distinct agencies and imaginaries of different generations of exiled Palestinians today?

Although the commemoration of the *Nakba* is critical to Palestinian collective memory, it is important to keep in mind that the settler colonial processes of “the catastrophe” have never ended. These processes involve what Nur Masalha (2012:89) refers to as methods of “memoricide”. As noted above, the suppression of Palestinian history, self-censorship, and the renaming of place are key components to colonial processes. The physical destruction of Palestinian documents, homes, and villages had more than material consequences for the people directly affected at the time; these destructive acts have also taken on symbolic meaning that live

on in contemporary social memory and impact everyday life. Given the ongoing *Nakba*, the most distinctive features of social memory in the Palestinian context are “its production under constant threat of erasure” and its “orientation to place” (in Lentin 2010: 29; see also Abu-Lughod and Sa’di 2007:13). In Lentin’s (2010: 34) reading of Abu-Lughod and Lena Jayyusi, she asserts that “while the patterns of iteration, repetition and accumulation are typical of many narratives of colonisation, the Palestinians use of memory as resistance and memory work as maker of national identity”. The use of memory as resistance is not necessarily particular to Palestinians, but is arguably common to all Indigenous peoples who continue to live under settler colonialism. While focusing particularly on disruption to the normalization of Zionist narratives of Israel, this study critically also contests the social memory of *all* settler colonial states, including that of the Canadian “nation”. As noted in my introduction, exposing the commonalities between different settler colonial states is essential for decolonizing knowledge practices.

For the most part, public discourse on Israel/Palestine in the West has mirrored the dominant governing Jewish-Israeli perspective. There has been little room provided in Western mainstream media or educational institutions for a Palestinian view on Israel as a settler colonial state; instead the Western media has presented a distorted perception of violence attributed to Palestinian resistance (see Qumsiyeh 2010). Rather than calling attention to the fact that the Indigenous Palestinian population has been resisting its colonial occupier for over 60 years, we are told that Israel is defending itself from the violent enemy other. In the context of resistance to settler colonialism, however, the very notion of violence itself must be questioned. Fanon (2004: 23) argues that the colonial world is an inherently violent world not because the colonized are violent but because colonialism requires mechanisms of violence and a continuation of violent practices to sustain itself. In a similar way, Gayatri Spivak warns that we must not ask that resistance and liberation movements follow what is deemed “correct political practice” (in

Harlow 1987: 29-30). The possibilities for transforming the way we understand, talk about, and retell resistance narratives depends not only upon our symbolic constructions, but how these symbols alter material practices and power relations within our imagined communities. As

Kertzer (1988:4-5) states:

That people perceive the world through symbolic lenses does not mean that people or cultures are free to create any symbolic system imaginable, or that all such constructs are equally tenable in the material world. There is a continuous interaction between the ways people have of dealing with the physical and social universe and the actual contours of that universe. When symbolic systems collide with the refractory social or physical forces, the potential for change in the symbolic system is ever present. Moreover, symbols do not simply arise spontaneously, nor is the continuing process of redefinition of the symbolic universe a matter of chance. Both are heavily influenced by the distribution of resources found in society and the relationships that exist with other societies. Though symbols give people a way of understanding the worlds [sic], it is people who produce new symbols and transform the old.

The “authorized vocabulary” which tells us what is permitted and what is not, as Foucault (1990:17, 27) aptly points out in his work on the history of sexuality, regulates the way in which we speak about and understand our social world. While symbolic ritual has a conservative bias in that it is an aspect of culture that is slow to change, there is nevertheless the potential for transformation in both social meaning and social effects through creative activity that gives rise to new rituals (Kertzer 1988:12). Narratives of resistance challenge permissible public discourses by demanding “historical referencing” and “politicized interpretation” (see Harlow 1987:81), placing into question what has been accepted as truth and disputing notions of social memory. The demands of Palestinian resistance narratives therefore challenge epistemological understandings and enable the transformation of discourses concerning Israel/Palestine. A critical method for making these demands is through their performance. In the subsequent section, I draw upon the concept of radical performance to consider what practices of narrative resistance accomplish as political interventions.

2.4 Permission to Narrate: Radical Performance as a Tactic of Creative Resistance

Resistance as a performative knowledge practice involves remembering, retelling, and reiteration. I deploy Madison's term "radical performance" as a mechanism of disruption and transformation of other performative acts of storytelling which have been accepted in the mainstream. This type of performance may use essentialist dimensions of identity to express commonality not as a limitation for transformative possibilities but as a strategic tool to demonstrate the shared histories of Palestinians. While each artist (Ziadah), artistic endeavour (TFT) and solidarity act (SAIA) is distinct in the perspective narrated and provides the context to tell the significant struggles that belong to each, all share the commonality of contesting Zionist settler colonialism. According to Ihab Saloul (2008:7) "Palestinian exilic narratives have a performative function in the precarious preservation of cultural optimism or even stability in the face of the ongoing catastrophe". But can narratives go beyond this, to "become [as Bertolt Brecht argued] the hammer that breaks the mirror, distorts the reflection, to build a new reality" (Brecht in Madison 2010:12)? In the case of creative Palestinian resistance, I look at how the radical performance of resistance narratives counters, contests, and works to alter the dominant Zionist myths which have attempted to normalize the Israeli state, as an inevitable outcome of justice. Radical performance is a knowledge practice that extends beyond the content of the message. Creatively resisting hegemonic stories through performative methods makes it possible not only for silenced narratives to be heard, but enables the transformation of the mindset and actions of audience members as well as performers. As Gose (August 14, 2013) states:

The very fact that a (previously silenced) person actively assumes the right to speak, establishes a relation with an audience, etc., already begins to establish an unspoken frame that alters the reception of whatever they may say, and helps to ground whatever premises it is based on.

The dissemination of the performance through social media further facilitates the circulation of the narrative. More than this, however, the reiteration of the performance through discussion outside of the particular context where the performance occurs moves the narrative outside of its original sphere of communication. While my study does not seek to answer whether the creative resistance of SAIA, Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre transforms the perspective of the audience or the performers in the case of the latter²¹, it does point the potential for transformative change in the disruption of widely accepted Zionist narratives.

While all performances tell a story that extends beyond the immediate audience, radical performance is concerned with “the most vital cultural, social and political tensions of ...[our] time” (Baz Kershaw in Madison 2010:18, 19). According to Madison (2010:1), radical performance is a communicative and subversive tactic of narration. The purpose of radical performance is to change our interpretation of something that has been taken as a given or that is readily accepted. To consider the possibility that radical performance can make a difference in the way we understand and act, Madison (2010:2; emphasis in original) applies “a performance analytic to activism” to ask:

How do activists utilize performance as a *tactic* in their work for human rights and social justice? How do these tactical performances of public protests *emerge* into varied modes of performative gestures and actions? How do advocacy and ethics become inseparable factors in ethnographic, transnational performances? What makes radical performances radical? How is political economy implicated in radical performance?

In order to understand how the creative narratives of this study resist and counter the logics of settler colonialism outlined in the previous chapter, I take the above questions into consideration in my discussion of SAIA, Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre in the conclusion to this study.

²¹ While my examination of SAIA in Chapters 4 and 5 does not delve into the question of transformative change in audience members (or who in fact the audience is), my interviews do touch upon changes with group members in their involvement with the group.

Performance necessitates space and commands attention from an audience. Where performances take place can be planned in advance through room bookings in universities or other venues such as community centres, and theatre houses or they can occur in extemporaneous locations. This is when space is *taken* for the purpose of performance. Performance in a public space further enables the possibility for transforming the space itself from one that discourages active engagement to one which demands social justice. Here permission to narrate is not granted but seized. As Madison asserts (2010:6, 7):

Public performance invokes public discourse by becoming a communicative instrument where the shared naming and making of injustice can be realized; where multiple vocabularies for interrogation are formed; where ideology becomes enlarged due to the ways in which ‘performance can overrun ideology’s containment’, where communal mourning or resistance becomes a platform ‘to reject not only what we see and how we see it, but how we can reject the reality of what we see and know to be true’. What is public is open and made common. A public space is a promise of a democratic space, and a public performance becomes an open invitation to participate and (or) witness how democracy can be variously conjured and re-imagined.

Performance can also transform those involved as noted by members of SAIA and the Freedom Theatre. Referring to participants in activist performances such as protest songs and civil disobedience, Madison (2010:7; emphasis in original) states that “tactical and emergent performances encourage an embodied epistemology. They become a transformation of knowledge that literally *moves* our musculature and the rhythms of our breath and heart, as corporeal knowledge conjoins cognition through enfleshment.” The active participation in resistance is necessarily embodied by the participants, and changes how we interact with the world and the stories we tell about it. Radical performance therefore enables transformation on multiple levels. Despite the fact that my data does not lend itself to an examination of how performance impacts performers and audiences, for the most part, it does enable a discussion about how these forms of art/creativity interpolate an audience, how they call upon an audience and what creative resistance invites/demands of an audience.

2.5 Conclusion

Although not all resistance tactics can be construed as creative, I argue that the narratives that originate from SAIA, Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre as political knowledge practices enable a variety of articulations of creative resistance. As Collins (2011:138) puts cogently:

The world has had enough of the “realistic” approaches associated with the peace process; these only perpetuate hierarchical structures both within Palestine and beyond. Instead of writing timidly from within the prison of this oppressive dynamic, we need to write boldly from the exit.

The narratives that I consider in this study construct novel ways of political engagement that seek to transform institutions of education and power relations. The question of how these creative resistances write boldly from the exit will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

In Mohanty’s (2013: 985) recent article on intersectionality, she quotes the Palestinian feminist scholar and activist Islah Jad who states that Mohanty’s much maligned and frequently misread earlier work “Under Western Eyes” led to a reclaiming of “militant feminism” and a “spirit of resistance as a basis of solidarity”. My study seeks to connect resistance to a solidarity of linked struggles. Yet while my agenda in this study is to articulate the potential for creative forms of resistance and solidarity to be transformational in the sense that they challenge discursive categorizations of inequality and racist practices, I understand that those involved in this work are simultaneously a part of the social environment which reproduces disparities in relations of power. Issues of Palestinian (im)mobility, unemployment, incursion, and death inform the day to day work of activists and artists in particularized contexts while these lived experiences are also shared through and across transnational lines of resistance and solidarity. The differential experiences and situated knowledges of those involved in resistance and solidarity efforts here complicate questions of immediacy and normalcy which can help map the

ruling relations of Israel's continued racist separation and colonization practices and processes on the ground in Palestine.

Beyond linking creative resistances, however, as individuals who are exposed to the naming of injustices there is also a responsibility to bear witness. Thus in exploring the intersections of categories of gender, race, class, religion, nationality, citizenship, sexuality, and ability to reveal the complex and at times contradictory challenges of Palestine resistance and solidarity work, I draw out the transnational character of creative struggles and demarcate their unique asymmetrical power relations on the geopolitical landscape. In doing so, my project brings together a variety of narratives to demonstrate that in challenging contemporary colonialism and racism, creative resistance and solidarity efforts - despite the complex power dynamics that are produced by identity categories as well as borders, boundaries, and racializations - mark a very important transitional moment in the opposition to brutal and illegal Israeli practices of colonization. In mapping the connections of power relations onto the transnational landscape this study considers the transformative possibilities of approaches which challenge Israeli apartheid and counter the dominant logics of Zionist discourses as well as provide an archive of creative Palestinian resistance and solidarity. In the next chapter I focus on the ways in which solidarity can be understood and practiced as a meaningful act of connected struggles.

“*We’re still walking a trail of tears from Palestine to First Nations*”– Rafeef Ziadah

Chapter 3 Solidarity in discourse and practice

As noted in Chapter one, my study extends Ihab Saloul’s (2008:140) research on the importance of narrative performativity in the construction of diasporic Palestinian identity to map and archive narratives of creative resistance and solidarity which challenge and attempt to transform dominant Zionist settler colonial myths. These myths include declarations of *terra nullius* - the legal notion of empty land - and “making a desert bloom” to advance narratives of development through settler expansion which obfuscate colonial processes of land destruction, extraction of resources, genocide, and ethnic cleansing. Yet while these types of myths or what Collins (2011:32) and Wolfe (2006) deem colonial “logics” play a crucial role in the construction of the “imaginative geography” (Said 1978:54-55) of the Zionist state, they are not particular to Israel. Iterations of these logics can be seen in other settler colonial contexts, such as Canada. Quite recently in the Canadian Throne Speech on October 16, 2013, the Harper government expressed settler entitlement to the land of Turtle Island by stating that: “[pioneers] forged an independent country where none would have otherwise existed” (Wilson Oct 16, 2013). This assertion repeats the centuries-old claim of *terra nullius* to uphold the myth that what is now called “Canada” was a barren and uncultivated land before the arrival of European settlers. Only a day after the Throne Speech and two days after the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples Professor James Anaya (Oct 15, 2013) critiqued Canada for its racist, colonialist, and paternalistic assimilation policies²², the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) came under orders to enforce the protection of this doctrine in Elsipogtog, New Brunswick where Mi’kmaq and non-

²² Anaya’s critique extends to the Canadian government policies in the areas of housing, education, social welfare, and health; the government’s failure to attend to the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women; it’s disrespect for the rights, interests and voices of Indigenous peoples as well as the continued theft of lands and resources amongst other grievances.

Indigenous communities had been protesting the destruction of land and water by South-Western Energy, a Houston-based corporation which was granted permission by the Canadian government to explore 2.5 million acres of lands for the purpose of shale gas extraction, or *fracking* (CBC Oct 20, 2013). More arrests occurred on the following day as a result of state-initiated violence by the RCMP. This is not the first time that the Canadian government has ignored or dismissed its settler colonial roots. In September 25, 2009 Prime Minister Stephen Harper speaking at the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh said: “We [Canada] also have no history of colonialism” (AFN 2009). While the Harper government has expressed more commitment to the state of Israel than any other previous Canadian government (see Abu-Laban and Bakan 2012; Engler 2009), statements such as the above should not be considered atypical of the Canada’s white supremacist political landscape.

It is in this climate of Canadian settler colonial denial that I open my chapter on Palestinian solidarity. I do so, by first acknowledging that I am a settler, writing from an uneasy position of social privilege in a comfortable office space on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin territory in the settler colonial state of Canada. I begin as well by expressing solidarity with the Mi’kmaq peoples and their non-Indigenous allies in resistance to the destruction of land and water in Elsipogtog, New Brunswick. This chapter has benefitted from the comments and observations of numerous people as a result of talks given at the University of Victoria on the unceded Coast Salish Territories of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples on June 7, 2013 as a part of the Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences, and also as part of the colloquium series on Indigenous solidarity for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University on October 18, 2013 organized by Nahla Abdo, Aaron Doyle, and Marie-Eve Carrier-Moisan. Through these speaking opportunities, I received a good deal of feedback and questions, in addition to being challenged about doing Palestine solidarity work in Canada-

another settler colonial state. In this chapter, I trouble my relationship with where I currently live and am situated to consider how it is possible to be in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples of Palestine while living and benefitting from another settler colonial state on the unceded land of the Indigenous Algonquin peoples. To navigate the intricacies of this journey, I consider how researchers position themselves within their research, and the practices and processes they use to negotiate solidarity and also be present as activists. I bring together a number of perspectives with my own approach to solidarity research and activism to discuss what solidarity is and how it can be practiced in the furthering of social justice.

3.1 Overview of Chapter

In order to place my own work within a solidarity framework, I begin this chapter with a review of the literature on solidarity from an anticolonial feminist perspective. I start with a discussion of Chandra Mohanty's²³ (2013, 2003) model for solidarity which challenges simplistic binary divisions of colonized and colonizer to address the interweaving of social categories in resistance and solidarity struggles. Mohanty seeks to chart power relationally across boundaries to reveal systemic inequalities, exploitations, and oppressions in the transnational context. To further interrogate binaries in relation to researcher positioning and the research 'other', I then present Nahla Abdo's (1993) critique of Simona Sharoni's (1993) writing of women's struggles in Palestine. Sharoni directly attempts to adhere to Mohanty's call for feminist scholarship but shies away from an examination of class and religious fundamentalism which Abdo stresses is necessary to fully comprehend the Palestinian struggle as well as to demonstrate solidarity. Throughout this discussion, I highlight George Marcus's (1995) work on multi-sited ethnographies as his perspective on researching from within is critical to my study. I next introduce Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's (1985) work on the articulation of the social

²³ While the work of Mohanty, Sharoni, Smith and other feminist scholars considered here focuses mainly on women's experiences and histories, my project considers gender more broadly.

which adds further complexity to the discussion of dichotomous categories of self/other, researcher/researched, insider/outsider, and theory/practice. Since differences exist even within categories of sameness, Laclau and Mouffe contend that the study of relational power is more significant than the study of dichotomous subject categories. Yet while this is the case, I maintain that the perspective of those experiencing injustice cannot be dismissed or ignored. To underscore the significance of experiential knowledge and its impact on knowledge production, I draw on Dorothy Smith's (2005) sociology of institutional ethnography.

I move on to present my own configuration of solidarity which centers Indigenous anticolonial resistance and enables an examination of power relations, including positions of social, epistemic, and political privilege. Here I review perspectives on knowledge production, researcher positionality and reflexivity from Abdo (1993), Mohanty (2003), Smith (2005), David Graeber (2009), and Jeffrey Juris (2008). I consider where the researchers locate themselves within the research, how they propose to deal with social dimensions in their studies, and what their views are on the tensions between activism and academia. In this section, I take up Adam Lewis' (2012: 232) position that an anticolonial approach must be intersectional and it must theorize neocolonial as well as colonial relations in order to resist new forms (policies and practices) of colonial projects. I reflect upon the significant contributions of Linda T. Smith (2012) to decolonizing methodologies from her book of the same title. I also bring in the recent work of Mike Krebs and Dana Olwan (2012), and Waziyatawin (2012) concerning Palestinian solidarity and resistance within the settler colonial states of Canada and the United States, respectively. These works helped to shape my own articulation of solidarity as a decolonizing political practice. While my solidarity framework rejects simplistic binary identity categories as a way to understand the complex power relations of colonialism, it nevertheless recognizes that there are moments in struggle when strategic essentialism is useful in bringing together the

voices of those who have been oppressed. I understand the employment of this strategy as a dialectic of resistance rather than as oppositional to critiques of crude binary identities.

3.2 Review of the Literature

To fully comprehend particular elements of struggles against domination and oppression, Mohanty (2003:231-6) calls for an analysis of the everyday in marginalized communities to look from the bottom up or in her words “to read up the ladder of privilege [from the perspective of resistance]”. While Marcus (1995:101) takes issue with the notion of reading up or “studying up” which he understands as “merely adding perspectives peripherally to the usual subaltern focus” or in other words an adding of “perspectives on elites and institutions ... for mere completeness”, Mohanty’s emphasis on reading up demonstrates her concern with understanding the complexity of relations of power which connect people in multiple contexts across geographical borders. Hers is not an attempt at completeness, but at drawing connections which she claims are traceable from the vantage point of marginalized communities to reveal the complex mapping of ruling relations. As she states: “Activists and scholars must ... identify and reenvision forms of collective resistance that [people] in their different communities ... enact in their everyday lives [to understand the discourse and practice of ruling]” (Mohanty 2003:236). A number of scholars considered in this chapter (Sharoni 1995; Smith 2005) understand the significance of the everyday as a starting point for a method of inquiry in the examination of power relations.

Nevertheless, despite concurring with Mohanty’s (2003) perspective on agency, Sharoni (1995) identifies a reoccurring criticism from those involved in political struggles who maintain a distinction between research/activist outsider and activist/community member insider.

Proponents of this distinction posit that research not written by them is not written for them but rather about them (Sharoni 1995:2). Sharoni (1995:1-2) further notes the difficulty of doing solidarity work while at the same time writing about struggles as an “object of study” given that

those involved in the struggle may not necessarily agree with the theoretical connections made; yet, as others have noted, even when writing from within, there is always a possibility that those who share in the struggle may not reach the same conclusions as the writer (Graeber 2009; Mohanty 2003). Rather than framing different inferences as a downfall, Mohanty (2003:238-9) celebrates the examination of everyday lives with all the complexities and contradictions that exist as a benefit of feminist research which she maintains averts the processes of colonization. The distinction between writing for or about is important to consider since the question is not only indicative of articulations of these discussions on the ground, but further highlights how people involved in resistance and solidarity efforts are differently affected due to geopolitical power relations, structural and institutional formations as well as how struggles for justice are intertwined.

The examples of creative resistance and solidarity that I consider in the next part of this study share similarities in their opposition to the racist ethnonationalist Zionist narratives of *terra nullius*, biblical claims to the land, notions of manifest destiny, and settler-colonial denial or in other words, what John Collins refers to as the four main logics of settler colonialism (see section 1.4.3); however, the narratives of SAIA, Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre also reveal differences not only in their forms of presentation, but also in their specificity (uniqueness) both in the way their stories are told and in the stories they tell. These narratives illustrate the tensions that exist between categories of outsider and insider, and demonstrate the relational links between outsider-insider dimensions. While defining community and identity categories for political purposes of unity and solidarity struggles can be strategic, these categories can also be restrictive and exclusionary. Given these confines, I take into account both the potential and the limits of essentialism as a resistance and solidarity strategy in my discussion of the creative narratives that I have chosen to explore. In the following chapters, I probe these differences in

order to juxtapose how circumstances of birthplace afford opportunities to some and not others. While this is a lottery of sorts it is based on significant geopolitical determinations.

3.2.1 *A Model for Solidarity*

Mohanty (2003:226) proposes a historical material approach which recognizes and analyzes differences and particularities found in the basic material necessities of life to establish and mark the connections in social relations that link local struggles to those occurring elsewhere in the globe. As noted in Chapter 2, while some claim that her earlier work “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” (Mohanty 1988) attempted to establish a clear divide between colonized and colonizer, Mohanty (2003) argues that her purpose was not to construct simplistic divisions; rather she sought to provide a critique of the predominantly Western feminist scholarship that is central to knowledge production as well as to connect scholarship and political action (Mohanty 2013:975, 2003:222). In her essay which revisits this earlier piece, Mohanty (2003:239-42) refers to Eurocentric feminist approaches that consider the non-Western world or Third-World/South from a Euro-American perspective as following either a “*Feminist-as-Tourist Model*” or “*Feminist-as-Explorer Model*” of scholarship and activism (italics in original). According to Mohanty (2003:239), the *Feminist-as-Tourist Model* promulgates an essentialized understanding of the West as the norm. Studies of struggles and cultures elsewhere are juxtaposed against the normative context of the West. Differences within local contexts are ignored while the focus remains on the differences between the local “evolved” Western-nation versus the global colonized-victim of the non-Western world (Mohanty 2003:239). The *Feminist-as-Explorer Model*, on the other hand, situates the foreigner as “the object and subject of knowledge” (Mohanty 2003:240). The focus is on the international (i.e., non-West) which signifies an “other” to be studied. While this strategy, unlike the tourist

model, involves a consideration of the spatial/geographical and temporal/historical, relational links fail to be made which perpetuate the notion of a divide between West and non-West. As Mohanty (2003:240) states, focusing on differences and separateness between “us” and “them” ignores and silences the real and important connections between the local and the global which are needed as a basis of evaluation when considering questions of power, agency, and justice. In contrast to the tourist and explorer approaches, Mohanty (2003:242-4) develops a pedagogical feminist studies and activist approach which she terms the “*Feminist Solidarity*” or “*Comparative Feminist Studies Model*”(italics in original). The aim of Mohanty’s (2003:242) feminist solidarity model is to highlight “mutuality” and “coimplication” of power relations in different communities by examining the ways in which the histories of communities are interwoven through social and economic processes. She maintains that intersections of race, class, gender, nation, and sexuality are grounded in an understanding of historical and experiential particularities of individuals and of communities.

By foregrounding connections of struggle and resistance Mohanty’s (2003:242) model “is based on the premise that the local and the global are not defined in terms of physical geography or territory but exist simultaneously and constitute each other”. Her proposition is not meant to dismiss the real significance of Indigenous struggles against the confiscation of land and/or claims to land, but rather to demonstrate the relationships between our globalized world that can be obscured by discourses that create regional separateness. Since experiences and histories of marginalization and privilege differ in local as well as global contexts, Mohanty’s (2003:243) call for the use of non-essentialist categorization complicates simplistic notions of insider versus outsider by proposing an analysis that considers the similarities and differences that exist within and throughout local and global dimensions. Her model seeks to locate “common differences” in particular histories and culture(s) and to map these relationally across borders to reveal mutual

struggles and resistance to dominant discourses and systemic exploitative and oppressive governing rationalities (Mohanty 2003:244). Like Mohanty (2003), Marcus (1995:102) emphasizes the importance of comparative study in multi-sited ethnographic research where there is “no developed theoretical conception or descriptive model”. He maintains that comparison is crucial to ethnographic study “in which the global is collapsed into and made an integral part of parallel, related local situations rather than something monolithic or external to them” (Marcus 1995:102). Similarly, Nahla Abdo (1993:29) argues against a seamless and unchanging conception and understanding of life in Palestine. She makes clear the need to reveal connections between capital interests and gendered experiences in transnational contexts.

Abdo (1993:29) takes on the essentialism debate within solidarity research and activism in “Middle East Politics Through Feminist Lenses: Negotiating the Terms of Solidarity” by deconstructing and reconstructing alternative approaches to understanding “the insider/outsider debate ... [which presents an essentialized perspective of] the monolith Middle Eastern/Arab/Muslim [experience].” Here Abdo considers Simona Sharoni’s (1993) activist research on the insider/outsider dilemma.²⁴ Abdo (1993:30) commends Sharoni’s “conscious decision to situate her research within the context of committed activism ... [which to her means research] conducted *with* and *for*... not *abstractly about* women” (emphasis in original). Indeed, Sharoni presents the significant critique of Western feminism conveyed in Mohanty’s work (see Sharoni, 1993:6-8). Citing the feminist works of both Mohanty and Sandra Harding, Sharoni (1993:7) situates her knowledge to locate the basis of her socio-political position, provides a critique of previous studies on the subject, and listens to women’s struggles “to articulate new questions and conceptual frameworks”. Yet while Abdo (1993:30) lauds Sharoni (1993) for her articulation of the two overarching agendas of feminism and nationalism that are indicative of

²⁴ Abdo’s article provides a critique of Sharoni’s (1993) “Middle East Politics Through Feminist Lenses: Toward Theorizing International Relations from Women’s Struggles” in the same journal.

the problematic within women's movements in the Middle East, she finds Sharoni's failure to account for class differences and to question the role of religious fundamentalism disconcerting. For Abdo (1993:31), the issue of class is central to women's struggle in the Middle East not only because women had to struggle for basic economic living standards well before they began to struggle for liberation, but more fundamentally because the inclusion of a class analysis is basic to the understanding of the majority of Palestinian struggle which is often mistakenly framed as a struggle for national liberation.

Although she distinguishes between "official-state nationalism" and "national liberations", Abdo (1993:31) asserts that national liberation is "not a movement for the liberation of gender and class oppression [but rather often masks these contradictions]". The works of nationalist feminists such as Huda Sha'rawi, Bint el-Nil and the Arab Women's Association whose elitist views taint their perspectives and "feminist agenda" are exemplary of the inconsistencies between gender, class, and nationalism according to Abdo (1993:31). She argues that while women's struggles and national struggles are interconnected, there is a dialectical relationship between them, and likens the differences between Palestinian women's struggles and national struggle to the differences between capital and labour. Although both are interdependent, she asserts that "the two are contradictory and oppositional" (Abdo 1993:32). In recognizing the tension between women's liberation and national struggle, Abdo (1993:33) contends that the current situation for Palestinian women is not only due to Western, colonial, imperial or international interests but also the result of the intervention of Middle Eastern states in "the lives and movements of women" both in secular and religious aspects. Nevertheless, she is careful not to diminish the impact of imperialism on the Middle East which has deepened disparities between rich and poor by creating dependencies on market integration, and Western approved dictatorial rule. While the discourse of "liberation" is used for nationalist aims as well as by the

West with respect to women, Abdo (1993:33) argues that these liberation struggles must be viewed with a larger scope:

[A]ttempts to liberate women through force and coercion is not radically different from the use of force and coercion to veil them. In both cases, male patriarchal state force is being used. These practices must be seen in the wider context, namely, as an attempt to solidify the ruling classes.

In emphasizing the significance of the intersection of gender, class, religious fundamentalism, and nation in struggles for liberation, Abdo's (1993) perspective prevents the romanticization of nationalist struggles, but importantly also draws the connections between imperialist aims.

My own reading of Sharoni's (1993) text found that her relational linkage of women's particularized struggles to state and non-state political economy takes up the challenges of Mohanty's (2003) perspective to feminist scholarship. Even so, while she mentions class briefly she does not relate class experiences of Palestinian or Israeli women to her discussion (see Sharoni 1993:13,17). Additionally troubling is how aside from a brief mention of Palestinian women in Israel, Sharoni's (1993) account presents a division of Palestinian and Israeli women "on either side" in relation to geographical borders/boundaries (see 15,19-20). This phrasing gives an inaccurate picture of the demographics of Palestine/Israel in relation to the physical landscape. There are Palestinian Israelis as well as Jewish Israelis who live within what is considered Israel proper; meanwhile, although mainly Palestinians live in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza, there are numerous illegal Jewish Israeli settlements in the West Bank and at the time of Sharoni's writing there were also a number of illegal Jewish Israeli settlements within Gaza. Furthermore, Sharoni's (1993:23) self-identification "as an Israeli Jewish feminist" hinders her examination of religious fundamentalism in the Palestinian context. It is precisely in failing to consider the significance of class and religion in the struggles of Palestinian women

that she leaves out crucial relationships of power tied to colonialism, nationalism, and scholarship.

According to Abdo (1993:35) the reluctance of researchers to interrogate certain aspects of study which touch upon differential power relations tied to identity is not unique. Charges of racism, orientalism, and Eurocentrism pitted against Western feminists have occurred with reason, which has affected feminists in various ways including an uneasiness and disinclination to examine particular questions that may be conceptualized from the view of the researcher as being outside the research (Abdo 1993:35). Yet, who decides on such borders of belonging, and is there anything wrong with research that comes from someone who is deemed an outsider? As Abdo (1993:35) queries:

Who sets boundaries and who establishes limits as to what can be researched and what cannot be touched? Is there anything inherently unethical or immoral in the concept 'outsider'? ... Or ... [is the work of an outsider] less important or less valued when she is an 'outsider'? The answer to all the above is a resounding 'no'.

Abdo (1993:36) responds to the feminist dilemma she sets out at start of her article on the insider/outsider debate by claiming first that “feminist epistemology is not the private property of one specific culture ... [and second that] true feminist solidarity must cross all arbitrary boundaries”. Accordingly, representing the interests and concern of subjects can be heeded by responding to calls for solidarity from within feminist forums, and in addressing the fact that fundamentalisms regardless of association are “not about social harmony, nor do ... [they] support gender or class equality [but are movements that are political in nature]” (Abdo 1993:36). They are struggles for state power which must be considered in their “socioeconomic, political, and cultural context” (Abdo 1993:36-7). To Abdo (1993), political commitment is grounded in a commitment to the feminist values of antiracism, decolonization, as well as class and gender equality. But does the determination of political commitment in research then lead

back to the same issues of insider versus outsider? Who decides the researcher's political commitment? The researcher her/himself or the research subjects? To further develop the dichotomous categorizations of self/other, insider/outsider, for/about and theory/practice I turn now to consider Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's (1985) discussion on the articulation of the discourse of the social followed by Smith's contribution to the production of knowledge.

3.2.2 The discourse of the social: On dichotomies and knowledge production

In "Beyond the Positivity of the Social: Antagonisms and Hegemony", Laclau and Mouffe (1985) understand discourse as more than purely linguistic yet neither totally fixed nor unfixed. Accordingly, all social identities are formed upon the basis of shared experiences and commonalities but within these identifications are also experiences and notions of difference. As articulations of sameness and difference, social identities are necessarily tied to discourse which is central to the possibility of contradiction in struggle and in solidarity. As Laclau and Mouffe (1985:110) state:

If we consider social relations as discursively constructed, contradiction becomes possible. For, whereas the classical notion of 'real objects' excludes contradiction, a relation of contradiction can exist between two objects of discourse. The main consequence of a break with the discursive/extra-discursive dichotomy is the abandonment of the thought/reality opposition, and hence a major enlargement of those categories which can account for social relations.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985:108) argue that differential positions and relational identities are formed through discourse which includes both linguistic and non-linguistic elements. Discourse cannot be unified as discursive formations occur as a result of the subject who articulates them as well as in relation to the material structures in which they are articulated whether institutional, ritual, or in practice (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:109). Any totality defined as fixed is therefore invalid (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:111). They maintain that the dichotomous notion of inside

versus outside exists as a totality and thus falls into essentialist assumptions (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:111):

The irresolvable interiority/exteriority tension is the condition of any social practice: necessity only exists as a partial limitation of the field of contingency. It is in this terrain, where neither a total interiority nor a total exteriority is possible, that the social is constituted.

Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) is not a relativist argument, however. Rather their discussion presents the notion of partial fixity which connects agreed upon meaning with non-discursive practice. Discursive articulations are linked to non-discursive articulations or material reality and meaning is attached to these connections (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:111-2). They contend that the origin of social relations is never that of the subject, as subject positions are dependent on discursive structures (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:115).

