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**Women (Re)Writing History:
Constructing the case for a state-centered analysis of indigenous women's literature
in South Africa and Israel/Palestine**

By

Kim Elliott
B.A Honours (Distinction)

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
In partial fulfilment of
The requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

School of Language, Literatures and Comparative Literary Studies

Carleton University

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploratory work. Informed by critical feminism and the sociology of literature, it attempts to develop a state-centered theoretical framework for a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of the literary productions of indigenous women writers from the settler societies of South Africa and Israel/Palestine. The thesis draws upon contemporary sociological theories of gender and nation-state – particularly those of Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias and Souad Joseph – to highlight the gendered nature, not just of the metaphor of ‘nation’, but of the political construction of ‘state’. The thesis argues that the contradictory and gendered nature of the state and its practices are exposed in the contemporary writings of indigenous women. Women have typically been the invisible subjects of both the theories and the political policy and legal formations of the nation-state. Having historically been relegated to the realm of the private within the public/private divide, women have generally been perceived of as not having a role in the public domain. However, as Souad Joseph (1996, 1997) among others, has noted, the concept of the public/private divide is in fact a fiction. Women have both been affected by ‘public’ policy and have also been actively engaged in the ‘public’ and the political. To highlight this, the thesis will examine three areas of historical policy, shared by both South Africa and Israel/Palestine, and inherited from the prior British colonial bureaucracy: displacement, migrant labour laws, and pass laws. The thesis aims to illustrate that the writings of women such as South Africans Miriam Tlali, Sindiwe Magona, Ellen Kuzwayo and Palestinians Liyana Badr, Sahar Khalifeh and Hanan Mikha’il ‘Ashrawi, need to be understood as not only works of resistance against the patriarchal structures they live within, but also as actively participating in a (re)writing of history.

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Women (Re)Writing History: Constructing the Case for a State-Centered Analysis of Indigenous Women's Literature in South Africa and Israel/Palestine

THE LAW! The greatest hardship we laboured under was not that we had no protection from the law. No! That was the lesser evil. The worst was that we were burdened with protection by the master race via an unwieldy plethora of laws, by-laws, rules and regulations passed by a parliament with whose existence we had had naught to do and whose *raison d'être* appeared to be our exclusive 'protection'. (Magona, 1990:1)

The occupation! The word had so many meanings. Exile: a reality we experience in the heart of the motherland itself. Torture: a topic defined to perfection by the pimps of politics at the United Nations. Sink in the mud, Palestine, kiss the world goodbye! (Khalifeh, 1976, 1994: 56)

INTRODUCTION

The Law. The nation-state and its institutional extensions. These are the first references Sindiwe Magona makes in To My Children's Children, her first published book and an autobiographical account. Magona had overt intentions in writing this book: intentions of filling the silence, the void of African women's histories in South Africa. And further, she wished to provide in this history an example for the young to understand – for young men and women to know *their* history – a history until recently severely distorted when it was not altogether absent from the official state history books. In so doing, and by writing under apartheid South Africa, Magona spoke directly back to the state;

challenging a state and system that pointedly and systematically developed an agenda to dis-empower the 'native' South Africans. Magona's book could not be published under apartheid South Africa. Sahar Khalifeh's Wild Thorns was banned in Israel. Khalifeh, in the above quotation, refers to the 'occupation', alluding directly to the law of the Israeli nation-state, to the laws that enforce the internal displacement and the legalized poverty of Palestinians. Khalifeh's quotation goes beyond pointing to the role of the state, and looks to the complicity of the UN and international politicians in maintaining Israeli dominance over the Palestinian population – a complicity that dates back to the period of British presence in the region.

The two above quotations speak volumes to the conditions of life of the indigenous populations under the modern nation-states within which they live. These nation-states share a history of settlerism, or as Aijaz Ahmad has written, a 'recalcitrant kind of settler colonialism' (1992: 31). In Israel, Zionists began to settle in what was known as Palestine in the late 19th century, a process which culminated in 1948 – at the end of the British Mandate period - with the establishment of the state of Israel and the influx of Jews escaping European anti-Semitism in the aftermath of the Holocaust. This settlerism is ongoing as I write, through the state-sanctioned settler establishments – illegal under international law - in the areas identified as Palestinian territory under the Oslo agreements (Aronson, 1998: 12). In South Africa, the first settlers were Dutch, or Boers or Afrikaners as they became known, who, after a long period of British dominance, took over rule of that country in 1948. However, more than referring to the laws of the contemporary nation states, Khalifeh and Mogona's quotations point to policies and

complex bureaucracies that date back to a British colonial presence in both countries. Their writings provide representations and critiques of the effects of such policies on the lives of indigenous women.

Paulo Friere coined the term 'culture of silence' to describe the condition in which the impoverished majority of the world's people are living, "powerless, and with little access to the means of communication" (Friere in Spivak, 1993: 94). Only in recent decades have indigenous women in South Africa and Israel and the Occupied Territories begun to record their histories - in effect assuming agency through writing, while frequently partaking in nationalist and other social movements. Generally writing in a genre that has been described as a form of 'life-writing', the literary works of these women share many common themes such as the re-appropriation of voice, of histor(ies) that have been systematically excluded from the grand narrative of traditional Eurocentric and patriarchal 'HIStory' – the specific telling, recording of women's, of grandmothers' and great grandmothers' tales; themes of emancipation and national struggle that highlight the interconnectedness of the individual, in the Renaissance liberal humanist sense, with that of the community; themes of healing and reconstruction of community and society; themes of women's all too frequent exclusion or manipulation within nationalist or liberatory struggles, and most specifically, by the nation-state with its policies and laws. The novels, short stories and poetry written by the indigenous women of these two regions thus cut through the silence that Friere has described. In particular, this thesis will argue, the writings of these women speak to the role of the state with regard to the lives of women – and this from the perspective of women. This thesis will provide a cursory

examination of the writings of three women from each region: Palestinians, Sahar Khalifeh, Liyana Badr and Hanan Mikha'el 'Ashrawi and from South Africa, Sindiwe Magona, Ellen Kuzwayo and Miriam Tlali.

This thesis will argue that by putting pen to paper and recording their own and their communities' experiences, these writings expose the effect of government policy – contemporary inherited from a shared colonial past - on women, and that as such they contribute to the dialectical relationship between state and society. The thesis draws on the framework of sociology of literature, which situates literature as a social discourse – where the social contexts that define literature are in turn defined by literature. Patricia Clark (1982) comments that it is the dialectic between text and context that the sociology of literature attempts to elucidate. Clark also contends that comparisons across literatures and across societies lay at the foundation for any sociological approach to literature; that it is through comparison that what is characteristic of a given society or literature and what is shared by many societies and several literatures can be derived (118-119).

This thesis, situated within comparative literary studies and informed by a critical feminist and sociology of literature framework, is concerned with the dynamic existing between 'indigenous' women's writing and the nation-state. As such, the thesis will draw upon contemporary sociological theories of gender and nation-state – particularly those of Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias and Souad Joseph – to highlight the gendered nature, not just of the metaphor of nation, but of the political construction of 'state'. This thesis argues that the contradictory and gendered nature of the state and its practices are

exposed in the contemporary writings of indigenous women. To expose this, the thesis will examine three areas of contemporary policy, shared by both countries and inherited from the prior British colonial bureaucracy: displacement, migrant labour laws, and pass laws. In both countries, these policies and laws were directed primarily at the male indigenous population however, their implications for women in particular, and for the indigenous communities in general, have been immense, as the literature will evidence.

As Chapter One of this thesis will show, much of the existing literary analysis that explores the relationship of gender and the nation-state tends to focus on the concept of 'nation' as gendered, and tends to neglect the 'state' side of the concept (Said, 1983; Ahmad, 1992). This sort of analysis focuses on women as the 'gendered subaltern' as Spivak has written, manipulated as a metaphor in the nation-building processes – where women represent either the 'mother' or 'boundary' of nation, or they are the 'powerless', 'oppressed', or 'disenfranchised' who need to be protected. This is particularly true in much criticism of Arabic literature, where women frequently represent the 'honour' of the nation – whether the writing is concerned with a nation-state, or a nationalist movement. The study of the representation of women as metaphor of nation consists of an important element contributing to the understanding of the gendered nature of governance structures. It helps, for instance, to expose the porousness of the private/public concept that has traditionally relegated women to the sphere of 'home' and men to the 'political'. However, as Chapter One will illustrate by drawing on sociological literature, an understanding of the dynamic between nation and state, brought together in the term 'nation-state', is vital to understanding the real impact of the state on the lives of women.

The second chapter of the thesis will provide the historical context framing the literature under review, highlighting some of the shared aspects of Israel and South Africa's pasts: the role of British colonial bureaucracy, and a history of settlerism. Taking on a critical feminist, new historicist lens, the chapter, while primarily descriptive, will attempt to expose the silenced history of women in both countries. In particular, this chapter will focus on policies and laws relating to land distribution, population control and segregation, and the colonial treatment of gender, keeping in mind that the law is not simply a piece of legislation, but a force that defines and creates realities.

Having spent considerable time providing the contexts in which these writings, and this thesis, can be understood, the third chapter will represent the focus of the thesis, as a preliminary literary case study. This chapter is divided thematically by area of policy: displacement, migrant labour and pass laws. The chapter will weave together the historical 'facts' surrounding these policies and laws with their representations in the stories and poetry, and from this, the chapter will extract some general observations about the effect of the state on women's lives, and women's responses to it.

The final chapter, the conclusion, will summarize the questions posed in this thesis, and attempt a cursory evaluation of the usefulness of this sort of study. The chapter will also consider a question that cannot be left silenced in this work: whether the women's writing under review, that of the three South African and three Palestinian women writers, can be considered feminist works. I fear that to avoid reference to this question

will simply presume a direct feminist stance on the part of the authors however, the question of the relationship of their writing to something that could be termed a more general feminist enterprise is something that needs to be considered.

Comparative Considerations

This thesis is written within the framework of comparative literary studies – a dynamic and shifting discipline that has at its foundation an interest in cross-nation and cross-cultural comparison and research. The discipline, however, has come under criticism for its historical lack of accounting for feminist and non-Western approaches to literature. The boundaries of the discipline, as Margaret Higonnet (1994) has suggested, are being contested and expanded. This is not new to the discipline: the discourse and object of the study of comparative literature has shifted over the past century, taking up the challenge of engaging with the political and philosophical surges of the times. As Higonnet writes, “the question of boundaries is key to what one critic has called the ‘permanent crisis of comparative literature’. The fertility of the field has depended on asking again and again, ‘what is to be compared with what, by whom, to what end, and under what conditions’” (1994: 1). In the early part of the century, the discipline opened itself up to what has been deemed the ‘first linguistic turn’, referring to the influence of Saussurian linguistics on Russian Formalism. What has become known as a second linguistic turn took place in the 1960’s, with French philosophers Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes at the lead, and through the particular influence of anthropological structuralism as articulated by Claude Levi-Strauss.

One of the challenges that currently faces the discipline are the movements that have been developing and gaining (theoretical and political) ground over the past three decades, in particular through the influence of feminist, new historicist¹, and post-colonial studies (Goodwin, 1994, Lanser, 1994, Higonnet, 1994). These theories have, despite their growing presence and the bulk of work published under their rubrics, generally remained on the margins of comparative literary studies (Goodwin, 1994: 252). Both post-colonial and feminist discourses have, to varying extents, been shaped by the convergence of radical political movements – including the women’s liberation movement, the anti-racism movement, and the national liberation movements of emerging post-colonial nations. However, despite its contemporary marginalization, a feminist and historicist informed study, according to Sarah Webster Goodwin (1994), can be found at the roots of comparative literary studies, dating back to the contributions of Germaine De Staël’s writing in the early nineteenth century².

Goodwin foresees comparative literary studies, informed by new historicism and feminism, as broadening its scope to comparing questions such as legal codes and wartime culture. She asks, “what are the relations among laws such as those governing labour, copyright, and property on an international basis? How do literary representations of flight from domestic confinement treat borders between nations, legal codes, and cultures?” (1994: 266). This thesis, in a sense, broaches on these boundaries of comparative literary studies – informed by feminism, historicism and a sociology of literature framework. Further, along the lines of Goodwin’s suggestions, this thesis

attempts a comparison of literatures using as its framework legal codes – in this case pointing to laws and policies shared by contemporary states that have a common history of British colonial bureaucracy.

The reader of this thesis should keep in mind another aspect that has been remarked upon in feminist comparative literary theory: that of ‘comparative specificity’ (Lanser, 1994; Nnaemeka, 1994). Both Susan Lanser and Obioma Nnaemeka have called for a comparative literature that would ‘embrace both difference and similarity’ in its study, while ensuring that it does not ‘dissolve a text, idea, writer, group or movement into a safe and homogenous whole’ (Lanser, 1994: 297). This seems a simple statement, yet it is vital to keep in mind while reading any work. Any academic undertaking must highlight certain aspects of literature, of history, in order to illuminate particular points. By no means do I, in this work, intend to suggest that the whole of the struggles and experiences of Palestinian and South African women are the same. There are, however, aspects that are strikingly similar, and this thesis aims to point out the role that colonialism and settlerism have had in fomenting this.

Terminology

Writing a thesis that deals with Palestinian and African South African women’s writing involves an unpacking of many of the discourses that have been constructed around their identities. This becomes evident as soon as one attempts to categorize their writing – is it indigenous women’s writing? Third World women’s writing? I have chosen to refer to

this literature as indigenous as the following will explain. In both countries, identity has been deeply racialized. In particular, in South Africa, the apartheid system of racial classifications presents a dilemma. The term 'black' in South Africa refers generally to all those categorized as 'non-White', thus 'Coloured', 'Asian' and 'African', or what was referred to as 'Bantu'. The thesis targets a specific sub-section of the South African population that lived in the area at the time of the colonial encounter, thus in this thesis I refer to African South Africans or indigenous South Africans. In Israel and the Occupied Territories, I refer to Palestinians or indigenous populations.