To explain their understanding of the social, Laclau and Mouffe (1985:115-8) explore the category of the subject to reveal how the notion of fixed essences establishes false dichotomies--a problem which in their view is common in the social sciences. A good illustration of the false separation of a subject into two divisions is presented in their example of the feminist essentialism of the 1960s and 1970s which defined all women's oppression in relation to a single mechanism-men's power. Laclau and Mouffe (1985:117) maintain that the movement within feminism to examine particularized histories including the institutions and practices through which the category of "the feminine" is produced opened up possibilities for feminist politics to consider the implication of law, social policy, family structures or cultural forms to provide a richer analysis beyond simplistic male/female divides. Moreover, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue that to examine the category of the subject rather than the relations that reproduce and reinforce categories creates confusion as to who is included and excluded from these subject positions and who determines these inclusions and exclusions.

Dorothy Smith (2005:28) critiques theoretical social movement models that do not account for the experiences of active participants within social struggles and instead place them outside of the movements within which they are involved. Smith (2005:28-9) contends that the type of framework which examines activists as outsiders fails to consider the standpoint of people within movements and results from a sociology that understands the sociologist as the ‘universal subject’ capable of objectively grasping the world as knowable. Moreover, sociology that attempts to present an objective stance blurs the positions of power which exist in all research studies (Smith 2005:29). Concerned with the production of knowledge, Smith (2005:2) introduces institutional ethnography not as a methodology but as a sociology. Smith’s institutional ethnography demonstrates how relations of power, structural inequities, and subject positions are important to understanding and reconciling social injustice. To connect how lives are shaped by social relations of coordination and control that may not be perceived and understood from within the scope of those involved, Smith’s (2005) institutional ethnography ensues from local experiential perspectives or people’s “standpoint”. In doing so, she offers an alternative to the sociological social movement model for studying activism. The object of inquiry concerns the aspects of institutions that are most relevant to people’s lives which are mapped through interviews based on experience, assumptions based on discourse, and historical research (Smith 2005:39).

While Smith’s (2005:225) ethnographic approach values the perspective of people as “expert practitioners of their own lives”, it does not simply rely on people’s commonsense explanations. Instead, institutional ethnography discovers the important organizing features of social life by moving outside the local ethnographic setting to explore how the social is put together in the way that people experience it (Smith 2005:40,125). In mapping the order of experiences through description and analysis, institutional ethnography makes apparent the

connections between social relations that extend past the experiential. This type of ethnographic study enables the researcher to understand the implications of and possibilities for changing practices (Smith 2005:32).

Institutional ethnography sets out to produce knowledge that is beneficial for those involved because it addresses the problems and concerns identified from within areas of struggle as well as the order in which things are understood to be significant (Smith 2005:32). Through a particular “point of entry” institutional ethnography is employed to examine work processes that are considered to be central to social life, including all forms of visible and invisible work as well as activist practices (see Smith 2005:151-2, 229), to study how they are coordinated through discourse. Smith (2005:38) utilizes Louis Althusser’s term ‘problematic’ “to locate the discursive organization of a field of investigation that is larger than a specific question or problem”. Questions within fields of investigation are not exhaustive, however. What is important to explore in the problematic of institutional ethnography are the ordinary goings-on of the everyday that reveal power relations that are oftentimes imperceptible and otherwise go unexamined (see Smith 2005:39). Institutional ethnography thus looks at power that is both “present and absent in the everyday” (Smith 2005:41). As such, sites of resistance or struggle cannot be examined from a scientific perspective which excludes the standpoint of those involved (Smith 2005:39). In establishing the institutional regime to be investigated the participants in resistance and solidarity are able to define the contours of the research project (Smith 2005:31). Moreover, as a sociology, institutional ethnography can be helpful for people to identify what needs to be changed and what possibilities exist to enable these changes to take place.

3.3 Connecting Solidarity and Resistance: Academia, Activism, and Reflexivity

Although Smith's approach may at first appear to necessitate researchers who are not directly inside the research, I maintain that as researchers we are never *really* outside of systems of hegemony and structural relations of power; regardless of our positioning and location, we are connected to the global systems of neoliberal capitalism, neocolonialism, and colonialism that frame the particular experiences of the lives on the ground in which we study. As Linda Smith (2012:222-223) makes clear, academic research has served to further colonial interests and silence Indigenous knowledges. Because of academia's relationship to systems and structures of injustice that are fundamentally linked to neoliberal and colonial order and reproduction, I argue—following Adam Lewis— that the academy is a place for struggle and resistance. Lewis (2012: 229) contends that as academic researchers we must see ourselves as participants and contributors to continued practices and processes of colonization and oppression, and in doing so we must also actively oppose them. Therefore, it is crucial that we contest what kinds of knowledges are privileged within academia.

It is my belief that there are no fixed boundaries between academia and activism. Like Juris (2008) and Mohanty (2003), I understand activist research not as a collapse between academia and activism, but as flexible and fluid relations. Within the academy there are arguably many academies that intersect with people, communities, and institutions outside of the primary site of the university itself.²⁵ The way that resistance in Palestine is understood (or not) is most certainly influenced by academic as well as activist (re)presentation (or the lack of publication) of such. Yet the university is important not only for publishing, but for teaching and networking as well. The university is more than simply a part of the system. It is a site of diverse forms of

²⁵ This is a paraphrase of a statement that was made in a round-table discussion that took place following a Socialist Studies panel discussion on activism and academia at the Congress for Humanities and Social Sciences in Fredericton on June 3, 2011.

resistance. Indeed, the student activism that is considered in the next two chapters takes place within academic institutional space. Although I do not accept the clear binary between academy and activism and strive to make my work accessible to those involved in struggle, I recognize that my position as a writer is still ruled from within the academic world with all of its established norms as well as the community of scholars who will ultimately evaluate my work and determine its value. Therefore, instead of discarding binary categories entirely, the exploration of dichotomous constructions assists in furthering discussion and making relational connections. Rather than asking whether it is possible to move beyond scholar-centrism, as a multi-sited research study I examine the links between scholastic studies and understandings of the colonization of Palestine, and how these connect to struggles that aim to effect change to Israel's racist colonial discourses and practices.

While my study is inspired by Smith's work with respect to including those involved in their own struggle, and mapping institutional power and relations of power, it is not an institutional ethnography per se. In the upcoming chapters, I take into account Lewis' (2012: 230) call "to reveal the institutional constructions of power, social relations and administrative regimes, making visible their contradictions and weak points to make activism within them more effective". I do this through my involvement in SAIA, the interviews that I conduct, and the narratives of the Israeli Apartheid Week project that I record and examine. Though differences within those inside the researched community exist, I understand political commitment to require more than the clear articulation of the social and political position of the researcher; it necessitates ongoing discussion with the people involved in struggle. This perspective is echoed in the work of Graeber (2009:325) who suggests that the practice of solidarity should be neither from moral pressure nor in the advancement of one's own interests over that of others (see also Marcus 1995:112). This means, as Mohanty argues, allowing room for contradictions and

contested views yet keeping the political aim of the work at the core of the research. Mohanty's (2003) model which posits political education as a requirement to achieve justice is crucial to the creative resistance and solidarity narratives that I explore. Rather than a particular method or theory, solidarity according to Mohanty (2003:7-8; see also Smith 2012:205) necessitates a commitment to decolonization as a movement from below that involves active processes of unlearning previously held beliefs and ways of doing while learning new ways of thinking and working collectively. In the work of SAIA and through the narratives of Ziadah and the Freedom Theatre this commitment to decolonization comes through. Like Smith (2005), Mohanty (2003) recognizes the importance of subjective experiences to destabilizing dominant understandings and common sense notions of history. It is not the "truth" of experiences that are relevant but the connections that are drawn in considering the narratives of marginalized peoples (Mohanty 2003:244; Smith 2005:126). Whose voices are heard and why is not simply a local question but a transnational one linked to the historical silencing of narratives of dispossession, racism, and genocidal practices. The stories documented in the following chapters demonstrate the significance of subjective experiences and disrupt the often taken for granted telling of the Zionist perspective of Israel.

Critically, solidarity is a practice and as such solidarity necessarily involves recognizing the commonalities of the struggles of which we are a part. This does not mean a sameness in experiences, but rather an acknowledgement that some of us benefit from the work that we are doing as a part of the continued systems of oppression that are integral to settler colonialism. As such, we must actively work to not just recognize, but also to trouble and transform these systems and structures. One of the main goals of shared struggles involves the transformation of narratives which dominate the discourse and normalize relations of ruling. Taking the concept of struggle further, Linda Smith distinguishes between resistance and transformation. According to

Smith (2012:199), resistance involves a struggle against something, while transformation concerns social change in the relationships and structures of power. Transformation in this respect requires what Lewis (2012:232) describes as an ongoing anticolonial and decolonizing intersectional approach -an approach advocated by Abdo (1993), Mohanty (2003), and Smith (2012)- and it must theorize neocolonial as well as colonial relations in order to resist new forms (policies and practices) of colonial projects. As he states: “We must rethink our collaborations, our contexts, our privileges and our practices, and conceive of them ethically in anticolonial terms as a process that is never complete” (Lewis 2012:237). Practicing political commitment can, therefore, move us beyond for and about and insider and outsider questions, but crucially, I believe, we must keep these questions in mind and be self-reflexive. But how does one do this as an activist and academic researcher of Palestinian solidarity and resistance within the settler-colonial state of Canada? Mike Krebs and Dana Olwan (2012:139) similarly ask: “How do Palestine activists in Canada create lines of solidarity with Indigenous peoples? How can we foster global solidarity with the Palestinian people while addressing native struggles for sovereignty and self determination [here]?”. Their answer is that solidarity and meaningful allyship requires a structural analysis that interrogates gender and race to center Indigenous alliances (Krebs and Olwan 2012:159). To this, I add the dimensions of class, citizenship and ability as they are key categories for settler colonial projects. From her own experience, Waziyatawin (2012) uses rich description to document the similarities between the strategies and tactics of colonial projects in the present-day US and Israel/Palestine. Similarly, I make use of my current involvement in solidarity efforts and academic study to map the justifying discourses of Israeli settler colonialism. Through my examination of creative Palestinian resistance and solidarity narratives, I show the commonalties between settler colonial states and the transformational struggles against settler colonial logics.

In the subsequent chapters, I note the use of essentialist categories for political purposes to build unity amongst Palestinians in the diasporic community as well as to invoke support for the broader framework of struggles for justice (see also Abdo 1993; Mavroudi 2010:245, 247, 250). As a solidarity group which includes both insiders and outsiders, SAIA takes its direction from Palestinians within Palestine, including Palestinians from '48 who support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. The call to boycott, divest and impose sanctions against Israel until it complies with international law originated from over 170 civil society organizations in Palestine. As a participant in SAIA from 2010 up to the 2014, I also draw on my own experience and the experiences of those with whom I engaged in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. The stories that SAIA tells through its sit-ins, numerous videos, tabling, Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) events, and collaborations with other on-campus as well as off-campus groups are illustrative of solidarity and resistance. In support of the Palestinian call for BDS, SAIA works to challenge Zionist claims while (re)producing knowledge of the *Nakba* and the continued Zionist occupation and colonization of Palestine. Yet, SAIA has also faced the need resist condemnation and silencing tactics from the university as well as from outside critics due to the group's continued efforts to include Palestinian narratives that challenge common place understandings of Israel as a liberal democracy. Additionally, SAIA's narratives also bring attention to the similarities between Israel and Canada as two settler colonial states to make connections with Indigenous struggles within Turtle Island that go beyond borders and indeed, contest colonially established state boundaries.

As both insider and outsider Rafeef Ziadah's spoken word expresses *manfa* (exile) literature. Her personal experiences as a refugee and exiled Palestinian which challenge and agitate current understandings of Israel/Palestine are recounted through the stories she tells which transcend borders and boundaries via the Internet. Like the narratives of SAIA-Carleton,

the stories of Ziadah further contest and disrupt the settler colonial state in which she is situated to make connections with global struggles which critique capitalism, neo/colonialism, neo-liberalism, gender disparities, and racism. Meanwhile, the stories from the Freedom Theatre concern the subjective experiences from the perspectives of insiders living in the occupied West Bank. Rather than *manfa* narratives, these stories represent a form of cultural resistance of *taht al-ihtilāl* (life under occupation). Their stories speak to the everyday life conditions of displacement, dispossession, and occupation, but as insider-outsiders they also include performances of solidarity with Palestinian refugees outside of Palestine and threats from conservative minded Palestinians who oppose elements of the Theatre's aims, such as the questioning of traditional gender roles. The narratives of the Freedom Theatre are then, at once, decolonization practices that seek to challenge and alter the colonized mind (Fanon 2004 [1961]) of those within and outside the West Bank in addition to being anticolonial practices and processes.

3.4 Conclusion

The sociology of solidarity that I explore goes beyond identifying with resistance, to being directly involved in the struggle. Although the methods of inquiry proposed by the authors presented in this chapter differ somewhat in their approach to research subjects, all challenge the possibility of partiality and objectivity in research. My study brings together an ethnographic framework for activist centered research on global justice movements to investigate the particular in relation to the transnational, and to explore the possibilities for challenging and transforming the hegemonic discourse of Israeli victimization in the narratives of SAIA, Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre. My concern with resistance and solidarity narratives rests in the ability not to challenge *the* master narrative, but to contest and work towards transforming a narrative or more accurately narratives which forget and disappear the complex layers of misunderstanding

of Israel/Palestine. In examining this possibility I think it is crucial to look at how the experiences of those participating in this work understand struggle and solidarity. While Laclau and Mouffe's discussion demonstrates the significance of examining relations of power rather than categories of subjects, I believe as do a number of other scholars of activism and social movements (see Graeber 2009:330; Negri 2007:65; Smith 2005:7-9; Smith 2012:77; Sullivan 2003:44-9) that there is a role for the purposeful use of dichotomies or "strategic essentialism" (see Jhappan discussion in Siltanen and Doucet 2008:184) to demonstrate unity and shared aims in struggles for solidarity. What are the similarities and differences across differential categories of race, class, gender, nationality, citizenship, and ability? When do categories of difference collapse and when are they emphasized to transform dominant colonial narratives?

My understanding of solidarity is rooted in political practice understood and expressed through an anticolonial and decolonizing epistemology that takes its direction from those belonging to the directly affected communities in question. According to Juris (2008:19) reflexivity is a result of fieldwork which requires that researchers situate themselves as authors of research and is not a result of an abstract commitment to such. It is through this understanding that I link the notion of decolonizing resistance to a solidarity of mutuality and accountability, which as Islah Jad (see Mohanty 2013:985) points out should form the basis of solidarity. This, as Gose (June 17, 2013) points out, is a "solidarity of linked struggles" rather than of charity. While like Abdo (1993), I understand political commitment as central to my research, I also recognize the significance of looking into the construction of insider/outsider categories as they are exemplary of the dominant discourses which shape and frame the work and experiences of solidarity activists. In this sense, political commitment means that I must make my social and political position as an academic and an anticolonial feminist clear in my writing as well as in my work within activism. Political commitment in this respect is a process of constant

negotiation with others involved in solidarity efforts (see Marcus 1995:112). Following Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet (2003), I use my experience as a resource for reflection to connect and interpret my research data. While theory informs the way that ethnographic researchers frame description, description remains primary. In the words of Graeber (2009:500), “in ethnography, theory is properly in the service of description rather than the other way around”. Yet it is important to remember that description is inevitably loaded by the experiences, interpretations, meanings, and intentions of researchers; this is why I believe that it is crucial for researchers to state their socio-political positions clearly and be reflexive. This approach to reflexivity which is echoed in Bent Flyvbjerg’s (2001:132) methodological guideline of “getting close to reality” enables researchers to use their own experiences and viewpoints to continuously reflect on what appears most meaningful throughout the research process and at the time of data analysis (Mauthner and Doucet 2003:419). Rather than a deterrent to the research, I contend that my personal experiences and beliefs as a someone committed to transnational anticolonial and decolonization efforts, a Palestinian solidarity activist, and an academic researcher aids in the research process and is considered and discussed in the articulation of the my study.

According to Ghassan Kanafani (as quoted in Harlow 1987:3; see also Chapter 1), no research on resistance “can be complete unless the researcher is located within the resistance movement itself inside the occupied land, taking his testimony from the place in which it is born, lives and is propagated: the lips of the people”. Although my project does not take place in the physical territory of Palestine, local solidarity efforts are directly connected to the daily struggles of Palestinians in the material place. As noted at the end of Chapter 2, the everyday work of activists is informed by the experiences of Palestinian (im)mobility, unemployment, incursion, and death in the local context. These lived experiences are also shared through and across transnational lines of solidarity. The differential experiences and situated knowledges of

members involved in solidarity efforts here complicate questions of immediacy and normalcy which can help map the ruling relations of Israel's continued racist separation and colonization practices and processes on the ground in Palestine. Importantly, since I write from occupied Algonquin territory, by looking at the phenomena of settler colonialism in Palestine I draw links to the settler colonial logics at work here. This is not to say that the situation on Turtle Island is the same as in Palestine, but there are fundamental similarities as well as connections between practices, processes, and structures of settler colonialism which I want to bring attention to.

In the following chapters I look at the solidarity narratives of SAIA, the spoken word performances of Rafeef Ziadah as well as the narratives emanating from the Freedom Theatre project in Jenin's refugee camp in the Occupied West Bank. All of these projects are in themselves acts of solidarity as well as forms of resistance which not only actively defy Zionist claims but as knowledge practices also attempt to transform public discourse on Israel/Palestine and establish material changes on the ground. In the case of SAIA and Ziadah they further contest the settler colonial states in which they are situated and make connections with global struggles which critique capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, neoliberalism and racism. Through the themed patterning of these creative resistance and solidarity counter narratives, my next chapters examine the relationship between what Collins (2011:31-35) identifies as the four main logics of settler colonialism: 1. the logic of elimination (or genocide), 2. the logic of the frontier, 3. the logic of exceptionalism, and 4. the logic of denial in addition to the theoretical concepts of race-thinking, apartheid, bio/necropolitics and ethno-nationalism as set out in the introduction to this work. In evoking different bodies of literature, this chapter has illustrated the relevance of investigating and integrating questions of sociological study in order to better understand the complex dimensions and linkages between resistance and solidarity.

“We understand Israeli apartheid as one element of a system of global apartheid. To this end, we stand in solidarity with all oppressed groups around the world, in particular, the Indigenous people of North America.” – Basis of Unity, #2 SAIA-Carleton

Chapter 4 What’s in a name? SAIA and the Challenge of the Apartheid Analysis

In this chapter and the next, I archive narratives of Students Against Israeli Apartheid-Carleton (hereinafter SAIA) as contestations and (re)configurations of the common-place Zionist understandings of the Israeli state in Western discourses. To write a present history (see Gastaldo and Holmes 1999:232; Noble 2006:84) of SAIA’s Palestine solidarity work, I draw on the conceptual approaches to creative resistance and solidarity that I describe in Chapters 2 and 3. I demonstrate how SAIA’s work is both in solidarity with the Palestinian call for Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) and is a form of resistance itself. As noted in Chapter 1 and in a lengthier discussion in Chapter 3, I understand solidarity as a political knowledge practice which takes its aim from those belonging to the directly affected communities in question based on a notion of linked struggles and shared values rooted in a commitment to social justice; in this case, the direction taken by SAIA as a solidarity group emanates from the call issued for BDS by over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations within Palestine, including Palestinians from 1948 (’48) with a commitment to anticolonial and decolonizing struggles worldwide. SAIA is invested in the (re)production of knowledge and knowledge practices to alter the way that people understand the on-going colonization of Palestine while making links to global apartheid, particularly as it is practiced on Turtle Island²⁶. While I focus mainly on mapping SAIA’s solidarity stories that actively enunciate lesser known accounts of the continued Palestinian *Nakba*, I also demonstrate how these narratives are in themselves forms of creative resistance.

²⁶ As noted in Chapter 1, I use the term “Turtle Island” throughout my study which although problematic as Mike Krebs and Dana Olwan (2012:footnote 5) note “has over time also taken on a distinct ‘pan-indigenous’ meaning as a way in which to conceptualise the continued existence of indigeneity in North America”. For more on this see Chapter 1 footnote 7.

My articulation of resistance encompasses creative forms of action that actively oppose structural and systemic oppression and discrimination. The stories told and (re)told by SAIA contribute to the production of social memory concerning the ongoing *Nakba*, and also reveal the power structures both within and outside of the university involved in upholding Zionist perspectives on Israel.

My research in Chapters 4 and 5 centers on the intersecting anticolonial and decolonizing narratives that stem from one main aspect of SAIA's work: Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW). Although my interviews²⁷ with various SAIA members and discussions in group meetings indicated that the group believes that the divestment campaign is the most important part of SAIA's solidarity efforts on campus, I argue that IAW has enabled a transformation of the discourse on Israel which could not have happened through the divestment campaign alone. Divestment focuses on educating the campus community and the wider public about Carleton University's complicity in Israel's colonial project through its investment in four companies that violate Palestinian human rights and international law with the explicit intention of getting Carleton to divest from these companies; however, the campaign and campaign literature does not utilize the language of apartheid or colonization. Instead, it employs the discourse of occupation which is more widely accepted in the dominant Western media and by the mainstream public than apartheid. The campaign is based on SAIA's divestment report which documents Carleton's pension fund investments in companies that manufacture surveillance equipment, produce weapons and weapons components used against Palestinians, perpetuate Israel's illegal siege of the Gaza strip, and support the illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian territories. While primarily concerned with Carleton's collusion in Israeli apartheid and how as Carleton students, faculty, and staff we are involved in supporting Israel's oppressive

²⁷ The names of some participants have been altered upon request of anonymity.

regime, the divestment campaign also serves as an important educational tool for informing people on and off campus about Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestine. Like the divestment campaign, IAW is used to educate and encourage people to become active in the solidarity movement. But IAW extends beyond the university's connection with apartheid Israel to raise awareness around such issues as Israel's "pinkwashing" of apartheid through its promotion of GLBTQ rights and "greenwashing" through its environmental façade as well as Canada's very vocal and material ties to Israel. The events at IAW are informative and performance based, and include talks, keynote speakers, workshops, movie nights as well as a yearly cultural night of resistance and solidarity aptly titled *Verses vs. Apartheid* which features spoken word, song, and dance by local artists as well as from those outside the community.

Throughout these two chapters, I examine ways in which SAIA has at times precluded Carleton's attempts to silence its solidarity work and at other times actively challenged these efforts. As SAIA works to make substantial changes at the institutional level that would have real impacts on the companies that are violating Palestinian human rights, it also significantly performs narratives of solidarity that are altering the way in which people understand the politics of Israel/Palestine. In talking about the possibilities for creative solidarity and resistance, I also raise concerns about the use of human rights and international law discourses to realize transformational change. In doing so, I bring attention to questions about the limits and opportunities for those working to achieve social justice in Palestine. The current BDS movement uses the language of human rights and international law to promote its call and to demonstrate the continued colonial oppression of the Zionist state of Israel against Palestinians. Yet human rights and international law discourses and practices are tied closely to European colonization efforts (Mutua 2002:11-12). As Makau Mutua (2002:16) points out, the United Nations' demand for universal human rights and the promotion of international law does not

account for the suffering incurred by people of colour due to the racist actions of white European nations that began prior to the genocides of white Europeans during the 1940s such as the colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The irony of using human rights discourse which is based in the same Eurocentric civilizing mission, institutions, and structures that lead to the question of Palestine and the establishment of the colonial state of Israel is not lost on Palestinians and those involved in the solidarity movement (Doumani 2007:58; Jarrar Interview 2012; Sultany 2013:16-17). Given the link between European colonial efforts, international law and the liberal human rights project, the title of Audre Lorde's infamous essay "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" are important to reflect upon. While human rights and international law discourses may never dismantle the neoliberal colonizing state of Israel, the application of these solidarity discourses in narrating Palestine can reveal the contradictions apparent in the Zionist goal of a Jewish state.

In recording SAIA's narratives, I explore the research questions set out in the initial chapter of this study to consider:

1. the ways in which Palestinian resistance and solidarity efforts are affected by the logics of Israel's hegemonic Zionist narrative of racialized ethno-national exclusion,
2. the stories that are being told through different creative forms of Palestinian resistance and solidarity efforts, and
3. how these stories attempt to reshape, counter, challenge, and possibly transform Israel's dominant story (see section 1.2).

To discuss and address these questions, I deploy the concepts of settler colonial logics, race-thinking, bio/necropolitics, and ethnonationalism presented in Chapter 1. I consider how SAIA's solidarity work creates new spaces for learning and teaching about Palestinian stories and struggles that are under and mis-represented, or at times completely silenced in dominant Canadian society. These spaces of knowledge production transcend geographical boundaries by establishing ties with Palestinian civil society as well as forming relationships with other

Palestinian solidarity groups on a transnational level; additionally, by recognizing the significant similarities between Israel and Canada as two settler colonial states, these novel spaces provide opportunities to make connections with Indigenous struggles within Turtle Island that go beyond and indeed, contest colonially established state boundaries.

In what follows, I provide an analytical account of SAIA's solidarity and resistance work on IAW from the group's formation in September 2008 until the end of the 2014 winter term. I begin by detailing my ethnographic approach to archiving SAIA's history on campus. I then present a summation on the usage of previous BDS measures by Palestinians and their allies to illustrate, in brief, the history of creative protest, resistance, and solidarity initiatives by Palestinian civil society. These earlier boycott initiatives are relevant to present day discourse and practice in that they mark a long history of the actualization of numerous creative measures of protest and resistance by Palestinian civil society, and further showcase a variety of imaginative ways to struggle against colonization as well as solidarity initiatives with people outside of Palestine. Following this, I move on to discuss SAIA's establishment as a solidarity group at Carleton and the significance of the apartheid analysis. I record some of the notable moments leading up to IAW in Ottawa, including the *Al Haq* panel in 2008, the poster banning of early 2009, and SAIA's application at the *Ontario Human Rights Tribunal* that have challenged Israel's hegemonic narrative of racialized ethno-national exclusion through creative forms of Palestinian solidarity and resistance. Based on the information garnered from my interviews with SAIA members as well as my experiences as an audience member, I then focus in Chapter 5 on the events of the first IAW²⁸ of March 2009 as primary sites for the contestation of the widely accepted narrative concerning Israel and an introduction to many of the stories of Palestine from a Palestinian perspective.

²⁸The complete listing for each IAW held in Ottawa is provided in the reference section of this dissertation.

Bringing together a wide-spectrum of people such as professors, community members, and students, this series of events began to challenge the discourse on Israel in a way that had not happened at Carleton or Ottawa previously. Here, I demonstrate how the first IAW in Ottawa along with the lead up to it mark a transformative moment in the way we talk about Israel at Carleton, in the Ottawa community, and across Canada. I then briefly discuss the double standard which exists when it comes to safety and security on campus and the bodies that matter. In this section I demonstrate how incidents involving SAIA members are dismissed while the claims of pro-Zionist Jewish students are taken seriously. I conclude Chapter 5 by discussing the limitations and possibilities for the use of human rights discourse in challenging and transforming the discourse on Israel and Palestine .

4.1 Knowledge (Re)production and Practice: An Ethnographic Approach to Narrating Palestinian Solidarity and Resistance

As a participant in SAIA, I draw on my own experience and the experiences of those with whom I engage in this movement to map and archive narratives of Palestinian solidarity and resistance. Using the conceptual tools of settler colonial logics (Collins 2011), race-thinking (Arendt 1973), apartheid (Abu-Laban and Bakan 2011; Davis 1987), bio/necropolitics (Foucault 2003; Ghanim 2008; Mbembé 2003) and ethno-nationalism (Bannerji 2003; Yiftachel 2006), I consider the ways in which SAIA challenges and possibly transforms the “authorized vocabulary” (Foucault 1990:17, 27; see also section 2.3) of what is currently permissible when speaking about Israel. I invoke the notion of radical performance (Madison 2010) to demonstrate the ways in which SAIA creatively counters Israel’s dominant ethno-national story at Carleton and in Canada more generally concerning one of “the most vital cultural, social and political tensions of ... [our] time” (see Baz Kershaw in Madison 2010:18-19). In archiving SAIA’s history on campus from its formation in 2008 until today, I record the group’s resistance to administrative attempts to

impede its solidarity work. In spite of the university's claims to be an institution that seeks to "encourage creative risk-taking enabling minds to connect, discover and generate transformative knowledge" (Strategic Plan 2014), Carleton produces a particular knowledge that is careful not to debunk its settler privilege. I consider the possibilities and the limitations for the production of knowledge on Palestine in light of the university's institutional refusal to adequately address its own complicity in Canadian settler colonial society. While my examination of the discourse on Palestine in these chapters focuses on the occurrences at Carleton, I want to stress that the experiences of student repression, censorship, and attempts to prevent critique of Israel from taking place are not unique to Carleton; rather the types of backlash that I describe here have been happening in Western academia for years (see for example, Abraham 2014; Drummond 2013; Thompson 2011) and are part of a larger colonial structure which seeks to silence Indigenous voices (Schick 2014; Smith 2010:51-54).

Through the discussion and analysis of email messages, online posts, radio podcasts, newspapers, videos, and my own participatory experience from 2010 up to the 2014 as well as in depth semi-structured interviews with nine SAIA members from February and March 2012, I examine the narratives that SAIA creates and circulates around the two central components of SAIA's work - solidarity and resistance. I show how SAIA's work is both in solidarity with the Palestinian call for BDS and a form of resistance itself due to the backlash against Palestinian solidarity organizing at the university, in mainstream news media, and at the governmental level in Canada. In this chapter and the next, I explore how SAIA's solidarity efforts as well as its resistance to hostility as a result of the stories (re)told create fissures in the hegemonic understanding of Israel and expose failures in the narration of the Israeli state. In its performance of solidarity and resistance, SAIA challenges the construction of Israel's mythologized "birth" as "a land without a people for a people without a land" (Zangwill in Zureik 2003:619) and the

presentation of itself as liberal democratic, yet Jewish, state. The repetition of Palestinian accounts of colonization and apartheid that convey the real-time violence of life on the ground are key to contesting and countering these Zionist myths.

As noted in Chapter 3, an important part of the discussion in this work concerns the question of how one furthers a decolonizing, anticolonial approach as a white activist and academic researcher of Palestinian solidarity and resistance within the settler-colonial state of Canada. As stated previously, engaging in meaningful global solidarity to center Indigenous alliances (see Chapter 1 and section 3.3) requires a structural analysis that interrogates dimensions of gender, race, class, citizenship, sexuality, and ability that are key to settler colonial projects. In the spirit of antiracist, anticolonial, and decolonizing feminist praxis, this multi-sited ethnographic study attempts to “cross all arbitrary boundaries” (Abdo 1993:36) to express a commitment to the shared values of social justice while recognizing the very real differences, contradictions, and contestations in rewriting the settler colonial project of Israel within the settler colonial state of Canada. In doing so, the academy is recognized as a site for never-ending struggle and resistance since it is fundamentally linked to neoliberal and colonial order and reproduction (see Lewis 2012:230; Collins 2011:35-36). The university cannot uphold itself as a bastion of free speech and critical thought when it impedes the introduction and production of knowledge that contests the status quo. While the mapping of power relations within the academy is especially significant to my discussion of SAIA since the group is situated within the world of academia and has had to deal directly with the administration’s continuous silencing tactics, the silencing of Palestinian narratives of the on-going *Nakba* is also a concern for my project more generally. As producers and sources of knowledge, Western and Israeli academic institutions are largely complicit in the creation and circulation of dominant Zionist and other settler colonial myths.

Along with presenting lesser known stories about Israel from the perspective of Palestinians, SAIA has also had to creatively resist the labeling of itself as anti-Semitic. The telling and (re)telling of Palestinian narratives reveals Israel's Zionist settler colonial trajectory to contest the widely held myths about Israel as a liberal democratic state where equal rights and benefits are afforded to all. This has resulted in having uncomfortable yet critical conversations with people whose understanding of Israel does not include Palestinian stories of the *Nakba*, Israeli apartheid or the continued Zionist occupation and colonization of Palestine. These conversations have pushed and challenged the possibilities of permissible discourse on the university campus and beyond. Yet, this is not only a discursive project. While SAIA works to change the ways in which we speak about Israel and Palestine, the group also attempts to increase the possibility for real changes on the ground for Palestinians living under apartheid. In the short-term, the latter is a much greater although less realizable aim, but it nevertheless remains a crucial part of its goal as a social justice group in solidarity with Palestinians.

4.2 Tracing Palestinian Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Strategies: From pre-*Nakba* Praxis to Contemporary Transnational BDS

The current BDS movement is part of a long history of organized Palestinian boycott strategies beginning prior to the establishment of the Zionist state. Although there are notable differences between earlier boycott measures and the contemporary movement, the former efforts of Palestinian civil society to struggle against the injustices of Zionist settler colonialism are significant to the continued resistance and solidarity practices of today. During the 1880s and 1890s, Palestinians waged a series of boycotts and strikes as a result of colonial Britain's implementation of measures that supported Zionist land ownership in Palestine (Qumsiyeh 2011:207). While laws allowing the foreign purchase of land had been relaxed under Ottoman rule in the 1850s, the situation worsened under British rule enabling wealthy European Zionist

Jews to buy land and displace Indigenous Palestinians (Pappé 2006:93-97; Qumsiyeh 2011:38-39, 41; Rowley 1984:30; Smith 1984:44-47, 51-52). In response to the influx of Jewish settlers with the transition from British to Zionist colonial expansion in Palestine prior to the *Nakba*, Palestinians employed a number of novel oppositional strategies, including a Palestinian civil society boycott against Zionist businesses and goods (Kilani 2003:24; Pappé 2006:104-105; see also Bakan and Abu-Laban 2009:35; Qumsiyeh 2011:84). Before the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, the call for a boycott was extended to Arab nations and endorsed by the Arab League in 1945 (Losman 1972:100; Turck 1977: 473-474; see also Bakan and Abu-Laban 33; Qumsiyeh 2011:207-208). Boycott was also used from the near start of the first Intifada (1987 - 1991) when Palestinians from the grassroots level called for an economic boycott of Israeli goods and a tax boycott in addition to employing other tactics of popular resistance from within Palestine (Gabriel 1988:200; Nasrallah 2013:57; Qumsiyeh 2011:142; Sayigh 1989:24).

The distinction between these previous boycott measures and the aims and strategies of the most recent movement speak to changes in the Palestinian situation with respect to Western support for the Zionist colonial project and class differences between Palestinians²⁹. The initial consumer driven boycotts which focused only on Zionist goods, for instance, were instituted in Palestine by Palestinians in the earlier twentieth century when Israel was not yet a recognized state. Although the boycott strategy had an impact on Zionist Jews within Palestine, it was not enough to stop British backed support for a Jewish state which emanated from Britain's own anti-Semitic desire to relocate Jewish peoples (see Abu-Laban and Bakan 2008:647). At the same time, the interests of the Palestinian elite including landowners and liberal professionals

²⁹ For more on class differences between Palestinians and the imperial goals of the Zionist state see Qumsiyeh (2011: 39-41). Additionally, Pappé (2006:110-113) provides examples of cooperation between Palestinians and Jewish peoples of similar poor to working/lower class backgrounds in the 1920s prior to the establishment of Israel. He notes that the division between peoples who shared class affiliations was purposefully constructed to push Jewish peoples towards nationalist aims rather than class solidarity.

undermined the potential for grassroots resistance (King 2007:57; Pappé 2006:86-87, 103; see also Qumsiyeh 2011:87-88). Political families and clan leaders wanted to maintain control over land which left rural communities without adequate representation. Meanwhile, the Arab League's state-focused approach to economic sanctions against Israel called for the recognition of Palestine as an independent state varying substantially from the current civil society boycott movement which does not advocate or demand one or two-state solutions (see Barghouti 2011:51-52). The failure of state approaches in achieving justice for Palestinians is evident when looking at the 1948 state initiative of the Arab League and the later sanctions or government-administered boycott approach of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (see Hallward and Shaver 2012:395). Even those states who had originally signed on to the boycott eventually withdrew in the interest of pursuing global capitalist objectives (e.g., Bahrain 2004 and Oman 2006), and in the case of Egypt and Jordan went on to enter into trade agreements with Israel in 1979 and 1994, respectively (Bakan and Abu-Laban 2009:36). In contrast, the boycott efforts of the first Intifada began with grassroots methods of resistance which emphasized strategies of self-reliance (King 2007:221). Unlike the BDS call of today, however, the tactics of this popular "shaking off" (literal meaning of Intifada) of Israeli power focused on pressuring the Israeli state through economic means from within Palestine and '48 and did not extend calls for boycott measures by civil society on a global scale (Hallward and Shaver 2012:395). Despite this difference, Palestinians involved in the popular struggle at that time made important links between all those fighting against racist regimes and in particular with the people of South Africa in their June 25, 1988 call for a day of solidarity for all who resist racial discrimination (Qumsiyeh 2011:154).

The contemporary BDS movement, which drew from previous resistance strategies, arose from boycott initiatives that began during the second Intifada (Barghouti 2011:54; Qumsiyeh

2011:208-209). Although often characterized as violent due to the use of Palestinian armed resistance, other means of unarmed struggle such as strikes, demonstrations, and boycott measures were frequently employed throughout this period (Norman 2011:6). Palestinians throughout the West Bank who joined to demonstrate against then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's provocative and self-aggrandizing visit to al-Aqsa Mosque along with 1000 armed Israelis in September 2000 were met with brutal military force. Within days, Israel had murdered 76 Palestinians nearly half of whom were children (Qumsieyh 2011:169). Although Sharon's visit to the Mosque was an incitement to violence, Palestinians had long been frustrated by the Oslo process which not only failed to bring an end to the injustices of the colonial project, but actually worsened the day to day living conditions of the majority of Palestinians (Barghouti 2011:52-53; Qumsiyeh 2011:168-169). Indeed, Oslo exacerbated class divisions between Palestinians while it discursively reduced the ongoing colonization of Palestine to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza thereby masking the discrimination against Palestinians in '48 and suppressing the question of Palestinian refugees and those who had been exiled. As Hilal (2010:32) states:

Since Oslo, the division between the Palestinians living in the occupied territories on the one hand and those living in Israel and the diaspora on the other has become more keenly felt. When the leadership was based in the Arab diaspora, and even though its focus was historic Palestine including the occupied territories, the Palestinians in *al-shatat* [the Diaspora] (not only the refugees in the camps, but in general) continued to feel part of the national project. The Oslo accords created separate political fields for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, within the Green Line, and in the diaspora, with no institutional links or unified vision or strategy to unite them. The Oslo accords also promoted an already existing mindset within the Palestinian national movement and the elites of most Arab states that the Palestine problem was the concern of Palestinians. Similarly, the accords reduced the Palestinian issue to the 1967 Israeli occupation, disconnecting it from the 1948 *Nakba* and the refugee problem.

The unhinging of the "Palestinian question" from '48 and the Palestinian refugee crisis as a result of Oslo not only disconnected the responsibility and complicity of Western states to the

violent Zionist colonial project and its continuation, but also concealed the ongoing imperial goals and colonial projects of the West.

Whether through the direct use of force or through racist and discriminatory policies and practices, the structures and processes of *all* colonial endeavours are violent. Despite the violence of colonial projects, however, it is often those who resist colonialism who are characterized as violent. Undeniably, at different points in time, the use of arms by Palestinians has been successful as a mode of mass mobilization and political consciousness raising in resisting the colonial violence of Israel (see for example, Faras Giacaman 2013). Yet, while unarmed forms of resistance have been part of the Palestinian struggle against Zionist forces from the beginning of the colonial project, the mainstream media and Western public discourse has focused on portraying Palestinians as violent (Qumsiyeh 2011:227-228; see also Abu-Laban and Bakan 2012:320). My purpose in mapping SAIA's BDS narratives as a form of creative solidarity and resistance is not to dismiss the use of armed struggle by Palestinians countering Israeli settler colonial forces, but rather as mentioned earlier in this work (see Chapter 2, section 2) to consider creative methods alongside other forms of resistance.

4.3 Students Against Israeli Apartheid-Carleton: The Who, What, How, and Why

SAIA was established in September 2008 as a working group of the Ontario Public Research Group (OPIRG)-Carleton and the Carleton University Student's Association (CUSA) through the initiative of three Carleton students: Abla Abdelhadi, Jessica Carpinone, and Ben Saifer. Having been involved in previous Palestine solidarity organizing in Ottawa, the three had grown tired of the language of "conflict" and "the peace process" in discussing Palestine which they understood as giving the illusion of two equal sides (i.e., Palestine and Israel) that were simply not able to overcome their differences (Saifer Interview 2012). The students felt a renewed sense of hope in the emerging discourse emanating from the BDS movement and the work that was being done in

Toronto by the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid (CAIA) which recognized apartheid as crucial to critiquing the Israeli state. CAIA held its first Israeli Apartheid Conference in October 2006 bringing together Jamal Juma' of Stop the Wall Campaign in Palestine, Salim Vally a campaigner with the Palestine Solidarity Committee in South Africa, Rafeef Ziadah from CAIA (and a Palestinian spoken word artist whose work I explore in Chapter 5), Co-Chief Robert Lovelace of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nations (who has subsequently presented at two IAWs in Ottawa), and Adam Hanieh of CAIA. Building on the momentum of CAIA's work and the BDS movement more generally, the newly established Carleton campus group believed that talking about Israeli apartheid would enable the root causes of injustices and oppression in Palestine to be recognized and understood, and therefore possibly addressed.

SAIA based its direction upon the July 9, 2005 Palestinian call from over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations including political parties, unions, associations, and coalitions representing Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation and Palestinian citizens of '48 in support of a global campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. Framed by the discourse of human rights and international law, the campaign sets forth three demands that boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully comply with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194. (BDS Movement 2005)

As a working group of the OPIRG (Working group 2014), SAIA functions on a non-hierarchical consensus basis. Each new member goes through an educational-mentoring period using a "buddy" system in which they are paired with a more experienced member to learn about the

history of SAIA, the group's current focus, past events, and initial consensus training. To become a SAIA member, individuals must agree with and sign onto the SAIA's "Basis of Unity" which outlines the group's objectives, values, and structural understanding of injustice and oppression based in a global apartheid system. This includes the groups call for the end to the "occupation and colonization of all Arab lands", dismantling of the apartheid wall, release of all "Palestinian and Arab political prisoners", recognition of full equality for Arab-Palestinians within '48, and the return of Palestinian refugees as well as its antiracist positioning which opposes "all forms of racism, including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism". New members are encouraged to ask their buddy questions which are not answered in group meetings. The buddy system process usually takes about a month but may vary depending upon the individual's comfort level as a SAIA member, including the ease at which they feel in talking about the Palestinian situation with people who may oppose their understanding and/or those who may simply be interested in learning about Palestine from SAIA's perspective. Membership in SAIA grew quickly following IAW 2009, and at different points in time the group has had over 100 members, but throughout has maintained a core group of about 10-15 members.

Discussions and decisions, which are reached through consensus, take place at collective meetings. Meetings run anywhere from an hour to several hours depending upon what is being discussed and/or decided. Lengthy meetings occur when there are major disagreements among members regarding a decision that needs to be made and/or are when a lot of planning for a particular action and/or event such as IAW is required. The agenda for the meeting is prepared beforehand and is written out on chart paper. When the meeting begins, people have a chance to add or remove agenda items if they are collectively agreed upon. Roles, which include an agenda collector, facilitator, mood minder (i.e., someone who observes the disposition of members and the emotional atmosphere of the room), and minute taker, are shared and alternated so that

everyone has an opportunity to learn and utilize various skills. Usually, the roles for the next meeting are decided at the end of that day's meeting, but sometimes changes are made because people are unable to make the meeting or roles are left unfilled. Role-rotation helps to minimize informal hierarchies that may develop given group dynamics and provides the occasion for members to take on different functions and tasks in everyday life that they are often not afforded in other circumstances. Some people feel more at ease leading while others prefer to participate in a less direct way. Despite having to overcome the unease or challenge of assuming unaccustomed roles, all members have a chance to voice their concerns and can block any decision that they believe is fundamentally wrong or opposed to SAIA's call and mandate.

For events such as IAW and the researching and writing of the divestment documents, the larger collective creates smaller groups that focus on one particular aspect of the work, such as IAW fundraising, logistics, or organizing speakers or events. Through a consensus process, the larger group turns over decision-making authority to the smaller groups so that they can function independently. During collective meetings, the smaller groups then provide updates to the larger group. If there are any decisions which the smaller groups believe are controversial, require extra discussion, and/or involve additional funds not agreed to previously, the smaller groups bring these issues back to the larger collective for further discussion.

SAIA's work has come up against strong condemnation on the part of the university administration as well as by Canada's neoliberal media and government; concomitantly, SAIA has helped to build social relations across the campus community with other organizations/groups motivated by a human rights and social justice ethic as well as by students more generally who are appalled that their university is invested in companies that not only violate international law, but which are linked to the deaths of thousands of Palestinians (Journal of Palestine Studies 2009). Relationships with off-campus groups such as Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), the

Raging Relics, and with other SAIAs and campus Palestinian solidarity groups across the country have also been established. Meanwhile, efforts to denounce SAIA's work and thwart the group's activities have been met with resistance as SAIA continues its call for divestment while educating members of the Carleton community as well as the wider public about Israeli apartheid.

4.4 What's In a Name? The Apartheid Analysis

Those who founded SAIA at Carleton in 2008 were well-seasoned in the conventional discourses on Palestine/Israel. Given Canada's increasingly vocal support for the Israeli state since the Conservative Party's rise to power in 2006 (Abu-Laban and Bakan 2012:320, 328), the Canadian milieu in 2008 more generally as well as the conventional media's by and large pro-Israel stance (Eid and Duffin 2011:28), SAIA was aware that even the name of the group would disturb and disrupt the views held in the mainstream when it came to Israel/Palestine. Not only was increased use of the term "apartheid" in relation to Israel causing a stir in Canadian society when SAIA-Carleton hosted its first IAW in 2009, but Israel was and continues to be commonly referred to as "the only democracy in the Middle East" (Bakan and Abu-Laban 2010). On February 26, 2015 the House of Commons adopted a motion to condemn what it called "the rise of anti-Semitism around the world" and reaffirming its commitment to the *Ottawa Protocol on Combating Anti-Semitism* which fuses criticism of the state of Israel with discrimination and hatred against Jewish people (Findlay 2010). Yet while the apartheid analysis has been used to speak about states and global conditions of migration such as "global apartheid" outside of the South African context where law is utilized to create policies and practices of separation between religious, ethnic and racialized groups (see Sharma 2005; van Houtum 2010), until relatively recently Israel has managed to evade this analytic framework and its usage remains a contentious issue. The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of

Apartheid (hereinafter the Apartheid Convention), however, was always meant to encompass *all* states that utilize racist segregation policies and practices as set out in Articles 1- 19, including those who participate in their implementation not only those of Apartheid South Africa. This point is reiterated by International Law professor John Dugard (2008:1; see also International Convention 1973:75-77) in the following:

The Apartheid Convention declares that apartheid is a crime against humanity and that ‘inhuman acts resulting from the policies and practices of apartheid and similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination’ are international crimes (art. 1). Article 2 defines the crime of apartheid – ‘which shall include similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practised in southern Africa’ – as covering ‘inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them’. It then lists the acts that fall within the ambit of the crime. These include murder, torture, inhuman treatment and arbitrary arrest of members of a racial group; deliberate imposition on a racial group of living conditions calculated to cause it physical destruction; legislative measures that discriminate in the political, social, economic and cultural fields; measures that divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate residential areas for racial groups; the prohibition of interracial marriages; and the persecution of persons opposed to apartheid.

As Abigail Bakan and Yasmeen Abu-Laban (2010:334) argue: “In light of the many contexts outside of apartheid South Africa that are labeled ‘apartheid’, we note that it becomes important to question the condemnations that have been so uniquely vociferous, and the international reverberations so uniquely intense, in the case of Israel”. Like Abu-Laban and Bakan (2012:321), I contend that employing an apartheid analysis to critique Israel serves as a mobilizing tactic for social justice solidarity and pushes the boundaries of permissible discourse enabling the possibility of transformative change. Aidan MacDonald (Interview 2012), one of the core SAIA members during the period of my research makes this point:

I think we’ve seen over the last couple of years that say maybe four years ago apartheid wouldn’t have been the discourse in terms of Palestine. It would be about ... occupation or settlements ... I think things like IAW have real impact in terms of shifting the discourse. It’s not about settlements or not settlements. It’s about apartheid or not apartheid. And so say three years ago BDS would not have been in the discourse. Nobody

would have known what BDS was, but because of things like IAW which pushed that analysis.

Although in y interviews the divestment campaign was identified as the most important component in SAIA's solidarity work, all members recognized IAW as critical to educating people about the impact of Israeli policies and practices for Palestinians. Because of the relative novelty of using an apartheid analysis to talk about Israel, the language employed in the divestment document was curtailed to increase the possibility of the university administration's acceptance of the report. Though mention is made of Israel's discrimination against Palestinians within Israel proper as well as Israel's refusal to address Palestinian refugees' right of return, the focus of the report is on Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories (SAIA October 2011). The decision to use the language of occupation rather than apartheid was therefore purposeful. As MacDonald (January 30, 2013) states: "In terms of our messaging for the divestment report itself, we made ... a strategic choice to talk about occupation rather than apartheid, as a way to try and avoid the admin just rejecting it off-hand". Despite this decision, the group's name as well as the annual IAW events utilize the term apartheid. The usage of the term keeps the link between Israel and apartheid active even when SAIA is talking about and taking action against the more accepted and therefore less controversial violation of Palestinian human rights through Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories.

Israel is a settler colonial state whose racialized policies and practices underlie all aspects of its colonial dominance. Central to the apartheid policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination that are tied to white supremacist ideology is what Hannah Arendt (1973) terms "race-thinking" (on apartheid see Articles 1-19 International Convention 1973:75-77). Race-thinking, according to Arendt (1973:158-161), moves the ideology of hierarchical race difference from a matter of opinion to the political construction of knowledge and nation-state

building. The physical manifestation of associating what Arendt (1973:158) identifies as “dignity and importance” to race is witnessed through Israel’s Jewish only settlements which are illegal under international law and the segregated by-pass roads which only Israelis can use (see SAIA 2011:5). The concepts of biopolitics/ necropolitics (Foucault 2003; Ghanim 2008; Mbembé 2003) and ethno-nationalism (Bannerji 2003; Yiftachel 2006) offer further crucial points of analysis in understanding and examining how apartheid is practiced in the Israeli context. In its regulation and control of bodies that are deemed to matter or marked as threats, Israel as a settler colonial state merges the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics or the management of life with necropolitics (thanatopolitics) or the management of death (Ghanim 2008; Mbembé 2003). The killing and maiming of Palestinians (SAIA October 2011:4, 20-21) as well as the military seige of Gaza (SAIA October 2011:9-10, 20-21) underscores the necropolitical aims of the state. Checkpoints and other movement restrictions which limit access to medical care, education, and employment illustrate the biopolitical regulation and control of life (SAIA October 2011:7-8). These biopolitical regulations are central to the logics of exceptionalism described by Collins (2011:33) while the necropolitical regulation of death through assassinations, administrative detention, arrest and torture referred to in the document are central to the methods and rationalizing logics of elimination (Collins 2011:32).

Reversing the order of the Foucauldian conception of demographics linked to optimization, Himani Bannerji’s (2003) understanding of ethno-demography provides a useful way to examine Israel’s bio and necropolitical practices. As noted in Chapter 1, Bannerji (2003:97) argues that the concern with cultural and numerical ethnicity used to manage and control “majority” and “minority” populations in ethno-nationalist states such as Israel is “inherently and intrinsically genocidal/ethnocidal” and necessarily connected to women. The biopolitical/ethno-national goal of Israel to make and keep the state demographically Jewish

requires mechanisms to regulate and control the birth of Palestinians. Israel uses mechanisms such as checkpoints to manage and control Palestinian life by limiting access to medical appointments and hospitals (SAIA October 2011:7-8). These impediments affect the lives of all Palestinians requiring medical care, but are especially adverse for those who require immediate medical attention, including women in labour, and those needing emergency treatment.

A number of significant happenings have occurred in relation to furthering the apartheid analysis at Carleton and other Canadian as well as American university campuses in addition to outside of these educational institutions. I have chosen to record and discuss those noted above for two main reasons. Primarily, the *Al Haq* event, the lead up to first IAW, and the panel discussions at the first IAW in March 2009, discussed in the following chapter, mark the beginning of the shift in discourse in naming and talking about Israel as an apartheid state. The *Ontario Human Rights Tribunal*, meanwhile, demonstrates the limits to human rights discourses in creating the spaces and places for the discursive and practical changes required to understand Israel as a settler colonial state and illustrates the need for more radical forms of language and action to push for the changes required to transform the real life experiences of Palestinians living under occupation and apartheid.

4.5 Who Decides What is Permissible? On the Limits of ‘Civil Discourse’

The first IAW in Ottawa received a great deal of attention from students, community members, the media, and government officials (MacDonald Interview 2012). The build up to the week started months earlier with SAIA’s first event on October 23, 2008 entitled “Israeli Crimes, Canadian Complicity-A Panel Discussion with *Al Haq* Human Rights Workers from the Occupied West Bank”. Before the *Al Haq* panel took place, the administration moved to distance itself from the event. Feridun Hamdullahpur, then Provost and Interim Vice President Academic, went so far as to send a mass email to the Carleton community a day prior to the panel

explaining that Carleton was not officially sponsoring the event, and stating the university's administration "encourages the respectful expression of different points of view in the context of academic freedom and peaceful and civilized exchange". A FIPPA (2009: section unknown) request filed by a former SAIA member revealed that minutes after Hamdullahpur's message was sent, John Osbourne, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, responded with a private email taking issue with Hamdullahpur's usage of the term "sponsor". According to Osbourne, the university was indeed sponsoring the event; however, they were not taking a position in relation to the content of the panel. As Osbourne writes (ibid):

With respect, I disagree with your understanding and use of the word 'sponsor'. In my view, we are sponsoring this event, as I understand that term. We are not taking a position on what is said, but in providing space we are a "sponsor", in the sense of a "host". I thought that I had made this point when we met yesterday, and am disappointed to see otherwise.

At the event, Osbourne revealed that university administration had received numerous email messages pressuring Carleton to stop the event from taking place (Amdur 2008). Notably, messages such as the one sent by Hamdullahpur, stating that the university's sponsorship of an event, or lack thereof, were not (and are still not) commonplace for other events taking place on campus which are not critical of Israel. The purposeful distancing of the university from the *Al Haq* event held on campus and supported by university departments was unusual. Other campus events and talks, even seemingly controversial ones in which for instance students were permitted "to erect a 15-foot tall display, adorned with images of shrapnel wounds" entitled "Terror Built this Fence" in reference to Palestinians, have not come with the same warnings (D'Orazio November 4, 2011); therefore, the administration's decision to communicate its dissociation from the *Al Haq* panel to the university community was both out of the ordinary and unnecessary. Indeed, other than announcing the events through various Carleton media, the

administration says nothing about the manner in which discussions on other topics will take place.

The *Al Haq* event which was organized on campus in conjunction with the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies and Human Rights was successful at getting a large number of people out and it moved individuals such as Dax D’Orazio and Reem Buhaisi, both longstanding SAIA members, to become involved with the group. As D’Orazio (Interview 2012) states in his interview with me: “I noticed that the event elicited ... a disproportionate amount of ... complaints, most of them completely specious ... It was sort of eye-opening to see that there were these various means employed to actively obstruct the discussion of this topic on campus”. The lead-up to the *Al Haq* panel also roused Buhaisi’s (Interview 2012) interest in becoming involved with SAIA. As a young Palestinian woman born in Gaza but living most of her life in Ottawa, Buhaisi had grown up going to demonstrations with her parents. While she had been encouraged by her family to know the history of Palestine, Buhaisi (Interview 2012) felt that she lacked a real understanding of Israel’s colonial project. With this realization she began to educate herself more. With all of the commotion created from the *Al Haq* event, as Buhaisi (2012) noted in her interview, she became inspired get active with SAIA.

Using terms such as “academic freedom” and “civilized exchange” in this context appears to serve as a reminder to those involved in organizing the panel that they must control the content of the narrative in order to assuage the concerns of those who oppose Palestinian perspectives. Abstract notions such as civilized exchange regulate what is acceptable and what is not acceptable as well as who is permitted to speak in various contexts. Who gets to determine who may speak, what may be talked about, and which concepts are understood as contentious is significant. As Susan Drummond (2013:7) argues in what she terms her “unintentional ethnography” concerning the lengths that people both inside and outside of academia took to

prevent the 2009 conference “Mapping Models of Statehood in Israel/Palestine” from taking place:

Understanding the significance of the idea ... becomes critical to understanding how seemingly innocuous and abstract concepts such as civility, respectful exchange, balance, apolitical sponsorship, discipline, and expertise can become fairly deft political tools in the service of a distinct agenda.

In the situation that Drummond (2013) describes, the idea that was considered too controversial to be discussed at the York University conference was the possibility of one state for both Israel and Palestine. In the case of the *Al Haq* panel, the discussion of Israel as criminal in its continued illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, theft of Palestinian land, and Canada’s connection to Israel’s illegal policies were the ideas that lead to mass messages to the administration either objecting or demanding a stop to the event. The language of apartheid was not yet present in SAIA’s promotional material for the *Al Haq* panel.

Hillel Carleton, a Jewish campus group, wrote specifically about the content that they considered to be so troubling as to likely lead to violence, which included talk about the “annexation (separation) wall” and the denial of the Palestinian right to self-determination (FIPPA 2009: 21(3) (h); 2-178). Due to the discussion of such topics, they urged the university to take precautions to ensure that students would be safe. The message further points out that similar events which occurred at other universities had lead to “the situation get[ting] ‘out of control’” although exactly what is meant by this and where such events took place is not described (ibid). The claim of possible threats to safety and the demand for the university to ensure the safety of students is paradoxical considering the subject matter which concerns the violence of a state against people. The threat of questioning the actions of the state of Israel and the consideration of Palestinian rights, including that of self-determination are precisely what form part of the hegemonic Zionist narrative of racialized ethno-national exclusion. Palestinian

narratives that speak to threats to security, safety, and rights outlined in international law reveal the racism of the Israeli state and counter the validity of dominant Zionist stories, and therefore avenues for telling these stories are marked as threats.

The language of “civility” and “civilization” is in itself far from being innocuous as it is laden with colonial connotations (Lloyd 2012). The bureaucratic or unmarked discourse of Western rationality which Arendt recognized in the link between national-socialism and imperialism obscures “civilized” practices of state murder (Mbembé 2003:23). The current narrative which discursively marks Palestinians as an alien/stranger population rather than as natives with irrevocable binding rights to the land began with Zionist myths that “Palestinians did not exist” or that Palestine was “a land without a people” (Golda Meir and Israel Zangwill respectively in Said 1992:5, 7). In contemporary times, the pervasiveness of othering discourse which characterizes Palestinians as alien extends to all areas of media and scholarship including feminist discourse (Abdo 2004:23–24; Abdo 2008:174; Al-Hardan 2008:249; Khalidi 1997:18; Pappé 2008:152,160; Puar 2011). Israel actively employs the two discursive techniques to continue their ethno-nationalist pursuits. While attempts to silence and erase Palestinian experiences and histories such as the case with the *Al Haq* event limit the production of these situated knowledges, the discursive representation of Palestinians as terrorist others controls the manner in which Israel and Palestine are discussed and the racialized policies and practices that are implemented and to a large extent accepted in Israeli society and the international arena (see Thompson 2011; Drummond 2013; also Pappé 2010:174). Israel’s hegemonic narrative that presents itself as a Jewish and democratic state which tolerates “others” including Arabs (i.e., Palestinians) is widely accepted in Western academia and by Western governments.

Despite the attempts to silence the first SAIA event and the inability of the only Palestinian panel member to attend due to the denial of a visa from Israel allowing her to leave

Palestine (D’Orazio Interview 2012), the panel was successful in critiquing the launch of Israel’s rebranding campaign that attempted to “greenwash” its apartheid policies as well as in exposing Canada’s responsibility in Israel’s violations of Palestinian human rights and international law. According to Nick Feinstein (2013:233), “the term [greenwash] refers to false or misleading representation that products, brands, or corporate practices are beneficial to the environment. Scholars and environmental organizations define a broad range of practices as greenwashing, including false assertions and claims that exaggerate, misdirect, or mislead consumers as to the environmental qualities of a product”. The technique of greenwashing includes the rebranding of colonial projects through civilization and progress discourses. The *Al Haq* (SAIA October 8, 2008) panel explored the Canadian connection and contribution to Israel’s colonization and on-going land theft. It began with a discussion of the money raised by the Jewish National Fund, recognized as a charitable organization in Canada (Engler 2013), to build a park on the ruins of the three destroyed Palestinian villages of Beit Nuba, Imwas, and Yalo (Reynolds 2007:66). The park, fittingly named “Canada Park”, symbolizes the financial and ideological relationship between individual and government supporters of the Zionist Israeli state in Canada and those in Israel. The symbolic here is significant considering that Canada is also a settler colonial state with a history of its own land theft practices from the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

The vocal and real dollar support for Israel impacts the lived experiences of Palestinians. Israeli policies and practices implemented through law have made it impossible for Palestinians to purchase land within ’48, enabled the construction of the apartheid wall which worsens restrictions on movement, and allowed demolitions and/or seizure of Palestinian homes leading to their displacement (SAIA October 8, 2008). As the promotional material for the event read, “underpinning these issues is the intentional fragmentation of the Palestinian people, and the perpetual denial of their right to self-determination” (SAIA October 8, 2008). Special attention

was also “given to the continuing occupation of the Gaza Strip, the collective punishment of its civilian population and the resulting dire humanitarian situation” (SAIA October 8, 2008). The *Al Haq* event occurred before the Israeli massacre in Gaza of 2008-2009³⁰ termed “Operation Cast Lead” in which over 1,419 Palestinians were killed, 318 of them children, and 5,300 were wounded (Khalidi 2010:14-15).

While the *Al Haq* event was momentous in getting people interested in learning about Israeli war crimes against Palestinians and challenging what was discursively permissible in the case of Palestine, attempts to silence critique of Israel were pushed much further in the banning of the first IAW poster at Carleton.

4.6 Beyond Reproach: Banning SAIA’s IAW Poster and the Exceptionalism of the Israeli State

Pasquetti (2013:465) argues that the state utilizes civilization discourses to increase fear and gain support for increased securitization measures. Similarly, the Carleton administration’s use of these terms seems to have lead to an escalation of fear amongst the Carleton community. At the beginning of February 2009, SAIA’s posters promoting the first IAW in Ottawa were removed from the walls of the university and banned by Carleton’s administration under the Department of Equity Services. Throughout the period preceding the 2009 IAW, Carleton’s rationale for prohibiting the posters changed substantially in relation to the administration’s claims that the poster violated human rights codes and could potentially incite hatred. After the posters were initially torn down by Carleton Safety following orders from Equity Services, SAIA sought an explanation from the administration. At the time, the group was told that the posters were

³⁰ The brutality of the 2008-2009 “Operation Cast Lead” was followed recently by what Israel called “Operation Protective Edge”. According to Amnesty International (2014), Israel killed over 1,500 Palestinians including 519 children in the summer of 2014. They also destroyed more than 18,000 homes. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/israeli-forces-displayed-callous-indifference-deadly-attacks-family-homes-gaza-2014-11-05>. I discuss the 2014 violence of Israel on Gaza in my next chapters.

“crossing a line”, “could be seen to incite others to infringe rights protected in the Ontario Human Rights Code” and were “insensitive to the norms of civil discourse in a free and democratic society” (SAIA February 18, 2009; see also HRT 2013:9-10). On February 12, 2009, Hamdullahpur (email; emphasis mine) once again sent out an email to the Carleton community, which I quote at length here, reiterating the university’s commitment to “civil discourse” and “tolerance” while implicitly alluding to SAIA’s actions:

In recent days, several incidents have been brought to the University’s attention regarding behaviour that has been received by many as hurtful and discriminatory to some students on campus. These actions, which are a rare phenomenon at Carleton University, appear to *be related to the serious and tragic conflict that recently took place in the Middle East.*

As members of the Carleton community, you are all aware that universities across Canada *take extraordinary measures to ensure their campuses remain the cornerstone of free speech and open civil dialogue.* In this regard, Carleton University is both a champion and leader. You need to look no further than this current academic year to know that Carleton and its students are exceedingly capable of thoughtfully engaging in vigorous and sometimes contentious debates.

In protecting our community’s right to free speech, we must also be vigilant to ensure that our campus environment remains an entirely respectful one, where all students and other members of our community, regardless of their race, ethnic background or religion can achieve academic success and personal growth. They should be able to take part in their everyday activities without regard for who they are as a person, their beliefs, and their personal safety.

In stating this, I would like to make the following point very clear to all students as well as to our campus community in general. *Carleton University, regardless of the circumstances, cannot and will not tolerate actions that infringe or contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code and Carleton’s own University Human Rights Policy and Procedures.* Discrimination, harassment, and intolerance which take the form of inappropriately challenging or questioning a person’s race or beliefs are actions that are contrary to the mission of Carleton University and put in peril the essence of the Canadian university experience.

We understand that some events may be planned which may be related to some serious and emotional world issues. I would therefore ask everyone to take a few moments to become familiar with the Carleton University Human Rights Policy and Procedures and the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy. Both documents play an important role at the University and provide us with guidance towards civil and collegial behaviour. However, they are also tools to be used to address inappropriate behaviours including

discrimination and harassment. *Among other sanctions that may be applied under these policies, students can be withdrawn from their studies indefinitely.* Note that under the authority of these policies, all reported incidents of racial or religious intolerance will be investigated vigorously and addressed regardless of the persons or groups involved.

All members of the University community ought to be assured that the University will thoroughly investigate every complaint of inappropriate behavior, and *will strictly monitor the use of University space* to guard against discrimination, harassment and other activities in violation of relevant law and codes of conduct.

Above all else, universities are meant to be institutions that facilitate and encourage open academic discourse. Importantly, the imperative nature of these discussions go hand in hand with the responsibility to conduct ourselves in a manner that is respectful and that is consistent with the inherent values of Canada. Please join me and your fellow students in making every effort to ensure that *Carleton's campus remains a model of tolerance* to which other institutions, both in Canada and abroad, will continue to aspire.