I chose not to use the term 'Third World writers' for a number of reasons, however, primarily because I do not believe the term adequately captures the positionality of the women writers of this study. The term 'Third World' is widely used and yet controversial, and in many instances has been replaced by 'developing countries', or 're-developing countries'. As Ella Shohat and Robert Stam succinctly argue, the term 'Third World' is invested with a patronizing tone: "The term itself was formed against the backdrop of the patronizing vocabulary which posited these nations as 'backward', 'underdeveloped', and 'primitive' (1994: 25). There are other reasons, however. Authors such as Fedwa Malti-Douglas have already raised the question of the inappropriateness of referring to Arabic literature as 'Third World': "Third World Literature, emergent literature, postcolonial literature: these are categories that elicit much positive response. But to sneak Arabic literature through the door as an emergent literature... is to do it a grave injustice" (1994: 226). Thus for the present study I've chosen to refer to writers as 'indigenous' – referring to their heritage of colonization.

Employing the term indigenous, however, is fraught with political controversy, and requires a further elaboration. In both contemporary South Africa and Israel and the Occupied Territories, there are 'indigenous' populations, in the sense of populations that remain more or less nomadic and who continue to remain apart from other segments of the population – in Palestine there are the Bedouin, primarily located in the Negev region, and in South Africa there are the San and !kung, for instance, who generally live in the arid regions in the north-west area of the country. This thesis, however, employs the term 'indigenous' to refer to the peoples of a contemporary nation-state who were there at the time of European colonization. Indeed in both South Africa and Israel, the British Colonial Administrations dealt with these populations as part of their ongoing search for the ideal solution to the 'Native Question', i.e. the control of the indigenous populations living in 'their' colonies. The use of the term 'indigenous' is justified by reference to the International Labour Organization's definition of the term, which defines indigenous as those "peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of the present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions" (ICHRDD, 1996 : 146).³ The International Labour Organization's understanding of the term 'indigenous' has become a standard definition that has been adopted by organizations ranging from the World Bank to Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 1992: 114).

General remarks

The subject of this thesis is derived from many years of personal involvement with issues around South Africa and Israel/Palestine. Having been exposed to women's literature in these countries, I was, perhaps naively, fascinated with the thematic similarities that I recognized in the writings, despite what are clearly immense cultural and historical differences. It became clear to me that they are connected as peoples oppressed by colonial and settler encounters and, in a more general sense, as women living under patriarchal political and social systems. Chandra and Satya Mohanty contextualize their book on women writers in India, The Slate of Life, within a feminist framework. They ask "in what ways do women come to terms with the social fact of gender, that is the socially determined relationships of hierarchy and inequality that govern their experiences and shape the choices and possibilities available to them" (1994: 2). In attempting to extract the representation of state policies – policies of dislocation, migrant labour and pass laws – in the works under study, this thesis attempts to answer some of these questions, and to bring into view the strong and active voices of women questioning and resisting the role of the nation-state in their lives.

Research for this thesis was undertaken in South Africa, where I had the good fortune of speaking to various writers and researchers on women's writing, including Gertrude Vester⁴ (University of London), Haj Naidoo⁵ (University of Natal), Farid Esack, Gender Commissioner for South Africa⁶, and Benny Bunzee, former editor for Drum⁷. Library research was undertaken at the libraries of Durban (Universities of Natal and Durban-

Westville), Cape Town (University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape), as well as at the Senate House and the SOAS libraries in London, UK⁸. I had hoped to visit Palestine this past year on an exchange program with Birzeit University, West Bank, however the program was canceled due to 'Israeli closures and economic policies'⁹, which is indicative of the enormity of the restrictions Palestinians writers and people in general continue to live with.

The choice of authors and works examined in this study was primarily limited by the availability of texts in English. While I was able to purchase a number of the South Africa texts in South Africa, I found better fortune at locating texts by African South African writers in London, as several have been published by the Women's Press of the UK, which perhaps evidences the problems of publication and distribution of texts written by African women. With regard to the Palestinian authors, I was greatly limited by availability of texts in English. As Amal Amireh (1996) has pointed out, very few Palestinian women authors, and Arab in general, have been translated into English.¹⁰ Amireh suggests that there are only two Palestinian women whose books have been translated into English: Sahar Khalifeh, and Liana Badr. For the third I've chosen poetry by Hanan Mikha'il 'Ashrawi, published in an anthology by translator Salma Khadra Jayyusi – an anthology in which the writers represented are predominantly male. However, more than not being translated into English, both Amireh and Nezar Andary (1996) complain of the lack of critical discourse in the West with regard to Arabic literature in general¹¹. With regards to South African criticism, while there has been a fair amount of work on Bessie Head's writing, there remains a great lacuna with regard to a

more comprehensive treatment of African women's writing (Stratton, 1994). Thus I hope, at least in a minimal way, that this thesis will contribute to filling this void.

Chapter One

NEGOTIATING GENDER WITHIN THE NATION-STATE

“The mothers of the nation, the womenfolk as a whole, are the titans of our struggle.” *From the address of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress* (1987: 8, in Yuval-Davis, 1997: 1)

Introduction

The basis of the comparison for the women writers whose accounts are the subject of this study is located initially in their colonial heritage – in particular the British colonial heritage they share¹². Policies and practices initiated during the British colonial era in each of these countries have played vital roles in constructing the present day realities of the peoples living within the current nation states that superseded the British: South Africa and Israel with the Occupied Territories. The particular interest of this thesis is the role such inherited policies have had in shaping the experiences and lives of indigenous women; influences that have become translated and responded to, the thesis argues, in the literary writings of indigenous women. The idea that literature reflects reality is not new, however. How this thesis differs from others' analyses is by the particular filter it will use to elucidate this relationship, i.e. through an analysis of particular policies and their representation in women's writing. While it is clear that all policies effect women, the thesis will focus on three broadly defined areas of policy that have had particular repercussions for indigenous women and gender relations, and that are shared by both

countries: policies of forced relocations/displacement and the ensuing policies concerning pass laws and migrant labour.

Chapter Two will examine the historical roots of such policies, situated within a history of British colonialism and within the context of settler societies. However, initially, an understanding of the contexts within which these policies exist, and thus of the concepts of nation and state, brought together in the term 'nation-state', is vital. Much of the existing literary analysis that explores the relationship of gender and the nation-state tends to focus on the concept of 'nation' as gendered, and tends to neglect the 'state' side of the concept (Said, 1983; Ahmad, 1992). This sort of analysis focuses on women as the 'gendered subaltern' as Gayatri Spivak has written, manipulated as a metaphor in the nation-building processes – where women represent either the 'mother' or 'boundary' of nation, or they are the 'powerless', 'oppressed', or 'disenfranchised' who require men's protection. In order to elucidate the state side of the nation-state concept, and to examine how nation and state combine to regulate the lives of women, this chapter, in keeping with a sociology of literature approach, will draw upon sociological theory.

In particular, this chapter will highlight the falsity of one the main traditional (Western) conceptualizations that has served to define women's role within the nation-state, that of the public/private divide. The premise of the public/private divide suggests that women (within the imposed colonial model) have been traditionally conceived of as occupying the private domain of the home and family, and thus not of significance within the public and therefore political realms. The ramifications of the concept of the public/private

divide have been, and continue to be significant, as pointed out by Omolara Ogundipe Leslie (1987): “women are ‘naturally’ excluded from public affairs; they are viewed as unable to hold positions of responsibility, rule men or even be visible when serious matters of state and society are being discussed. Women are viewed to need tutelage before they can be politically active” (130, in Stratton, 1994: 15). As this chapter will elucidate, such a binary division has not only served as an excuse to keep women out of the affairs of politics, but has also served to maintain the false notion that the public or the political does not have repercussions on the private. The division fails to capture the dialogical interaction that exists between the realms of public and private, and the implications of the ‘public’, in terms of the state policies, for instance, that encroach upon the supposedly politically neutral ‘private’ domains. The thesis will argue that not only do such policies have repercussions in the private domain, but the ‘private’ speaks back to the ‘public’, as evidenced through the various forms of women’s political organizing both countries have witnessed, and, this thesis would argue, through women’s writing.

Women & Nation in Literary Theory

Literary theorization around the concepts of nation and nationalism(s) has exploded over the past several years, particularly with the emergence of post-colonial studies - perhaps beginning, or certainly impelled by Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1991) and texts such as Homi Bhabha’s *Nation and Narration* (1990), Partha Chatterjee’s *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993), Aijaz Ahmad’s *In Theory* (1992) and the list goes on. What tends to be lacking in the literary analysis, as Florence Stratton (1994) among

others has argued, is a concerted examination of the relationship between nation and gender, beyond the role of women as metaphor of nation.

The reason for this may partially lie in the problem of the term 'nation' being conflated with the term 'nation-state'. However the two terms are quite distinct, as we can see even in this early definition of nation by Ernest Renan in 1882:

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle... more valuable by far than common customs posts and frontiers conforming to strategic ideas is the fact of sharing, in the past, a glorious heritage and regrets, and of having, in the future, [a shared] program to put into effect, or the fact of having suffered, enjoyed, and hoped together ... A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future (1882, 1990:19).

Renan's early definition of nation is one that often holds true in the usage of the term today. However, his definition includes the basic distinctions between 'nation' and 'state'. A 'nation', the concept of the imagined community, does not hold within itself 'custom posts' and 'frontiers'; these are elements that protect the boundaries of a 'nation-state' – physical boundaries that the 'state' with its bureaucracy and institutions puts into place to protect the 'nation'. The state aspect of 'nation-state' will be further elaborated upon later. For the moment, however, it is important to understand nation and state as two separate concepts, and to understand the concept of 'nation' and its relationship to nationalism.

What separates state nationalism from other forms of nationalism (the nationalism, for instance of post-colonial or national liberation movements) is in fact the 'state'. Within any state there exists several forms of nationalism – there are always competing nationalisms attempting to dominate. What the nation-state signifies is the dominant nationalism that controls the state. The state, in turn, creates bureaucracies, institutions, policies and laws to maintain the hegemony of the dominant nationalism¹³. This of course helps to explain the predicaments of emerging 'nation-states' which have inherited the bureaucracies of the former dominant group. As we will see in the following chapter, both settler colonies under review – Israel and South Africa - inherited British colonial bureaucracies, which they adapted for their own means of controlling the other 'nations' existing within their boundaries. Contemporary South Africa, for instance, now governed by the African National Congress, has inherited a bureaucracy having both the imprint of the British and the Afrikaners – a state apparatus that had as its aim the suppression of the indigenous populations. One of the main tasks of the current government is to continue to run the country through this apparatus, while simultaneously attempting to dismantle its racist legacy.

The concepts of nation and state must therefore be understood as independent, while at the same time, inter-dependent. Literary studies of nation-states have focused on the 'nation' side of the nation-state concept, and have paid very little attention to gender. Edward Said, in *The World, The Text and the Critic* (1983) lambastes literary theorists for not examining the role of the state in literature. However, other than mentioning that

feminist literary critics have not taken up this task, Said makes very little reference to gender, or what a gendered critique of state might look like within literary criticism.

Nevertheless, while generally limited to an examination of the concept of nation, literary studies of 'imagined communities' or of 'nationalism' - whether it be a state nationalism, conceived of within the term 'nation-state', or the nationalism involved in post-colonial or 'national liberatory' movements -- have highlighted the manipulation of the concept of 'woman'. 'Woman' as metaphor within the concept of nation and nationalism tends to exist on two levels. The concept of woman tends to be both one that is placed on a pedestal and patronized simultaneously. Women tend to represent the 'mother of the nation' or the boundary of the nation, and at the same time are represented as weak, foolish and needing of protection. These representations become increasingly pernicious in the case of indigenous women in South Africa and Israel/Palestine, where African women tend to be constructed as poor and powerless (Nnaemeka, 1994; Stratton, 1994), and Palestinian women as either controlled by their own men, as exotic, or as terrorists (Fayad, 1995; Shohat and Stam, 1994). The power of such representations can be better understood when one considers how they are used as justifications for the treatment of women by the state. R. Radhakrishnan (1992) has noted that metaphors, such as woman as 'mother of nation', create an idea of 'woman' as a pure ahistorical signifier of 'interiority': "In the fight against the enemy from the outside, something within gets even more repressed and 'woman' becomes the mute but necessary allegorical ground for the transactions of nationalist history" (84). 'Woman' thus becomes the public symbol of

the state and the nationalist movements, while ‘women’ become relegated to the margins of politics and history.

Metaphors, such as that of women as ‘mother of the nation’, are a part of what authors such as Homi Bhabha (1990) or Mary Layoun (1992), would refer to as ‘narration of nation’. However, more specifically, such metaphors concerning women become translated into the justification for the treatment of women within the ‘nation’. Such metaphors, as will be examined, are vital to upholding the public/private divide that relegates women out of the political, and thus leaves the control of women to men, who control the political, and thus the state. The use of metaphors for justifications of control of one group by another become all the more important, as will be examined in Chapter Two, within colonial settings and settler societies – the contexts from which the women whose writing this thesis examines, come from.

The Nation-State in a Sociological Context

The literary analysis of nation, which highlights the use of metaphors of ‘woman’ as boundaries of nation and as individuals who are ‘weak’ and need to be ‘protected’, thus is an important background to understanding women’s historical treatment by the state. However to further investigate this, it is useful to draw upon sociological theory that further develops the role of gender within the nation-state. It is important to keep in mind that this thesis draws upon the sociology of literature as a framework. As Patricia Clark (1982) has noted, the imbrication of the literary and the social explains why the sociology

of literature draws on literary studies and social sciences alike. Sociological analyses do not supplant; they supplement more familiar kinds of literary inquiry (108).

Not unlike much literary theory, sociological theories of nation have also generally lacked a gender component in their analysis. Sylvia Walby, for instance, writing in 1996, suggests that with the exception of four female theorists, the existing literature on nation does not deal with questions of gender, ethnicity or race¹⁴. Politics has historically been conceptualized as the realm of men, and yet women have always played an important role within the concept of both nation and nationalism. Women, as discussed above, tend to represent the symbolic bodyguards of the 'nation'. They are the "embodiments of the collectivity, while at the same time being its cultural reproducers" (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 23). Women, Souad Joseph (1996) notes, have been crucial to the establishment and maintenance of the boundaries of nations. While women become the symbolic markers or icons ('mothers of the nation', for instance), and are metaphorically placed on a pedestal, their lived experience is shaped by patriarchal national ideologies and structures. Joseph has argued that it is because women have been symbolically equated with the nation that women are increasingly subordinated by the nation-state. The burden of maintaining 'traditional families', the 'honour of the family', etc., falls onto women's shoulders. As Joseph writes: "At times, the preservation of the nation results in moves to assume greater control over women than had existed in some imagined past" (1996: 6). Floya Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) have summarized in a list – one that has been widely accepted among feminist scholars studying nation and nationalisms – five major ways women are involved in the ethnic and national processes of 'nation':

- 1) as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities
- 2) as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups
- 3) as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture
- 4) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences – as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories
- 5) as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles (7).

Their list moves from the biological role of women in child-bearing – the physical reproduction of members of the ‘nation’, to the metaphorical and symbolic, to the economic, illustrating the various ways women participate in the concept of ‘nation’. This list affirms that the concept of ‘nation’ must be understood in relation to the state (its institutions, bureaucracies) and to nationalist ideologies. Nation-states exist at specific historical moments and are constructed from “shifting nationalist discourses promoted by different groupings competing for hegemony” (Yuval-Davis, 1992: 4). Yuval-Davis and Anthias, in agreement with their literary counterparts, contend that the concept of the nation-state and nationalism are grounded in a fiction; in a belief that there is an absolute correspondence between the boundaries of a nation and the boundaries of those who live in a specific state, and that women represent the symbolic borders of nation.

Nevertheless, there is no widely accepted definition of ‘nation’ or ‘nationalism’ (Anderson, 1996: 1). E. Gellner (1983) traces the development of nationalism to the need of modern societies for cultural homogeneity in order to function smoothly. This need,

when satisfied, is sponsored by the modern nation-state; but when it is unfulfilled, it stimulates the growth of ideological movements among the excluded groupings (the competing nationalisms), which call for the establishment of alternative nation-states (in Yuval-Davis, 1997: 15). Traditional theories of nation and nationalism suggest that at their root must be a common territory or common language, statehood or shared tradition, history or race. This definition would thus subsume what would be considered secondary differences of class and status (Greenfeld 1992: 7, in Yuval-Davis, 1997: 19). However more recent theories, particularly those that acknowledge the importance of gender, race and class, have contested this definition, pointing out that associating national identity with 'nation' in modern nation-states is not so straightforward, that differences in class and status are not superficial (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 19).

As will be examined in the following chapter, nation-states founded on conquest go to great means to suppress other 'nations' existing within the territory of conquest in order to uphold their own 'narration' of nation. For the present I would like to touch on the question of state, as nations and nationalism do share a project of maintaining or working towards obtaining a state – with physical boundaries and the attached apparatuses of bureaucracies and institutions.

The concept of the 'state' needs to be addressed separately from, though clearly not unrelated to, the concept of 'nation'. There are many definitions of 'state'; however, they have generally tended to share a lack of accounting for gender concerns (Rai 1996; Yuval-Davis 1997, 1991). Michael Mann (1996) has suggested that on a very basic level,

states became important in the modern world for providing five specific services their citizens¹⁵: 1) they became capable of waging massive routinized war, thus ensuring the protection of the physical or geographical boundaries of 'nation'; 2) they provided communications infrastructures for both militarism and capitalism; 3) they became the site of political democracy, for those having citizenship status; 4) they guaranteed social citizenship rights encroaching into the private sphere; and, 5) they invented macro-economic planning (314). Mann's listing is very much a utilitarian one, and of course focuses on the role of the state for those inhabitants living within its borders who are full citizens – and not for those who do live within the geographical borders of state, but do not hold full citizenship rights. It is important to note that, of course, the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa did not have citizenship rights, in particular the right to vote, until the 1994 elections in South Africa. In Israel, Palestinians – even those living within the territory of Israel – do not hold the same citizenship rights as Jewish Israelis¹⁶.

Stuart Hall (1984) has defined the 'modern state' as one in which power is shared; where rights to participate in government are legally or constitutionally defined; representation is wide; state power is fully secular and boundaries of national sovereignty are clearly defined (9-10, in Yuval-Davis, 1997: 12). This of course is a somewhat idealistic version of what a modern 'state' perhaps should be. Certainly the countries under review in this thesis, South Africa and Israel, though considered 'states', cannot be considered to have provided a 'wide representation', or to have shared power, among all those who live within their boundaries, and over whom their influence is exercised. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, having a particular interest in understanding the relationship of the

state with regard to questions of race, gender and class, have provided a definition of state that includes the question of power dynamics. They argue that the questions of control and coercion are central to any state:

[A state is] a body of institutions “that are centrally organized around the intentionality of control, with a given apparatus of enforcement (juridical and repressive) at its command and basis... Different forms of the state will involve different relationships between the control/coercion which is the residing characteristic of the state (1989: 11).

The state, thus, can be conceptualized as a bureaucratic, coercive and normative order. At least three levels of the state have power over gender relations: state officials, state institutions and state policies. Policies, as outlined earlier, are the primary area of interest in the present study.

The impact of the state on gender specifically has been seen to be partly shaped by historically specific patterns of gender relations in society, and partly shaped by historically specific state leaders, policies and definitions of politics (ideologies) (Charlton et al, 1989: 178). Thus the state has no *necessary* relationship to gender relations; it is evolving, dialectic and dynamic – it can change with time and with the intervention of new political leaders, new policies, new ideologies. However, according to Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) the treatment of women by a state is always controversial, and is generally informed by the metaphor of women as ‘mothers’. They note contradictions in the state’s relationship to gender, where, at least in contemporary

Western states, women are recognized as members of collectivities, institutions or groupings, and as participants in the social forces that give the state its given political projects in any particular social and historical context. Women are, on the other hand, “a special focus of state concerns as they are a social category having a specific role (particularly that of human reproduction), and thus the focus of state policies regarding gender is of women as mothers” (1989: 6). Their analysis thus clearly connects the policy of the state to the metaphors that support the idea of ‘nation’.

Furthermore, Waylen (1996), has suggested that the most useful way to understand the state is as a site of struggle. Within this conception, the state does not lie outside of society and social processes, but interacts with these processes, both influences and is influenced by. She argues that while gender (and race and class) inequalities are buried within the state, they are also partly constituted through the state. The state therefore partly reflects and partly helps to create particular forms of gender relations and gender inequalities (Waylen, 1996: 15). Thus state actions can also ‘engender’ the political. When the state inserts itself – creates policies that define or effect the ‘private’ (the realms of the family, reproduction, household subsistence, and sexuality), it politicizes them. A state thus, by its own policy and legal interventions, breaks down the barriers of the private/public divide.

Joseph (1997) argues that the public/private divide, central to classical Western constructs of citizenship and nation/statehood, is constructed as an entirely imaginative enterprise that has at its basis the control of women. The very fact that state policies can politicize

the 'private', Joseph contends, proves that the private/public divide is a porous one, one that varies from state to state and time to time, but is impacted upon by institutions and forces competing with and within state-building projects. Donna Sullivan (1995), suggests that "the demarcation of public and private life within society is an inherently political process that both reflects and reinforces power relations, especially the power relations of gender, race and class" (128 in Joseph, 1997: 75).

The role of the state is significant in the construction and maintenance of rights and privileges associated with gender, and is informed by the gendered notions of nation. As Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) has succinctly articulated, the construction of rights in the private domain of marriage and family are what has historically determined women's roles as citizens within the public domain. State subsidized institutions and agencies develop policies and laws that ensure control over women's reproduction and maternal rights (abortion laws, family assistance, child guardianship legislation), as well over productivity (access to employment, daycare) and wealth (right to own property, inheritance). She notes that even women's dress codes (i.e. the veil, the chador) can become a source of nationalism and of ideological production of the 'nation'. Women typically find themselves in a complex relationship with a state that frequently occupies the roles of both oppressor and liberator, as it negotiates between various forms of state nationalism and other internal nationalisms competing for power¹⁷.

Much of this competition for power – not simply of competing nationalisms, of course, but of competing groups having a variety of interests - plays itself out in what has been

conceptualized as 'civil society'. The state holds real power over people's lives. The centrality of the struggles in civil society are to gain further access to the state and state power. The different (power) positionings of men and women and other groups in a given state is determined by their differential access to the state.

Conclusion: Engaging in Civil Society

Often seen in opposition to the state, the concept of civil society needs to be briefly touched on as it plays an important role within nation/state-building – having the ability to reinforce or to contest it. The concept of civil society is yet another contentious and elusive one. The notion of civil society came to prominence in contemporary theory with the Eastern European uprisings of the late 1980s. These events were taken as signaling a paradigmatic shift from a state-centered perspective: from a strategy of armed struggle that seeks to capture state power, to one of an unarmed civil struggle that seeks to create a self-limiting power. However, while the concept in its contemporary form is associated with Europe, Mahmood Mamdani suggests that its power was even earlier witnessed in Africa. Mamdani refers to South Africa where, in the course of the Durban strikes of 1973 and the Soweto uprising of 1976, the shift was made from armed struggle to civil society (1996: 14).

There is no such thing as a homogeneous civil society, nor a uniform definition of what accounts for a civil society. The term generally refers to a social space, networks, institutions and social relations, including families, households, voluntary associations,

the production of signs and symbols, and in some definitions, production relations (Stasiulus and Yuval Davis, 1995: 17). Civil society includes those institutions, collectivities, groupings and social agencies which lie outside the formal rubric of state parameters, but which both inform and are informed by them. Theories divide civil society into the domains of the private and the public (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 12-13). Women (and the family) are located in the private domain, which has not been historically seen as politically relevant. Thus women do not necessarily have easy access to participating in civil society – to having their voices heard in public.

Civil society is the arena in which individuals and collectivities play a role in expressing their desires and needs to the state. It is through individual agency, through participation in civil society, that the state and its institutions, policies and practices might be transformed. Despite being ‘invisible’ in many historical narratives and theorizations of nation and state, women have played an active role in civil society through their various political and social undertakings. This thesis contends that a recent contribution has been made to debates in civil society by women writers, particularly indigenous women writers such as those under review in the current study. These women write against a nation-state that has attempted to relegate them to a position of silence, and in the particular cases under review, these women also write as members – or at least against a backdrop – of nationalist movements that work against the nation-state. These nationalist movements are certainly no less contentious sites in terms of gender relations, however this last point, concerning feminism and nationalist movements, will be revisited in the conclusion of this thesis. For the present, the following chapter will examine aspects of the colonial

history of Israel and South Africa, particularly with regard to gender, and will discuss the particular forms of nation-building that occur within settler societies.

Chapter Two

FROM BRITISH COLONIALISM TO 'INTERNAL' COLONIALISM: SOUTH AFRICA and ISRAEL/PALESTINE

The law cannot be conceived merely as executing interest external to itself but as an active constitutive force through which one culture establishes its modern identity by rendering another culture unfit for its underlying conceptual structure. Once we think of law as a distinct type of narration, a particular literary genre that tells us who we are by telling the story of others, the law's methods and points of view must be analyzed in their own terms (Shamir, 1996: 238).

Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the concepts of nation and state, pointing to the focus of study, in literary theory, on the concept of nation and in particular the metaphors of nation and nation-building. The study of gender, with regard to the concept of nation, has been focused on woman as metaphor, as representing 'mother of nation' or the 'boundaries of nation'. In order to work towards a literary analysis of the role of 'state' and gender in women's writing, the thesis has drawn upon feminist-informed, sociological theory of nation-state – particularly through an examination of the work of Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias and Souad Joseph. What has been identified as perhaps the most significant factor contributing both to the lack of academic study of gender and the nation-state, and has also contributed to the exclusion of women from the realm of

politics and policy-making (not to mention the realms of literary production and distribution), is the notion of the public/private divide. The concept of the public/private divide would situate women within the sphere of the family, and thus of the 'home', and therefore of little political importance – as politics have been traditionally conceived of as effecting the 'public' and not the 'private'. As Souad Joseph (1997), among others, has noted, the concept of the public/private divide is in fact a fiction. Women have both been affected by 'public' policy and, as this chapter and the chapter reviewing the writings of women from Palestine and South Africa will highlight, women have also been actively engaged in the 'public' and the political.

The present chapter examines specifics of the histories of the two countries under review: South Africa and Israel with the Occupied Territories. These two countries share a history of British colonialism and settlerism. South Africa's first experience of European colonization was by white settlers from the Netherlands who arrived in the extreme south-west of what is now South Africa during the mid-17th century. There they encountered two main groups of indigenous peoples, the Khoi (a now extinct people) and the San (still today known by the derogatory term Bushmen). The settler society expanded and spread, however the advance of the Dutch settlers (who would later become known as Boers, and later as Afrikaners) was slow and was checked by successive wars of resistance. The decisive factor in taking control of the lands was the arrival of British military forces. The British took over the Cape from the Dutch in 1806. By the end of the nineteenth century, what is now South Africa was comprised of four territories under white settler or colonial rule. Natal and the Cape were British colonies,

while the Transvaal and the Orange Free State remained under Boer control until the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. In 1948, the Nationalist Party, an Afrikaner party, took power and thereafter enacted many of the laws which have become known as the pillars of apartheid, i.e. laws enforcing racial classification, residential and educational segregation, strict controls on the movement of people classified as Africans, and laws preventing marriage and sexual intercourse between those classified as white and those classified as 'non-white'. However, as Elaine Unterhalter suggests, much of this legislation made *de jure* what already existed *de facto* under British rule (1995: 222).