Although Hamdullahpur and the rest of the administration denied that the message was about SAIA (see HRT 2012:18, sec. 58), his mention of the Middle East conflict, violations of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the university as a place of “free speech and open civil dialogue”, and blatant warning that possible sanctions could result from “inappropriate behaviours” including the withdrawal of students from their studies, were thinly veiled references to SAIA (on this see also Pappano 2009; CBC Radio February 18, 2009).

Like the response to the *Al Haq* panel, the administration employed discursive strategies in this email in an attempt to construct Carleton's identity as exemplary of Canadian academic institutions and “a model of tolerance” for other Canadian as well as international educational institutions. Guised in the language of civility and tolerance, the message given by Carleton and other Canadian as well as American universities reinforce the narrative of Israel as a liberal state like Canada and the United States implicitly defending the Zionist apartheid project. The language of tolerance both conceals and confuses the underlying critique of Zionism as a colonial project. Tolerance implies a right to put up with something. In this case, the university's right to put up with a certain level and type of discussion concerning Israel. Ghassan Hage

(1998) argues that the language of tolerance is used as a mechanism to assert colonial authority of the white nation. As he states (Hage 1998:89-90):

To tolerate is not just to accept, it is accept and position the other within the specific limits or boundaries....It is this discourse of limits that makes clear that those who tolerate imagine themselves to be in a position of spatial power. Likewise, the tolerated others are imagined by definition to be present within 'our sphere of influence'. They are part of 'our' nation, but only in so far as 'we' accept them. Their belonging to the national environment in which they come to exist is always a precarious one, for they never exist, they are allowed to exist. That is, the tolerated are never just present, they are positioned.

The way in which Israel gets talked about, therefore, matters. The ideas that frame the manner in which Israel is portrayed, as Drummond (2013) points out, are seen as a threat to the dominant discourse of Israel as a liberal and tolerant state. This makes the ability to speak about the colonial foundations of the Israeli state and its current policies and practices near impossible. Doing so, as documented in numerous instances by the likes of Ali Abu-Nimeh, Nora Barrows-Friedman, Rania Khalek, Joseph Massad, and Ilan Pappé (see Electronic Intifada 2015) just to name a few, risks being labelled anti-Semitic even when those involved in critiquing Israel are themselves Jewish. The university assumes, deploys, performs and reinforces the same dominant Zionist narrative and logic of Israel, which in turn, shapes how SAIA responds through creative resistance. These are strategic choices by the administration. Understanding this as an attempt to stifle critical discussion about Israel, the group worked quickly to inform people about the university's silencing tactics.

On February 18, 2009, SAIA sent a public callout to community groups, students, and academics across the country as well as the media. In the callout, the group explained what had unfolded after the first IAW posters were put up advertising the upcoming March event. They issued four demands from the university including: an immediate lift on the ban of the Israeli Apartheid Week poster; a public apology for the banning; and the appointment of a university/community commission "to investigate the record of the University in relation to

democratic discourse and equity around issues of Palestine solidarity” along with a call to action directed at those who opposed the ban to contact the president to demand that she immediately reinstate the Charter Rights of Carleton students (SAIA February 18, 2009). The callout also noted how Carleton had refused to condemn Israel for the bombing of the Islamic University of Gaza on December 28 and 29, 2008 and the killing of hundreds of children during Israel’s military offensive, Operation Cast Lead. In response, the group received a good deal of support from students, members of the Ottawa community, Carleton alumni, and others outside of the city who were simply incensed by what had occurred. Numerous letters of protest were sent to the President and Equity services calling on the university to follow through on SAIA’s demands. Rather than concede to SAIA, however, on February 20, 2009 Carleton issued a form list of “Facts” to all those who wrote to express support for SAIA in an attempt to discredit SAIA’s position on the poster banning. These included claims that the university did not ban IAW; the removed posters lacked the requisite approval for posting and “did not contain information about any specific events planned at Carleton”; the posters were “deemed by Equity Services to incite hatred” and “could incite infringements of the Ontario Human Rights Code”; other posters could be created and “submitted for approval and posting”; the Provost did not threaten students with expulsion [but rather]... said that offences would be treated within the parameters of the student code of conduct; and finally that “the University promotes free speech and debate in a context of respect and dignity” (SAIA February 22, 2009). SAIA then strategically used the university’s approach to addressing SAIA’s outspokenness on the poster banning by elaborating on each of the points made by the university to provide context for each claim made by the administration. In reply to those who had taken the time to write the Carleton administration to voice their concern over the poster banning and had copied SAIA in their letters, SAIA wrote individual responses to clarify what had happened and why (SAIA February

23, 2009). The group used this opportunity to demonstrate the administration's double-standard in upholding Zionist storytelling rather than permitting the student population and the larger Carleton community to consider for themselves Palestinian perspectives of life under apartheid and occupation, including what it means to be a child living in a situation with little hope of escaping the likelihood of either being bombed or witnessing others being bombed in addition to the physical destruction of homes, schools, places of worship, and shelters.

Significantly, the poster itself performs a narrative of creative resistance as it conveys through visual means a Palestinian child's experience living under Israeli occupation fearing the helicopter gunships overhead.³¹ In its visual narration it subverts and challenges the dominant story of Israel as needing to fend off the Palestinian threat of Hamas, and also performs an act of international solidarity. To this day, posters without the required approval can be found all around the Carleton campus. Rarely are they taken down, but in the case of the IAW poster banning the university took a systematic approach to remove SAIA's posters. Firm dates had not yet been set for the IAW event, but reference information in the form of the website for the international event was available on the poster which was being to promote IAW around the world and was used in "at least 45 cities" (SAIA February 22, 2009). SAIA demanded that the administration publically explain why the poster was banned and "address how to prevent such violations from occurring in future" (SAIA February 22, 2009). These demands were never dealt with in public. Instead, through the Department of Equity Services, the administration told several SAIA members that the posters could "incite others to infringe rights protected in the Ontario Human Rights code" and were "insensitive to the norms of civil discourse in a free and democratic society (SAIA February 23, 2009). SAIA's requests for further clarification regarding these claims were refused. The group used the university's refusal to clarify its

³¹ I am indebted to Dr. Augustine Park for pointing out this significant form of visual resistance.

position on how the poster could incite violence to draw attention to the double standard that often comes into play when critiquing the state of Israel. This double standard relies on Israel's definition of itself as a Jewish, yet liberal democratic state. On the one hand, this definition is based on the premise that Israel represents all Jewish people while on the other, it depends upon the view that Israel is a liberal democracy with equal rights for all citizens.

In its response to the administration's facts, SAIA pointed to the flaws in the university's claim that the IAW "incites hatred". As the group stated in its email (SAIA February 22, 2009):

There is nothing hateful about criticizing a government's foreign policy. One can only imagine that such an analysis is based on blurring the line between Israel and world Jewry, as if an attack on the former's policies is equivalent to an attack on the latter. This formulation indirectly makes all Jews responsible for the crimes committed by Israel, a clearly anti-Semitic concept itself.

The discursive conflation of critique of Israel with anti-Semitism has been mobilized on several fronts by Zionist lobbies in North America, by the Israeli state, and by the Canadian government under Harper's Conservatives as well as by Canadian university administrations. Omar Barghouti (2011) among others, including former Jewish SAIA members (Levi Interview 2012; Saifer Interview 2012), have noted how deeply problematic this conflation is as it places responsibility for Israel's actions on all Jewish peoples. While the university claimed that the Provost's email was not about SAIA, the "widely-distributed letter to the Carleton community sent a chill on several fronts--as it was designed to do" (SAIA February 22, 2009). This chilling effect is used to silence and/or shape any discussion and debate that takes place on campuses concerning Israel, which is thoroughly documented by both Drummond (2013), and Thompson (2011) in their scholarly works. The use of "human rights" defines what is acceptable and not when it comes to Israel, that is, the limitations of "free speech" when Palestine is the question. The administration mobilized the language of liberalism to delegitimize SAIA and criticism of Israel. At the same time, SAIA and its allies took this same discourse to task against the

university. In both cases, the strategic discursive choices illustrate how liberal human rights discourse is utilized to assert claims to credibility and truth. Seeing that Carleton was not interested in apologizing or taking the claims of SAIA seriously, the group decided to publically convey its own version of events.

On February 26, 2009, SAIA along with Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights at the University of Ottawa - where the poster had also been banned - held a silent protest with members of the larger Carleton community and wider public to demonstrate how the university had aimed to shut down critique of Israel. This performative act drew attention to the limitations of academia's "tolerance" to views that challenged the dominant discourse. At Carleton, students marched to the president's office in silence, many with their mouths symbolically taped shut holding signs with slogans such as "Carleton Give Us Back Our Rights", "Stop Campus Repression", and "Lift the Ban Now" (see SAIA May 4, 2009). When they reached the president's office, a spokesperson for SAIA read out the group's demands to President Roseann Runte who had stepped outside of her office. After the demands were read, Runte informed the crowd that "I think your presence here is exactly an evidence that you can speak on campus. And the fact that I listened to you is a fact that you are heard. Thank you for coming here today" (CBC February 26, 2009). But as SAIA responded after Runte returned to her office, "how can this statement begin to address the huge atrocities that the banned poster symbolically represented?"

SAIA's silent protest illustrates how SAIA narrates creative solidarity and resistance. It marks a moment of radical performance in the sense that Madison (2010:1) defines as a



Figure 1: First International Israeli Apartheid Poster by Carlos Latuff banned by Carleton University 2009

“communicative and subversive tactic” which serves to change the way in which we interpret something that has been readily accepted. Carleton attempted to tell the story that the posters were in violation of human rights codes and an incitement to violence in addition to numerous other offences. In banning the poster, the university claimed to be adhering to human rights policies, thereby acting in a fair manner to protect the rights of all students, and to “promote free speech and debate in a context of respect and dignity” (SAIA February 22, 2009; see also CBC February 26, 2009). The taping of the protestors’ mouths and the silent march performed a narrative of solidarity with Palestinians whose stories are continuously left out of the mainstream. SAIA’s performance here is a tactic to convene social injustice. It is also a performative act that enabled many other concerned students and community members to participate in resisting the silencing strategies of the university.

4.6.1 The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal

SAIA further challenged the narrative of the university by filing a human rights application against Carleton under the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal alleging that the poster ban and the university’s subsequent actions showed “discrimination with respect to goods, services and facilities on the grounds of ancestry, ethnic origin and place of origin” (HRT 2013:3, sec. 1). Although SAIA’s application under the Tribunal’s legislative authority was not able to prove that the university was partial to Jewish groups on campus who opposed critique of Israel or that the Provost’s email unfairly targeted the group (see HRT 2013:17, sec. 56; 18, sec. 61), the Tribunal revealed inconsistencies and inadequacies in the information provided to SAIA by official spokespeople from Equity Services. Particularly telling were the responses of Smita Bharadia and Linda Caperauld who had both stated that the poster “crossed the line” but were unable to “clearly articulate what ‘the line’ was, or how the poster had crossed it” (HRT 2013:15, sec. 47), and “likewise, under cross-examination, Ms Caperauld was unable to explain what she

meant when she wrote in her email to Ms Carpinone [SAIA] that the poster could incite others to violate rights under the Code, and that the poster offended norms of civil discourse” (HRT 2013:15, sec. 48). More forthcoming was the reply from then Director of Student Affairs Ryan Flannagan to the same inquiry in which he stated that given “the circumstances of the heightened tensions on campus, he was worried that the inflammatory nature of the poster might incite ‘young people to do stupid things’” (HRT 2013:15-16, sec 48). Ironically, the image used on the poster (see Figure 1) depicting an Israeli helicopter aiming a missile at a small Palestinian boy, standing alone, holding a teddy bear reflected who was being killed and harmed by Israel’s violent acts in Gaza during the course of their Operation Cast Lead military campaign. As noted in the previous section, within a period of 22 days, beginning on December 27, 2008 and ending on January 18, 2009, Israel killed over 1,400 Palestinians – 300 of whom were children (Stein 2012:137; see also AI 2009:6). It was in this context that world renowned Brazilian political cartoonist Carlos Latuff created the image to be used internationally to promote IAW.

While the decision at the Tribunal revealed that it was not the appropriate mechanism for SAIA’s concern with the stifling of political opinion on Israel at the university, the adjudicator did not dismiss the fact that an infringement of the group’s rights might have occurred.

According to the Tribunal adjudicator, Michael Gottheil, other policy or legislative means might be more fitting for examining the situation (HRT 2013:4, sec 8):

Organizing and promoting IAW is and was [a] political activity and an expression of political opinion. The applicant [SAIA] did not suggest otherwise. While the ability to engage in lawful political activity and free expression of political opinion are fundamental rights in Canadian society, and may be the subject of other laws or policies, they are not proscribed grounds of discrimination under the Code. To the extent the applicant argues that, as a human rights advocacy organization, it was denied a right of free political expression, as legitimate as that claim may be, it is outside the scope of the Tribunal’s jurisdiction.

Despite the Tribunal's decision, which came years after SAIA's first IAW, the group was able to use the poster banning to gain momentum, promoting IAW, and Palestinian narratives to make the most of the attention it received. SAIA was also able to gain support from concerned faculty and members of the community as well as from people outside of Ottawa and transnationally. The topic of academic censorship and silencing reached far beyond the walls of Carleton University.

4.6.2 Silencing in the Academy: The Zionist Lobby

As previously noted, Carleton has not been alone in suppressing critique of Israel as other Canadian and American universities have done the same and more, particularly in relation to the analysis of Israel as an apartheid state. For instance, Hamilton's McMaster University banned the phrase "Israeli apartheid" through its Human Rights and Equity Services department in 2008 claiming that the phrase violated "the university's efforts to ensure that all people will be treated with dignity and tolerance" (Hamdon and Harris 2010:67; see also CBC Radio One 2009, Feb 18). Mainstream national and international media sources picked up on the increased number of incidents involving efforts to limit discussion of Israeli apartheid, including Israel's own newspaper, *Haaretz* (see Liphshiz February 26, 2009) as well as the *Ottawa Citizen* (Butler February 28, 2009), the *Ottawa Sun* (February 19, 2009), the *Toronto Star* (Brennan February 28, 2009), and the *Edmonton Journal* (Butler March 8, 2009).

In a nine minute segment on CBC Radio News on February 18, 2009, journalists Adrian Harewood and Evan Dyer spoke about the repression of critical discourse on Israel in Canadian academic institutions. Harewood opened by talking about the tearing down of the first IAW posters at Carleton by security guards and the Provost's follow-up email to the Carleton community concerning the upcoming IAW event and threat of dismissal from the university for incidents of "religious or racial intolerance". Following this and other efforts across Canadian

campuses to control the discourse concerning Israel, over 325 academics signed an open letter expressing their dismay that some Ontario universities had been “using bureaucratic harassment, threats, bans and other tactics to silence criticism of Israel on campus”(Harewood CBC February 18, 2009). Dyer spoke about how university presidents and administrations were making it difficult if not impossible for groups in solidarity with Palestine to organize on campus. This was occurring through the cancellation or withholding of room bookings, exorbitant fees for rooms which students cannot afford to pay, banning of phrases such as “Israeli Apartheid” at McMaster University, and poster bannings at Carleton and the University of Ottawa (Dyer CBC February 18, 2009). Ryerson professor Alan Sears (CBC February 18, 2009), the spokesperson for the concerned academics quoted in the radio clip, drew parallels between the pattern of tactics used to silence IAW at university campuses in the past and the poster banning and subsequent email from the provost at Carleton. While pointing to factual evidence, Sears is careful not to make claims about the lobbying power of Zionist groups concerning the prevention of discussions of Israeli apartheid on university campuses. Instead he states that “perhaps coincidentally” these incidents happened just days after B’nai Brith took out an advertisement in the *National Post* calling on university presidents to prevent IAW from taking place (Sears CBC February 18, 2009). B’nai Brith has called IAW a “hate-fest” in the past (Rebick and Sears 2009; see also Hamdon and Harris 2010:66). While these incidents may be coincidental, there are clear examples of university administrations deliberately silencing events that promote critical discourse on Israel which have ties to Zionist advocacy groups.

For instance, Dyer recounts how Freedom of Information (FIPPA) requests obtained by the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) at the University of Toronto (U of T) show

how Hillel of Greater Toronto³² (a Zionist advocacy group), U of T President David Naylor, and other senior administrators at the U of T worked to prevent an event called “Standing Against Apartheid” (see also Schofield 2009). The event organized by SAIA (an OPIRG working group) at the U of T was set to take place in early October 2008 with the purpose of “strengthen[ing] the student movement against Israeli apartheid, and to share strategies for the future, including planning the annual Israeli Apartheid Week” (Schofield 2009). The denial of a room booking for the event led to OPRIG’s FIPPA request which revealed over 250 pages of email messages between Hillel and the administration. The accessed documents show how information about the “Standing Against Apartheid” event was first sent from Zac Kaye, the Executive Director of Hillel of Greater Toronto to Jim Delaney, the Director of the Office of the Vice-Provost. Delaney then proceeded to get in touch with other university administrators about putting a stop to the event and then together with Assistant Provost Sheree Drummond, Interim-Vice President and Provost Cheryl Misak, and University President David Naylor the decision to pre-emptively deny the group a room was made. Needing to offer a rationale for the booking refusal, these top university officials decided to “say that the group did not provide sufficient notice to book an event, and that the event was not an OPIRG event” (Schofield 2009; Dyer CBC February 18, 2009).

Conclusion 4.7

As noted above, the extent to which even critical discussion on Israel and Palestine has been suppressed is well documented by Thompson (2011) and Drummond (2009) in their research into the efforts to prevent the June 2009 conference on one-state solutions from taking place at York University (co-sponsored by Queen’s University). Thompson’s *No Debate: The Israel Lobby and Free Speech* commissioned by the Canadian Association of University Teachers

³² One of the elements noted in the mandate of the group is “Embracing Israel and global Jewish people hood” <http://hilleltoronto.org/ourhillel/ourhillel.html>

(CAUT) is an inquiry into the occurrences that took place prior to the conference as well as “the responses by York University administrators, the Harper government and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) which had awarded the conference a grant” (Sears 2012:283). Drummond’s (2009) study, meanwhile, draws from her own experience in co-organizing the conference and from documentation obtained under Freedom of Information legislation to detail the troubling events that transpired while the conference was being organized. From academics who refused to participate on the grounds that the conference should not be allowed to take place to organized Israel lobbies in Canada that publicly denounce the conference to threats of financial withdrawal, efforts to thwart the conference grew and the university began to concede to these threats.

The actions by the administrations at York, U of T, McMaster, Carleton as well as other university campuses are indicative of the extent to which institutions of higher learning are willing to go to ensure that Palestinian narratives concerning the apartheid nature of Israel remain unheard (for more on this see Abu-Laban and Bakan 2012; Beinlin 2004; Hamdon and Harris 2010). As Schofield (2009) aptly states, “[T]hese same Presidents have been strikingly silent about the denial of the basic right to education for Palestinian students who are living under Israeli occupation”. The motivation by these academic institutions for suppressing Palestinian perspectives on Israel is complex, but two reasons cited concern the links between Israeli and Canadian universities and the lobbying efforts of Zionist groups. As Dyer (CBC February 18, 2009) notes, there has been a determined effort by Israel advocacy groups to “reach out specifically to university administrators by giving them free trips to Israel under a program called ‘Influential to Israel’ ... where they are presented with Israel’s point of view”. In 2005, Carleton’s president Roseann Runte participated in this program when she was president of Old Dominion College and so have the president of U of T “David Naylor, along with many other

Canadian University presidents, ... touring Israeli Universities, to further show their direct support for Israel”(Schofield 2009; see also Dyer on CBC Radio 2009). Despite these types of overt tactics of persuasion from Zionist advocates, groups who lobby on behalf of Israel have not had to face the same types of backlash that Palestine solidarity groups have had to tackle (see Dyer on CBC Radio 2009). As Dyer (CBC Radio 2009) points out and briefly noted in section 4.5 above, in 2008 Carleton allowed the Israel Awareness Committee (IAC) to hold an event in which a 15 foot fence meant to represent the wall between the Occupied Territories and '48 Palestine was set up with graphic images of injuries “such as a close up of someone’s leg with shrapnel on one side and Arabs on the other”. The double-standard of the university becomes glaringly apparent when one considers the administration’s indifference to the IAC’s obviously racist display and the over-the-top interference in Palestine solidarity organizing. The logic behind this double-standard is tied to the ethno-nationalist ideology of Zionist settlers as the “chosen people” constructed through metaphors of Manifest Destiny and the Holocaust (see Collins 2011:33 in section 1.4.3). The university’s acceptance of this logic is based on notions of settler superiority linked closely to the white Canadian understanding of settlers as unique pioneers with an “altruistic” and necessary colonial mission (Collins 2011:34).

In this chapter, I have examined how SAIA has worked creatively to make substantial changes at the institutional level in the ways in which we talk about Israel by bringing in an apartheid analysis. To change the permissible discourse on Israel and Palestine, SAIA has performed acts of solidarity with the Palestinian call for BDS and resisted attempts to silence its solidarity work to actively challenge the university and wider society through the *Al Haq* panel, the resistance to the IAW poster banning, and the application to the *Ontario Human Rights Tribunal*. In the next chapter, I demonstrate how IAW challenges the accepted Zionist discourses to counter the logics of colonialism and push for a transformation of how we

understand Israel. This challenge occurs within the settings of Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. The current BDS movement uses the language of human rights and international law to promote its call and to demonstrate the continued colonial oppression of the Zionist state of Israel against Palestinians. Yet as noted earlier, human rights and international law discourses and practices are tied closely to European colonization efforts (Mutua 2002:11-12). The United Nations' call for universal human rights and the promotion of international law does not account for the suffering incurred by people of colour due to the racist actions of white European nations that began prior to the genocides of white Europeans during the 1940s (Mutua 2002:16). Significantly, while apartheid falls under the gambit of international law, the application of apartheid discourse to Israel in what is paradoxically considered a white Western state, has been disputed by the Israeli state and Zionist supporters. Nevertheless, through their talks, the IAW panelists perform narratives of Palestinian solidarity in articulating Israel's violations of human rights and international law against Palestinians. They show how Zionist race-thinking is integral to the view that Israel is a Jewish homeland for all Jews regardless of where they reside and/or claim citizenship, and speak to how Israel discursively constructs a racialized framework of citizenship and nationality that attempts to legitimize the practice of differential citizenship rights, property and land theft as well as genocide and ethnic cleansing through the use of law and religion. Their talks also make important links between the settler colonial states of Israel and Canada - links which are crucial to the transformational potential of anticolonial and decolonizing movements.

“Our ambitions, hopes, dreams and creativity are higher than their walls and prisons.” ~ Yafa Jarrar, former SAIA member

Chapter 5 Israeli Apartheid Week 2009: Contestations of Zionist Myths

As documented in the previous chapter, the months leading up to the first IAW enabled SAIA to capture the interest of those who wanted to know more about Israeli apartheid and those who sought to dismiss the apartheid analysis. Much of the focus of the 2009 IAW concerned the relevance and appropriateness of the term ‘apartheid’ in reference to Israel’s policies and practices. I understand this period as marking the beginning of a change in the discourse concerning Israel which is the reason why I chose to examine IAW 2009 in depth. In the following section, I discuss several of the events in the first IAW series in Ottawa. I link these events to one another while interspersing segments of the interviews that I conducted with SAIA members in 2012 about the significance of IAW. I then briefly discuss the double standard which exists when it comes to safety and security on campus and the bodies that matter. In this section, I demonstrate how incidents involving SAIA members are dismissed while the claims of pro-Zionist Jewish students are taken seriously. I conclude this chapter by discussing the limitations and possibilities for the use of human rights discourse in challenging and transforming the discourse on Israel and Palestine. I draw on the theoretical concepts introduced in the last chapter to talk about the ways in which IAW 2009 and the lead up to it as sites of contestation indicates transformative moments in altering the discourse on Israel and therefore how we understand the Israeli state at Carleton, in Ottawa and across Canada.

5.1 Beyond Discursive Transgression: The Transformational Potential of IAW

The opening event for the first IAW series on Monday March 2, 2009 entitled “Political Prisoners from Turtle Island to Palestine” brought together two Indigenous speakers from Turtle Island and Palestine whose lives have been touched by the violence of political imprisonment:

Robert Lovelace, a retired Chief of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and Adjunct Lecturer in Global Development Studies at Queen's University, and Yafa Jarrar, a Palestinian woman and a former SAIA member who at the time was finishing her degree in Politics and International Development Studies at Trent University³³. Lovelace spoke about his experience as an Indigenous man who had been imprisoned for three months for his leadership role in attempting to secure Algonquin land by refusing to permit uranium exploration near Ardoch, Ontario. He focused on the significance of land in anticolonial struggles. Meanwhile, Jarrar's talk centred on the conditions and state of Palestinian political prisoners. Both her parents had at different times been imprisoned for their political beliefs and involvement in struggling against the Zionist occupation of Palestine. Jarrar's mother was arrested when she was three months old and released when she was two years old. Jarrar's younger sister was born while her father was in prison and released when she was three years old.

Aside from obvious identity differences between Lovelace and Jarrar, the similarities and variances of their experiences speak to a number of factors concerning the state of settler colonialism in Turtle Island and Palestine. The settler colonial project of Canada has been in effect for a much longer period of time than Israel's settler colonial undertaking in Palestine, but as Lovelace (IAW 2014) points out, within Canada there are also differences between the start of colonialism and settlement in the Eastern and Central regions compared to the Western region and the Arctic. Lovelace spoke in depth to this in his most recent IAW talk in 2014 which involved mapping the region of Ottawa by tracing it back to how Indigenous peoples lived before and after the start of colonization. One mechanism of the colonial project which continues to be a problem for both the Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island and those in Palestine is the control of education and the imprisonment of large segments of the population.

³³ Lovelace and Jarrar also participated in the 2014 IAW in Ottawa although they spoke separately in this series.

Jarrar (IAW 2009) makes clear the links between education and imprisonment in the Israeli colonial project. She points to how colonial powers use educational institutions, such as universities, in two primary ways: 1. as tools to impart particular knowledges that support the political project of colonization, and 2. through criminalization processes that control or subvert the education of resistance. For example, she explains how Israel criminalized student activism and student political parties on a massive scale during the first and second Intifadas which saw thousands of Palestinians held under administrative detention. She spoke about how practices of criminalization of student organizing, education, and cultural resistance continue on a daily basis until today (for more see B'Tselem 2013; see also Chapter 6). Palestinians can be arrested for such mundane activities as carrying Palestinian flags, clearing debris from the street that is left by the Israeli army, and being part of a student council (Jarrar IAW 2009). As she states bluntly, “for the Israeli military state, it is a crime simply to be Palestinian” (Jarrar IAW 2009).

The biopolitical and necropolitical aims of the state are apparent in Israel’s treatment of political prisoners where social categories of class, race, and gender play a fundamental role. As a result of the Oslo process, the solidification of a Palestinian elite entrenched class divisions within the territories and enabled those of a wealthier class to benefit from their own relationships with the colonizers to the detriment of poorer Palestinians, disproportionately affecting women and children (see Hilal 2003; Lagerquist 2003; Roy 1998). Through political patronage and the establishment of monopolies, Oslo strengthened the Palestinian Authority’s control within the Occupied Territories for the financial benefit of only a small elite (Roy 1998:25). This is not surprising given the nature of colonial rule which divides colonized communities in order to undermine resistance. Oslo encouraged stronger surveillance of Palestinian liberation and resistance groups through combined Palestinian policing and Israeli efforts (Lagerquist 2003:8). At the same time, Israel remained in control of the borders, internal

movement within the territories, most of the land and water, and international trade (Hilal 2003:168–169; Johnson and Kuttab 2001:22–23; Lagerquist 2003:8; Roy 1998:20).

Israel has also strengthened “clanship loyalties” through preferential ethnic treatment within Palestinian communities in ’48 as a preventative measure “against political radicalization” and “political mobilization” of Palestinians (Sa’ar 2006:402). A consequence of this has been the exacerbation of existing gender inequalities, including the social control of women by boys and men, and in the case of girls and younger women also by older women, justified by moralistic and cultural codes as well as political, economic, and religious arrangements (Herzog and Yahia-Younis 2007:586; see also Abdo 2011:29–30). Despite the limits of this patriarchal rule, women continue to be involved in national liberation and resistance struggles. Moving beyond attempts to divide Palestinians through factionalism, women’s participation in political struggle crosses class and religious lines. As Abdo (2008:178) notes, many of the women who are imprisoned for political activities come from well-educated and fairly well-off secular families like Jarrar’s. The ability to traverse class divides does not appear to be the case for men, however. Julia Peteet’s (1994) research shows that class privilege is an important category of difference in determining a male’s experience with violence in relation to political involvement. Although all men, and indeed, all Palestinians including women and children are subject to periods of administrative detention (Falah 2008), Peteet (1994:43) details how men from camps and villages are more likely to experience “bodily inscriptions of violence” that are “class bound” than “the politically active urban elite, often from notable families, who have traditionally striven for leadership.” Israel’s differential treatment of men involved in political activism and resistance based on socioeconomic standing reinforces class divides. This tactic attempts to interrupt and displace possibilities for collective Palestinian struggle.

While Israel constructs or intensifies fissures within Palestinian society to control the population, the state's rule over the racialized and sexual body is central to the genocidal violence of the colonial project. Jarrar (IAW 2009; for more on this see Abdo 2014) points to the racialized difference in the treatment of Palestinian and Jewish Israeli detainees. According to Jarrar, unlike Jewish Israelis no authorization documents are required for the arrest or search of Palestinians. When inquiries are made in relation to this discriminatory treatment, Palestinians are told that they "are in a state of war [with Israel] so no permits are needed" (Jarrar IAW 2009). In addition, the age designation used to decide who falls under the category of child was until 2011 based on different determinations for Palestinians and Israelis. At the time of Jarrar's talk, Palestinians over the age of 15 were not considered children while Israelis who were 18 or younger were (see UNICEF 2013:8). Although Israel now uses the same age determinacy for both Palestinian and Israeli children, Israel's treatment of child detainees and political prisoners, such as its failure to provide adequate nutritional sustenance and appropriate living conditions, is tantamount to neglect and is in gross violation of human rights, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Jarrar notes how other human rights abuses occur during interrogation where psychological as well as physical torture techniques are used on political prisoners, including children. Attempts to get children to collaborate with the Israelis or confess to crimes they did not commit through emotional manipulation, such as the threat of "death, physical violence, solitary confinement and sexual assault, against themselves or a family member" are rampant (UNICEF 11; see also Abdo 2014:149-173; Jarrar IAW 2009). Detainees as well as political prisoners may not be able to see a lawyer or family for indefinite periods and children are often deprived of an education (Jarrar IAW 2009; see also Abdo 2014). Jarrar speaks of the methods of intense psychological torture and sexual harassment for children as well as the treatment of

women political prisoners. Unlike Palestinian men, Palestinian women are held with Jewish Israeli prisoners (Abdo 2014). In addition to sexual harassment, women have had tear gas fired into their cells, have been arrested as means of pressuring spouses inside prison, and when pregnant have not received the adequate care that they need (Jarrar IAW 2009; see also Abdo 2014).

Jarrar (IAW 2009) ends her talk with a recollection of a childhood memory about her experience visiting her father in prison as a young child and no longer being able to fit through the small window to sit on her father's lap which was only permitted during Eids (festivals). In total, her father spent ten and half years in prison. She grew up thinking the experience of children visiting their fathers in prison was "normal". In recalling this powerfully emotive story, Jarrar (IAW 2009) speaks to an earlier point she made about how Israel has colonized not only physical spaces but the minds of Palestinians. She emphasizes the importance of education as a primary tool of resistance for youth in maintaining a sense of pride in the face of oppression and developing Palestinian identity while envisioning a future for Palestine.

Stressing the significance of education in countering colonialism and linking his talk to Jarrar's (IAW 2009), Lovelace (IAW 2009) asserts: "The first step in challenging colonialism is education. I liked what Yafa said that education brings self-value, it brings pride and a sense of worth." Lovelace acknowledges his fairly recent understanding of Palestine, which he knew little about when first asked to present at an IAW event in Toronto in 2006. The initial speaking request, Lovelace notes, was a starting point for him to get to know much more about the Palestinian struggle against colonization. Lovelace centers his discussion on the colonial experience, and the similarities and differences between stages and processes of colonialism with a focus on the colonial project in Ontario, specifically of the Algonquin people. The logic of the frontier (Collins 2011) with its territorial claims and expansionist view of the land is challenged

in Lovelace's telling of colonial project. He contends that although colonialism takes on a number of forms, and differences exist between the imposition and maintenance of settler colonialism on Turtle Island and in Palestine, all colonial projects require the exploitation and destruction of land and natural resources as well as people. He explains how Anishinaabe culture is based on a communal collective support for individual journeys rather than a belief in progress from a "savage" to enlightened state, and how this understanding of Anishinaabe culture has been lost to a great extent due to what Fanon (2004 [1961]) discussed as the colonization of the mind (Lovelace IAW 2009).

Both Lovelace and Jarrar (IAW 2009) spoke about their involvement in struggles against settler colonialism. They were born political subjects. In Jarrar's (Interview 2012) conversation with me she discussed the matter of choice for her and other Palestinians who become involved in the struggle outside of Palestine. Unlike non-Palestinian SAIA members, Palestinians who live outside of Palestine, especially those born and raised in Palestine, feel compelled to resist Israel's continual colonial efforts. As she states (Jarrar Interview 2012):

I had no choice, like all Palestinians, like many, many Palestinians I had no choice but to be actively involved in my own history and my own experience because I can't avoid it. I can't pretend that its external and an extracurricular activity that I join after school. It was part of my school, it was part of my life and it still is... that is what shaped me.