By comparison, the period of the British Mandate in Palestine was relatively short, from 1917 to 1948. Nevertheless, the imprint the British left on the legal and bureaucratic apparatuses of the state of Israel is far reaching. In fact, authors such as Mary Layoun contend that Palestinians today still remain captive to the arbitrary invocation of regulations and restrictions that date back to the British Mandate period in Palestine (1992: 415). Before the presence of the British, Palestine had had a long history of external occupation. In its more recent history, the territory was in 1517 conquered by the Ottoman Empire, and remained under their subjugation more or less consistently until 1917, following WWI, when it became a British protectorate. From this point on it was agreed by the British that Palestine would ultimately become 'a home' for Jews¹⁸. In the summer of 1920, a British-run Civil Administration was established to replace the military administration. The land of Palestine had already begun to be settled by European Zionist Jews as early as the 1860s. During the Mandate period, the Zionist movement held the full support of the British.¹⁹ The state of Israel was founded in 1948.

The nation-building and state-building process within settler societies differentiates itself somewhat from the general introduction provided in Chapter One. The metaphors or tropes of nation-building within settler societies, as this chapter will elucidate, involve both the feminized metaphors discussed in Chapter One, as well as particular tropes that reflect the settlers' views of the indigenous populations they encountered. These tropes have served to justify both the treatment of women and the treatment of indigenous populations. As Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1994) have succinctly elucidated, these tropes are both Eurocentric and Orientalist in nature, and are generally an important aspect of the process of colonization. Considering that the literary works to be examined in this thesis have been written by indigenous women, an introduction to these concepts is vital.

The state-building processes in the two settler societies under review have been particularly complicated by the inheritance of British colonial bureaucracies. While the contemporary states have re-worked the state apparatus to serve their own needs of governance, many aspects of their treatment of indigenous populations are shared, and can be understood to be inherited from their British predecessors. In Israel/Palestine, for instance, Ronen Shamir contends that the law is embedded in the legacy that the Israeli legal system inherited from Britain. In fact, there are more than 1500 military regulations governing the daily lives of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, many of which date back to the Mandate period (1996: 237). The Nationalist Party in South Africa also inherited from the British a complex bureaucracy with regard to the administration of the

‘Native’ population. In fact, the concept of separate development that the Nationalist Party refined into the much loathed practice, *apartheid*, was already well established under British rule²⁰.

This chapter will review three areas of policy, shared by both states, related to the treatment of indigenous populations. Situated within the general ideology of ‘separate development’, the policies under review concern displacement, migrant labour policies and pass laws. These three areas of policy figure prominently in the writings of the three South African and three Palestinian women writers under review in this thesis. It is important to note that these three areas of policy were not intended to focus directly on women. In fact, women were neglected, in many cases, altogether in the letter of such policy imperatives, which have at their core the intention of keeping the indigenous populations separate from the dominant population, in reserves or areas outlined for a more direct control by the state. In so doing, the strategy of separate development, that has also been termed ‘internal colonialism’, serves to protect the ‘boundaries’ of the dominant nation, and in turn has created a cheap labour force for the dominant groups²¹. Indigenous women, while not necessarily being the explicit target of these policies, have nevertheless seen much of their day to day lives shaped by them. Nor have indigenous women silently accepted these policies and laws: women in both countries have a long history of political involvement, and this thesis would suggest that the more recent development of indigenous women’s writing figures as an important part of this resistance.

Nation-Building in Settler Societies

Settler societies have generally been defined as areas where Europeans settled and where their descendants have remained politically dominant over the indigenous groups living in that area at the time of colonization. A shared feature of settler societies is the development of systems of exclusion and exploitation of indigenous populations, as well as later immigrant groups, through a variety of coercive legal and administrative mechanisms. Many of these exclusionary and exploitative systems have frequently been borrowed from other settler societies – a model well established by British colonial administrations. The British Commonwealth provided opportunities for each colonial office and governor to share information on their respective jurisdictions, and more importantly ‘best practices’ on how the ‘Native Question’ was to be dealt with (Mamdani, 1996: 32). Among the most common trademarks of settler societies are the reserve and pass systems created to control the indigenous populations. Daiva Stasiulus and Nira Yuval-Davis (1995) have suggested that “settler societies share certain common features and challenges pertaining to the coexistence of diverse indigenous and migrant populations; that these commonalties stem from foundational claims made by European migrant groups intent on settlement and on the building of self-sustaining states, independent of metropolitan centers; and further that similarities pertain to the settlers’ political domination over the indigenous populations as well as other racialized minorities (1).

In order to consolidate control over the indigenous populations, settler societies have employed, to various levels, tactics that include the physical and cultural genocide of indigenous populations; the disruption of indigenous societies, economies and modes of governance; as well as the expropriation of indigenous territory and the forced removal of indigenous inhabitants from these territories. According to Stasiulus and Yuval-Davis, these methods have been at least partially used in order to suppress or prevent the political mobilization of indigenous populations, as well as to discourage the interference of the metropolitan centers to which the settler societies are attached (1995: 7). While many settler societies have remained linked to the 'home' country – such as the countries that maintain ties through Britain's Commonwealth of nations, others - such as South Africa and Israel - are independent states, with the metropolitan center (in these cases, Britain) having relinquished its authority.

The term 'internal colonialism' has been developed and accepted by a number of theorists and historians²² to acknowledge the treatment of indigenous populations and minority immigrants in settler societies. Internal colonialism refers to the internal network of coercive legal, political and economic constraints imposed on racial/ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in such societies. Stasiulus and Yuval-Davis have suggested that a fundamental aspect of internal colonialism is its relationship to capitalist production. Control over minority and indigenous populations has ensured a cheap labour pool for the dominant group in much the same way as other colonial enterprises have (1995: 12). Settlerism is a form of colonialism where the colonialists settled in the country of 'conquest' in large numbers, and became increasingly separate, administratively, from the

colonial metropole, and ultimately became nation-states in their own right. Canada, Australia and New Zealand are examples of settler societies that have maintained formal, if primarily symbolic links to the colonial metropole, as members of the British Commonwealth. South Africa became a state independent of ties to Britain in 1948. Israel accounts for a somewhat different form of settler society, as settlers came first from a variety of European countries, and after 1948, with the establishment of the state of Israel and the 'Law of Return', settlers began to immigrate to Israel from around the world. While Israeli settlers do not share a common original 'nationality', in the sense of holding prior citizenship in a common country, they do, however, share a common Jewish heritage. Moreover, as in the case of South Africa, although over a shorter time period, the Israeli transition to statehood was 'managed' by the British.

Settler societies differ from the other well-known form of colonialism which has been described as 'colonies of exploitation'. Colonies of exploitation typify many of the colonial enterprises in much of Africa and Asia. In these cases, colonialism was based solely on the appropriation of land and resources (natural and human), and the administration of the colony was left to a relatively small number of bureaucrats, merchants, soldiers and missionaries. This latter form of colonialism, in particular the structure of the colonial administration, has perhaps become most well-known due to its literary interpretation, in fictional accounts such as Joseph Conrad's tale The Heart of Darkness: the (in)famous story of the colonial bureaucrat's experience in the Belgian Congo – in the 'dark continent' of Africa.

Tropes such as the characterization of Africa as the 'dark continent' - which needs to be understood, of course, in opposition to the idea of the 'enlightened Europe' - are shared by both 'colonies of exploitation' and settler societies. They have provided the moral justification for the plundering, dispossession and enslavement of indigenous populations and cultures within all forms of colonialism. Tropes, however, have played an even more important role within settler societies - as they have provided a key element of the nation-building process in these countries. As discussed in Chapter One, nations are built on myths - myths, for instance of a common people, a common history and a common destiny - they are what Homi Bhabha has referred to as 'foundational fictions' (1990: 5). What differs in settler societies is that these are nations built on initial colonial encounters. As colonial encounters, the development of settler societies always involved displacing already existing peoples within the territory. The settlers needed a moral justification for the actions they would take to subdue, overpower, control, and in many cases, exterminate, the indigenous populations.

Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, in Unthinking Eurocentrism (1994), have highlighted the use of racial tropes in colonial discourses of conquest. As a means of justifying their brutal invasions and degradations of other lands and people, colonial discourses used a multiplicity of competing and contradictory tropes to describe both the lands and the peoples they were conquering. Europe, the home of diverse imperial powers, was represented as superior in varying and sometimes contradictory ways *vis à vis* the continents being attacked. Africa was constructed as hyper masculine and "grossly corporeal"(139), while the Middle East was exotic and barbarous (142). These tropes were violently

gendered, with the land presented as both shyly virginal waiting to be penetrated (raped), and wildly libidinous needing to be tamed by masculine presence (143). Depending on the context, tropes of infantilization and animalization constructed indigenous peoples as alternately savage, untamed beasts or children who were intellectually and racially immature (137-140). If colonized peoples were projected as body rather than mind (within discourses which privileged the latter over the former as a sign of civilization), then the colonized lands were described as raw materials waiting to be mined for their resources: the feminized racial Other was a dark continent waiting for the enlightenment of European males (140).

Edward Said and Samir Amin have characterized these tropes as being Orientalist and Eurocentric. Orientalism, in Said's theory, describes cultural and ideological discourses of domination, which are supported by institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, and especially by colonial bureaucracies. By Orientalism, Said refers to several interdependent ideas: it is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and the Occident. Said situates the starting point of Orientalism proper in the late 18th century. In an academic sense, Said considers Orientalism as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it" (1979: 3). Eurocentrism is a broader concept, referring to a 'culturalist' phenomenon in the sense that it assumes the existence of irreducibly distinct cultural invariants that shape the historical paths of different people (Amin, 1989: vii). Eurocentrism reduces the world to a

concept of the 'West and the Rest'. It is anti-universalist, but constructs itself as universal – with the Western way being the only way.

Thus, the nation-building processes of settler societies are Eurocentric and Orientalist in nature. When indigenous populations are 'feminized' through processes of infantilization – as 'children' incapable of handling their own affairs - and dehumanized, through animalization or vegetalization, the colonizers are justified in their constructing of systems of control that dispossess and oppress these peoples.

A contradictory element in the nation-building process in settler societies consists of the appropriation of native symbols as symbols of the 'new nation', in an attempt on the part of the settler nation to define itself as distinct from the colonial metropole or the country of emigration (Ashcroft et al, 1989: 135). As Stasiulus and Yuval-Davis state, while the indigenous populations are themselves repressed and made 'invisible' in many senses, their cultural symbols often account for the symbol of the new settler nation, and "the appropriation of some of their cultural symbols is often used to signify the difference between the members of the 'old' and 'new' hegemonic ethnic collectivity" (1995: 23). Thus any promotional material coming out of the apartheid era of South Africa included symbols such as Zulu war shields, or Xhosa embroidery. Israel, as seen for instance in recent advertizements of their 'fiftieth anniversary celebrations' (an anniversary that Palestinians refer to as *al nakbah* – the day of darkness) promote Israeli culture as consisting of Arab foods, such as falafal and hummus (NAC: 1998).

By far the most prevalent and fundamental trope, or foundational fiction key to the nation-building process in settler societies is the myth of empty land or 'virgin territory'. Apartheid and colonial South Africa and Israel share the common nation-building myth of 'empty land'. The British perceived Palestine as a lost land - outside of history and world affairs, and only sparsely populated (Palestine Royal Commission Report, 1937: 6). Zionism readily adopted and continues to perpetuate this myth of Palestine being "A land without a people, for a people without a land"²³. This slogan, first uttered in 1901 by Israel Zangwill, has become the predominant ideology of the Zionist settler movement (Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 291). A similar perception existed in South Africa, where until the early 1990s, standard South African textbooks continued to present the *voortrekkers* as heroic figures whose 'task was to tame the wilderness' as they migrated into an 'empty land' (Finkelstein, 1995: 94-95). The myth of the virgin land was a common element of colonial undertakings. In both South Africa and Israel, dominant groups have claimed that indigenous peoples themselves only moved to the contested territories as a result of the European settlements, and thus "the 'pre-history' of (pre-contact) indigenous peoples is rendered irrelevant to the 'history' of settler societies" (Stasiulus and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 4). Indeed, in Israel, the state has enacted measures to make this myth more of a reality. Consider, for instance that between 1946 and 1976, at least 444 Palestinian villages were erased from the map (Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 307).

Tropes, myths and metaphors have provided the basis of nation-building in settler societies and are, by and large, inherited from prior colonialist Eurocentric and Orientalist

ideologies. They have provided the rationale for the particular process that the state-building project would take on in settler societies. In South Africa and Israel, the primary ideology behind the development of policies concerning the indigenous populations is that of 'separate development'.

An inheritance of British Colonialism: State-Building in South Africa and Israel

State-building practices are informed by the myths of nation – in particular with those that relate to the need to protect the boundaries of nation. If, as seen in Chapter One, women figure in nation-building as metaphors for the boundary of nation, and as 'mothers' of nation, the question of how indigenous women are conceptualized within a settler state - one that views the indigenous population as a threat to the boundaries of the settler nation - would suggest that 'control' over the female indigenous population would be an utmost concern in the development of state policies and laws. However, at the same time, the state is informed by the 'fiction' of the public/private divide in state constructions of gender, which places women within the 'private' and often 'invisible' realm of home and the family. This perhaps explains why indigenous women have often been the indirect recipients of state policy. The protection of the boundaries of nation of the dominant group creates a need for policies concerning population control. While women, in Palestine in particular, have found themselves at times the direct target of the state – with attempts at the forced sterilization of Palestinian girls, for instance – the early

and most broadly employed method of population control within settler societies has been the establishment of policies around 'separate development' for indigenous populations.

The concept of separate development was in both South Africa and Israel inherited from their British predecessors. Separate development, for instance the creation of reserves for the indigenous populations, was a favoured policy of British colonial rule. The British Commonwealth provided the opportunity for each colonial office and governor to share information regarding their respective jurisdictions, and, more importantly, to share information on how the 'Native Question' was to be dealt with. For example, the Parliamentary Select Committee was a body formed for the express purpose of sharing information with regards to the 'Native Question'. This body intended to "secure to them [the 'Natives'] the due observance of Justice and the protection of their Rights; to promote the spread of Civilization among them, and to lead them to peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian Religion²⁴" (Parliamentary Select Committee, 1836: iii). This mandate was clearly informed by a Eurocentric ideology that held the West's way as the *only* way. The sharing of information between colonies did not end with the end of the British presence or domination in these countries. Historical documents evidence that the post-British colonial nations continued to both practice British policies with regard to their indigenous populations, and would also continue to share their specific examples of treatment of these populations (Mamdani, 1996: 32).