This perspective was also shared by Samah Sabawi (IAW 2009), a Palestinian Canadian writer who was born in Gaza and was displaced along with her family in the aftermath of Israel's occupation of the Gaza strip in 1967: "All Palestinians lives are political- we cannot get away from politics". Sabawi spoke with Suzanne Weiss at the closing event for the 2009 IAW on March 6 entitled "From Warsaw Ghetto to Gaza Ghetto". In her talk, Sabawi (IAW 2009) explains the very surreal experience of watching the massacre of Gaza on television. The feeling of helplessness as she watched "people's lives break" was overwhelming (Sabawi IAW 2009).

The familiarity of this experience for Palestinians in exile who, like Sabawi, continue to have family and friends living through the daily horrors of bombing, shelling, shooting, and imprisonment amongst other practices of occupation and apartheid is reflected in Sabawi's presentation. Buhaisi (Interview 2012) explains how difficult it is to return to a place where every aspect of life is ruled by the prospect of death. When I asked if and how Israeli policies and practices affect her life, she answered (Buhaisi Interview 2012):

They do, I live here but I can't live where I want to live. I could live in Gaza but it isn't a life. Siege, sewage pipes broken. It's unlivable.... If I wanted to go anywhere other than Gaza [in Palestine] I can't. Also it affects my family in Palestine. They can't leave. They can't come here.

Buhaisi's (Interview 2012) response highlights the control and regulation that Israeli policies have over her mobility and place of residence as well as that of her family in Gaza illustrating the complexity of the notion of choice for Palestinians in Palestine and in exile. Not only is Buhaisi prevented from living anywhere in Palestine except Gaza, she is also prohibited from visiting. In May 2009, Buhaisi was denied entry at the Allenby/King Hussein bridge after hours of questioning by Israeli authorities while her friends anxiously waited for her in Jericho. Meanwhile, her family in Gaza is not allowed to leave and also cannot access any other part of Palestine. Buhaisi's reply further demonstrates the internal conflict that many exiled Palestinians experience in living away from home. The impossibility of return is also expressed by Nadeen Nasser (Interview 2012), another Palestinian woman and former member of SAIA who attempted to visit Palestine in June 2009 and was also denied entry. While Nasser was born in Canada she longed to visit the place from which she had been effectively exiled as a result of her grandparents' forced expulsion. Being a child of a refugeeed Palestinian family from '48, Nasser was not permitted to enter any part of Palestine. The denial of entry for Nasser was made worse with the relentless interrogation process she experienced at the hands of Israeli authorities who

not only questioned her for hours on end, forced her to open her email by claiming that refusing to do so would prove that she intended to visit the West Bank, and refused to provide food or water after she had asked several times until she showed them her medications and told them she would faint without food and water, but in an overt act of racialization also picked through her thick dark brown curly hair on the alleged grounds that she might be hiding something.

The marking of bodies deemed as threats is something that Suzanne Weiss (IAW 2009) is familiar with from her own experience as a child survivor of the Holocaust in which both her parents were murdered. As a Jewish woman opposed to Zionism, she asserts explicitly that the state of Israel does not speak in her name. In her talk, Weiss (IAW 2009) speaks to the similarities concerning Israel's treatment of the Palestinians and the actions of Nazi Germany against Jewish peoples as well as other oppressed groups, in particular the forced removal of specific bodies, violence against helpless populations, and the walling in of racialized groups effectively creating ghettos. Comments and questions from audience members following Weiss' comparison between the Warsaw ghetto and what she refers to as the Gazan ghetto reveal the profound discomfort that some people have with being asked to consider likenesses between the ideologies, practices, and policies of Nazism and Zionism. Regardless of people's discomfort, Weiss (IAW 2009) claims that the "basic philosophy of Zionism is ethnic cleansing [and that] this was the same with Hitler". Weiss (IAW 2009) underscores the commonalities between Nazi and Zionist aspirations by focusing on three main aspects in relation to each ideology: 1. methods, 2. motivation, and 3. resistance. In the first case, she asserts that the Nazis wanted to get rid of all Jewish peoples but had no way of actualizing this so they imprisoned them in ghettos and starved them. She compares the Nazi practice of ethnic cleansing with Israel's original dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the 1948 Nakba, and Israel's subsequent creation of ghettos through physical barriers separating the Israeli and Palestinian

populations. Gaza is a primary example of a walled in ghetto where the import of food is limited, and water is scarce and contaminated; these are conditions, which according to Weiss, are similar to those of the Warsaw ghetto. Weiss (IAW 2009) argues that the motivation for Nazism and Zionism is rooted in racist notions of superiority. The Nazis aimed to control land and resources while the Zionist goal is to seize land, but as settlers (Weiss IAW 2009). Weiss (IAW 2009) also links the racism of the Canadian state against Indigenous peoples here as well as racism against people of colour to her discussion of Zionism. She talks about how the Zionist project is sponsored primarily by rich and imperialist Western governments, and provides the example of Prime Minister Harper's interest in supporting Zionism to reap the benefits of further colonial exploits as well as his role in spreading hatred against Muslims.

Her final point concerns resistance. Like Jewish resisters to Nazism, Weiss (IAW 2009) argues that Palestinians resist because they have to. The Warsaw Ghetto saw a thousand Jewish resisters crushed, yet they triumphed in that they inspired others. Palestinians resist with rocks and by any means possible to “keep the flame of resistance alive” (Weiss IAW 2009). Weiss (IAW 2009) asserts that “to do homage to those that died in the Holocaust we need to stand against racism always. We need freedom for Palestinians”. Recalling the words “never again” inscribed on a memorial at the site of the Dachau concentration camp outside of Munich, Germany she ends on a powerful note: “There are two types of Holocaust survivors – those that say never again for the Jews and those that say never again for anyone ever”. The two types Weiss refers to appear to extend beyond Holocaust survivors to describe all people who identify as Jewish. Despite the fact that this event was advertised with biographical information about Weiss, some people identifying as belonging to the Jewish community were not willing to attend. Sabawi expressed her disappointment with some of her Jewish friends who refused to attend all IAW 2009 events because the language of apartheid was being used to discuss the Israeli state.

Yet as Ronnie Kasrils, a white South African Jew who was a member of the African National Congress, and Omar Barghouti an independent Palestinian researcher, commentator, human rights activist and one of the founding members of the Palestinian BDS campaign argue in their presentations during IAW, the analogy is fitting from a legal as well as socio-political perspective.

The usage of the term apartheid, like that of other theoretical and legal terms such as ethnic cleansing and genocide, does not require identical policies and practices to invoke an analogy. As noted in section 4.4 in the previous chapter, the crime of apartheid includes “similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practised in southern Africa” this covers “inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them” (Dugard 2008:1; see also International Convention 1973:75-77). Those who are opposed to the use of the term often claim that it cannot be employed to describe Israel because the situation in Israel is not exactly the same as that of South Africa, but as Barghouti (IAW 2009) points out “apartheid is a generalized crime with a universal definition and can be applied elsewhere.” Like Uri Davis (1987) Barghouti (IAW 2009) asserts that the legal practice of apartheid in Palestine began with the Zionist myth that Palestine was “a land without a people” along with the forcible displacement of over 750, 000 Indigenous Palestinians. He outlines four main ways that apartheid is rooted in the ideology and practice of Israeli settler colonialism:

1. Racial discrimination against Palestinians living within Israel proper [’48] was made into law with the creation of Jewish nationality. There is no Israeli nationality only Israeli citizenship and Jewish nationality; significantly, Israeli citizens do not get all the rights only nationals do.
2. The 1950 Law of Return bestows the right of Israeli citizenship to Jews anywhere in the world. This practice excludes non-Jewish peoples.
3. The confiscation and control of Indigenous Palestinian land.

4. The denial of the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples prevented by means of force and racist laws – denationalized in “Violation of Law of State Succession”. (Barghouti IAW 2009)

While Barghouti (IAW 2009) outlined the definition of apartheid, Kasrils (IAW 2009) chose to focus on the similarities between South African and Israeli apartheid. He began by quoting Dr. Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd - the architect of apartheid - who in 1961 said: “Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state” (Kasrils IAW 2009; see also Kasrils 2011). Prime Minister of South Africa from 1958-1966, Verwoerd noted that unlike South Africa Israel was getting off lightly. Apartheid in South Africa meant citizenship for whites and laws that reinforce privileges for whites. In a similar fashion to what Collins (2011) describes as the logic of the frontier and the logic of exceptionalism, the ideological underpinnings of Israel as a state for Jews is based on territorial claims to the land with an expansionist settlement view and a biblical narrative of Jews as the chosen people in an attempt to justify claims to the land.

Likewise, in the South African case, Kasrils (IAW 2009) notes that the land was said to be without people. The biblical Christian notion of bringing civilization to the “heathens” of South Africa was invoked paralleling the situation of colonial projects in North, Central, and South Americas. Some analogous discriminatory policies and practices exercised in apartheid South Africa and current-day Israel include miscegenation, house demolition, and racialized separation between peoples. The regulation of miscegenation, sexuality, and sexual violence is rife in colonial contexts (Mohanty 1991). For instance, in apartheid South Africa laws prohibited sexual relations and marriage between Blacks and Whites, but not between Jews and non-Jews (Kasrils IAW 2009). Although sexual relations between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians are regulated through the prohibition of intermarriage (see Abdo 2011:41; Kanaaneh 2002:44; Lentin 2004; Yuval-Davis 1993), a more central concern for Israel’s colonial project rests with the question of ethno-nationalist demographics that underlies Israel’s racialized necropolitical

aim. The concern with cultural and numerical ethnicity used to manage and control “majority” and “minority” populations in ethno-nationalist states is “inherently and intrinsically genocidal/ethnocidal” (Bannerji 2003:97) and necessarily connected to women. To attain a Jewish majority, legal mechanisms are used to keep apart Palestinians from either side of the Green Line while family planning tactics limit the reproduction of Palestinians within ’48 (Lentin 2004; see also Schocken 2008). While the decision to have children and where childbirth takes places are fundamentally political for Palestinians they are also disturbingly ordinary which makes it easy to miss the way family planning choices are structured around relations of power.

In her talk, Sabawi (IAW 2009) recounts a story about a Palestinian women’s only tea party where the talk was dominated by discussions of what she understood as strategies for giving birth so that children could obtain citizenship. At the end of the party, one of the women cheerfully proclaimed that she was glad no men were present because they would have overshadowed the party with talk of “politics”. But when decisions about reproduction and childbirth are shaped by policies of a settler colonial power, choices of whether to have children and where to give birth are inherently political. In what Kanaaneh describes as “political arithmetic” (2002:73), the state of Israel prescribes what are generally considered private choices of families and bodies. Actively promoting the birth of Jewish Israelis (Yuval-Davis 1996), Israel’s advocacy and sponsorship of family planning clinics and advertisements aim at curtailing Palestinian births. Fusing issues of gender and class, discourses concerning Palestinian women’s reproductive rights and reduced family size link having children to material wealth and education (Kanaaneh 2002:74–79). The administration and servicing of family planning by liberal Zionists juxtaposes humanitarian concerns with the state’s aim to be an ethnically Jewish majority, and creates ambiguity for Palestinians (Kanaaneh 2002:77). Given that the purpose of Israel’s

ethnoidal project is to limit, remove, and eliminate the Palestinian population, the regulation of the biopolitical through family planning cannot be viewed as benevolent or benign.



Figure 2: Israeli stone barrier in between Palestinian farmland, near Qabatiya, Jenin District, West Bank Palestine, 2005. Madalena Santos

differences also exist. Recalling his visit to Yassar Arafat in 2004 in his bombed

out headquarters, Kasrils (IAW 2009) speaks directly to these differences. Kasrils (IAW 2009) recounts Arafat saying, “Well, now you’ve seen it. We are consigned to Bantustans” to which Kasrils countered, “No, not really because there was never a case in all the decades that there were Bantustans of this kind [in apartheid South Africa] of bombing from the air and from the ground, constant attacks – none of the Bantustans had massive walls around them with soldiers with keys”. Kasrils (IAW 2009) explains that a lot of money went into show off these Bantustans to the South African tax payer not through aid or other money unlike Israel’s apartheid practices. Of course, no two countries are exactly alike but when people visit apartheid Israel, especially those who struggled against apartheid in South Africa like Desmond Tutu, Blade Nzimande, and John Duggard, they assert that Israeli apartheid regime is worse than that of South African apartheid (Kasrils 2009; see also Eid 2014:114). Palestinians are surrounded by the Israeli military, walls, and encroaching settlements. There are even roads for only Israeli citizens (i.e., Jewish Israelis) which never existed in apartheid South Africa.

Despite the similarities between South African and Israeli apartheid regimes, significant



Figure 3: Jewish only road with "security fence" near Zababdeh, Jenin District, West Bank Palestine, 2005. Madalena Santos



Figure 4: Apartheid Wall, Jalameh, between Haifa District and Jenin District, Palestine, 2005. Madalena Santos

Kasrils (IAW 2009) argues that separation policies and practices are rooted in racist ideology. This ideology is based on exclusivity so that people are taught and continue to teach the white population that they should not mix with people of colour. While in apartheid South Africa the division of peoples was established along colour lines in Israel the distinction is made along

racialized religious and ethnic divides. To ensure the whiteness of the state and quell the potential for Palestinian nationalist sentiment and struggle, Israel has further ruptured and fragmented the Palestinian population within '48 through the construction of racialized citizenship and civil rights categories based on ethno-religious divisions. The hierarchical positioning of Palestinian Arabs into separate groupings as Druze, Bedouin, Christian, and Muslim facilitates the promulgation of what Kanaaneh (2009:10) refers to as a “good” versus “bad” Arab stereotype. The divisive nature of this classical colonial/imperialist method of divide and conquer (Arar 2012:121; Kanaaneh 2009:3, 10; Sa'di 2011:6; see also Abdo 2011:17, 18) also exemplifies Aihwa Ong's (1996) notion of cultural citizenship wherein discriminatory and separating institutional practices create categories of “desirables” and “undesirables” with particular rights and privileges based on racial and cultural capital. Understanding that “the white-black polarities” (Ong 1996:738) of European imperialism continue to shape relations between peoples in colonial states, Ong's theoretical intervention on citizenship and race posits that societal and state differentiations within racialized groups is based on an ideological “closeness to or distance from white ideal standards” tied to class, religion, ethnicity, and gender (Ong 1996:751).

In the case of Israel, the Druze, Bedouin, and Christian are understood as ideologically closer to the ideal white Jewish Israeli than the Muslim. Despite this ideological distinction, Barghouti (IAW 2009) claims that there is very little difference in Israel's treatment of Christians and Muslims in the Occupied Palestinian Territories except for public relations purposes. For instance, during the Christian holiday of Christmas checkpoints and permits may be relaxed due to the attention paid to Palestine by the Vatican at this time. Moreover, to limit efforts for Palestinian national struggle, religious conflict between Palestinians has been actively encouraged by the Israeli state (Sa'ar 2006:402) both in '48 and the rest of Palestine with the factional conflict between Fatah and Hamas backed by the Israeli state. This factional divide has not only been ideologically supported by states such as the US and Canada, but also through their direct intervention and financial threat. As Barghouti (IAW 2009) notes, the president of the Palestinian Authority (PA) was not democratically elected; rather US General Dayton put Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas in power, and following the democratic election of Hamas into the Palestinian Legislative Assembly in 2006, Canada immediately looked to withdraw financial support from the PA (Barry 2010:198). Kasrils (IAW 2009) further notes the irony of Israel's



Figure 5: Home demolition, Qabatiya, Jenin District, West Bank, Palestine, 2006. Madalena Santos

current stance on Hamas as terrorist group given that Hamas was established by Israel to create internal divisions within the Palestinian community.

To maintain power, states will not only overlook paradoxical relationships between oppressor and oppressed but will gladly enter into

them. The relationship between former South African Prime Minister John Vorster who was interned as a Nazi sympathiser serves as a case in point (Kasrils 2009; see also McGreal 2006).

As Kasrils (IAW 2009) explains, apartheid South Africa was a very anti-Semitic country where many Nazi sympathizers had come to live. Yet the arms industry under South African apartheid was built on the naval ships, weapons, and high tech munitions provided by Israel. With the assistance of Israel, apartheid South Africa also built six nuclear facilities. What relationships such as these underscore is their colonial mentality. The aim of settler colonial states is to establish and maintain wealth through the dispossession of land and resources of the Indigenous populations. Barghouti (IAW 2009) draws attention to the hegemonic tendencies of states where the notion of “might makes right” is heralded. This includes military might, and the collusion of Western institutions, including academic institutions, in continuing hegemonic power structures as discussed in the previous chapter. Discursively and in practice those who struggle for freedom against settler colonialism are often deemed terrorists for resorting to armed resistance against their violent occupiers. Yet as Kasrils (IAW 2009) argues the use of rockets or other means of armed struggle is a symptom of violence not a cause; the cause is dispossession which by its very nature is a violent act.

The state’s use of racialized discourse (Abu-Laban and Bakan 2011; Ghanim 2008; Goldberg 2008) facilitates the execution of Israel’s apartheid



policies that segregate communities from one another and



Figure 6: Before and After: Student Housing before Demolition, Zabadeh, Jenin District, West Bank, Palestine, 2005. Madalena Santos

limit or prevent mobility, including access to

food, water, and education. The continued territorial fragmentation of Palestine — primarily evident in the West Bank — continues to see increased settlements with separate road systems and tunnels and bridges for Jewish settlers and Palestinians (Abujidi 2011:315–319; Korn 2008:121; Weizman 2007:179–181); meanwhile Gaza is completely sealed off and the delivery of basic goods is severely limited and oftentimes prevented altogether (Ghanim 2008:77; Korn 2008:117). The movement of Palestinians inside and outside of West Bank enclaves is restricted (Ghanim 2008:66, 76; Korn 2008:123) and in the case of Gaza movement is near impossible (Ghanim 2008:77; Korn 2008:117). The apartheid wall cuts deeply into West Bank territory to engulf the expanding illegal settlements, and absorb resources such as water and fertile agricultural land (see Weizman 2007:161-179). The consequence of discursively representing Palestinians as racialized others is thus evident in the Occupied Territories.

It comes as little surprise that “Canada was the first country in the West to support the boycott of Hamas which lead to ... [the siege on Gaza]” (Barghouti IAW 2009). Sabawi (IAW 2009) notes how Minister Cannon, the Foreign Affairs Minister for Canada at the time of the Gaza massacre, visited a Holocaust Museum instead of travelling through Gaza. Although Cannon was supposedly on a Gaza reconstruction conference in Sharm El Sheikh as part of a donors’ international conference “he did not care to assess the damage preferring to look at images of past atrocities” (Sabawi IAW 2009). Sabawi (IAW 2009) also observes how prior to the 2009 IAW, then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Jason Kenney issued a press release voicing his concern for Jewish students and professors; however, according to Sabawi (IAW 2009), Kenney failed to mention that during the course of the week the liberal Zionist group Peace Now, which is a member of Canadian Jewish Congress, issued a press release condemning settlement expansion and calling on the Canadian government to issue a statement against settlement growth. Peace Now’s media release also received little attention in the media

unlike the statement by Kenney and Michael Ignatieff who also released a statement that was very similar to Kenney's (Sabawi IAW 2009). In addition, the Canadian Jewish Congress and Simon Wiesenthal Center paid for advertisements condemning IAW.

In comparison to the discomfort experienced by those who support Israel unconditionally to references of Israel as an apartheid state, Sabawi (IAW 2009) considers the differences in violence experienced by Palestinians and Jewish Israelis within a week. For Palestinians, this entailed continued ethnic cleansing, discrimination, and harassment of an entire population. As Barghouti (IAW 2009) states citing Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, "the siege of Gaza was a deliberate intention to subject an entire community to collective punishment". This is what Barghouti (IAW 2009) refers to as the "slow death of masses" or in Mbembé's words the "living death" of Palestinians in Gaza. Barghouti (IAW 2009) brings in Sara Roy's work on "de-development" to describe the situation of dependency and collective punishment created between colonizer and colonized. According to Barghouti (IAW 2009), the siege on Gaza pushed Palestinians into poverty. Educational and medical institutions were left unable to function due to the lack of fuel, and purposeful damage to sewage systems. People died as a result. The longer term effects include chronic malnutrition, anemia, low birth weights, stunted growth, and preventable diseases due to sewage and contaminated water spread. The concentrated use of sonic booms from F16s have caused hearing problems and the use of white phosphorous combined with increased pollution and the inability to attain treatment have led to significant increases in cancers. All of these factors mean that Palestinians will continue to suffer grave psychological and physical damage for years to come. Yet the severity of the situation in Palestine is not only trivialized by the Canadian government, but Palestinians are further made responsible for their own victimization. Canada was the only state to vote against a war crimes

investigation into the Gaza massacre. This despite the fact that it was Israel that broke the ceasefire with Hamas on November 4, 2008. “Gaza is a wake-up call” according to Sabawi (IAW 2009) and the price for complicity, complacency, and silence is the violence of continued settler colonialism, occupation, and apartheid.

While the disabling effects of colonialism are readily apparent in the war on Gaza and its aftermath, the immobilizing and hindering impacts of settler colonial states are structured into their very make-up. The purposeful erasure of Indigenous bodies and their stories are central to the techniques used to create and maintain colonial states. Sabawi (IAW 2009) asserts that Palestinians have been stripped of diplomatic language and denied the opportunity to tell their history. Complicity, complacency, and silence are central to the story told by Barghouti (IAW 2009) at the event entitled “Apartheid Israel: Democracy as an Existential Threat”. Barghouti (IAW 2009) begins by raising the important issue of the poster ban at Carleton to point out the hypocrisy of not being able to critique Israel for fear of being labeled anti-Semitic. He cautions people against equating Israel and the actions of the state of Israel with Judaism and being Jewish. The Zionist movement was never a religious movement according to Barghouti (IAW 2009). Like SAIA’s email message to the university, Barghouti (IAW 2009) argues that the assertion that the state of Israel speaks for all Jewish people is “specious” and “is the textbook definition of anti-Semitism”. In highlighting the important distinction between critiquing Israel as a state, which is not anti-Semitic, and maintaining that all Jewish peoples support and speak for Israel, which is anti-Semitic, Barghouti speaks to both the logic of exceptionalism and the implicatory denial of those who want to reject the claim that Israel is a racist apartheid state.

As Collins (2011:35) explains, the logic of denial does not involve denying the facts “nor their conventional interpretation but rather ‘the psychological, political or moral implications that conventionally follow’”. The religious justification for the establishment of Israel was and is

used to gain momentum but Zionism is really a colonialist movement modeled on Western European colonialism upholding the current neoliberal values and goals of economic globalization. Danny Levi (Interview 2012) a former SAIA member put it this way:

You can look at how Israel claims to speak on my behalf and identify as Jewish. And Israel claims to be the homeland for Jewish people and work on behalf of Jewish people and I don't buy that. So when their policies are very racist and that they say they're doing it on my behalf it's very disconcerting. So that affects how I identify as a Jew and how I identify as being part of my community because my community is for the most part very resistant to my ideas about Jewish identity. There is very much a conflation with the state of Israel and Judaism. Israel [is] a colonial state and we have to acknowledge that the idea of Zionism came out of anti-Semitism, came out of Jews in Europe who were feeling persecuted and seeing that if they wanted to escape persecution they should have their own state. It's almost like pursuing whiteness and being at the same level as their oppressors in order to contain security to attain that whiteness, that privilege, and Israel was the means of doing that and that came from there being imperial interests from states like Britain who mostly funded the Zionist project. The Nazis even helped fund the Zionist project and they had interests in getting Jews out of Europe and as well in Israel being like a little Western outpost in the Middle East to allow for the continued extraction of resources to the satellite countries. I see that historically and also today.

Although few would deny that Israel has committed acts that have harmed Palestinians, these actions are justified as necessary to protect the "Jewish state". Weiss' (IAW 2009) talk provides a significant counter story in this respect not only because she is a Jewish Holocaust survivor - frequently upheld as one of *the* main justifications for the establishment of Israel - but because as an anti-Zionist Jew she addresses the fact that the goal of Zionism is ethnic cleansing. Barghouti (IAW 2009) provides examples of the ethnic cleansing process when he tells of how Tel Aviv University is built on the site of a Palestinian village while Hebrew University is built partly on occupied Palestinian territory - in direct contravention to international law on war crimes of occupation. As Kasrils (IAW 2009) points out, citing the work of Zionist Israeli academic Benny Morris whose research is based on Israel's own records, the systematic plan to expel the Palestinians proposed in 1943 was a reign of terror intended to push people over, dispossess them, and ethnically cleanse. To carry on its transformation of historic Palestine into a Jewish

majority state, Israel has maintained its practice of ethnic cleansing through land expropriation which is not only geopolitically significant and meaningful in a material sense, but is culturally symbolic and intended to alter the story of Palestine. The government under the newly established Israeli state took possession of the properties of Palestinian refugees who were forced to leave as a result of the *Nakba* and as well as the lands which were formerly controlled by British Mandatory authority. According to Alexander Safian (1997),

The government sold some of this land to the JNF, and retained the rest. In 1960, the Israeli parliament passed a series of land laws including the “Basic Law: Israel Lands” that defined government-owned and JNF-owned land both as “Israel lands.” It reiterated the principle that these lands would only be leased, not sold. While the JNF retained ownership of its lands, the 1960 laws turned administrative responsibility for these (as well as government-owned) properties to a newly-created agency, the Israel Land Administration (ILA).

Through the bureaucratic machinery of the Israeli state, 95 percent of state territory is administered via the offices of the Israel Land Administration according to “laws that differentiate between Jew and non-Jew making it illegal for non-Jews (read Palestinians) to lease state lands” (Lentin 2004:par. 2.4; see also Davis 1987:26). As a result, most Palestinians who remained within ’48 or what is more commonly considered Israel proper are not legally entitled to own or lease land since Israel has designated almost all of the land within the Green Line as available exclusively to Jews. Known as the “Judaization of land” (Kanaaneh 2009:72; Yiftachel 1997:98), these processes include the erasure of Arab villages through their purposeful unrecognition as well as the Hebraicization of Arab villages and street names (Masalha 2012; Suleiman 2004:162–165). In addition to the material dispossession of land and property, displacement of peoples, and the creation of a considerably large refugee population with all of the socioeconomic consequences that result from these processes, the Zionist methods of erasure of Palestinian history, collective memory, and existence are central to the aim of white colonial rule that naturalizes notions of settler nationality and citizenship belonging.

Making the connection between settler colonial states and continued colonization and apartheid practices, Barghouti (IAW 2009) compares Israel to Canada as a white settler-state that tries to justify its uprooting of the Indigenous population. The close ties between Canada and Israel include the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, the Canada-Israel Security Agreement, and tax shelter incentives made available through charitable status for organization and foundations such as the Jewish National Fund (JNF) (Barghouti IAW 2009) which I discuss in in section 4.5 of Chapter 4. One of the examples most commonly cited regarding the connection

between charitable organizations and Israeli colonization and apartheid is that of Canada Park. Built on occupied Palestinian land (67 Palestine) Canadians raised money for the JNF to build a park named after Canada in al Quds (East Jerusalem) (Barghouti IAW 2009). Barghouti is quick to point out that support for Israel can be direct as in the case of trade and security agreements as well as through tax shelters, or it can be indirect in the case of “assistance”

provided to rebuild Palestinian infrastructure after Israel has destroyed it. According to Barghouti (IAW 2009) Israel should be made to pay for the damage it has caused and “Canada should keep that money to pay at least in part for some of the damage it has done to the Indigenous peoples here”.

While many non-Indigenous North Americans are indifferent to the situation of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island and Palestine as Lovelace (IAW 2009) explains, everyone should be concerned because colonialism destroys the land. The question according to Lovelace (IAW 2009) is not “about whether to engage or not engage. You’re either part of the solution or part of the problem”. He advocates sustained active resistance which is concerned with a better



Figure 7: Canada Park, Al Quds, West Bank, Palestine, courtesy of www.PalestineRemembered.com

future as one of the most significant ways to engage in struggle. As he states, “Real warriors have to look past the barricades ... look past the barrel of the gun. We have to dream about tomorrow. We can’t just allow ourselves to be cultures of resistance.... Peace is a process. It is a verb not a noun.” For Jarrar, Barghouti, Kasrils, Sabawi, and Weiss (IAW 2009) BDS is such a process. Maintaining pressure against corporations whose reputation is tied to financial success is increasingly important as more BDS victories are won and fewer companies desire to be associated with apartheid Israel. Academic and cultural boycotts are also significant by challenging institutional links to colonization, occupation, and apartheid. Throughout the IAW talks of 2009, each speaker stressed the significance of the BDS movement in creating the climate for transformational change in the way in which Palestine is understood and to enable real changes on the ground for everyday Palestinians. As Jarrar (IAW 2009) states with a final call for BDS - “our ambitions, hopes, dreams and creativity are higher than their walls and prisons.”

5.2 Bodies that Matter in Settler Colonial States: Some of Us are More Equal than Others

While the university administration has frequently used the discourse of security and fairness in its public statements concerning SAIA, it has failed to address some of the most egregious violations of safety that SAIA has brought forward, including threats of bodily harm. SAIA has made numerous attempts to speak with university officials about the inequities it has faced as a human rights campus group. It has met with university administration in various capacities concerning incidents of harassment and discrimination on campus for working on Palestine solidarity and in some cases, with experiences of racism for being Palestinian. Individual members have met with the administration to explain their own experiences and knowledge of occupation (Abu-Ayash 2008) while others have met with the office of Race and Equity services in relation to the poster ban in 2009 in addition to situations of aggressive harassment and assault

as well as racism on campus. These include assault on the following students while SAIA members: Buhaisi and D’Orazio 2010, d’Entremont 2011, and Khatib 2012. The university has downplayed all of these incidents (D’Orazio Interview 2012), choosing instead to concern themselves with a small but confident and well organized group of Zionist supporters, including the Israeli Awareness Committee and Hillel.

Demonstrative of the university’s preferential treatment of the voices of Zionist supporters over all others is the report entitled “The Commission on Inter-Cultural, Inter-Religious and Inter-Racial Relations on Campus” released in September 2012 and publically introduced by President Runte in an email on Wednesday October 10, 2012. The report uses the alarming language of anti-Semitism in an attempt to silence critique of Israel stirring opposition on a number of fronts (see Open Letter Critiquing the Report 2012; Abdo et al. Reclaiming Space November 21, 2012; Graduate Students Open Letter November 28, 2012; Stanzack, 2012; SAIA’s open letter in *Charlatan*) as well as a much smaller number of supporters (see Reject the critique 2012). SAIA’s response to the report was published on SAIA’s listserv on November 19, 2012 and in the print edition of the student paper the *Charlatan* in the same month. SAIA’s (November 19, 2012) statement questioned the claim that the Commission lived up to its mandate to “contribute to a better context for dialogue and understanding on the Carleton campus and in the surrounding community” . SAIA(November 19, 2012) argued instead that the report used “the pretext of dialogue to mask its true intention -- to silence criticism of Israel” and that the group understood the report as targeting people and groups who support solidarity efforts in favour of Palestinian human rights.

What was particularly troublesome to SAIA (November 19, 2012) , in addition to the claim that the report was an attempt to deal with racial and other discrimination and oppression on campus, was the report’s “use of a definition of anti-Semitism that equates critique of Israel

or anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism”. This obvious attempt to curtail critique of Israel would severely limit SAIA’s work on divestment and in demonstrating how Israel is an apartheid state. It also promotes the view that those involved in Palestine solidarity are necessarily anti-Jewish and denies “the fact that many Jewish people, including members of SAIA who are Jewish, are critical of the state of Israel” (SAIA November 19, 2012). Indeed, as the group asserted and Barghouti (IAW 2009; 2011) warns, by presenting the perspective “that all Jewish peoples are supportive of Israel’s policies and practices, the report assumes one monolithic voice for all Jewish peoples” (SAIA November 19, 2012). SAIA’s letter goes on to remind readers that Israel continues to build illegal settlements in the Occupied West Bank in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, continues to reject international law concerning the globally recognized Right of Return for Palestinians, practices discriminatory citizenship practices against Palestinian citizens of Israel through its employment, educational, and land ownership policies, and had recently showed majority support for apartheid policies in a poll commissioned by an Israeli academic institution. While the report did not specify any group or individual, it is apparent that it aimed to limit how Israel could be discursively discussed and named. What the report failed to mention were the verbal and physical threats to individual SAIA members and the group as a whole, including routine harassment, vandalism, and verbal and physical assault, which have been carefully documented by SAIA yet, as noted above, “rarely investigated” by Carleton’s administration while the university has “reinforc[ed] the facade that SAIA is the aggressive and/or intolerant party” (SAIA November 19, 2012). SAIA also found problematic the report’s failure to represent the diversity of “communities that make up Carleton” (ibid). The group pointed to the struggles endured by other racialized communities, disabled peoples, people belonging to GLBTQ communities, and other religious groups that were not identified in the report, particularly Muslim and Arab students who have continue to face a great deal of

discrimination and harassment in this racist “Muslim (or looks like might be Muslim) = Terrorist” environment which has dominated the Western psyche since the attacks in the US on September 11, 2001. Finally, although SAIA (November 19, 2012) commended the university for its efforts to identify what Indigenous peoples at Carleton recognized as patterns of racism, discrimination, and oppression in their university experiences, the group nevertheless asserted that “after two years in the making, a few pages in an 11 page report does not really suffice in dealing with the extent of the ongoing colonization and genocidal practices and policies against Indigenous peoples here”. Drawing attention specifically to Carleton’s refusal to recognize that it “sits on unceded Algonquin territory”, SAIA (November 19, 2012) called for the university to immediately retract the report.