The British colonial doctrine of differentiation, which ultimately translates as segregation, aimed at forging specifically "native" institutions that would allow the

colonial administration greater control of the indigenous groups in its colonies. South Africa has become well known for its perfection of this practice; however, apartheid has been interpreted by some writers as simply an improved form of the practice of indirect rule established by the British (Mamdani, 1996: 27). As early as 1916, the British colonial Beaumont Commission reported on the prospects for an equitable division of land among the races, clearly indicating that the idea of institutionalizing separate development had already become a popular one. In 1948, with the Nationalist Party elected into power by an all-white electorate, apartheid was introduced into South African politics. At the same time, the Nationalist Party introduced *The Suppression of Communism Act*, which gave the state broad powers to suppress any form of opposition in the name of state security (Walker 1991: 73). Dr. Verwoerd, Prime Minister from 1958-66, was the innovator of the contemporary South African ideology of 'apartheid', which Cherryl Walker (1991) sums up as having at its core an ideology of control: economic control of the work force and political control of opposition to the state (123).

In Palestine, partition was a suggestion of the British under the British Mandate. Indeed it was a recommendation of the 1936 Palestine Royal Commission Report (1937: 337). Thus Britain initiated the policy formation around separate development in Palestine, which has been continued by the state of Israel. A turning point in Britain's relationship with Palestine occurred in 1936, when what has become known as the first Palestinian uprising took place – a general strike among Palestinians that lasted from April until October of that year. In July 1936, a Palestine Royal Commission investigation was established to ascertain what the British Colonial Office's role should be in rectifying the

situation²⁵ (Palestine Royal Commission Report, 1937, xi). This document is of particular interest as it illustrates the paternal role the British Colonial office maintained over the area. Britain set itself up as a parent looking out for two of its offspring - one good and law abiding: the Jewish administration, and one bad: the Arabs, who organized strikes and refused to participate in official meetings. The uprising that erupted in 1936 was brutally suppressed by the British. In 1948, at the end of the Mandate and at the creation of Israel, the Israeli state, under the watchful eye of the British, uprooted at least 700,000 Palestinians²⁶ (Holt, 1996: 189). Today Palestinians have become the largest refugee population in the world (Amnesty International, 1997: 12).

The absolute fragmentation of Palestine, or what is known as the Occupied Territories and the Gaza Strip, is astounding. Mahmood Mamdani has suggested that if the fragmentation of the Palestinian population was the Israeli goal, they have far outdone the South African concept. Mamdani contends that separate development, or apartheid (a term that has become increasingly used to describe the treatment of Palestinians by Israel) is the most pernicious of state policies. Apartheid repackages the indigenous population under the extension of a 'Native authorities', which would fragment any attempt at revolt, and further, creates an urban/rural divide which makes the population more easily policed. The lack of infrastructural and economic development in the indigenous territories also ensures a cheap labour pool for the dominant group (Mamdani, 1996: 31). The exploitation of the indigenous population for capitalist gains is another trait inherited by settler societies from the British. The primitive accumulation of land has been noted as the starting point of the colonial and capitalist enterprise. Colonial settlers in both South

Africa and Israel sought to change the native subsistence-based economies into a capitalist mode of production.²⁷ With the onset of capitalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, changes in the economic and political structures of indigenous populations occurred in these countries, affecting family formations and gender relations.

It is important to point out that the oppression of indigenous populations generally via state legislation was also accompanied by a consistently positive attitude towards the traditional patriarchal leadership, and towards patriarchal social values. In both countries, traditional leaders of indigenous communities were permitted to autonomously enforce traditional practices that fell within the sphere of family law – the primary area of law that affects women. Here we can clearly see the concept of the private/public divide in operation. In Palestine, under the British Mandate, family law, i.e. that relating to marriages, divorces and so on, were left to the religious institutions. Thus for Muslims, family law was determined by the Supreme Moslem Council (a body created by the British in 1921), and would fall under the *Shari'a*. The system functioned in a similar way for Christians and for Jews, and has been generally maintained within the state of Israel. A similar trend was established in South Africa, where family law was left to the traditional patriarchal structures, or 'customary law', with only a few exceptions (such as the banning of polygamous marriages – a mortal sin in eyes of the Christian settlers). Much like the family laws that ruled Palestinian women, this 'customary law' entailed that all African women were considered perpetual minors subject to the authority of their father or husband. They could not enter into contracts or own property in their own right (Unterhalter, 1995: 228). Indigenous women thus found themselves in a double bind –

on the one hand, they were under the oppressive patriarchal rule of the British colonial administration and then the settler state administration. On the other hand, the colonizers/settlers were comfortable with the idea that the traditional patriarchy existing within the indigenous populations would obviate any need to legislate further women's rights within family law.

Policies of Displacement, Migrant Labour and Pass Laws

In their seminal work, Gender and Colonization (1980), Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock posit that there are two contradictory views that characterize both the study of colonization in general, and the study of women in particular. On the one hand, they suggest that there is a tendency to see colonization as having been beneficial to women (in the sense that certain colonization practices, such as the British's banning of polygamous marriages in South Africa, improve the lot of women). On the other hand, and simultaneously, they point to the tendency of understanding colonized women as passive victims. Their characterization of the study of colonization coincides with the conceptualizations of indigenous peoples in the tropes discussed earlier in this chapter. In these tropes, indigenous peoples are constructed – as women have been historically – as 'children', incapable of managing their own affairs. This also coincides with the concept of the public/private divide, which situates women outside of the political realm, where they could only be understood as 'passive victims'.

Nation-building ideologies that sought to protect the boundaries of nation – boundaries represented by women in their reproductive role – have provided the impetus for settler states to develop policies that ensure the protection of the settler culture. The present section examines three main areas of policy shared by South Africa and Israel, that inform the day to day realities of indigenous women. However, women in these countries are clearly not passive recipients or beneficiaries of colonial policy – they have been actively involved in resisting them.

Displacement/Dislocation

The policies of separate development in both South Africa and Israel/Palestine necessarily resulted in the forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of people in Palestine, and millions in South Africa. The practice of dislocation or displacement, a vital element within the ideology of separate development, was initially established by the British. In South Africa, a formal division of land ownership, primarily on grounds of 'race', was effected in the 1913 *Native Land Act*. This Act prevented 'Natives' from owning or acquiring land outside scheduled areas. By 1921, the majority of women - over 58% of African women - lived in the Native Reserves established by the British (Walker 1991: 12). However, it was only under apartheid that the system of segregation was fully set into place. Soon after taking power, the Nationalist Party established the *Group Areas Act No. 41* on July 7, 1950. This Act introduced race zoning with forced removals for those race groups living in the 'wrong zones'; it focused primarily on the removal of

'blacks' from those areas considered 'white'. By the mid-1950s, the more developed idea of Bantustans was established. The concept of the Bantustans was promoted as providing separate 'self-administered' governments for the Africans, by a South African government which hoped, after the human rights atrocities of WWII in Europe, that this would appear as a beneficent resolution to the 'Bantu' problem. However, as early as 1959, Nelson Mandela warned that: "behind the 'self-government' talks (for the bantustans) lies a grim program of mass evictions, political persecution and police terror" (Rogers, 1980: 57). This is a picture of reality that historians such as Norman G. Finkelstein have argued has not been so different for Palestinians under Israeli rule (1998: 25).

Under the 1950 *Group Areas Act*, the demolishing of homes and mass transportation of Africans from their squatter camps, shanties or homes, to remote bantustans commenced. Women, according to the International Defence and Legal Aid Fund for South Africa, accounted for the most numerous group to be forcibly removed (IDAFSA, 1981: 24). The rights of Africans to reside in urban areas were dependent on conditions defined in *Section 10* of the *Urban Areas Act*. The basic qualifications for such rights were that a person must either have been born in an area and lived continuously there for more than 15 years; or must have worked continuously in the area for 10 years for one employer; or have lived continuously there for 15 years with official permission. It was difficult for women to obtain these restricted rights. In 1964, the *Bantu Laws Amendment Act* placed a total ban on the further entry of women into the urban areas, other than on a visitor's permit^{28, 29}. The bantustans - the Transkei, BophuthaTswana, Venda and the Ciskei - were

given a form of independence, which provided the South African government with the ability to treat all of the 'nationals' of these areas as foreigners with no rights in South Africa. These 'foreigners' accounted for 87% of South Africa's population (IDLAF, 1991:8). While the homelands were supposedly self-governed, their laws were, by and large, established by the South African government.

In Israel/Palestine, land owned by Arabs was appropriated on a mass basis in the early years of the state with the aid of a complex web of legal rules specifically designed for that end. The Zionist movement was supported in their 'grab for land' by the British Mandate administration. In particular, the 1920 *Land Transfer Ordinance* made it possible for the colonial government to change the legal status of land and property in Palestine. The *Ordinance* allowed for large transfers of indigenous land to the European Jewish settlers (Abdo 1992). Despite this, when the 1948 war broke out, the total amount of land owned by Jews in Palestine was estimated at only six percent (Said, 1985: 42). Today, under the *Wye River Agreement*, Palestinians would be left with approximately 40% of the Occupied Territories only. However, the percentage figure is misleading, and actually refers to a further fragmentation of Palestinian territory (Said, 1998)³⁰.

In 1948, most of the Palestinians in the territories under Israeli control were forcefully evicted, while others fled out of fear during the war. When Israel became a state, it appointed itself legal guardian of all the private and public land possessed by Palestinian refugees. This included 'Present Absentees' who had not left the territories under Israeli control, but were not at their homes during the 1948 census which was carried out in the

midst of war. At the end of the census, an estimated 80 percent of the indigenous population were not able to return to their homes (Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 295). Indeed, in a desperate attempt to accumulate land, the Israeli state employed both legal and illegal coercive measures, including taxation, imprisonment and collective punishment (Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 298).

The main thrust of the Zionist settlement project (much like the South African settler project's intentions towards the African and non-white populations) was and continues to be to dispossess and then to exclude the Palestinians whenever possible from control over the various resources of the country and the state. Historical comparisons of the two systems of rule have been undertaken by scholars such as Norman G. Finkelstein and Mark Marshall. Marshall (1995) in particular provides an in-depth comparison of Israel and South Africa around the question of land and population control - specifically comparing the Israeli system with South Africa's system of apartheid. In both cases, the bantustans and the Arab areas were usually situated at great distances from the main urban areas where employment exists. This necessitated a set of policies around the control of migrant labour, as individuals were forced to travel long distances both to work, and in search of work.

Migrant Labour

Migrant labour, and the policies regulating it, have been a vital component of both South Africa and Israel's ideologies of separate development. The concept of migrant labour

was an important element of British Colonial policy in South Africa, as the colonialists required cheap labour to work in the gold and diamond mines (Rogers, 1980: 6). In 1913, *The Native Land Bill* was passed. This Bill became the foundation of the policy regarding cheap migrant labour in South Africa, establishing the outline of the African reserves (eventually to amount to no more than 13 percent of the total land mass in the country). The Bill also outlawed African squatting and sharecropping on white-owned land (Walker 1991: 29). These policies were later further entrenched into law with the formal establishment of the Bantustans under the government of the Nationalist Party.

Migrant labour has been seen as the fundamental condition affecting the lives of African women in South Africa. African men had no alternative but travel to 'white' towns to work, generally leaving their wives and children behind for months at a time. This depressed the wages paid to the men because, in theory, their families were expected to live on the proceeds of subsistence agriculture in the homelands. This was yet another fiction, as most of the homelands were located on the most barren lands in the country. Migrant labour laws prevented Africans from becoming integrated into the 'white' urban economy and thus of demanding services and rights. The system of migrant labour, as early the 1920s, was already undermining the basis of traditional modes of existence. Women, living on the reserves, were beginning to assume an increasing degree of *de facto*, if not *de jure*, responsibility and authority as heads of their households. The sexual imbalance in both town (where men boarded) and country (where women, children and the elderly lived) became one of the most distinguishing features of African family life in

the twentieth century, and served to undermine the stability and organization of the traditional family structure (Walker, 1991: 13-14).

With the growth of industrialization there was a consequent and illegal movement of African families to the growing cities. In the face of this movement, the migrant labour system was maintained by increasingly harsh legislation and administrative procedures: the tightening of the Pass laws (which will be described at greater length in the following section) and the resettlement of women, children and the aged and infirm into reserves or bantustans. When women needed to move to cities to work - primarily as domestic workers, they, like the men, were forced to live in bachelor hostels, where no members of the opposite sex could visit. The migrant labour system played a fundamental role in devastating the family life for Africans. Broken marriages, desertion, faithlessness – all resulted from the prolonged separation of families.

Migrant labour has also been an important aspect of the Israeli economy, despite the early attempts of Israeli legislation to ban it – in order to avoid contact (as much as possible) between the two populations. The exclusionist policies of the Jewish National Fund were articulated in its constitution, which stated that land provided to a settler was to be worked “by himself or with the aid of his family... if and whenever he may be obliged to hire help, he will hire Jewish workmen only” (CID, 1936). In fact, the Jewish National Fund went so far as to impose a penalty on any Jewish owner attempting to employ Arab workers or lease them land (Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 298). The principle of exclusively Jewish labour was, however, eroded after 1967, mainly by the incorporation

of a cheap Palestinian labour force from the Occupied Territories. Israeli policies of confiscating vast tracts of land, controlling water resources, creating a system of tight supervision of agricultural production and of preventing export from the Occupied Territories, effectively denied the inhabitants of these areas any prospect of economic self-sufficiency. Palestinians thus became the cheap labour source for the Israeli market, working under conditions described by prominent Israeli historian Israel Shahak (1988), as “worse than working under the South Africa apartheid system” (in Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 303).

Certain features of the migrant labour system held many Palestinian women in traditional or semi-traditional life-styles. For instance, the insecurity and low pay of men’s wage labour in Israel perpetuated reliance on family land and the presence of women and other family members at home farming, a similar condition to that of South Africa. However, not all men were able to find work within Israel. From the 1950s onwards, thousands of Palestinian men left the Occupied Territories to find work abroad, returning to visit their homes only once every year or so. Palestinian women, just as their South African counterparts, are often left as the head of their households – however they are often consigned to the care of another male relative, or are even more restricted in their movement by their added vulnerability to gossip and criticism when they have no man to ‘protect’ them (Warnock, 1990: 50-51). When a woman is left as the sole provider, widowed or abandoned by a man who has stopped sending support from abroad, her household is likely to be amongst the poorest.

The situation under Israel, to a certain extent, replicated the migrant labour system that existed during the British Mandate period. Joel S. Migdal (1980) has suggested that the pattern of migrant labour in the early years of Israeli Occupation was reminiscent of the Mandate, where a high rate of social mobilization involved a stream of workers to the coastal areas engaged in new occupations. He notes that as during the Mandate, villages went from having a labor surplus, to labour shortages (47). Migdal notes that “the resumption of the old westward flow of Arab labour has been mitigated by the fact that workers have returned eastward in the evening or at the end of a week” (1980: 48). Even overnight residence at the places of work within Israeli territory was made illegal for residents of the Occupied territories. Similar to South Africa, Palestinian workers require special permits to travel and work in Israel (however, unlike in South Africa, this practice continues today).

Pass Laws

Perhaps the most pernicious act of control conceived of by the British Colonial administration, and perpetuated by the later states, is that of the pass laws. In 1911, the *Native Labour Regulation Act* made it a criminal offense for those defined as African farm and mine workers to leave their jobs without the permission of their employers, and in 1924, the *Industrial Conciliation Act* excluded ‘pass bearers’ from the definition of ‘employee’ (Unterhalter, 1995: 224). The intention of this Act was to prevent African men from forming legally recognized trade unions. A pass system began operating in

Natal and the Cape in 1928, for African workers in the service of colonial farmers³¹ (Cock, 1990: 79).

In 1950, under the Nationalist Party government, *The Population Registration Act* provided for the compilation of a population register and the issuance of racial identity cards. The Act classified the population into White, Coloured, Asian and Native (subsequently termed Bantu) (IDAFSA, 1991: 18). The Nationalist Party quickly decided that the flow of women and families to the urban areas – women who either moved to these areas to join their partners or to find employment themselves, usually as domestic workers - had to be stopped. In 1952, Section 10 of the *Native Laws Amendment Act* was issued. This Act limited Africans with a right to live permanently in the urban areas to those who were born there, those who had lived there continuously for fifteen years, and those who had worked continuously for the same employer for ten years. In the same year, the *Natives (Abolition of Passes and Coordination Documents) Act* required all Africans (including those exempted under the pass laws, and women for the first time) to carry 'reference books' containing their photographs, and information about their place of origin, employment records, tax payments and encounters with the police (Davenport, 1987: 373-374). This regime ensured control over the African influx into urban areas. The African population, faced with starvation in the rural areas, defied the pass laws and daily risked arrest and imprisonment in order to gain access to the wage economy in the urban areas. Decades of mass defiance made the pass law system unworkable (particularly as employers were allowed to evade the pass laws) (Unterhalter, 1995: 230).

From this point on, all African women were forced to carry passes until their abolition in 1986. The pass laws meant women were extremely vulnerable in relation to employment, accommodation and mobility. They were deemed the 'superfluous appendages' of male workers and were viewed as "the breeders of an unwanted African urban population" (Simons, 1968: 282). As such, they were forced to remain in the Bantustans by a whole array of laws which subjected them to the authority of Bantu Affairs Administration Boards. These Boards held extensive powers in order to control and enforce where women could live and work. As illegal workers in urban areas, women, often employed as domestic workers, were isolated and subject to enormous exploitation (Cock, 1989). As illegal urban residents, women were often forced into dependency on a male with access to accommodation.

In the Occupied Territories, until 1966, Palestinians were placed under military rule. Confined to their underdeveloped villages, inhabitants needed special permits from local military commanders to leave them, whether to seek employment or to visit relatives (Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 307). Almost every activity continues to be subject to a specific permit, and all Palestinian adults have to carry identity cards, which are frequently used as a tool of control and harassment. Security arguments and 'emergency' powers enable the authorities on many occasions to by-pass legal processes (Warnock, 1990). Arrests due to the lack of a pass are common, and long waits and difficulties in obtaining passes continue to be notorious, as was the case under apartheid South Africa.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the role of tropes, myths and metaphors within the nation-building practices of settler societies, noting that these have, by and large, been inherited from prior British colonialist Eurocentric and Orientalist ideologies. More than contributing to nation-building, tropes have provided the rationale for the particular process that the state-building project would take on in settler societies. In South Africa and Israel, in line with the need to protect the internal 'boundaries' of nation, the primary ideology behind the development of policies has been that of 'separate development'. The chapter reviewed three areas of policy, shared by both states, related to the treatment of indigenous populations and attempted to highlight aspects of their impact on gender. Situated within the general ideology of 'separate development', the policies reviewed concerned displacement, migrant labour policies and pass laws. As the following chapter will elucidate, these three areas of policy figure prominently in the writings of the three South African and three Palestinian women writers under review in this thesis.

Chapter Three
WOMEN (RE)WRITING HISTORY
in SOUTH AFRICA and ISRAEL/PALESTINE

It is no surprise that most [Native] writers are also activists. Organizing, gathering, mentoring, demonstrating, picketing. Our writing is, and always has been, an attempt to beat back colonization and the stereotypes of our Nations (Brant, 1994: 40).

Introduction

State-building practices are informed by the myths of nation, in particular with those that relate to the need to protect the boundaries of nation. Chapter One, drawing on literary and sociological theory of nation, has demonstrated that women have figured in the nation-building process as metaphors for the boundary of nation, and as ‘mothers’ of nation. As Chapter Two has examined, in settler societies, the protection of the boundaries of nation has involved the protection of the dominant society from contamination by the indigenous, and has led to the development of the practice of ‘internal colonialism’. Informed by Orientalist and Eurocentric tropes of infantilization and animalization, the practice of internal colonialism has at its core an ideology of ‘separate development’, which has ensured a cheap labour pool of indigenous workers for the capitalist projects of the settler states. Many of the policies of internal colonialism

within the settler states of South Africa and Israel and the Occupied Territories are shared, and have been derived from a common history of British Colonialism.

The treatment of gender within the development of laws and policies has been informed by the concept of the public/private divide, which places women within the 'private' and often 'invisible' realm of the home and the family. Thus the state has developed general or 'public' policies relating primarily to their interest in the control of the indigenous populations, and to men in particular. These settler states have left much of the policies that would effect the particular treatment of gender to the patriarchal traditional ('customary') or religious laws of the indigenous populations. As Souad Joseph (1996, 1997) has demonstrated, the concept of the public/private divide is a fiction, as the policies of the 'public' are both informed by and effect the 'private'. Indigenous women have thus found themselves in a double patriarchal bind.

The primary interest of this thesis, however, has been to examine the effect of state policies on gender, and the response of indigenous women to these policies, discrediting the notion that women are the 'passive' victims of colonial and settler state practices. Picking up on the three areas of specific policy introduced in Chapter Two – those of dislocation/displacement, migrant labour and pass laws – this chapter will examine the responses to these policies in the samples of literature of six indigenous women writers. In reviewing the literature of these writers - Hanan Mikha'il 'Ashrawi, Liyana Badr and Sahar Khalifeh from Palestine, and Sindiwe Magona, Miriam Tlali and Ellen Kuzwayo from South Africa - the chapter situates their writing as active forces of resistance to the

patriarchal colonial ideologies and policies that have informed their, and their communities', day to day lives within settler societies.

The thesis argues that the writings of these six women figures within the long, and generally neglected history of indigenous women's activism within the settler colonies of South Africa and Israel with the Occupied Territories. Contrary to the myth of women as passive recipients of law and policy, women in both countries have been actively involved in resistance. In South Africa, indigenous women have consistently taken part with men in the battle against apartheid. While women have also campaigned for issues concerning women specifically, according to South African feminist historian Cherryl Walker (1990, 1991), the concerns that stirred indigenous women to political activity were not primarily 'women's issues'. They were basic bread and butter issues that affected the entire community, such as passes, rents, the cost of living, and laws that discriminated against Africans³².

In Israel and the Occupied Territories, prior to the rise of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement in the mid-1960's, Amal Kavar (1996) characterized women's involvement in politics as sporadic and as occurring mainly during times of crisis. Women's societies, consisting of volunteers from the Palestinian middle class, tended to focus on performing 'charitable work'. With the fall of Ottoman rule in Palestine during WWI, the small, charity-oriented Palestinian women's movement joined the nationalist struggle, contributing food, clothing, nursing, and fund-raising. With each general strike, rebellion, and war, the need for the women's help intensified, but was confined primarily

to relief work. The nationalist-charitable women's movement flourished specifically in the aftermath of the 1967 Israeli occupation of Palestinian East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Kavar notes however, that throughout the history of the Palestinian charitable societies' movement, women's rights have always taken second place to the national cause. Over the past few decades, the area has witnessed an immense shift in women's participation in the resistance, with woman taking on increasingly prominent roles³³.

In both countries, those women who most actively took part in the organized resistance to their respective states have been from the middle and upper classes. The recorded history, which feminist historians have been bringing to light over the past several decades, have generally been limited to the records of involvement – organization documents, newspaper articles, government documents - and thus focus on organized resistance. We know, however, that in South Africa it was women and children from all classes who resisted the construction of the bantustans, heading to cities in such numbers that the state was forced to institute pass laws for women in order to uphold their policies of 'influx control'. Women in the thousands participated in the anti-Pass law campaigns, and in the Sharpeville and Crossroad protests – events which have been ascribed as key turning points in the resistance to apartheid. Among Palestinians, we know that women, young and old, from all walks of life, have resisted the laws of Israel; have participated in demonstrations; and have risked their lives by smuggling arms and supplies to the (usually male) freedom fighters. However, few of these instances have been recorded in

the annals of history. They are often considered anecdotal evidence, which however, this chapter will demonstrate, are recorded in the literature of indigenous women's writing.

In order to understand the development of indigenous women's writing, the barrier of class distinctions must also be recognized. Most indigenous women writers of these two countries have emerged from the middle and upper classes. These women have had access to education, when education for women was not guaranteed by the state, and was often frowned upon within the traditional patriarchal societies. Indeed, the emergence of indigenous women's literary production is relatively new, developing primarily over the past three decades. In both South Africa and Israel with the Occupied Territories, there were few published women writers prior to the late 1960s.

The history of cultural domination in South Africa has, within the sphere of literature, resulted in a situation where race, gender and class factors have adversely effected the literary production of women. In her 1982 'preliminary checklist' of black³⁴ South African writers, Amelia House was only able to list forty authors (6). The oppressive social conditions have had disastrous consequences for the general advancement of black women. According to van Niekierk (1990) the unrepresentative nature of institutionalized South African literature is evident in its exclusion of, for example, the widely practiced indigenous oral narratives. These narratives have been denigrated due to the collective and non-individualized nature of their origin. A similar marginalization has affected the literary production of the writers examined in this thesis. House, for instance, found that South African literature is not well known by students: "When I teach South African

Literature, I frequently find that students have only heard of either Bessie Head or Nadine Gordimer” (1982, 1). House made this comment in 1982, while teaching in the United States. However, in my own preliminary research in 1993, I approached a professor of African Literature at the University of Natal for leads on ‘indigenous’ South African writers. Her response was much the same as House’s students, suggesting initially only Bessie Head³⁵!

In fact, African women’s writing in English was generally absent in South Africa, at least in any published form, until the mid part of this century. The first woman writer in Zulu, Violet Dbe, debuted in 1935 with a collection of short stories, *Woza Naso*, which is based on traditional narratives. The first black woman writer whose work appeared in English was Bessie Head. Her stories started appearing in the New African, Transition, Drum Classic, Freedomsway, the New African Statesman and other magazines from the early 1960s. Head’s anthology of short stories, The Collector of Treasures, was the first produced by a black woman from South Africa (van Niekierk, 1990: 12). The effect of the 1970’s Black Consciousness Movement, led by Steve Biko, on the short fiction writing of black women only becomes evident in the late seventies and eighties. With Head as an important forerunner, the eighties was a vital period for the emergence of black women’s voices in literary production. A year of particular importance was 1982, when Skotaville, the first black publishing house, was established. This was followed by the first black women’s publishing house *Seriit sa Sechaba* in 1987 (van Niekierk, 1990: 23).

In Israel and the Occupied Territories, indigenous women's writing, while only emerging in significantly in the late 1960's, participates in a long tradition of Arabic literature. Knowledge of Arabic literature in the West – its lack of translation into English in particular - has been limited by the Orientalism of Western institutions (Amireh, 1996; Andary, 1996). Consider for instance the following: the Palestine Royal Commission Report of 1937 not only reported on the 1936 strikes, but also attempted to give a general overview of the culture of the British Protectorate. After exalting for several paragraphs upon the wonder of the European-based art and Hebrew literature the author witnessed among the Jews in Palestine, he made the following comment on Arabic culture: "There is Arab literature, of course, and Arab music, but the culture of Arab Palestine is the monopoly of the intelligenzia; and born of Asia, it has little kinship with that of the National Home, which, though it is linked with ancient Jewish tradition, is predominantly a culture of the West" (1936: 117). Given the lack of cooperation he received from Arab organizations, it is possible that the author had not much opportunity to peruse the literature. However, it is more likely that he did not like what he did read! From as early as 1910, the themes of the Zionist and British encroachment on Palestinian lives have been expressed in Palestinian poetry³⁶. The best known female writer of the early period in Palestine is Samira 'Azzam (1927-1967) who published Little Things (*Achya saghira*) (1954), The Great Shadow (*al-Zill al-kabir*) (1956) and The Hour of the Individual (*al-Sa'a wal-insan*) (1963). There were few other female writers during this early period (Tomiche, 1993: 21-25).