SAIA’s letter addresses both the attempt by the university to prevent further critique of Israel at Carleton as well as the administration’s disregard for recognizing the racisms, prejudices, and discriminations faced by other marginalized groups on campus. The report garnered a lot of attention and was soon followed by a panel discussion on November 21, 2012 entitled “Reclaiming Space: Confronting the Report of Carleton’s Commission on Inter-Cultural, Inter-Religious and Inter-Racial Relations on Campus” (see Abdo et al. 2012) organized by members of Faculty for Palestine. The panel explored the space of academic freedoms at Carleton and on Canadian university campuses more broadly, especially as they concern the right to defend justice and human rights for Palestinians. The event was well-attended and received by a number of concerned faculty and students. The question period revealed a great level of interest in the topic in relation to Israel, but also as it connects to critiquing the genocidal policies of Canada.

The similarities between Canadian and Israeli settler colonial structures and processes, including legislated apartheid practices such as reserves and residential schools in the Canadian

context and discriminatory land ownership and education policies in Israel while not the aim of this study must at least be acknowledged. The silencing of Indigenous narratives plays a central role in the logic of denial which Collins (2011:35) describes as “active and influential in settler societies that are by definition built upon hidden structures of violence that extend into the present”. This logic runs deep within the university and in mainstream Canadian society.

Carleton’s failure to recognize its location on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin land in any official sense is notable; meanwhile, Canada continues its settler colonial and genocidal policies against the Indigenous peoples of these lands in pursuit of economic gains for its white supremacist elite.

5.3 Limitations and Possibilities for Creative Solidarity: IAW and the Challenge to Israel’s Impunity

There are important limitations to using the language of international law and human rights in seeking transformative change. As noted above, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* had limited relevance/ applicability in the case of the poster ban. These shortcomings were recognized by a number of SAIA members. Jarrar explains how the concepts of human rights and international law can be discursively helpful in bringing people together under a common struggle but are not always useful in practice. Human rights and international law are supposed to be about accountability, but there are limits to the protections they offer and in the discourse itself, especially in terms of asking broader questions concerning social justice. As Jarrar (Interview 2012) states:

[Human rights and international law] are useful for activists, good for solidarity; good for tools to put the general concepts that we fight for such as justice, equality, etc into context. They are appealing as well to people in the West as liberal concepts that people subscribe to, but for me, because they are non-binding ... because they do not have to follow them in a binding way then it becomes... really frustrating and disempowering at times. Useless tools cannot hold violators accountable for the oppressed. From my experience I know many people who don’t like these concepts anymore because they

didn't help us that much when Israel was violating rights left, right and centre and nothing is done. Then they become kind of useless and the people under oppression find them to be just tokens for whatever reason ... Also a third dimension, I feel that can be kind of tackled in regards to international law and human rights is when they are used as a double-edged sword to neutralize certain things or to be used as kind of a counter active way. Because recently here, in Canada we've noticed as activists that many Zionists and racist organizations have been using the same concepts even if some of the stuff they use isn't accurate but to kind of neutralize that language to be a language that is used just loosely without any actual meaning behind it can be very destructive. It can become... they can become very loose terms that are used. For example, especially after the Gaza attacks a lot of the Zionist organizations and people that are apologetic for what Israel did have been using the language of international law and human rights to talk about Hamas even in public, even in public talks when they bring Israeli Defence Forces to speak to people in the West they, we've noticed that they, the way they speak is that they say that Hamas has been violating international law, Hamas has been doing this and this to violate human rights to kind of distract and I am not saying that Hamas didn't but I'm just saying with completely distracting the real issue about what this is really about and the fact that Hamas is not an army. It doesn't represent a state and all this so this is when these two concepts or ideas become destructive... so it's not a bad or a good thing but that there are so many things that come with these concepts.

Jarrar (Interview 2012) touches upon a number of significant limitations to human rights and international law discourses. The September 2012 Commission on Inter-Cultural, Inter-Religious and Inter-Racial Relations on Campus report serves as a case in point for the ways such discourses are manipulated to constrain critical discussion on campus and in the classroom. Moreover, while Palestinians can be readily versed on all the human rights codes and international laws that exist, they are next to meaningless in defending oneself against military might. The risk, as Sultany (2013:16) points out, is in equating law with justice:

The boycott movement speaks the language of human rights and international law. It is intended to pressure Israel to abide by international law. By doing so, it risks falling into the trap identified by critical legal scholars. The risk has two aspects. First, there is a danger in conflating law with justice; there is no intrinsic connection between law and justice. The gap between them may not be apparent to those who equate the attainment of justice with the application of law. Second is the belief that applying international law can produce self-evident, concrete consequences; this belief presupposes that applying law is a mechanical operation. But law-application involves inevitably normative interpretations that are not independent of power relations and hegemonic understandings. In addition, law (whether local or international) is not a monolithic entity nor a gapless system. Rather, it contains gaps, ambiguities, and contradictions. For example, the boycott movement demands full equality for the Palestinian citizens inside

Israel. The meaning and requirements of equality, however, are far from clear. The boycott movement's demands could easily be satisfied by instituting formal equality that is oblivious to the injustices of the past. Most importantly, legal language abides by the classifications and categorizations created by international law ("refugees," "citizens," "occupied population") without critically engaging with these terms.

The possibilities for utilizing the language of human rights and international law rest with critically engaging with these terms while employing them to bring attention to Palestinian stories. It is not that rights and laws will bring about justice, but that the knowledge of what has happened and what continues to happen in direct contradiction to these rights and laws allows for transformation in the way Israel and Palestine are understood. The language of human rights and international law provides Palestinians and those in solidarity with them the occasion to capture the attention of the world, particularly the West, where the language of human rights and international law is not only widely respected, but makes up a part of the mythical fabric of Western societies. The value of utilizing these discourses comes through in storytelling. As MacDonald (2012) and other SAIA members note, the transformative potential for human rights and international law discourses is that they facilitate a change to the dominant Israeli narrative, and make possible the opportunity to seize it, and speak to what has been silenced. The change in discourse, in what is permissible to say or not say in relation to Palestine is needed for change to material conditions on the ground for Palestinians.

5.4 Conclusion: Narrating Boldly from the Exit

In this chapter and the last, I have offered a present history of the narratives of Students Against Israeli Apartheid-Carleton leading up to the first IAW. These archives act as contestations and (re)configurations of the often accepted Zionist understandings of the Israeli state in Western discourses. I drew upon the conceptual approaches to solidarity and creative resistance outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 to demonstrate how SAIA's work is both in solidarity with the Palestinian call for Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) and a form of resistance itself. Understanding

solidarity as a political knowledge practice which takes its aim from those belonging to the directly affected communities in question based on a notion of linked struggles and shared values rooted in a commitment to social justice, I have shown how SAIA is committed to anticolonial and decolonizing struggles in Palestine and Turtle Island. Although I have emphasized SAIA's work in the (re)production of knowledge and knowledge practices that actively enunciate lesser known accounts of the continued Palestinian Nakba, I have also demonstrated how these narratives are in themselves forms of creative resistance. My articulation of resistance encompasses creative forms of action that actively oppose structural and systemic oppression and discrimination. The stories told and (re)told by SAIA contribute to the production of social memory concerning the ongoing Nakba, and also reveal the power structures both within and outside of the university involved in upholding Zionist perspectives on Israel. Throughout these two chapters, I have examined ways in which SAIA has had to thwart Carleton's attempts to suppress its solidarity work and at other times actively challenged these efforts. As SAIA works to make substantial changes at the institutional level that would have real impacts on the companies that are violating Palestinian human rights, it also significantly performs narratives of solidarity that are altering the way in which people understand the politics of Israel/Palestine. In talking about the possibilities for creative solidarity and resistance, I have also raised concerns about the use of human rights and international law discourses to realize transformational change. In doing so, I bring attention to questions about the limits and opportunities for those working to achieve social justice in Palestine. In considering Lorde's infamous words about the inability to "dismantle the master's house using the master's tools", I argue that while human rights and international law discourses may never undo neoliberalist colonial efforts that rely upon apartheid practices, the employment of these discourses in narrating Palestine perform acts

of solidarity with the Palestinian people that reveal the profound contradictions of the Zionist goal of a Jewish state.

In the following chapter, I move to examine creative resistance and solidarity from Palestinians outside of and within Palestine (Kanafani in Harlow 1987: 2). Here I archive and examine creative solidarity and resistance in “exile” (*manfa*) in the work of Rafeef Ziadah, and then I chronicle narratives from the Freedom Theatre (TFT) as cultural resistance “under occupation” (*that al-ihtilāl*). My discussion of Ziadah’s spoken word considers the possibilities and limitations of what can be said in exile, and the need to speak as a collective rather than show divides between Palestinians in situations of overwhelming asymmetries of power. I talk about how Ziadah’s narratives actively express *manfa* literature and solidarity with Palestinians while also contesting other settler colonial state and making connections with global struggles which critique capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, neoliberalism and racism. I follow the discussion of Ziadah’s contribution to disrupting the discourse on Israel with an examination of TFT. Bringing class privilege, gender discrimination, and race into the fold of settler colonial critique, TFT complicates the stories being told. These narratives do not excuse the occupier nor do they diminish the devastation wrought on Palestinians as a result of the practices of the settler colonial state, rather they illustrate how occupiers use existent class, gender, and race hierarchies to achieve their ends. Throughout Chapter 6, I bring into play Abu-Lughod and Sa’di’s (2007: 22-23) assertion that we must question dominant narratives and the carrying of deeper historical truths while pointing to the potential of artistic endeavours such as that of Ziadah and TFT in transforming Zionist storytelling.

“I started rethinking about the power of fiction, to really transform you and open up your heart to someone else. I realized that we might feel justice or recognize justice from facts, but we feel something from stories. We’re moved to do something by stories.” – Lee Maracle³⁴

Chapter 6 Palestinian narratives of resistance against colonization and memoricide³⁵

As noted in chapter 2, storytelling is critical to our understanding of the world. The stories we are privy to and those we choose to circulate shape how we come to know and accept what we consider as “truth” as well as how we determine who and what is important to us. These stories enable us to connect with others through notions of commonality, but also construct distances between us and those we deem unworthy of our interest or concern. Often premised along disparate social dimensions, the hegemonic stories of the imagined nation tell us who does and does not belong to our communities. The way in which dominant stories are told and retold through (re)presentations in news media, art, pop culture as well as in educational and other institutional contexts in addition to our own personal storytelling further establishes hierarchies of worthiness based on race, class, gender, sexuality, disability and other categories of difference. The question here is not simply based on cultural or social difference(s), but on political determinations of collective values and evaluations of (un)deservedness. Yet, despite the telling of narratives which diminish the humanity of peoples along categorical dimensions, narratives which counter hegemonic storytelling also exist and continue to be passed on. In this chapter, I focus on the telling of counter hegemonic narratives in the Palestinian art of Rafeef Ziadah and the Freedom Theatre to consider how their narratives are practices of creative resistance which expose and contest dominant colonial myths that rely on racialized dehumanization. Here, I theorize the concept of creative resistance as a political knowledge

³⁴ See Lee Maracle. 2015, June 18. “We feel something from stories”. Retrieved from <http://www.thewhig.com/2015/06/18/we-feel-something-from-stories>. Last accessed June 28, 2015.

³⁵ Segments of the following have appeared in “Beyond negotiating impossibilities: The art of Palestinian creative resistance” published in *Platforum*, 12:57-79, 2011, and “Relations of ruling in the colonial present: An intersectional view of the Israeli imaginary” published in the *Canadian Journal of Sociology, Special Issues*, 38(4): 509-532, 2013.

practice to examine two modes of narrative performance against the logics and materiality of settler colonialism; namely, Ziadah's spoken word, and the Freedom Theatre project and performances in Jenin, Palestine. Ziadah's poetry and spoken word performs an expression of what Ghassan Kanafani termed literature in "exile" or *manfa* in Arabic while the creative projects of the Freedom Theatre in Jenin, Palestine perform acts of cultural resistance "under occupation" or *taht al-ihtilāl*.

During Israel's latest attack on Gaza in the summer of 2014, Ziadah's spoken word performances, particularly the piece "We teach life, sir!", circulated on social media such as twitter and Facebook on a nearly daily basis. Meanwhile, the Freedom Theatre expressed its solidarity with the people of Gaza calling for support for boycott and sanctions, including cultural and academic boycotts against Israel (TFT July 17, 2014). As of July 21, 2014, the death toll amongst Palestinians killed in Gaza by Israel's military forces had exceeded 500 (Al-Mughrabi and Balmer July 21, 2014). By the end of August the number of Palestinians killed reached over 2100 (Blumenthal 2014:14). Within a period of a little over two months, the death and physical destruction of infrastructure had left the Palestinian people in Gaza living in an extreme necropolitical state with "25 percent of Gaza in ruins" (Blumenthal 2014:14). Writing on creative resistance during this period was particularly difficult and heart wrenching as images of dead Palestinians or those targeted for death in UN hospitals, schools, centers for people with disabilities, and housing complexes (see for example, Itlas 2014:15; Manduca et al. 2014:397) were readily available on social media (Kelley 2014:31; Munayyer 2014:103); yet, the stories coming out of Gaza at this time also served as a reminder of the resilience of a people who have continued to resist the ongoing colonization of their lands and minds in multiple and creative ways even in the face of violence and chaos. The refusal of dominant media to cover such atrocities is not an anomaly, but is rather predictable when it comes to Israel's gratuitous

violence against Palestinians. The stories coming directly from Gaza, shared on social media could not be found in most mainstream Canadian and American media. These stories expose the brutality of massacre, ethnic cleansing, and genocide that continues as I type these words. The bloody and graphic images that surfaced from those witnessing the gruesome carnage in Gaza, including Palestinians going about their daily lives, and both Palestinian and foreign journalists and camera operators, are difficult to look at, the words on the page are painful to read, but these are the stories of Palestinian experiences on the ground. The significance of witnessing and documenting the extreme and overtly racist actions of the Israeli state greatly outweigh the emotional heaviness of these tasks and pale in comparison to the physical and psychological costs of experiencing such terror.

6.1. A way forward: Aims of the chapter

In examining Palestinian resistance and solidarity narratives, as set out at the start of my project, this chapter questions representations of Israel as victim of Palestinian violence and examines the contradictions fundamental to Israel's portrayal of itself as a liberal democracy (Abu El-Haj 2010; Abu-Laban and Bakan 2008; Dalsheim 2007; Falah 1996; Ghanim 2008; Weizman 2007). It further attempts to effect change in the ways Palestinian political struggle and solidarity are conceptualised. To consider these interrogations and the possibility for transformation in how Israel and Palestine are understood, I address the research questions laid out in my introduction and discussed in the previous two chapters concerning: 1. The ways in which Palestinian resistance and solidarity efforts are affected by the logics of Israel's hegemonic Zionist narrative of racialized ethno-national exclusion; 2. The stories that are being told through different creative forms of Palestinian resistance and solidarity efforts, and 3. How these stories attempt to reshape, counter, challenge, and possibly transform Israel's dominant story.

My textual analyses of Ziadah's (2009; 2011) spoken word and audio visual texts considers how her stories disrupt current understandings of Israel/Palestine. I discuss the poetry from Ziadah's first spoken word album Hadeel (2009) and her celebrated YouTube performance of "We teach life, sir!" (2011) which lays bare the horror of turning mass death into sound bites for the media. As in the case of SAIA, Ziadah's art further contests the settler colonial states in which she has been situated and makes connections with global struggles which critique capitalism, neo/colonialism, neoliberalism and racism. Like Ziadah's spoken word texts, the narratives from the Freedom Theatre (TFT) consider subjective experiences of everyday life. Yet unlike Ziadah's work, TFT also explores the stories of people living in the occupied West Bank under conditions of displacement, dispossession, and occupation rather than the stories of Palestinians in exile. I show that while the Theatre is primarily a form of cultural resistance "under occupation" (*taht al-ihtilāl*), it is also one of solidarity in its contestation of race, class, and gender norms as well as its presentation of Palestinian refugees. TFT's narratives demonstrate the complexity of the settler colonial project which includes challenges from Israel as well as from the Palestinian Authority in addition to threats from conservative minded Palestinians who oppose elements of the Theatre's aims, such as the questioning of traditional gender roles. To map some of the battles that the young theatre faces in continuing to creatively resist Israel's ongoing colonization of Palestine while simultaneously fighting for their liberation as Palestinians, I examine the Theatre's website, clips of online video performances, print news reports, and social media posts. In examining these narratives, I also reflect on the ways in which these stories connect to previous texts or in Saloul's (2008) terms, how they are linked to deep-narratives of the *Nakba* to archive how these creative works attempt to seize authority over dominant Zionist discourses (see Noble 2006:84 ft.10).

There are always risks when writing from inside or outside of a context of resistance; these risks include leaving out information to simplify narratives and make them into clear cases of good versus evil. Ortner (1995:177) warns that these simplifications avoid the politics that existed prior to as well as the continued struggles of subalterns which leads to an idealization of resistance or in other words, a romanticization of resistance. Creative resistance works against such romanticizations to show the complexity involved in struggles against oppression. It does not minimize the violence of the oppressor, but neither does it attempt to reduce the complicated situation of oppression. By looking at internal contradictions within resistance, including how some people benefit from ongoing situations of injustice, creative resistance explores the “prior and ongoing *politics* of subalterns” (Ortner 1995:179; emphasis in original). These politics involve social dimensions of class, gender, race, sexuality, disability, and citizenship, for instance, as well as the practice of collaboration with the oppressor. Addressing internal politics is significant for understanding the complicated power relations connected to the external politics of oppression. There are also potential harms of epistemic violence in speaking and writing on behalf of others. For instance, the use of woman’s bodies in resistance literature that connects land and gender links to earlier texts and cannot be read solely as a one dimensional re-inscription of patriarchy onto woman’s bodies; rather, the connection may be used as a method of strategic essentialism to resist colonial oppression and bring attention to the harm that is (re)produced for woman and girls. An intersectional approach to examining resistance enables the study of complexities such as these which require looking at context and linkages between social categories as well as relations of power.

In the case of Palestinian creative resistance against the violence of the settler colonial state of Israel, the stories told and enacted through spoken word and theatre signify the importance of the *Nakba* on the collective memory of Palestinians in Palestine and in exile

(Saloul 2008). Palestinian creative resistance works to disrupt Zionist narratives to illustrate the continuous occupation and colonial practices of the state; moreover, many of these narratives demonstrate solidarity with related struggles in their contestation of all settler colonial states. By providing alternative discourses as sites of struggle to Israel's dominant myths of biblical renaissance and liberal democracy, the narratives of Ziadah and the Freedom Theatre creatively work towards transforming the current understanding of Israel. While the labelling of criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic attempts to create an impossibility in critically assessing the state's laws, policies and practices, these creative projects present historical narratives of Palestine unknown to many in the West which affords opportunities to overcome this impossibility.³⁶ These overlooked stories of Palestine are significant in the telling of history and crucial to resistance; they further demonstrate the complexity of narratives that have been stifled through violence endemic to settler colonial societies as well as the particularities of Israeli state violence on the Palestinian people. I begin by recounting my definition of creative resistance detailed in the second chapter of this study. I then explore Ziadah's spoken word and performance before delving into the work of TFT. As noted in my introduction to this study, I look at the narratives of Ziadah as they traverse the complex web of a neoliberal apartheid system while I consider TFT as it works to reveal how apartheid functions within that state (Collins 2011:141; see also Marcus 1995). I end by noting the significance of creative resistance and solidarity to other struggles. Bringing us back to Gaza and the solidarity actions and texts that emanated from

³⁶ While it has been pointed out to me that my perspective may be overly optimistic in relation to the potential of these creative works to transform Zionist discourse, I understand the projects of Rafeef Ziadah and the Freedom Theatre as part of a larger Palestinian resistance and solidarity movement that is seeing some significant implications on economic investments (see AbuNimah 2015; Silver 2015) as well as cultural and academic boycotts of Israel (see AbuNimah 2012; Barrows-Friedman 2015; Silver 2012). This is not to say that previous resistance and solidarity was not substantial or effective, but I believe that the ability to share this information through social media cannot be overlooked.

within Palestine to the people of Ferguson, Missouri, I raise the possibilities for ties to other oppressed and colonized peoples in Turtle Island and beyond.

6.2 Conceptualising Creative Resistance

As previously noted in Chapter 2, I follow Lila Abu Lughod's (1990:42; see also Ortner 1995) reversal of Foucault's understanding of power to employ the category of resistance as an analytic of power. Resistance understood in this light enables the study of intricate power relations, including the complex and at times contradictory ways in which social power is exercised. Beyond being a diagnostic of power, I consider creative resistance a form of political knowledge practice. To provide a working definition of creative resistance, I adapt Stephen Duncombe's (2002:8) definition of cultural resistance which creates a "free space" to challenge and transform the ideological and material hold of dominant power through novel "language, meanings, and visions of the future". In what Walter Benjamin termed the "tradition of the oppressed", the political knowledge practice of resistance narratives demand a reading against the grain from the perspective of the oppressed rather than the oppressor at times directly alluding to earlier infamous resistance narratives. In the situation of Palestine, the political-knowledge practices of creative resistance demand a reading against the logics of the Israeli settler colonial state. This demands that the audience question narratives of exception and indeed the notion of violence itself as all colonial projects are necessarily violent practices.

Creative resistance draws attention to the significance of both symbolic practices and material goods. Settler colonialism depends upon the destruction of knowledge and resources. These destructive practices of colonialism are key to what Masalha (2012) refers to as "memoricide" which include the suppression of history, self-censorship, purposeful physical destruction and renaming of place. As Kertzer (1998:9) argues, social memory is constructed through "symbolic behaviour that is socially standardized and repetitive"; he terms this

behaviour “ritual”. Similarly, Lentin (Abu-Lughod and Jayyusi in Lentin 2010:34) states that narratives of colonization demonstrate “patterns of iteration, repetition and accumulation” that form collective memory which enables the continued Zionist colonization of Palestine; however, narratives of resistance also construct collective memory by challenging the “authorized vocabulary” of the colonizer and (re)telling stories which have been distorted or left out completely that are crucial to symbolic and material transformational possibilities on the ground. The performances I discuss in this chapter are also representative of D. Soyini Madison’s concept of radical performance. Like Duncombe’s cultural resistance, Madison (2010:3; emphasis in original) states that radical performances “*create a means and space from whatever elements or resources are available in order to resist or subvert the strategies of more powerful institutions, ideologies, processes*”. Demanding change that is concerned with “the most vital cultural, social and political tensions of ... [our] time” (Baz Kershaw in Madison 2010:18,19), radical performance is a tactic of human rights and social justice (Madison 2010:2). In many cases, creative resistance requires that space be taken when it is not given/provided. Radical performances change the people involved, the performers as well as the audience, to create in Bertolt Brecht’s words “a new reality” (Brecht in Madison 2010:12). While the data in my study does not enable me to show that the radical performances of Ziadah and the Freedom Theatre have altered either the people involved in the performances or the audience members, the creative resistance narratives of their art nevertheless demands that “a new reality” be known.³⁷

³⁷ Indeed, in both cases I do not define who the audience is which would require further theoretical engagement concerning who makes up audiences; however, in relation to the impact of radical performance on the performers, I use interviews with two Theatre members to discuss their views on being performers and on their audiences. See discussion of Nabil Al-Raee and Faisal Abu Alheja.

6.3 The Spoken Word of Rafeef Ziadah

Allow me to speak my Arab tongue before they occupy my language as well

Allow me to speak my mother tongue before they colonize her memory as well “Shades of Anger”

My first encounter with Rafeef Ziadah’s poetry was in Montreal at an event for Palestinian political prisoners put on by *Sumoud*, a political prisoner solidarity group in 2006. Ironically this event was marked by police violence and the arrest of several community social justice activists. There are a number of Palestinian spoken word poets who have gained attention on social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook, and twitter as well as through Def Jam, the popular HBO series out of New York City. Although Suheir Hammad is arguably the most well-known Palestinian spoken word artist in the English language whose writing and presentation has influenced many artists both Palestinian and not, I examine the art of Ziadah who has more recently come onto the spoken word scene and is an active member of the BDS movement. Ziadah participated in the 2014 Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) in Toronto and the UK and has expressed a continued commitment to the anticolonial struggle for the liberation of Palestine; however, my rationale for choosing to focus on her narratives is based only in part on her

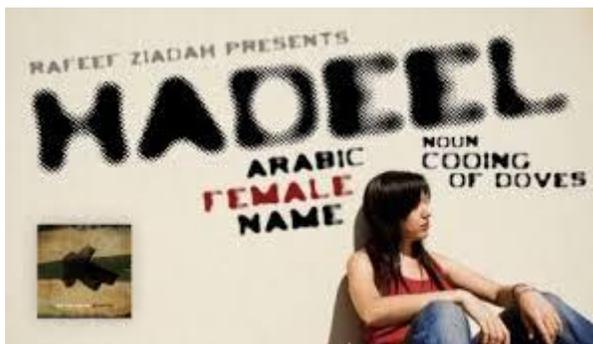


Figure 8: *Hadeel*, Courtesy of Rafeef Ziadah

connection to IAW events. As noted above, my principal motivation in deciding to look at her work is that the stories she tells are exemplary of Kanafani’s *manfa* literature (Harlow 1987:2). Ziadah speaks from experience as a refugee and a migrant/immigrant/settler in the West. Her

works of art, which critique, question and expose Israel as a settler colonial state, extend to other (settler) colonial and imperial projects, including Indigenous struggles on Turtle Island and in

Iraq. As I attempt to contribute to an anticolonial as well as decolonial study I am particularly drawn to her art for this reason.

Ziadah's lyrics and radical performance (Madison 2010) advance a creative critique of the Zionist national imaginary. Her spoken word expresses her personal experiences as a Palestinian transcending borders and boundaries through the transnational field of the Internet. Her album *Hadeel* and her YouTube videos present a slice of history that maps her lived knowledge practice as a Palestinian refugee in exile onto the political cartography of the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Social media and the prevalence of YouTube videos have enabled Ziadah to access a wider audience than she would be able to do through conventional means. Her writing disrupts what Collins (2011) refers to as the logics of settler colonialism³⁸ which include well-known and widely accepted narratives of Israel as the home for all Jewish peoples established on a land that was nearly barren and uncultivated, and further complicates these hegemonic narratives to show the power relations involved in enabling the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Her poetic verse explicitly references British and US political involvement and complicity in the Zionist colonial project and extends beyond the colonization of Palestine to expose Western interest and destruction in Iraq, Chile, the Congo and Turtle Island. Her work is also a critique of capitalism and patriarchy across the globe. The links between race, gender, and class are central to her art. Interrogating the current storytelling of Israel/Palestine, Ziadah traces social relations to make clear the connection between occupier and occupied, of exiled and exiler, of migrant/ immigrant/ refugee/citizen/native and settler, of government, media, and government complicity and how international law fails one who becomes colonized. Speaking to

³⁸ As outlined in Chapter 1, Collins (2011:31-35) details four main logics of settler colonialism that work in tandem with one another: 1. the logic of elimination (or genocide), 2. the logic of the frontier, 3. the logic of exceptionalism, and 4. the logic of denial.

the ethnic cleansing of Palestine through the erasure of Palestinian history, including the renaming of place, and genocide, her words work to transform the discourse on Palestine.

Attempts to destroy or control Palestinian knowledge are crucial to maintaining the dominant Zionist narrative and the myth of Israel as a liberal democracy. Like other Western settler colonial states, Israel's discourses of security discursively construct a racialized framework of belonging and enemy others. Israel's mechanisms of security, which limit access to jobs, building permits, travel permits, business licenses, and the like, in addition to the highly militarized apparatus of the Apartheid Wall and checkpoints, ensure that the livelihood and nationalist pursuits of Palestinians are made difficult if not impossible (see Zureik 2011: 22). Ziadah (2009) confronts the hypocrisy of Israel as a liberal democracy in her spoken word "Savage". The challenge to the audience listening to Ziadah's work is to recognize that the conflation of Judaism and Israel has been constructed for the benefit of the governing elite. This is to the detriment and devastation of the Palestinian people.

Tonight, tonight, I make no apologies/ ... I am what I am Indigenous from Palestine/... I am your savage, your terrorist/ ... Demographic threat, born to a demographic threat and *inshaallah* will give you your next demographic threat/ Wrap her in a *hattah* and name my baby girl Yafa/ ... My mother rubbed olive oil in my hair and in my skin until the smell of Palestine seeped through to my veins/ I have an immune system you can only dream of/ Built on UNRWA *hommous* and *fuul*³⁹/ [...] explain this to me - I have lived a refugee while you took my home and they tell me you're Polish and some god promised you my land/ Can I have a phone number, a fax, an email for your god? I'd like to have a chit chat/ Don't know when god became a real estate agent/ And of all the world decided to promise away my land/[...] Don't you see, don't you see? The colour of my skin is the colour of the soil in Palestine/ Every rock in Jerusalem knows my last name/ And every wave hitting the Haifa shore is waiting for me to return/ And I will return and I will always be on your mind/ ... In the stones of your homes, in the cactus plants/ I will always be on your mind/ ... I am your savage/ your terrorist/ ... Always there to haunt you.

Through Ziadah's poetic verse, she urges listeners to question the historical ethno-national narrative they may be familiar with and the current stories that are offered in the mainstream

³⁹ *Fuul* is the name of a popular Arab dish made with fava beans which has no English equivalent. The pronunciation is similar to fool but transliterated into *fuul*.

media which portray Palestinians as alien others- demographic threats, savages and terrorists. She begins with an assertion that she will not apologize for her position as a political subject/object that her identification as a Palestinian woman necessarily entails. Her words underscore the very real experience of being a refugee unable to return to a land from which her family was forcibly removed in order to create a Jewish state. Ziadah contests the Israeli state's moral authority to create an all Jewish state and further questions the notion of homeland, indiginity, and terrorism as well as self-determination and resistance in the Israeli-Palestinian context. Her stated desire to have a "chit-chat with your god" mocks the logic of exceptionalism in Israel's biblical claims to land while she speaks to the racialized discrimination against Palestinians labelled "demographic threats" as explained in the introduction to this study. The ethno-national goal of Israel to make and keep the state demographically Jewish requires biopolitical and necropolitical mechanisms to regulate and control the life and death of Palestinians through the logic of elimination. This logic utilizes the techniques of forced migration, confinement, coercive assimilation and mass killing to deny the identity of the colonized and their connection to the land (Collins 2011:32). The colonizer makes claims to the land and refutes the existence of the Indigenous people. Doing so, enables the colonizer to dismiss the legitimacy of resistance by labeling struggles against colonial forces/colonialism as acts of terror/terrorism.

Remarkably, in colonial contexts, Indigenous populations are racialized as other while White colonizers represent themselves as citizens who belong to the land. Natives are thus transformed into "aliens" (Abdo 2003:133; Bannerji 2003:102). Ziadah responds to this Zionist othering and refusal of belonging with her personal story that presents her connection to Palestine through the metaphor of the landscape in the cactus, olives, soil, stones, and sea. She makes the ties between land and gender apparent. Reversing the logic of the frontier which

constructs territorial claims to the land directly related to spatial politics and the logic of denial, she plants herself firmly in Palestine. Her prose figuratively alludes to her newborn baby girl who she will name Yafa - a reference to the historical Palestinian city- who she will wrap in a “*hattah*” - a term used for the now iconic black and white checked scarf symbolic of Palestinian resistance - as a “demographic threat”. Rather than re-inscribing patriarchal gender norms of masculinity and femininity (see Ball 2012: 30-31 discussed in Chapter 2), Ziadah uses her body strategically to connect to the land that is necessary for the existence of the Palestinian people. The employment of the trope of the feminine body to the land and fertility, in this case Ziadah’s own body, connects but also contrasts to linkages of women’s bodies made by Palestinian male authors who also use women’s bodies as representations of fertility and motherhood tied to the land but speak as men.