The above has summarized some aspects of the literary conditions the women writers under review emerged from. These writers share a privileged class or educational background, as well as a commitment to social justice for their people. From South Africa, the writers whose work is considered in this thesis are Ellen Kuzwayo, Miriam Tlali and Sindiwe Magona. Ellen Kuzwayo trained as a teacher, however worked most of her life as a social worker. Kuzwayo has continued to be actively involved in improving the conditions of her community. She was raised on a large farm owned by her family, but was removed from there by the *Group Areas Act* in 1974. Married in 1941, the subsequent breakup of her marriage led her to move to Johannesburg, where she became secretary of the youth league of the African National Congress. Kuzwayo was detained without trial under the '*Terrorism*' Act in 1977, when she was 63. In the 1990s, she was president of the Black Consumer Union of South Africa, and chairman of the Maggie Magaba Trust (MacKenzie and Clayton, 1989: 58). Her autobiography, Call Me Woman, was published by the Women's Press (UK) in 1985. Sit Down and Listen, the anthology from which I've pulled the stories I will be considering presently, is a series of short stories, many taken from real experiences Kuzwayo has been told over the years.

Sindiwe Magona was born in a village in the Transkei, and grew up in Guguletu, near Cape Town. She has university degrees from UNISA and Columbia University, and more recently has worked at the United Nations in New York. Her first published book, To My Children's Children (1990), which I will refer to in the present study, is autobiographical. From Magona I also refer to several short stories from her anthology Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night (1991). Miriam Tlali, the third South African

writer considered in this study, was born near Johannesburg and grew up in Sophiatown. She enrolled in a BA program at the University of Witwatersrand just before blacks were banned, and she has worked in journalism, drama, novel and short story writing (MacKenzie and Clayton, 1989: 2). Tlali was the first published African woman novelist inside South Africa to write in English. Her novel Amandla! was banned in South Africa six weeks after its publication in 1980. Cecily Lockett characterizes Tlali's work as 'a loosely-woven rendering of the fabric of black experience from the perspective of a black woman' (1990: 7). Much of Tlali's work deals with the consequences of a racist, capitalist structure for black women in urban township settings (van Niekierk, 1990: 25-26), as will be seen in selections I've chosen from her short story collection, Footprints in the Quag (1989).

From Palestine I will be drawing from the work of Sahar Khalifeh, Liyana Badr and Hanan Mikha'il 'Ashrawi. Sahar Khalifeh is from the West Bank. She began writing shortly after the 1967 Israeli invasion of Gaza and the West Bank, and published her first novel in 1974. She is considered by many to be the foremost Palestinian novelist. She is the most translated Palestinian author after Mahmoud Darwish. Her fame extends beyond Palestinian and Arab borders, as her translations in many languages attest to, however Wild Thorns is her only novel translated into English. According to Salma Khada Jayyusi (1992), no other Palestinian writer of fiction has equaled her capacity to reproduce the rhythms, intonations, vocabulary, and cast of mind of the Palestinian urban classes – "menial workers and intellectuals alike" (42).

Liyana Badr was born in Jerusalem to an educated nationalist family. Her father, a doctor, was incarcerated for many years during her childhood. Out of prison, her father was joined by her mother in the Palestinian struggle, and the family's consequent constant exposure to the scrutiny of the secret police led them from exile to exile. Badr obtained a BA at Beirut Arab University. She undertook collective work in the Union of Palestinian Women in Jordan and in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut. Her first novel, The Sundial, was published in 1979, in English, by the Women's Press; however, I have not been able to locate a copy of it. A Balcony Over the Fakihani is a collection of three novellas that were originally published in Arabic in 1983, and are now available in English translation thanks to PROTA, the Project of Translation from Arabic – a project that is funded primarily by Palestinians in exile.

Hanan Mikha'el 'Ashrawi served as an advisor to PLO Chairman Yassar Arafat during preparations for the Israeli-PLO accords, and she is well known as the international spokesperson for the PLO. She was the director of the Palestine Human Rights Center, and was until recently a Minister in the Palestinian parliament. She is considered unique among the younger generation of Palestinian activists in that she did not come out of the factional ranks of the Women's Union. She spent much of the '70s and '80s in private life, pursuing her education in Lebanon and the United States and an academic career at Birzeit University in the West Bank, only breaking into public life during the Intifada. 'Ashrawi's international role is considered by many as an important breakthrough in "the long journey of Palestinian women toward public life" (Kawar, 1996: 3). However, more than a politician and activist, 'Ashrawi teaches literature at Birzeit University and is

prolific poet. The poems I've chosen for this study were published in Jayyusi's Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature (1992), another PROTA publication.

Women (Re)Writing History – a Preliminary Case Study

In "Reinscribing Nation and Community in Arab Women's Writing" (1995), Mona Fayed describes the purpose of her study of the texts of three Arab women authors as an examination of the relationship between gender and national identity. More specifically, her intent is to bring "into question the representational structures that establish woman as bound by the national narrative rather than as agent of her own history" (152). The present study's intent is to go beyond initial representational questions of women and nation, and rather to foreground the very real structures – the state policies - that relegate women, and particularly indigenous women, to secondary characters within their own stories, their own lives. Rather than attempting to illustrate how these women are bound to this position, the purpose of this thesis is to show that women do in fact assert agency in determining both their lived history, and their place in history; in this instance through the medium of literature.

Having in Chapters One and Two introduced the implications to gender of nation-building and state-building, particularly within settler societies (concepts which this thesis maintains are a vital background to understand the relationship between indigenous women and the state), the remainder of this chapter will, as a preliminary case study, highlight in the literature indigenous women's responses to the state. The primary

interest of this thesis concerns an examination of the effect of state policies on gender, and the responses of indigenous women to these policies, discrediting the notion that women are the 'passive' victims of colonial and settler state practices. The thesis argues that the writings of these six women figure within the long, and generally neglected history of indigenous women's activism within the settler colonies of South Africa and Israel with the Occupied Territories. The chapter situates the writing of these six women as active forces of resistance to the patriarchal colonial ideologies and policies that have informed their, and their communities', day to day lives within settler societies, and will examine the literature following the three specific areas of policy introduced in Chapter Two: dislocation/displacement, migrant labour and pass laws.

Displacement/Dislocation

Central to the practice of internal colonialism established in the settler societies of Israel and the Occupied Territories and South Africa, is the ideology of separate development. Separate development is the cornerstone of apartheid in South Africa, and is the primary characteristic of Israel's treatment of Palestinians. Separate development, however, rather than resulting in greater control of indigenous lives by the indigenous peoples themselves, as the term suggests, has resulted to the contrary in the establishment of a plethora of policies and laws targeted at ensuring the settler state's control over the indigenous populations. There exists in these countries at least two sets of laws: one for the dominant population, and one for the indigenous. Policies and practices of displacement of indigenous populations have been the first and most pernicious actions

undertaken by the settler states, however, as reviewed in Chapter Two, the displacement of indigenous populations was initiated by the British colonial administrations. The repercussions of the policies of forced removals on indigenous peoples figure prominently in the literature of all these women writers.

In Sit Down and Listen, Ellen Kuzwayo writes of the forced removal policies in South Africa that: "Until you have first hand experience of such removals, it is impossible to understand the emotional and physical trauma involved... All kinds of force are brought to bear on the residents in order to intimidate them into co-operating with the removal. The most distressing is when the residents see their houses bulldozed and their furniture and household items violently flung about the place" (Kuzwayo, 1990: 44). The stories in Kuzwayo's anthology inherently reflect a reality of displacement. The political decisions of separate development – of forced removals and expulsions - have had a direct impact on the private domain, on the structure of families, and on the lives of individual women. In "One of Many", the reality of the African townships is described. In conditions of overcrowding and poverty, a young couple, having found employment working for a white family in an urban area, attempts to find a home of their own: "The influx-control regulations were in force so it took some time before they finally qualified as legitimate residents of the urban area. That qualification earned them the right to enter the long, long waiting list of those applying for a house in those 'sacred' urban areas regarded as exclusively 'white people's domain'" (1990: 66). The couple's only means of leaving the homelands was to find employment; but employment was no guarantee of being granted the right to rent in those urban areas deemed African townships. In the meantime, they

reside in a small shack adjoining their employer's home. Under such conditions, there was no question of personal space or personal life. Such abodes were usually one room, and rare, under apartheid, were the cases where employers would permit husbands and wives, to live together on 'their' land. However, the overcrowding in the townships also presented itself as a problem for those families who did find a home, as Kuzwayo explains in "Granni Basadi". "Many families in the townships", she writes, "shared this problem of overcrowding and living on top of each other. Sometimes families had to sacrifice all privacy and traditional ethics in order to have a roof over their heads" (1990: 107). The policies of displacement, of creating the African homelands, then permitting the development of black townships for reasons of employment only, have clearly created a situation of great hardship. Kuzwayo is careful to point out the role of the law and the difficulties, if not destruction, it caused for the 'African family'.

Kuzwayo's "The Strongest Link in a Chain is its Weakest Point", highlights the plight of those who fled to the urban centers and were not able to find work. As illegal residents, these shanty town dwellers lived in poverty and were subject to frequent expulsions. This story begins in a poverty stricken town typical of the homelands. A young woman, Pulane, in search of employment, must leave. She finds herself in a township where homelessness abounds "Some of them lived in discarded cars or in very dilapidated shacks made of cardboard and sacks; others roamed the streets, without shelter from rain, cold, heat or darkness" (1990: 84). Shanty towns, such as those described here, have become the way of life for thousands of indigenous South Africans. These were perceived as a 'nuisance' by the authorities. Throughout the 1960's, 70's and 80's, there were mass

expulsions of shanty town dwellers, returning the residents to the bantustans they had fled, where they would find no source of employment or income.

Sindiwe Magona's "Lulu" also provides an example of the representation of the physical and emotional reality created by displacement and segregation. In this story the narrator tells the story of her neighbour, Lulu. A single mother living in an African township, Lulu literally loses her child when she is forced to give her to the care of another woman, who takes the child with her back to the Transkei homeland. With the difficulties of travel, this is perhaps the last Lulu would see of her child for months, if not years. However, a single mother, working as a domestic and traveling long hours to work daily, could not care for a child alone. This is only one aspect of Lulu's tragedy: the narrator loses track of Lulu during one of the routine expulsions of Africans from the 'illegal' homes, the shanty towns.

Afterwards came the government's great slum clearance project of the early sixties. Like a whirlwind, it swept black people helter-skelter. Communities that were well-knit and welded by ties of friendship, grief and joy shared, were scattered like chickens before a hawk. The sprawling sea of shacks where I grew up made way for a spic'n span residential area where the government put coloured people, themselves routed from once cherished and settled communities. We transplanted to Nyanga West, later called Guguletu. And I lost touch with almost all the people I had known at the New Site Location (1991: 98-99).

The narrator does once later encounter Lulu, years later – only Lulu is an 'empty shell' of a person – the blankness of her expression, the narrator learns, having been engraved on

her face since she was ‘arrested’ and ‘imprisoned’ for two days during the New Site Location expulsion.

In “The Point of No Return”, Miriam Tlali also illustrates the psychological damage to the African population caused by the practice of expulsions. In the story, a young man, Mojalefa, explains to his wife, S’bongile, his reason leaving to join the resistance movement. The story is of his father, saving all of his money to build a house. The day it was finished the superintendent asked to come to see it. He brought several white people with him. His father had been proud, and so had Mojalefa, that they should be interested in seeing the house. However, the superintendent’s intentions were different. As he was leaving, the superintendent turned back and said to Mojalefa’s father: “You must have spent a lot of money to build and furnish it so well. But, you should have built it on wheels!’ And the official added, with his arms swinging forward like someone pushing some imaginary object, ‘It should have had wheels so that it may move easily!’” (1989: 132). Mojalefa was determined to learn what the official meant, and through his research he “read of the rush to the main industrial centers and the influx of Africans into them, following their early reluctance, and sometimes refusal to work there, and the subsequent laws which necessitate their coming like the vagrancy laws and the pass laws. I read about the removals of the so-called ‘black spots’ (1989: 133). From this moment on, the young boy’s life becomes one of fear and insecurity – and later – one of resistance. The resistance movement, resulting from the hardships suffered under policies such as the *Group Areas Act*, would also serve to sever families in both South Africa and Israel/Palestine. Resistance movements have created a reality of young men either being

imprisoned, killed, or as in Tlali's story, disappearing into the 'underground' movement, leaving women alone as the heads of their families.

Life in the townships was, despite the terrible conditions, considered a better prospect than that of the bantustans. Miriam Tlali, in "Vigil with the Flies and the Bed Bugs", describes a woman visiting a bantustan. The place is referred to as 'red', however the narrator learns that this is not simply due to the colour of the sand in the arid 'homeland', but also due to the infestation of insects "of whizzing, agonizing flies and that army of blood-thirsty bed bugs" (1989: 1). Certainly the description speaks volumes to the desperation of the homeland, which she writes of scathingly, although not, however, without reference to its historical origins: "The British, they built these structures which have now been taken over by the struggling Basotho. When they left (ostensibly giving the Basotho self-rule) these places became breeding places for all sorts of household pests... rats, termites and crawling insects of every description" (1989: 10). Thus the history of the policies of displacement is not lost on writers such as Tlali.

Displacement also figures prominently in the Palestinian literature. For instance, in Liyana Badr's "The Land of Rock and Thyme," the overwhelmingly evident theme is that of displacement. The story takes place in Tal al-Zaatar refugee camp, one of the several Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Many of those still living in camps came as early as 1948, and rare are Palestinians who have been given Lebanese citizenship. Palestinians, in fact, tend to be considered 'unwelcome guests' in Lebanon. The term 'refugee camp' is a misleading denomination for these areas, where generations of

dispossessed Palestinians have lived. The life of flight, exile and destruction of family due to the exodus from Palestine is represented in the story of Yusra's (the young protagonist) father. Her father had had a premonition of his death: "He told her he'd die as his father had, and at the same age; and so it happened, according to his premonition. My grandfather had been killed by a stray bullet during the exodus from Palestine in 1948. He was 46 years old" (1993: 19). Yusra narrates the story of her flight from one refugee camp to another, and from crowded make-shift shelters where empty gun boxes become doors, to deserted houses "with no doors, no windows, no floor and no sanitation" (1993: 23). It is in one such house that she spends the first ten days of her married life, probably the only days she will ever live in a house of her own. Yusra's husband is killed in an Israeli air raid before they are ever able to move into the home. The multiple departures of Badr's characters are violent uprootings that result not only in a loss of place, but also in a permanent breaking up of family and community. In "A Land of Rock and Thyme", during the exodus from the long-besieged Tel Al Zaatar refugee camp in 1976, Yusra loses her father and brother, both claimed by the ensuing massacre. By the end of the story, Yusra, pregnant, has also lost her husband, and is destined to join the ranks of single mothers.