Nevertheless, her symbolic use of language also pays homage to the artistic resistance of her Palestinian predecessors, primarily the poetry of the infamous Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish.⁴⁰ Her evocation of Darwish is also present in “Breathe” which repeats the directive to “record/take a picture”. “Breathe” concerns the experience of someone suffocating through the bombings in Gaza and documenting the horrors of watching others die, the stench of decaying bodies, and the smell of burning flesh. Like the call to record in Darwish’s “Record! I am Arab”, Ziadah’s poetry underscores the significance of recording to archive in the Foucauldian sense of actively challenging the historical record. Her reference to Darwish establishes relational ties to the histories of Palestinian peoples who have had similar experiences as refugees or exiles. While her account does not tell of the dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, Ziadah’s words compel listeners to question why one group of people should have more right over a territory than another based on a biblical claim. She puts forward an alternate narrative of

⁴⁰ For more on the symbolism and imagery in the work of Mahmoud Darwish see Hala Khamis Nassar and Najat Rahman (2008).

her life as a refugee unable to return home to Palestine. She tells of her life in one of the many United Nations Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA)-run refugee camps in Lebanon notorious for poor sanitation and living conditions, as well as for dogmatic restrictions on building and movement inside and outside of the camp boundaries.⁴¹

This is a story shared by what is now one of the largest refugee populations in the world that has been disappeared through near silence in the (re)telling of the Zionist myth. The over 750,000 Palestinians who were made refugees with the creation of the state in 1948 (Masalha 2003:259) and again following the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories now number approximately 11 million if the internally displaced are included (see for example, Masalha 2012:14; Feldman 2012). Under the Law of Absentee Property, Palestinian Arabs who were forced to leave their homes as a result of the *Nakba* were classified by Israel as “absentees” and had their homes, lands, and property confiscated (see Fischbach 2011; Leibler 2011). Through the settler colonial logics of elimination and denial, Israel continues to refuse them entry in violation of the internationally recognized Right of Return (Abu-Laban and Bakan 2008:651; Lentin 2004:par. 2.4). Meanwhile, the Zionist state’s Law of Return enables any Jewish person who immigrates to Israel to be granted automatic citizenship and nationality (Davis 1987:26; see also Abdo 2011:40).

Ziadah’s words in “Shades of Anger” also speak to the discursive practices and processes of such settler colonial logics. She begins in Arabic, repeating in English, the significance of language to culture, place, and memory and the purposeful erasure of language as a process of colonization: “*Esmaho lee an atakalam be lesany alraby qabel an yahtaloo loghatee aydan*”⁴²/ Allow me to speak my Arab tongue before they occupy my language as well/Allow me to speak

⁴¹ UNRWA is short for the United Nations Refugee and Works Agency, created to aid and be responsible for the Palestinian refugee population both inside and outside of Palestine.

⁴² I would like to express thanks to my dear friend and colleague Abla Abdelhadi for the translation.

my mother tongue before they colonize her memory as well”. Telling the story of her connection to Palestine, this poem like “Savage” speaks to the logics of elimination and denial. Her narrative challenges Israel’s “memoricide” of Palestine through the naming of Palestinian places and symbolic cultural images of religion and land:

I am what I am/An Arab woman of colour and we come in all shades of anger/All my grandfather ever wanted to do was to wake up at dawn and watch my grandmother kneel and pray in a village hidden between Yafa and Haifa/My mother was born under an olive tree on a soil they say is no longer mine

She calls attention to the methods of the logic of elimination, highlighting the practices of confinement through physical barriers, walls, checkpoints, and imprisonment as well as the control and regulation over bodies in forcing women to give birth at checkpoints:

But I will cross their barriers, their checkpoints, and their damned apartheid walls/....And did you hear my sister screaming yesterday as she gave birth at a checkpoint with Israeli soldiers looking between her legs for their next demographic threat?/Called her baby girl Jenin/And did you hear Amni Munah screaming between the prison bars?: We are returning to *Falistin*

As in “Savage”, in “Shades of Anger” Ziadah points to the construct of Palestinians as terrorists before they are even born: “But you tell me, this womb inside of me will only bring you your next terrorist”. Next, she extends the use of the racist stereotype of terrorist to other Arab contexts to identify the hypocrisy of the West’s support for imperial projects: “Beard-wearing, gun-waving, towel-head, sand-nigger/ You tell me I send my children out to die/ But those are your copters, your F16s in OUR skies”.

The violence of the state is woven throughout her work and is central to most of her poetry in the album *Hadeel*. “Baghdad” concerns the experiences of colonial and imperial violence against Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra, Shatila, and Tel al Za’atar in Lebanon by Israel, and against Iraqis in Baghdad by the US and its allies. Moving beyond Arab nations, she highlights the involvement of the US in the overthrow and murder of democratically

elected leaders Salvador Allende in Chile and Patrice Lumumba⁴³ in the Congo as well as the training of Osama Bin Laden through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); while within the US itself she alludes to the violence of the Ku Klux Klan “my grandparents didn’t run around like clowns with white capes and white hoods on their heads lynching Black people”. The suggestion in this verse is that the US has not only directly colluded with right wing dictators to destroy democracies but also has historical ties to white supremacist movements (McVeigh, Cunningham, Farrell 2014).

In “Savage”, Ziadah further speaks to orientalist tropes that are common in Western popular culture and reproduced on individual and institutional levels from remarks about “liv[ing] in a tent and own[ing] a camel” to beliefs that Arab women are submissive, soft-spoken and exist primarily for the purposes of entertainment: “Forgot to be your every-orientalist dream/ Genie in a bottle, belly-dancer, harem girl/ Soft-spoken A-raab woman/” to the impact of racialized stereotypes on practices immigration: “And one more immigration officer stop me and frisk me for having a tan he only wishes he had”. She counters these racialized stereotypes by pointing to the West’s duplicity in their claims to be aiding people, particularly women, who are oppressed and suffering as a result of war while benefitting financially from hostilities through weapons sales and strategic power in their relations with Israel : “Yes master, no master, thank-you for the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches raining down on us from your B52s, master/ Yes, my liberators are here to kill my children and call them collateral damage”. In a clever reversal of tropes, as in “Savage”, in “Shades of Anger” she uses her own body to resist the colonial oppression in the logics of elimination and denial to show the steadfastness (*sumoud*) of the Palestinian people: “So let me break it to you/ This womb inside of me will only bring you your

⁴³ While there is some dispute as to whether or not the CIA directly assassinated both leaders, the CIA’s involvement in these coups and plans to murder Lumumba are accepted in mainstream scholarship.

next rebel/ She'll have a rock in one hand and a Palestinian flag in the other Beware my anger”.

Ziadah demonstrates the importance of the personal to the political. The complexities in familial and community relationships must be understood within the context of larger political struggles against oppression. In Anna Ball's (2012: 58) discussion of Fadwa Tuqan's work noted in Chapter 2, Ball discusses Tuqan's significant recognition of the problems with the personal/political dichotomy in the Palestinian context “whereby poets are expected to privilege the political over the personal”. Ziadah provides a view into how the personal and political are intricately entangled and the direct impact that the colonial project has on the personal in “Cry”. Here Ziadah offers a story of a Palestinian daughter agonizing over watching her mother who has been exiled from Palestine struggling with mental wellbeing as a result of the complex processes of colonization. “Cry” speaks to how relationships between spouses, suicidal ideation, the murder of siblings, child birth, and immigration procedures are connected to the logics of elimination, denial, the frontier, and exceptionalism of the Israeli state. She begins, singing in Arabic to her mother, drawing attention to the connection of personal struggles to relations of power through the processes of migrant detention as a result of Israeli settler colonialism:

I just can't see you cry/ I just can't see you cry/Curled up in a ball next to a man who loved his revolution more than he ever loved you....not knowing that you are a walking, talking, breathing Palestine/ Carried her on your back and in your womb for 61 years waiting for liberation/ You were the one who sat on the cold floor of an immigration cell and gave birth to your first girl/ Carried the memories of those who were named through airports and luggage that would be checked and double-checked/ because you had the wrong last name and you carried their memories

Here again, Ziadah uses strategic essentialism to show how gender is impacted by colonial practices which regulate and control life and death. She connects life and death to mental health, personal memory, and social memory revealing the biopolitical and necropolitical practices of the state.

And all your doctors/ and all your doctors/ All your doctors just deliberate and say/ just take a pill/ Just take a pill and all the voices in your head will disappear/ Just take a pill and all the voices in your head will disappear/ Numb every thought of suicide/ Erase dispossession/ And your brothers/ Your brothers lined up against the wall/ Your brothers lined up against the wall as you press their dead bodies into your chest and let their blood soak your dress/ But they want you to take a pill to erase your history/ Our history/ Stateless and refugees/ But they want you to take a pill to erase your history/ Our history/ Stateless and refugees while others live in our land

As Nadia Kanani (2011, 2014) has noted in her work, the intersection between disability, race, gender, and colonial practices is one that requires more scholarly study⁴⁴. Ziadah makes clear that these practices cannot be separated from one another. Mental health and disability are deeply connected to practices of colonization. The suggestion to “take a pill” is not only about forgetting what has gone on before but it concerns the destruction of memory which is integral to the colonial project; alternatively, remembering is crucial to social and collective memory needed for resistance. Using the rhetorical literary tactic of repetition, Ziadah ensures that her audience will remember the suffering of colonial processes intended to erase Palestinian history.

The relationship between memory and state-sanctioned violence is also presented in the title track of Ziadah’s album “Hadeel”, a poem about the death of a nine year old girl named Hadeel in Gaza whose name means “the cooing of doves”.

Hadeel/ Hadeel is nine/ Hadeel was nine/ Officials said/ Israeli officials said, “they regret her death/ but terrorism must stop, rockets must stop, resistance must stop”/ or they will continue to shell Gaza/ until we surrender the bit of dignity we have left/ Until we elect who they want/ sign what they want/ and die in silence/ the way they want/ They smile and regret death/ as a casual accident/ and regret how Palestinian children die/ in a collective torture chamber: Gaza

Ziadah demonstrates how the logics of settler colonialism function to silence the stories of

Figure 9 - Performing Hadeel, Courtesy of Rafeef Ziadah



⁴⁴ See also Matthew M. Heaton. 2013. *Black skin, white coats: Nigerian psychiatrists, decolonization, and the globalization of psychiatry*. New African Histories Series. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Palestinians, deny their rights to resist occupation, and diminish the worthiness of Palestinian lives. She illustrates the logic of Israeli exceptionalism which places the lives of Israelis above Palestinian life and speaks to how gender is used in this logic to present the killing of Palestinians as more palatable: “Israeli security is absolute written with blood and bulldozers/ and the art of women spokespersons/ because death is softer coming from a woman/ death is more polite coming from a woman”.

Ziadah further shows the complicated and strained relationship between the oppressed and those who consider themselves allies and their efforts at solidarity. The constant meetings, email correspondence, and decisions made concerning what and who is worthy of media attention while necessary for practical reasons inevitably dehumanizes the lives of Palestinians:

Who?/ who will tell Hadeel that we went out for coffee and carried on/ the day she died?
Nothing stopped/ not a pause/ not a tear/ next meeting/ next cigarette/ next train/ check e-mail and sigh/ over another Palestinian gone/ “Is this worth a press release?/ Maybe not.”/ Solidarity from afar like a sick joke/ a bad story to tell a child

Ziadah brings humanity back to Hadeel’s life and the lives of others lost by presenting an image of Hadeel’s mother “busy baking bread and *za’atar*⁴⁵” and asking who will let her know that her daughter has been killed and that her son Ahmad “has lost his sight”. She connects the significance of the killing of Hadeel to the significance of all Palestinian lives killed by Israel.

Although the *sumoud* of Palestinian society asks that life not be mourned and that resistance continue, Ziadah counters with an alternative view of resistance through the commemoration and remembrance of Palestinian life:

Every prayer I remember and half-remember won’t bring you back/ Every prayer I remember and half-remember won’t bring you back/ as you wrap yourself in stories of Palestine. Gather the other children to cry a while/ waiting restless/ for the next soldier/ to knock down your door/ But the Gaza sky/ the Gaza sky still rains US-made shells/ to cast us out of a history/ we carry on our backs/ Hadeel... But the doves/ the doves will not fly over Gaza again/ the doves will not fly over Gaza again/ Hadeel is gone forever/ Gone/

⁴⁵ The Arabic word for thyme.

No final words/ just a void in her mother's heart/ just a void in her mother's heart/ And they say/ they say/ "don't cry for martyrs/ don't cry for martyrs/ carry on the fight/ carry on the fight/ carry on the fight"/ but for Hadeel/ for Hadeel/ give me a moment of silence/ give me a moment of silence/ NO/ give me a moment of sincere resistance/ sincere resistance/so we can hold on to the bit of dignity we have left/ so we can hold on to the bit of dignity we have left / For Hadeel.

The contradiction in Ziadah's call for "a moment of silence" followed by the negation of this call for "a moment of sincere resistance" brings attention to the fact that Hadeel's death cannot be marked simply with silence, but requires action. Resistance here is not defined except for the insistence that it be "sincere". For Ziadah ensuring the dignity of Hadeel's life and Palestinian life in general necessitates the continued fight against oppression. Commemorative silence is significant in marking the loss of lives in affected communities, but to demonstrate to others that Palestinians will not lay down and die quietly and to demand that Palestinian life be recognized resistance must "carry on".

On the whole, public discourse on Israel/Palestine in the West has mirrored the dominant governing Jewish-Israeli perspective. There has been little room provided in Western mainstream media or educational institutions for a Palestinian view on Israel as a settler colonial state; instead Western media has presented a distorted perception of violence attributed to Palestinian resistance (Qumsiyeh 2010). Rather than calling attention to the fact that the Indigenous Palestinian population has been resisting its colonial occupier for over 60 years, we are told that Israel is defending itself from the violent enemy other. There are multiple reasons for the failure of dominant discourses to capture the voices of Palestinian, and although there is no absolute silencing of their narratives, their absence must be interrogated.

There is a concerted effort to keep particular narratives in public discourse to maintain current structures of power. Ziadah's poetry contests and disputes this perspective offering a radical view from a place of exile that demands to be heard. In "Shattered" Ziadah presents the

case of an immigrant refugee who is stateless and the struggle for a sense of belonging while in “Montreal Subway” Ziadah offers her listeners a glimpse into the world of a Palestinian man named Ahmed who is a stateless refugee about to be deported from Canada. In this story, she demonstrates the paradox of state deportation rules when there is nowhere to which Ahmed can be deported. Ziadah shifts away from Palestinian oppression and resistance to show solidarity with women who are racialized and experience class oppression in “Supposed to”. Providing a picture of the life of a live-in domestic caretaker who is taken for granted and abused by her employers, she speaks:

And I am supposed to clean your house, madam/And, I am supposed to love your children, madam/ and I am supposed to always thank-you, madam and thank god for letting me find you/ Want me to bow down, back bent over brown Lucky to be out of my debt into your servitude/ Will you give me back my passport madam?/ Will you give me back my passport? And I am supposed to keep my place in this world/ And I am supposed keep my place in this world with all my aching body parts and give you the last seconds of my day and my last thoughts at night Your rules, they keep changing ...so I never know what why I did wrong to ask for a few hours of free time just to go shopping for my children madam/ But just make sure, madam/ Please madam, just make sure, that you watch your back, madam/ Because us armies of brown us armies of brown we do know our place / And there will come a time when you will have to clean your own crap madam and pay back for your crime of separating I from my child, madam ... Because I am not supposed to clean your house, madam / And I am not supposed to love your children, madam/ And I am not supposed to thank-you/ So watch your back, with love from back home

While some may maintain that Ziadah’s spoken word romanticizes Palestinian resistance, her lyrics reveal the complexity of interpersonal relations and the efforts that people go through to obtain a better life as a result of colonial and imperial oppression. Pointing to the very real differences in how Indigenous peoples and their colonizers understand and experience life is not about constructing idealistic notions of the past, but about recognizing the concrete attempts by colonizers to devastate and obliterate Indigenous ways of being. Ziadah speaks clearly to this in her spoken word “Trail of Tears”. Here she connects the processes of imperialism and settler colonialism to the continued resistance of the Indigenous peoples of Iraq, Palestine and Turtle

Island. The four logics of settler colonialism (and imperialism, in the case of Iraq): the frontier, exceptionalism, elimination, and denial, are evident in this poem.

From Baghdad to Tyendinega/ We're still walking a trail of tears from Palestine to Six Nations [...] Their gods promised them our lands/ Trail of tears/ Bury their fears in our skin/ Trail of tears/ Uprooting our olive groves/ Stealing our land/ Trail of tears/ Bury, bury their dead in our skin/ And build golf courts on our corpses/Call death machines Apaches/ They dare to call death machines Apaches and their cars Cherokee...

The assertion of resistance is not a romanticization of life, but instead demonstrates how the colonization of Indigenous peoples relies on destroying their knowledge practices and ways of living. As noted in the previous chapter, the transformation of historical Palestine into a Jewish majority state requires ongoing practices of ethnic cleansing through land expropriation. These practices are materially as well as symbolically significant. Changing history through the Zionist renaming and rewriting of place and experience or “the Judaization of land” (Kanaaneh 2009:72; Yiftachel 1997:98) as discussed in Chapter 5 not only attempts to alter the story of Palestine, but is an epistemic and material act of erasure (Masalha 2012:108, 117, 127; see also Pappé 2006:222; Safian 1997; Weizman 2007:120).

The knowledge practices of shared histories are removed through the settler colonial mythmaking processes. This is as true in Canada as it is in Israel. As Ziadah states in “Trail of tears”, villages have been uprooted and Indigenous people buried under golf courses and parks. In Canada, the consequences of these actions go mostly unaccounted for and redress is far from adequate since the government and many Canadians refuse to address the continued settler colonization of this land. For Palestinians under direct threat of death the accountability process is a long time coming, but the collective memories of people living under colonization lives on.

In her performance entitled “We teach life, sir!”, Ziadah illustrates the frustration and contradiction of the West’s notion that Palestinians are filled with hate and the demand on Palestinians to be “non-violent”. Drawing attention to the limits of international law and UN resolutions in favour of Palestinian rights, this spoken word video was shared countless times during the extensive bombing campaign in the



Figure 10 - Performing We teach life, sir! in London, UK, Courtesy of Rafeef Ziadah

most recent Israeli massacre in Gaza in the summer of 2014. Ziadah’s exasperation - who as a Palestinian in exile has to answer to questions that use racist stereotypes of Palestinians as terrorist others - is palpable. She begins this piece by explaining the context in which it was written. As a media spokesperson for the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid (CAIA) during the 2008-2009 Israeli bombing campaign in Gaza (Operation Cast Lead) she stayed up all night preparing for the interviews and talks she would have to give. The next morning she was asked, “don’t you think it would all be fine if you just stopped teaching your children to hate?”. Her poem which she radically performs in the sense that Madison describes, is “a response to these types of questions we Palestinians always get”.

Today, my body was a TVed massacre/ Today, my body was a TVed massacre that had to fit into sound bites and word limits/ Today, my body was a TVed massacre that had to fit into sound bites and word limits/ filled enough with statistics to counter measured response/ and I perfected my English, and I learned my UN Resolutions but still, he asked me/ “Ms. Ziadah, don’t you think everything would be resolved if you would just stop teaching so much hatred to your children?”/ Pause./ I look inside of me for strength to be patient/ but patience is not at the tip of my tongue as the bombs drop over Gaza/ Patience has just escaped me/ Pause./ Smile./ “We teach life, sir”./ Rafeef, remember to smile./ Pause./ “We teach life, sir”/ We Palestinians teach life/ after they have occupied the last sky/ We teach life/ after they have built their settlements and apartheid walls, after the last skies/ We teach life, sir.

The insistence of Western journalists on having “a human story” not a political one in “sound bites” that fits within “word limits” lays bare both the dominant media’s refusal to engage and reveal the political questions of Israeli apartheid and occupation, as well as its inability to provide historical context. Ziadah’s vocalized depiction of her body as a “TVed massacre” provides an image of the personal in the political. Ziadah also expresses her complex position as a member of CAIA in solidarity with the people in Gaza and as a Palestinian in exile directly experiencing the epistemic violence of the media and a public “desensitized to [what is deemed as the] terrorist blood” of Palestinian death. She describes those who felt sorry for the deaths (but did nothing) and cites “UN Resolutions and statistics” as well as the rejection of the notion that there are two equal sides. Throughout the poem, Ziadah remarks on how she must come across as patient and polite as she states, “smile, not terrorist”, while recounting the horror of Palestinian deaths and the numbers of people dead, which moved quickly from hundreds to thousands.

As noted at the start of this chapter, the video for this poem traversed the transnational online landscape countless times during the most recent Israeli bombing campaign in Gaza in the summer of 2014. A possible reason for the circulation of the video may have been the collective outrage and helplessness that many people expressed globally in solidarity marches around the world because of the purposeful targeting of Palestinians being bombed in what would usually be considered places of safety, including schools, mosques, churches, hospitals, housing complexes, and disability centres (see for example, Norr 2014; Rhohana 2014; Aljazeera, In pictures 2014). While the dominant media maintained its status quo coverage, various forms of social media, including twitter and Facebook provided a new avenue for people on the ground, alternative media sources, and those in solidarity with Palestinians to share stories and often graphic images of what was occurring in real time (Kelley 2014:31; Munayyer 2014:103). The sharing of

information from Palestinians in Gaza and the teaching of life under these circumstances demonstrates a shift in how Palestinians are perceived, at least for those open to the knowledge circulated. Through “patterns of iteration, repetition and accumulation” (Lentin 2010:34), Ziadah’s narratives of resistance recall and (re)construct collective memory and in doing so confront the “authorized vocabulary” of the colonizer.

I turn now to explore the creative resistance of the Freedom Theatre (TFT) as an analytic of power and as a political knowledge practice which permits an examination of the complex and often contradictory power relations of Palestine-Israel, and further enables novel ways to challenge dominant discourses and power structures. Resistance narratives as Benjamin maintained, demand reading against the grain from the perspective of the oppressed rather than the oppressor to envision “a new reality”. The creative work of TFT is both a tactic (Madison 2010:2) and a performance of decolonization exemplary of Kanafi’s *taht al-ihtilāl* or resistance “under occupation”. The significance of social media to the exposure that TFT has received has also been of great consequence. I will discuss the potential avenues that social media has opened up for the Theatre near the end of the next section.

6.4 The Freedom Theatre

“Arts cannot free you from your chains. Art can generate and mobilize discourses of freedom. Art can create debates. Art can expose.” – Juliano Mer Khamis, The Freedom Theatre⁴⁶

Approximately 16,000 people live in the Jenin Refugee Camp where the Freedom Theatre is located. The creation of Israel caused the internal displacement of Palestinians from their homes and towns or villages, mostly from in and around the Haifa area during the *Nakba* in 1948 and following the *Naksa* in 1967 (Mee 2011:9). Forced exile is therefore significant to the realities of Palestinian lives in the Jenin refugee camp and also to their receipt and interactions with those outside of the camp. Palestinians within Israel proper do not learn their own history in official

⁴⁶ Artsworld: Palestinian Theatre AlJazeeraEnglish (Sep 6, 2008). Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoeBhD6Q_60&feature=related -

discourses, such as educational institutions (Arar 2012) while until recently, education within the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza was informed mainly by the history of other nations (de Santisteban 2002). The Theatre enables Palestinians to learn and perform their own stories, stories that counter Zionist claims, stories written by Palestinians in exile and within Palestine, as well as stories written and performed by young people related to their own experiences. While a great focus of the Theatre is on youth, professional performances by adults are also central to the project. The narratives of TFT are then, at once, decolonization practices that seek to challenge and alter the colonized mind (Fanon 2004 [1961]) of those within and outside the West Bank in addition to being anticolonial processes.

My initial aim in studying the Freedom Theatre was to get the perspective of the Theatre performers in relation to their work. I wanted to know if participants in this project saw their work as a form of resistance against colonization, but I also wanted to learn about the struggles they faced daily to be able to perform in the Theatre. My goal was to establish the connections between the Theatre as an institution of memory and resistance and the everyday challenges which are part and parcel of the colonial present in a particular place in Palestine. While I received a positive response to my request to conduct a narrative study with members of the Theatre (Stanczak May 1, 2012), there was no reply to my follow-up. Soon after my second email correspondence to confirm the Theatre's commitment to participate in the project, news stories surfaced about the arrest and torture of two members of Jenin's Freedom Theatre. Only slightly over a year since the murder of the Theatre project's co-founder, Juliano Mer Khamis on April 4, 2011, the arrest of co-founder Zakaria Zubeidi and artistic director Nabil Al-Raee in May and June of 2012 made it evident that the type of narrative research that I was trying to conduct through the personal journaling of TFT members would be near impossible given the

everyday realities of the people involved in the project combined with the fact that I was trying to do this from such a distance.

Yet in tracing the news stories and press releases of the arrests of Zubeidi and Al-Raei, the emerging story is significant in demonstrating the complexity of power relations involved in acts of resistance and liberation struggles in what appears to be an attack on the survival of the Theatre project. In documenting both the clampdown on the Theatre and the continued Theatre performances, this chapter records the ways in which people involved in struggle and resistance narrate their stories. Like the radical performances of Ziadah, the narratives of TFT are concerned with social justice and demanding change. TFT offers numerous symbolic and material spaces and avenues “to resist or subvert the strategies of more powerful institutions, ideologies, processes” (Madison 2010; see also Duncombe 2002). Taking up space that is not given, TFT reveals how apartheid functions within the Israeli state. Working against the settler colonial processes of memoricide identified by Masalha (2012), the Theatre provides avenues to counter the destruction of history, the slippage into self-censorship, and the erasure of place and name. The Freedom Theatre (re)tells stories which have been distorted or left out completely - all of which are crucial to symbolic and material transformational possibilities on the ground.

In the following, I use the Theatre’s website, online and print news reports, YouTube videos, and social media posts to map some of the battles that the young Theatre faces in continuing to creatively resist Israel’s ongoing colonization of Palestine while simultaneously fighting for their liberation as Palestinians. The stories selected for study demonstrate a sophisticated analysis of the contemporary situation in Palestine against what Collins (2011) describes as the logics of settler colonialism including: 1. corruption/collusion of power relations between occupied and occupier; 2. psychological, physical, and epistemic violence connected with settler colonialism; 3. resistance against occupation and colonization; and 4. counter

narratives that demonstrate everyday life for Palestinians within the West Bank and Gaza. I begin with a brief historical account of the Freedom Theatre to provide some background into the purpose and people behind this project. I subsequently discuss some of the major professional performances put on by TFT both in Palestine and elsewhere using video excerpts and media coverage of: *Animal Farm*, *Sho Kman?*, *Fragments of Palestine*, and *the Siege*. I consider responses in relation to these performances from interviews with Theatre members that are accessible online to discuss how and why the Theatre community persists in their work and commitment to TFT. I then briefly discuss one of the other projects that is an integral part of TFT's work; namely, The Freedom Bus.

6.4.1 *The History of the Freedom Theatre*

The idea for the establishment of a Theatre in Jenin refugee camp was born out of the work of Jewish Israeli activist Arna Mer Khamis⁴⁷ during the First Intifada (Fisek 2012:104). A. Mer Khamis's life and work illustrates some of the complexity of the relationships between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. As a young eighteen year old woman, Arna Mer had advocated and worked towards the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 (Fisek 2012). She worked with *Palmach*⁴⁸ (Fisek 2012), known to Palestinians as a Zionist "mobile striking" group (Khalidi 1988:13). Later she married Saliba Khamis, a Palestinian man from Nazareth who was a member of the Israeli Communist Party. Within Israel, the Communist party has historically represented interests of Palestinian as well as Jewish members of the state (Rahat and Malka 2012: 311). In 1989, A. Mer Khamis began working with Palestinian children in the Jenin area using theatre as a method of therapy. She began a theatre group and moved on to fund the construction of a

⁴⁷ Following this, I use the first initial of Arna Mer Kamis's first name to distinguish between her (A. Mer Khamis) and her son Juliano (Mer Khamis).

⁴⁸ According to Walid Khalidi (1988), *Palmach* "is short for *Plugot Machats*, i.e., crushing battalions. By spring 1948, this force was made up of three brigades (Yiftach, Harel, and HaNegev) numbering just above 8,000. See Walid Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987), 861." cited in Khalidi (1988).

theatre in Jenin with money that she received as part of the Right Livelihood Award (also known as the Alternative Noble Peace Prize) by the Swedish government (Mee 2011:9); the family of Zakaria Zubeidi - one of the co-founders of the existing Freedom Theatre, and one of Arna's former theatre group students who was later to become an armed resistance fighter- donated the building used to house the theatre which became known as the Theatre of Stones (Freedom 2008, July 8; see also Fisek 2012:107). The original theatre was destroyed by the Israeli military in 2002 during the Second Intifada, and then rebuilt in 2006 as the Freedom Theatre by Arna Mer Khamis's son, Juliano Mer Khamis and Zubeidi (2008, Artsworld).

According to the Freedom Theatre's mission statement (TFT, Mission 2015), the Theatre seeks to provide a space for artistic learning and activity, connect Palestinian communities that have been isolated from each other, empower youth, and promote societal change. TFT offers a variety of programs to fulfill its mandate including a professional theatre school for training in theatre and cinema, drama workshops aimed specifically at youth, productions within Palestine which engage contemporary social and political issues, performances and screenings of other art projects from Palestine and abroad, and *Hakawati* (storytelling)⁴⁹ which plays an important cultural role in the Arab and Mediterranean world emphasizing "oral histories, improvisation and mythmaking" (TFT, What we do 2015). TFT project also provides education in multimedia, involving filmmaking, creative writing, and photography. Meanwhile, the Freedom Bus is a mobile form of theatre and activism which brings together Palestinian and international artists and activists to tour Palestine. This year's 2015 Freedom Ride! which took place in March served marginalized areas of Palestine "where people are particularly at risk of forced expulsion

⁴⁹ According to the Freedom Theatre's website, "In the Arab and Mediterranean world, the *hakawati* (storyteller) has traditionally played a central role in a society's culture, reflecting the importance placed on oral histories, improvisation and mythmaking. The Freedom Theatre's very own *hakawati* spellbounds the children of Jenin Refugee Camp and beyond with wondrous and engaging stories from Palestine's rich cultural heritage" (see <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/what-we-do/theatre/>).

from their ancestral homelands” (TFT, Freedom bus 2015). The bus journey included “building and reconstruction work, protective presence activity, guided walks, interactive workshops and cultural events” (TFT, March Blog 2015), and playback theatre, where community members “share personal accounts about the realities of life and struggle under settler colonialism, military occupation and structural apartheid” (TFT Freedom bus, 2015).

6.4.2 Setbacks and Challenges

Both in spite of as well as due to the success of the performances in Jenin, the Theatre has had to deal with and transgress many challenges in continuing its work. From the onset the then Theatre of Stones, faced setbacks from the Israeli forces. The First Intifada brought numerous difficulties to the physical realization of the project. By the time A. Mer Khamis had passed away from cancer in 1994, many Palestinians had come to support the theatre and understood the project as a helpful way to channel youthful frustration and anger. The destruction of the theatre by the Israeli military during Second Intifada only fueled the already growing numbers of youth who had returned to armed struggle and resistance⁵⁰. Years later, since its reincarnation as the Freedom Theatre in 2006, the project continues to deal with the burdens of living under occupation with an oppressive local government. According to Theatre staff and performers, the Israeli state and the Palestinian Authority (PA) have hindered the ability for the Theatre to continue, most evidently through the arrests of Theatre members. There has also been opposition to the Theatre voiced by some Palestinians who believe that the project goes against their beliefs in permitting girls and women to perform, and in its cultural and religious representations (see Zonszein 2011).

⁵⁰ To be clear, the aim of my words here and throughout this project is not to downplay, diminish, or dismiss armed resistance and the right of colonized peoples to use any means possible to fight for their survival. As noted previously, creative resistance goes hand in hand with other tactics and strategies of resistance against oppression including armed struggle.

The murder of Juliano Mer Khamis on April 4, 2011 dealt a severe blow to the Theatre, but also reaffirmed the commitment of those involved with the project. Theatre members and actors understood Mer Khamis' killing as an attempt to silence the very crucial work of the project as a tool of resistance and social memory. Mer Khamis made Jenin his home and considered himself both a Jew and a Palestinian (Zonszein 2011). This is important because of the role that Mer Khamis played as both a leader and a mentor in establishing the Theatre and the subsequent professional theatre program. He viewed the Theatre as a mode of resistance to the various forms of occupation and violence that Palestinians experience inside and outside of home such as gender violence, class discrimination as well as military and police violence, and also as a method and tool for liberation. Following his murder, the Palestinian Authority and Israeli forces repeatedly raided the Theatre, and beat and arbitrarily arrested employees and actors (HRW July 27, 2012).

On May 13, 2012, the PA arrested and imprisoned Zakaria Zubeidi (one of the co-founders of TFT as noted above), amid a wave of about 150 arrests following the May 2, 2012 shooting at the home of the Palestinian Governor of Jenin, Qaddura Musa who later died in hospital of a heart attack (HRW July 27, 2012; TFT July 11, 2012). In addition to being denied access to newspapers, television, and other information sources, Zubeidi alleged that he had been severely maltreated and tortured during his incarceration (HRW July 27, 2012). This includes being kept in solitary confinement for his first 50 days, having interrogators force him to drink toilet water, having his arms tied together and raised in a painful elevated position for two days at a time, requiring him to stand and preventing him from sleeping, and tying him to an iron door outside in the heat of the day. These allegations were reported in a Human Rights Watch Report, numerous Freedom Theatre news posts as well as in the *Toronto Star*, and the Israeli newspaper the *Haaretz* (see HRW July 27, 2012; TFT July, August, September 2012; Rosenfeld October 27,

2012; Marlowe September 12, 2012). Zubeidi was released temporarily between August 19-August 22, 2012 to spend Eid with his family (TFT August 19, 2012), but his lawyer's attempt to obtain his release on bail failed on August 26 (TFT August 27, 2012). Although Zubeidi had been able to return to his family during Eid and returned to prison as required by law, the prosecutor argued on August 27 that Zubeidi's detention should be extended for another 45 days since he posed a threat to public security (TFT September 2, 2012). While waiting for the judge to look over his request for bail, Zubeidi began a complete hunger strike refraining from any food or liquids on September 9, 2012 (TFT September 10, 2012). The Freedom Theatre issued an urgent call for action including a form letter to advocate for Zubeidi's immediate release from prison (TFT September 10, 2012). Zubeidi was finally permitted bail in October 4, 2012 (Trueman 2012) and acquitted later that year (Khalil 2015).

A little short of a month after Zubeidi's arrest, the Israeli army entered the home of The Freedom Theatre's Artistic Director, Nabil Al-Raei at approximately 3:15 am on the night of June 6, 2012 and took him to an unknown location (Stancza June 6, 2012). It was later disclosed that he was kept in Jalameh (Kishon) prison in Israel proper. In his bail release statement, Al-Raei highlighted the suffering and injustice of thousands of Palestinian political prisoners in Israel and noted how his arrest illustrates Israel's use of the law against Palestinians: "Constantly shifting charges and long detentions without access to lawyers is a hallmark of the Israeli occupation and is a fate suffered by the thousands of Palestinians who are detained and imprisoned by Israel. It is also an indication of the extent to which the Israeli government is willing to go in order to repress nonviolent freedom of expression" (TFT July 12, 2012). Al-Raei was initially taken in for questioning in connection with the murder of Mer Khamis (HRW July 27, 2012). According to Al-Raei's lawyer, Smadar Ben-Natan, these allegations were found to be groundless after the first two weeks of detention. Nevertheless, the Israeli security service

continued to ask for his prolonged detention, and meanwhile tried to obtain evidence on other issues. This proved to be fruitless and on June 28, 2012 a military judge ordered Al-Rae's release after no evidence had been obtained against him. However, an appeal by the Israeli military prosecution was approved by the military court of appeals (TFT July 11, 2012). He was subsequently charged with "aiding a wanted man" (Khalidi July 27, 2012) but "pleaded guilty to amended charges [on July 29, 2012 in an Israeli military court] of assisting Zakaria Zubeidi ... in 2010 with food, cigarettes and car drives, and once answering Zakaria's question about the presence of the Israeli army in the camp" (TFT July 29, 2012). As the Freedom Theatre news post states, the "kafkaesque farce" of Al-Rae's arrest is underscored by the fact that Al-Rae's assistance to Zubeidi occurred when Zubeidi was no longer wanted by Israel (TFT July 29, 2012). Zubeidi "was granted amnesty in 2007. Thus Nabil [Al-Rae] pleaded guilty to assisting a previously wanted person" (TFT July 29, 2012).

The numerous actors and staff at TFT who have been arrested and imprisoned by both Israel and the Palestinian Authority illustrates the complex relationship between colonizer and colonized in acts of resistance and liberation struggles wherein silencing practices of confinement and restraint meant to suppress dissent and erase Palestinian stories are justified under the pretense of "security". I have highlighted the above instances of arrests as examples of Israel's biopower and necropower as well as the PA's collusion with the Israeli state. The regulation and control of Palestinian bodies through arbitrary arrest, detention, release, re-arrest as well as torture tactics and physical maltreatment, including the denial of basic medical needs, is well documented by human rights groups and scholars (see for example, Ali 2012; Abdo 2008, 2014; B'Tselem 2015, 2011, 2005; Falah 2008).⁵¹ Al-Rae points exactly to this in his statement

⁵¹ Importantly, as Nahla Abdo (June 19, 2015) notes in her communication to me, there is a lack of literature documenting the PA's treatment of Palestinians since "most literature speaks only of Israeli torture of Palestinian bodies and not of the PA, not that the latter did not happen or exist".

above concerning the thousands of political prisoners in Israeli detention centers. Currently, one of TFT's board member's Mustafa Sheta is under Israeli administrative detention (taken from his home on March 19, 2015) and his younger brother Ashraf Sheta, who was a volunteer with the Theatre in 2014, was also recently arrested on April 4, 2015 (TFT 2015 Board member taken). Very little to no information is known about the case against them (TFT April 5, 2015). While these cases reveal the power of Israel, Zubeidi's arrest, detention, and torture exemplifies how the colonial state has extended its power into the hands of Palestinian control. Once a freedom fighter for the armed wing of Fatah, and having narrowly escaped death, Zubeidi's arrest, and amnesty exemplifies the blurring of hierarchical relations of power between the oppressor and the oppressed which is part and parcel of divide and conquer tactics used by colonial powers.

6.4.3 Performances

The performances of TFT, such as their adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* - a novel about revolution and corruption- critiques Israel as a settler colonial state which utilizes apartheid practices but also importantly points to the collaboration between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. In the video clip of TFT's performance of *Animal Farm*, we see the character of Pig calling on his fellow comrades to revolt against their oppressive state of poverty and



Figure 11 - Performing *Animal Farm*,
Courtesy of the Freedom Theatre

torture. His oration moves the other animals to act. They are ready for revolution. In these scenes, the animals represent the Palestinian people. The abusive farm owner represents the Israeli state. The animals organize and successfully overthrow their oppressor, but instead of distributing wealth and work more evenly, the revolution leads to corruption and the once leader of the revolution becomes a tyrant in his own right. The play offers a critical perspective into what has occurred within Palestinian leadership since Oslo. As noted in Chapter 5, the

Palestinian Authority took on many of the security enforcement practices that were previously performed by the Israeli military with the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. The strengthening of the PA's control within the Occupied Territories has intensified already existent class divisions which negatively impacts women and children the most, and also led to more surveillance of Palestinian resistance groups (see Hilal 2003; Lagerquist 2003; Roy 1998).

Greater surveillance and policing of liberation and resistance efforts that are integral to settler colonial processes create a fertile environment for self-censorship, which along with the destruction of historical documents, homes, and villages, also enable the renaming of place and suppress the practices of passing down oral histories. Significantly, while the Palestinian commemoration of the *Nakba* is critical to Palestinian collective memory, the processes of settler colonialism have never ended. The material and symbolic violence of continued settler colonial discourse and practice is critical to current-day Palestinian collective memory and everyday life. For instance, part of the Jenin refugee camp where the Freedom Theatre is located was completely destroyed by the Israeli army in 2002 during the Second Intifada leaving 2,640 refugees homeless. All Palestinians involved with the Freedom Theatre project live under the daily imposition of illegal Israeli occupation; if not arrested themselves they have had friends and family arrested, and most if not all Palestinians in the area have been touched by the murder of friends or family at the hands of Israel. They live through checkpoints, drones hovering overhead, continual land dispossession, and violence from both the colonizer and the colonized.

Unequal relations of power are exaggerated under colonial regimes (Mohanty 2003). Gender and age differences, amongst other socio-cultural disparities, are used as grounds to justify mistreatment and abuse between women and men, women and girls, men and boys, and children and adults, including young men and boys who show authority over, and batter women and girls (Herzog and Yahia-Younis 2007:586; see also Abdo 2011:29–300). The play *Sho*

Kman? meaning “What else?” deals with “*the psychological impact of occupation in a densely populated area hemmed in by checkpoints. Violence in this production is all-pervasive. Not just the violence of the occupier, but the violence of the oppressed*”(TFT 2015 *What else?*; emphasis in original). In a vivid representation of nightmares performed in almost complete silence, *Sho Kman?* deals with gender and familial struggles of Palestinians living under the restricted conditions of culture and occupation (2011 *Sho Kman*; 2001 Laycock). As the description states, the play “encapsulates how young Palestinians see the world around them, exploring how the external occupation and violence turns inwards, mirroring itself in an internal form of chaos, destroying friendships, families, society and political structures. It is an intimate exploration of personal experiences, often wordless, physical representations of memories that become nightmares” (TFT 2015 *What else?*). The multidimensional aspects of cultural and colonial oppression are intertwined. While problematic gendered views of Palestinian women’s bodies continue through the construct of the feminized woman as symbolic of the Palestinian nation which needs to be defended (Amireh 2003:750-751; Massad 1995:471; Sharoni 1995:39) as the play underscores, the oppression of Palestinian women - largely understood in the West as connected with traditional culture - must be situated within the context of Israel’s colonial relations of ruling. The attempt to portray the situation of Palestine as a national struggle rather than one of settler colonial dispossession relies on gendered notions of nation and state as well as constructions of racialized difference that intersect with gender.

In one short promotional video for *Fragments of Palestine* (TFT September 10, 2009), men dressed in white coveralls made from what appears to be used banners with slogans of groups such as Islamic Jihad and phrases like “I love Palestine” represent both Palestinians and Israeli soldiers. More than spoken language, music is central to this piece as it stands in for the spoken word. It is unclear if the music is part of the show itself or if it was edited in the

production of the promotional video which shows the Acting School of the Freedom Theatre performing in Germany and Austria. The clip begins with the sound of a drum being struck twice with two women looking frightened as a line of men with menacing looks on their faces draw near while stomping their feet. The women hold hands and then come apart as the men who at that moment represent Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories begin to encircle them. The women move frantically back and forth. The men form a line and shout “*Shalom!*”. A gunshot echoes and one of the men in white now portraying a Palestinian holds his stomach, writhing in pain. He has been shot. One of the women screams. The other begins to yell as the men respond. One man runs toward a group of men that are on the floor holding sticks in their hands with tins on the end moving in spastic motions, representing the torture of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers. A funeral procession follows directly. As the men lay the body of the murdered Palestinian man down, his body immediately begins to convulse and he returns to life. He is put on the shoulders of the others and begins to shout out. The two women reappear and begin shouting at each other as the men approach representing the Israeli soldiers once again. One woman is held and her torture begins. As the two soldiers hold her, one repeatedly beats her with a stick. The music mimics the sound of beating, until the final blow is given and the music changes to an operatic score.

Another clip of *Fragments of Palestine* (TFT October 12, 2009) performed at the “Internationales Jugendtheater Festival Explosive 2009” in Bremen, Germany reveals a very similar enactment of the show to that presented in the promotional clip described above; however, this time the music is in Arabic. Again, it is unclear if the music was edited in or if it is part of the performance. This clip also includes interview excerpts with two unnamed performers (one woman and one man) who discuss how the play was put together based on different Palestinian experiences. Their comments are illustrative of how radical performance not only

challenges and changes the audience, but also transforms the performers themselves (Madison 2010). The woman explains her interpretation of the show. In her words, the show enables people to see “pictures of our [Palestinians] lives”. She explains the pressure she feels in having to represent Palestinian life outside of Palestine while her fellow actor contends that in performing the play “We feel we are free... We can do anything on the stage.” For him, the play provides an opportunity to demonstrate “what all Palestinians feel [living under occupation]”. These short clips demonstrate how precarious Palestinian life is and how demanding it is to represent the multitude of Palestinian life experiences. While the scenes from *Fragments* reveal how violence impacts the lives of Palestinians, they also demonstrate numerous narratives of Palestinian resistance.

The Siege is one such narrative of resistance. Currently touring the UK, *the Siege* is reaching a wide audience outside of Palestine through its reviews in mainstream and alternative



Figure 12 - Poster for *The Siege* in the UK, Courtesy of the Freedom Theatre

media (see for example, Arise News June 3, 2015; BBC May 24, 2015; Gardner in the Guardian May 21, 2015; McMahon in Huffington Post May 11, 2015; Shams in Ma'an News April 19, 2015; for more see <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/in-the-media/>). The performance tells the story of the 39 day long siege of the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem by Israeli forces in 2002. Directed by

Al-Raei and British director Zoe Lafferty, the play has received a great deal of attention and praise for its narrative and professional acting, including from Henry Brenton and Ken Loach

(The Birmingham 2015). The play is written and performed in Arabic⁵². English subtitles are included in performances outside of Palestine. Al-Raei discusses the reasons for this in an interview with Arise News on June 3, 2015 in London (UK). He explains the significance of the language to the story being told; there are words for experiences which are not easily translatable into English. Furthermore, he notes that the six Palestinian actors who are now performing the play abroad live in Palestine; their experiences are infused by Arabic making it was crucial that *The Siege* be performed in Arabic. Still, when asked if non-Arabic speaking audiences would be able to capture the essence of the play Al-Raei believes that they will since according to him much of the performance also supersedes language (Arise June 3, 2015).

The Siege offers a complex view of the events that took place at the Church of Nativity in April and May of 2002 when five armed Palestinian resistance fighters took refuge from Israeli occupation forces. Following traditional protocol, the priests offered sanctuary to the men. As Shams (2015) states in a review of the play:

The Siege explores the relationship of five fighters to one another, to the Israeli soldiers outside, as well as to the priests inside the church. The play also explicitly delves into deeper questions about the possibility of morality in warfare and interrogates each fighter individually, exploring his relationship to Palestine, to the struggle, and ultimately -- when the decision to end the siege with exile occurs -- to the very land itself.

Al-Raei stresses the importance of the play not only in documenting a significant historical moment in Palestinian history, but also in archiving -in the present sense - what is happening on the ground on a daily basis (see for example,



Figure 13 - *The Siege*, Battersea Arts Centre, London May 2015 (L-R) Faisal Abu Alheja, Rabee Hanani, Ahmad al-Rokh. Courtesy of Middle East Eve

⁵² Scripts that are originally written in English, such as *The Island*, that are staged outside of Palestine are performed in English.

BBC May 24, 2015; Arise News June 3, 2015). He also makes clear how onerous the journey for Palestinian actors coming from Palestine can be in applying for visas both to leave Palestine and to enter other countries which is often taken as a given from those in the audience⁵³. What goes unsaid in promotional material for TFT is that the determinations for who gets to leave the West Bank and who does not is a political, but also frequently arbitrary, process (Aljamal 2014; Jefferis 2012).

The play demonstrates mutual aid between Christian and Muslim Palestinians which is an important point to grasp for audiences outside of Palestine. Israeli mythmaking and mainstream media congruence to Zionist narratives provide stereotypical images of who and what is Palestinian. The attempt to simplify the context of Palestinian struggle into a situation of religious conflict between Jews and Muslims evades the reality of Israel as a settler colonial state and constructs Israel as a victim of Palestinian terrorism. Al-Raei raises these points in his interviews on the *BBC*, *Arise News*, and *the Guardian* among others. As he states: “We are facing the Israeli propaganda machine that speaks every language. It turns the oppressed into the oppressor and the oppressor into the oppressed” (Al-Raei in Crysse 2015). Perhaps equally important, Nahla Abdo (2014) points out in her book *Captive Revolution* is that Israel denies Palestinian Christians their Arab Culture. The Arab in Israel is Muslim only (Abdo 2014:156, 157).

Zoe Lafferty (2015, June 3) speaks to the significance of the West’s need to recognize the existence of Palestinian Christians as Arabs in her interview with Al-Raei on Arise News. The “siege” of the Church of Nativity is also symbolic of the siege of Palestine, in particular of Gaza. The play compels audiences to challenge their preconceived views of Palestinians and of the

⁵³ Al-Raei was denied a visitor visa to the UK for a speaking tour in June of 2014. See <http://ridinglights.org/freedom-theatres-artistic-director-denied-uk-visa/>

question of Palestine: “We want to discuss what happened, because people misunderstood history many times. History plays a big part in our lives. Is history written by people? I need to question that. And as a Palestinian, I have a perspective, I have been living under an unjust occupation for a long time” (Al Raei in Gostoli 2015). When asked by Ylenia Gostoli (2015) of Qantara.de an English and German online news source whether he thought of Jenin as his audience, Al Raei answered: “I think as a starting point yes, your audience is around you so you think about it, The Freedom Theatre has a history in the camp; it’s a continuation of the Stone Theatre that was established there before. But the idea itself is bigger than a local community”. The call to bear witness, significant to Madison’s concept of radical performance, is also a crucial aspect of TFT’s “Freedom Bus”. Next, I briefly discuss the intention behind this project and how it establishes solidarity with the struggles and resistance of other peoples under colonial or otherwise oppressive powers.

6.4.4 *The Freedom Bus*

In all respects, the Freedom Bus is a performance of decolonization exemplary of Kanafi’s *taht al-ihtilāl*. According to TFT’s website, the Freedom Bus is “an initiative of The Freedom Theatre that uses interactive theatre and cultural activism to bear witness, raise awareness and build alliances throughout occupied Palestine and beyond” (TFT, Freedom Bus 2015). It is also used as a mechanism to demonstrate and contest the severity of restrictions on mobility for Palestinians living in the Palestine (Griffin 2015:75). The Bus is modelled after the civil rights movement in the US, but as Marayam Griffin (2015:79) explains, unlike the American Civil Rights movement, TFT’s Freedom Bus is not about desegregation. Rather the Bus challenges the settlements themselves which are illegal under international law. The Freedom Bus draws attention to the fact that Palestinians are not allowed on the buses which are only for settlers and seeks to change the mobility restrictions that Palestinians have within Palestine.

A central feature of the Freedom Bus, as noted on the website, is playback theatre. Playback theatre is a form of improvisational theatre wherein people transfer personal stories into political theatre. The audience members tell their stories and then actors dramatize them back (Feedombus.ps). Palestinian actor Faisal Abu Alheja, who is currently on the UK tour of *the Seige* believes that the impact of TFT project is making a difference to Palestinians and also to Israel. In an interview with Philip Weiss from *Mondweiss* while in New York, Abu Alheja (April 13, 2013) speaks to this: “We have art, we have dreams We are not terrorists, we have a right to live The Theatre must be a threat somehow to Israel, art must be a threat, why else arrest me?” Abu Alheja (April 13, 2013) explains that at one particular place where the Freedom Bus was enacting playback theatre the Israeli military “would come to the camp to arrest people every night, so [the Freedom Theatre actors] decided to perform playback theatre about these experiences. The same night the army attacked my house and arrested me. They walked with me to where I did the performance, blindfolded me, and then took me to Jalameh [Kishon prison in Israel]”. When asked about the experience and how it made it him feel he points to the psychological trauma of arrests and detentions to the individuals involved and also those around them: “It makes me stronger, but it also makes me afraid. Maybe they will kill you and nobody will ask, man... Look if they can enter my room. Really, I woke up and found them in my room, like a Hollywood movie. I think ‘fuck politics’... Nobody can do anything for me in this moment. Maybe you will dead (sic)... They have the possibility to kill you. You feel as a Palestinian, that you are nothing. You are disappear (sic). You are disappearing”. The intention of such arrests is to “break the person’s spirit” and “bring them to their knees”, to make them “afraid of anything political” (Abu Alheja April 13, 2013).

For Abu Alheja, as for other Palestinians involved in the Theatre, creative resistance provides an outlet for release from otherwise unbearable violence and a way to teach others

about the Palestinian experience of living under settler colonial rule. In a video clip about the Freedom Bus, Ahmad Rohm (TFT February 2013) who is also touring with *the Siege* explains: “Freedom is not a word you learn in school. You have to learn it from the people who have lost it.” The Freedom Bus challenges and resists the current narrative which discursively marks Palestinians as an alien/stranger population rather than as natives with irrevocable binding rights to the land. In its re-enactment of everyday Palestinian life experiences, the Bus further exposes the imagined democracy of the Jewish ethno-national state of Israel, where the sovereign disciplines and regulates the body and population through discourses, practices, and processes paradoxical to the liberal notions of equality, rights, and freedoms.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the narratives of Ziadah traversing Israel’s neoliberal apartheid system and have considered the Freedom Theatre’s substantial storytelling as it reveals the functioning of apartheid within that state (Collins 2011:141; see also Marcus 1995). The creative resistance and solidarity of Ziadah’s poetry and the TFT’s performances and projects speak to Benjamin’s (1973: 259) appeal to read the history against the grain from the perspective of the oppressed not the oppressor. A central feature of the Palestinian resistance and solidarity narratives in the creative works of Ziadah and the Freedom Theatre are the direct ways in which they challenge and counter the logics of Israel’s hegemonic Zionist narrative of racialized ethno-national exclusion. In performing narratives from the perspectives of Palestinians in exile and under apartheid Ziadah and TFT demonstrate Israel’s construction of racialized difference and terrorist others while telling their own present histories as Palestinians attempting to alter realities on the ground. Although their stories are different with respect to their experiences as a Palestinian refugee who is not permitted to live in Palestine and as Palestinians living under the settler colonial regime of Israel, the commonalities of their shared histories and connections to

the land as well as their interrogations of the contradictions and cultural oppressions within their experiences are significant.

I end this chapter by bringing us back to Gaza and the possibilities for transformational change by noting the significance of the creative resistance of Palestinians living through another horrific genocidal bombing campaign tweeting messages and sending Facebook posts of solidarity with the people of Ferguson, Missouri in the summer of 2014. As Ziadah's video "We teach life, sir!" circulated through the web, the solidarity actions and texts that emanated from within Palestine with messages of encouragement as well as practical advice about how to deal with pepper spray reveal just how Palestinians, teach life. Although my study has not delved into the question of social media and its role, its prevalence in circulating counter discourse points to the need for an analysis of the power of social media. Mobile devices with cameras and wider internet access make it possible to obtain on the ground coverage from everyday Palestinians about their daily circumstances. Studies of social media along with archival documents could be used to highlight shifts in discourse. Further study in this area could be beneficial in considering the role of social media in enabling Palestinians to tell their stories and in opening spaces of understanding and learning about previously silenced histories as well as for establishing ties with other oppressed and colonized peoples in Turtle Island and beyond.

“We have art, we have dreams ... We are not terrorists, we have a right to live”
- Faisal Abu Alheja, Actor with the Freedom Theatre

Chapter 7 Conclusion

The focus of my study has been on the transformative potential of creative resistance and solidarity in telling Palestinian stories of the ongoing *Nakba*. My project demonstrates that the “deep narratives” of Palestinian resistance and liberation struggles to the continued settler colonial project of Israel are central to the stories told by SAIA, Rafeef Ziadah, and the Freedom Theatre. My exploration of these creative resistance and solidarity narratives has shown how the (re)presentation of Palestinian stories disrupts the “authorized vocabulary” (Foucault 1990:17,27) of permissibility and “the ‘deafening silences’ of so-called world opinion” (Saloul 2008:1) when speaking about Israel. As Barbara Harlow (1987:81), points out, narratives of resistance challenge acceptable public discourses by demanding “historical referencing” and “politicized interpretation” placing into question what has been accepted as truth and disputing notions of social memory. While research in the field of literary studies has shown the political importance of the suppression of narratives of creative resistance that expose Israel’s Zionist settler colonial project, including the work of Barbara Harlow (1987, 1996), Ihab Saloul (2008), and Anna Ball (2012), little sociological research has explored this silencing.

My study has sought to make several contributions to the literature on resistance and solidarity in settler colonial contexts. First, in invoking Hannah Arendt’s (1973) concept of race-thinking and an apartheid analytic lens to the creative resistance and solidarity works considered here, I expose Israel’s racist segregation, occupation, and colonization policies and practices of the past and present. Significantly, the synthesis of Israel’s exclusionary state measures with the political ideology of race-thinking is not widely discussed by Israeli or Western academics and little scholarship that considers this possibility is available. While, as I state in my introduction,

talk of Israel as a state of exception is part of the accepted political discourse within Israeli society (Pappé 2008:149-152), and studies on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine began to gain circulation in the 1980s through the work of Israel's "new historians" (e.g., Avi Shlaim, Benny Morris, Ilan Pappé - see Masalha 2012:148-204), examining the Zionist goal of the Israeli state through the rubric of racism and racialization as well as settler colonialism is fairly recent (see Goldberg 2008; Lentin 2004:par. 2.2; Collins 2011; Masalha 2012). Central to race-thinking and my apartheid analysis are the theoretical concepts of biopolitics/ necropolitics (Foucault 2003; Mbembé 2003), and ethnonationalism (Bannerji 2003; Yiftachel 2006) that help reveal the control and regulation of bodies in the life and death of Palestinians. In addition, John Collins' (2011) four categories of settler colonial myth making assist in revealing the settler colonial make-up of the Israeli state.

Second, my exploration of resistance and solidarity narratives which tell the on-going story of the *Nakba* demonstrates the inaccuracy of the label of anti-Semitism in the context of settler-colonialism and leads to further interrogation of the *naturalization* of the Israeli state within the Western purview and what appears to be a refusal of the West to circulate the stories of Palestinians inside and outside of what is considered Israel proper. Indeed, as we saw in the narratives of SAIA in Chapters 4 and 5, the discussion of Israel's separation policies and practices as apartheid or apartheid-like has been fervently contested by supporters of the Israeli state. This has led to state and institutional attempts to quell criticism of Israel and/or Zionism, including efforts to equate these terms with being Jewish/Jewishness/Judaism such as Carleton University's Commission Report on Inter-cultural, Inter-religious and Inter-racial Relations (2012) and the July 7, 2011 report by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA) which attempted to make critique of the state or Zionist ideology

tantamount to anti-Semitism (Abu-Laban and Bakan 2012). Here I make links to Canada's own settler-colonial project which continues with very little opposition from the mainstream.

My work unsettles stereotypes of the "other's" mode of agency and resistance in presenting a diversity of feminist anticolonial and decolonizing Palestinian narratives to show how these narratives contribute to counter discourse and knowledge production against the Israeli logics of "othering", exclusion and exceptionalization while creatively disrupting the accepted discourse of Israel as a liberal democratic state. I examine the role of gender, the state, race, class, and sexuality in the narratives of resistance and solidarity that seek to counter, contest and transform the hegemonic making of the Israeli nation. To attend to intersections among nationhood, race, gender, sexuality and economic exploitation in the context of colonialism, nationalism and global capitalism, I utilize a model of transnational feminism (Mohanty 2003; see also Alexander 2005; Kaplan 1994). This approach has been useful to my analysis as it highlights the connections and interrelations within and between local and global contexts to question the social, political and economic connections to colonialism, nationalism, and capitalism that exist within and throughout these dimensions. My theorization of feminism therefore also includes an active commitment to anticolonialism, antiracism, and decolonization on a global scale. In emphasizing the need for an anticolonial stance that is anti-statist, since the state necessarily depends upon hegemonic-masculinist notions of patriotism, top-down hierarchal structures and patriarchal relations, my study has focused on the link between relations of ruling and relations of power to contribute to feminist theorizing that attempts to transform discursive and material experiences.

My introduction sets the framework for my theoretical inquiry into the potential for creative means to transform the way we speak about Palestine. Here, I set out my main research questions, the data I use to explore those questions, and what research methods and approaches I

employ to enable an intersectional and decolonizing analysis critical to understanding and countering the myths of the Zionist construction of Israel. In Chapter 1, I describe the theoretical concepts, tools, and approaches that were most central to my study while in Chapters 2 and 3, I engage in a more comprehensive discussion on the possibilities for creative (and cultural) resistance and solidarity, respectively. Chapter 2 centered on theorizing the concept of creative resistance. Drawing on the work of Lila Abu-Lughod (1990), Anna Ball (1987, 2012), Stephen Duncombe (2001), Frantz Fanon (2004), Barbara Harlow (1996), D. Soyini Madison (2010), and Sherry Ortner (1995), I conceptualized my own understanding of creative resistance that encompasses a wide range of narratives of resistance that are linked by social values not necessarily embedded in a shared notion of traditional culture. I posited creative resistance not in opposition to, but alongside other forms of resistance such as armed resistance. I discussed the use of Boycott Divestment and Sanctions as a creative form of resistance, and connected the use of theatre and spoken word to what Walter Benjamin coined the “Tradition of the oppressed”. Following this, in Chapter 3 my focus shifted to look at solidarity. Reviewing the literature on approaches to examining solidarity, I discussed possible ways to move beyond binaries of “insider” versus “outsider” and “researched” versus “researcher” to a solidarity of meaningful ally-ship through political commitment. I brought together works that have most recently influenced my view of solidarity as a political practice to get beyond rhetoric of positionality (Abdo 1993; Graeber 2009; Juris 2008; Mohanty 2003; Smith 2005). These works present challenges and possibilities for how one can do academic and also activist research that attempts to be decolonizing and anticolonial as a settler in the settler-colonial state of Canada (Krebs and Olwan 2012; Lewis 2012; Smith 2012; Waziyatawin 2012).

This multi-sited ethnographic study (Marcus 1995) has examined three main questions concerning the counter hegemonic narratives of Palestinian resistance and solidarity. In my

analytical chapters of SAIA, *Ziadah* and the Freedom Theatre (Chapters, 4, 5, and 6), I engage with the questions set forth at the start of my project to consider the ways in which Palestinian resistance and solidarity efforts are affected by the logics of Israel's hegemonic Zionist narrative of racialized ethno-national exclusion; the stories that are told through different creative forms of Palestinian resistance and solidarity efforts, and how these stories are attempting to reshape, counter, challenge, and possibly transform Israel's dominant narrative. Chapters 4 and 5 serve as archives in the Foucauldian sense of actively disrupting commonplace Zionist storytelling culminating in the first Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) in Ottawa. These chapters demonstrate my understanding of solidarity as a political knowledge practice which takes its aim from those belonging to the directly affected communities in question based on a notion of linked anticolonial struggles and shared values rooted in a commitment to decolonizing social justice. I drew on the conceptual approaches to solidarity and creative resistance outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 to write a present history (see Gastaldo and Holmes 1999:232; Noble 2006:84) of SAIA's work as a form of solidarity and resistance. I demonstrate how the group is both solidarity in with the Palestinian call for Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) and engaged in resistance to the threats against its efforts and its members. I also show the ways in which IAW exposes Israel's Zionist race-thinking and apartheid practices and raise questions about the repression that SAIA has faced on campus including the poster ban, assault of individual members, and the university's Commission Report on Inter-cultural, Inter-religious, and Inter-racial relations to talk about how resistance is also a crucial part of SAIA's solidarity work. I connect recent Canadian government attempts to impede critical discussion of Israel to institutional efforts to prevent the same.

Chapter 6 deployed the terminology of Ghassan Kanafani's *manfa* literature or literature in "exile" as well *that al-ihtilāl* or cultural resistance "under occupation" (Kanafani in Harlow

1987:2) to archive and examine the work of Ziadah and The Freedom Theatre (TFT). I chronicle narratives from these spoken word and theatre projects to complicate the stories being told by bringing class privilege, gender discrimination, and race into the fold of settler colonial critique. These narratives do not excuse the occupier nor do they diminish the devastation wrought on Palestinians as a result of the practices of the state, rather they illustrate how occupiers use existent class, gender, sexuality, and race hierarchies to achieve their ends. I also talk about the risks that TFT faces from the Palestine Authority, and more conservative minded people in the area in addition to the direct threats it experiences from Israel. Both Ziadah's spoken word and TFT's narratives contest the settler colonial states in which they are situated and make connections with global struggles which critique capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, neoliberalism and racism.

While mainstream discourse on Israel-Palestine remains disproportionate in centering and reiterating Zionist narratives rather than speaking to Palestinian perspectives, Israel is facing significant material challenges through divestment measures as well as cultural and academic boycotts (see Abu Nimah 2012; Barrows-Friedman 2015; Silver 2015). The creative resistance and solidarity stories documented in this project are sites of struggle that add to these larger divestment and boycott shifts that are making differences on the ground. In my study, I have examined the intersection of transnational narratives of Palestinian resistance and solidarity as a political practice. I explored the ways in which each narrative is at once an act of resistance as well as of solidarity due to the relations of power between the settler colonial states of Canada and Israel in addition to the complicity of each state in the other's colonial project. While recognizing the significant differences between the concepts of resistance and solidarity in the former's connection to liberation struggles and the latter's shared social justice aims, my articulation of resistance encompasses forms of action that actively oppose structural and

systemic oppression and discrimination. Furthermore, my understanding of solidarity is rooted in political practice understood and expressed through an anticolonial and decolonizing epistemology that takes its direction from those belonging to the directly affected communities in question.

In closing, I reiterate my claim that Palestinian resistance and solidarity narratives not only operate as a powerful counterpoint to the Zionist construction of a Palestinian ‘other’, but further enable the possible material transformation of Israel’s bio/necropolitical racist practices of separation, fragmentation, and violence. In examining this possibility, my doctoral research has looked at how diverse strategies of narration are used to remember, (re)present, and resist Israel’s rationale of racialized exclusion and political violence through the stories that Palestinian artists and solidarity activists circulate. To move in the direction of halting the violent policies and practices of the Israeli state against the Palestinian people, however, more must be done to counter the Zionist silencing and erasure of situated Palestinian knowledges that continue to be purposely censored in academia and beyond. I believe that additional studies are required to examine the potential for transformation through creative resistance and solidarity and the significance of connecting settler colonial struggles in striving to achieve this end. As Audre Lorde infamously stated, “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” . Taking this to its full account, international law and human rights discourse can never bring down the walls that have been built and the treacherous conditions under which Palestinians live, but the employment of these discourses can reveal contradictions in the Zionist goal of a Jewish state as well as the settler colonial logics of Canada. At the same time, creative resistance and solidarity “writ[ing] boldly from the exit” (Collins 2011) can provide the means to articulate and construct novel ways of political engagement that contest the dominant logics of Zionist discourses in institutions of higher learning, mainstream media, and other *naturalized* power relations. My

project demonstrates that Palestinian creative resistance and solidarity efforts - despite the complex power dynamics that are produced by identity categories as well as borders, boundaries, and racializations - mark a very important moment in transforming our understanding of the continued Palestinian *Nakba* and in opposing the brutal and illegal Israeli practices of colonization and apartheid. The creative resistance and solidarity stories documented in this project are sites of struggle that add to these larger divestment and boycott shifts that are making differences on the ground. My research is a small but important contribution to this end. More needs to be done in exploring the impacts of social media on these creative narratives, on who - as Madison (2010) explains - is the intended and actual audience for the stories told, and how to account for the realization of transformative change.

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