Badr's "The Canary and the Sea", tells another story of broken families due to displacement. Here the protagonist, Abu Husain al-Shuwaiki, is traveling to visit his mother's brother in Acre. This brother had been lost from the family during the 'chaos of the Exodus' in 1948: "You know what it was like: the bullets and the explosions, and people running around in panic – although war was child's play in those days compared

to now” (1993: 51). The family became separated and the young boy mistakenly hung on to the side of a bus that was heading to Acre, while the rest of the family went on to Amman. “There he’d wandered the streets until an old lady in Acre, who had no husband or children, had taken him in and brought him up. When my grandmother made inquiries about him over the radio, he heard his name and sent a radio message back, and she managed to arrange a meeting with him with the aid of the Red Cross. When she saw him at Mandelbaum Gate in Jerusalem she didn’t recognize him, and he didn’t recognize her; he’d been eleven years old when he left her, and now he was twenty-two” (1993: 91). Such stories – of families lost, separated for years are not uncommon, and Badr provides a moving description of the effects of the various expulsions from Palestine on the Palestinian people. Badr’s stories in this collection focus specifically on the lives of those in Beirut and in the refugee camps. Being in a refugee camp, however, does not mean that these Palestinians are free from the ‘long arm’ of the Israeli state. The camps, for instance, were subject to the constant air raids of the Israelis: “Planes. The Israeli airforce. Rushing footsteps on the staircase of the block, everything confused. People, cries of terror (1993: 72). The present reality of those living in the camps brings to the characters the memories of their not so distant expulsion from Palestine.

The memory of the initial expulsion from their land remains a constant backdrop to the lives of Badr’s characters. In “The Canary and the Sea”, Abu Husain recalls his home village, Shuwaika, lamenting its loss. “But, you may ask, isn’t Shuwaika still Shuwaika, even though they took it in 1967?” (1993: 90). The city is now a frontier between Israelis and Palestinians, and as such is subject to a plethora of arbitrarily enforced regulations.

“People standing near the frontier on our side were forbidden to look over onto the other; and if anyone so much as stretched out their hand or put it over the border, they were killed straightaway by the Israelis. They used to place white flags on the open ground near the edge of the orchard, and there were whitewashed stones dotted there. If you don’t like white, I share your feelings; I can’t stand the color. All night great searchlights would light up the border – the trees, I mean, I’m sorry – and the land round about, to stop anyone trying to cross over to the other side” (1993: 90). Abu Husain was able to return, once, for a visit to his former village. He recalls the end of his visit: “The bus moved off, and I saw the land and orchards and trees and sky of Palestine, its cotton fields and the grapes in its vineyards – our country which we’re forbidden even to approach” (1993: 124-125). The trip was a bitter one – as a refugee, Abu Husain may, if he is lucky, visit, but may never return to live.

The memory of expulsion thus emerges as more than the backdrop, but as part of the fabric of life of all Palestinians. Consider how the theme of expulsion is referred to in Hanan ‘Ashrawi’s poem, “Women and Things”:

Women make things smooth
to the touch
like the kneading of
leavened bread at the dawn of hunger;
And coarse
Like the brush of a
homespun coat on
careworn shoulders and bare

arms barely touching on the night of deportation (1992: 336).

In this poem the characterization of 'woman', of Palestinian women, is co-mingled with that of the memory of expulsion. Memory thus becomes integral to a Palestinian women's identity. However, if this memory is a key element of Palestinian identity, it is represented as having been erased among the Israelis. For instance, in Wild Thorns, an argument erupts between a Palestinian and an Israeli worker, when the Israeli refers to the 'problem' of Palestinian 'terrorism'. The Palestinian responds: "Don't you remember the massacres of Arab civilians at Bahr al Baqr, Deir Yassin, and Qibya³⁷? ... How many houses have you bastards blown up? Just yesterday, Shlomo, you blew one up in the Saada district. Yes, thanks to the engineers of the 'Defence Forces'. Before you there were the British" (1994: 111). In this reference, Khalifeh's character remembers not only the Israeli history of domination, but, like her South African counterparts, recalls the role of the British in constructing a system of control and of 'separate development'.

The concept of 'homeland' in Palestinian literature is life in the Occupied Territories and the Gaza Strip. As in South Africa, the areas left to Palestinians tend to be those that are the most barren. Sahar Khalifeh, in Wild Thorns, describes the barrenness of the land left to the Palestinians by the Israelis: "The land around the barracks set up to process entry into the occupied West Bank was grey, devoid of even the smallest shrub" (1994: 20). The under-developed economy of the Palestinian territories forced a reliance on foreign and especially Israeli goods, as opposed to the production of their own goods. Of this Khalifeh writes: "Israeli-made goods were stacked in front of the shops, in the showroom

windows, even on the pavements” (1994: 27). Life generally in the Occupied Territories is represented as one of continued hardship, and as in South Africa, the authors expose the state’s construction of a culture of anxiety and insecurity for the Palestinians. Consider the following account in Wild Thorns: “Tell him how the people inside are suffering. Tell him how Israel’s blown up twenty thousand homes and four whole villages. Tell him how the detention camps are full of young men as cheap public bath’s full of cockroaches. Tell him what happened to al-Bahsh’s son and to al-Shakshir and al-Huwari’s daughters³⁸. But the worst thing is that all of us, every last one of us, are forced to work in their brothels just in order to live!” (1994: 84). Here Khalifeh links the methods of control and intimidation that have become an integral part of the practice of ‘separate development’ in both Israel and the Occupied Territories and South Africa, to that of migrant labour.

Migrant Labour & Pass Laws

More than the actual trauma of displacement, the removal of indigenous groups from urban areas where employment is found created a migrant labour situation, and a cheap labour pool for the dominant cultures and economic systems of both South Africa and Israel and the Occupied Territories. By and large, the majority of the migrant labourers have been men, who have had to leave their families, often for extended periods of time in order to find employment. Both countries have developed elaborate systems to control this process. The questions of migrant labour and pass laws are ones that surface time and again in the works of these women writers.

In Khalifeh's Wild Thorns, Usama al Karmi returns to the West Bank, having worked abroad as a migrant labourer: "I left home to work abroad five years ago, three months after the Occupation started" (1994: 13). In his time away he joined a freedom movement, and his mission at home is to stop the flow of internal migrant labour from between the West Bank and Israel. While some consider that the traffic of labour to Israel has contributed to the lack of development of an independent Palestinian economy, many Palestinians believe that they have no other choice: "Employment inside Israel is something that's actually been imposed on our workers. We are not to blame and neither is our social structure. It's the Occupation" (1994: 33). Usama, having lived outside of the country for many years, is young and is an idealist. His plans to blow up a bus transporting migrant labourers to Israel are, however, complicated when he learns that his cousin, Adil, will be on the bus he is to destroy.

Adil's family has become destitute due to the Occupation. A once wealthy farm owner and head of a prominent family, all of his farm-workers, and he himself (though secretly), have had to take on work in Israel. Usama is shocked at the devastation of the farm upon his visit. He asks Abu Shahada, the foreman of the farm for decades, now an elderly man, what happened: "And, where are the farm hands? What about them?" Usama demanded. 'They all go off to work in Israel.' 'Your son Shahada too?' 'Yes' (1994: 41). While working in Israel provides workers better incomes than they could receive in Palestine, they remain second class in Israel. Khalifeh writes of the differential treatment given to the Jewish workers: "The lowest-paid of them make twice as much as any Arab worker,

no matter how skilled and experienced. They enjoy privileges that Adil himself has never achieved. They eat their lunch in clean rooms, sitting on chairs at tables. They're paid extra for travel and given cost-of-living increments, and they're eligible for social security, old-age pensions and disability payments. They elect members to the Knesset. But we have no Knesset, no army, no government" (1994: 110). Nor are those who leave Palestine in order to find work only the manual labourers. Nuwar, Adil's sister, explains to Usama that the economy leaves even the educated no other option: "Our parents don't work their fingers to the bone paying for our education so that we'll return and work for peanuts at home. So the only solution is emigration, which means working in Saudi Arabia, Libya, and the Gulf. What's the result of all this? Educated people leave the country, and only workers remain. And that's exactly what Israel wants to happen" (1994: 59).

For most Palestinians, particularly those from the lower economic classes or working class, migrant labour has torn apart families. In a "Balcony over the Fakihani", the situation of men leaving the camps to search for work abroad continues, and women are left alone. Badr recounts the story of a woman in such a situation: "There'd be the constant daily quarrels between her and the family of her husband, who was away working in the Gulf, because she neglected her eight children during his absence" (1993: 44). Sindiwe Magona's "Atini's Reflections" recounts the story of a woman who is left alone with five children. In order to provide for them, she, without a pass, moves to the city and takes on a job as a domestic. A kindly neighbour and her mother-in-law care for the children, only the maternal bond is broken as she finds herself only able to visit the

children once a year: "The day I stole away from my children I was so sad that if I had not had those children to get money for I'd have killed myself. They are the only reason I'm still here, the one reason I will go on doing this job that is killing me" (1991: 59).

Women thus find themselves doubly affected by migrant labour. They are left as single-mother heads of households in some cases, and in others, or sometimes simultaneously, they are forced into migrant labour themselves, particularly as the male labourers – separated from their families for long periods – often abandon their families altogether. The plight of the female migrant worker is highlighted in Ellen Kuzwayo's "The Strongest Link in a Chain is its Weakest Point". She writes that "Many mothers regarded their employment as a godsend because it gave them earnings and shelter. But there was great pain in the fact that their employers did not allow their husbands to live with them and that the laws of the country forbade even their young children to be with them" (1989: 84). Living in the African townships was not without its own set of difficulties however, particularly due to the transportation problems, that often forced African workers to leave in the middle of the night to reach their place of employment in time. "Public transport was a real problem in this community as it was always crowded, scarce and erratic in arrival and departure times. But since it was common practice in the industry to cut the wages of latecomers, workers by and large took great pains to be on time for work and thus protect their meager earnings" (1989: 85). The African townships were always placed at a distance from the White areas. Often main highways would not even reach the townships. This ensured that white travelers would not mistakenly find

themselves encountering the unsightly reality of the townships, and made travel for the Africans incredibly burdensome.

The inextricable relationship between migrant labour and the variety of pass laws or permits is also evident in these women's writings. In Wild Thorns, we learn of the discrimination the migrant workers face in Israel due to pass laws and permit regulations. Abu Sabir, one of the thousands of illegal migrant workers, loses his right hand in an accident in the Israeli factory he works at. Adil, Usama's cousin, who is secretly working as a migrant labourer, tries to help him, but to little avail. "Adil ran off to the information office. The Jew apologized politely: 'I'm sorry,' he said, shaking his head. 'We can get help only for those who have work permits. Its against regulations. I'm sorry friend'" (Khalifeh, 1994: 49). The tragedy continues at home as Abu Sabir's wife learns that her husband will no longer be able to work: "As she wiped her tears, the gold bracelets on her wrists glinted and tinkled. Staring at the gold, she wailed, 'They'll be sold soon. Everything will have to be sold. I used to be afraid of what the Jews would do, I used to be afraid of the curfew. From now on our life's going to be one long curfew'" (Khalifeh, 1994: 54). The husband's tragedy is thus translated into a tragic situation for his wife and family. Unable to work and with no other source of income, Umm Sabir will have to sell her gold – which among Palestinian women has traditionally been considered as an economic safeguard. Once this last resource is depleted, the family will be left destitute.

The restrictions involved in migrant labour, and the difficulty in obtaining travel passes, for instance, have broken families apart in South Africa. In "It was Easter Sunday the Day

I went to Netreg”, Sindiwe Magona writes of the Single Men’s Quarters, the zones where migrant workers were permitted to stay, having been forced to leave wives and children in the homelands. She writes: “That most of these ‘migrant’ labourers were very much married bothered government policy-makers not at all. It could not. The white, highly specialized and learned officials had yet to grasp the simple fact of these men’s being human too” (1991: 109). In another story, “Flight”, Magona exposes the vulnerable, and in this case, deadly situation women are left in when they are left alone in the homelands. “Flight” is the story of a young woman in a bantustan who marries. Her husband soon has to return to work. The implications, the young narrator of the story learns, are that he will be away for most of the year. “Her husband, my uncle, was away at work in one of the mines where all the men of the village went for a long time. Later, much later, with great learning to aid me order my world, I would come to know the precise length of their stay – eleven months each year” (1991: 65). While her husband is away the young wife is murdered, after fleeing from an attempted rape. Miriam Tlali’s stories tell of the fractured family structure and how women are generally disadvantaged by the political and economic system that leaves many women as the single heads of households. This occurs in “Dimomona”, a story in which the protagonist, Dimomona, gives birth to twins while her husband is serving a sentence of hard labour for having forgotten his pass one morning, and who returns months later, crippled and unable to work.

The integrity of the family is also, in some cases, left to the whim of the bureaucracy that issues or creates laws around family reunification. For instance, in Wild Thorns, during Usama’s interrogation at the Israel border, he explains why he has been away and was not

able to return after the death of his father, two years earlier: "Why are you coming back now and not two years ago? Speak up!", the Soldier demands. Usama responds, "I was waiting for permission from the family reunion program" (1994: 13). Sindiwe Magona's To My Children's Children, recounts of the difficulties involved with the Pass System in South Africa. When Magona was a young child, her mother took ill and joined her father, who worked in Cape Town. Magona was left with her grandmother who died in 1947, when she was 5. "We were very lucky Makhulu MaMkwayi died when she did. A year later, 1948, the Boers came into power. Among the first laws the new government passed were those severely restricting the movement of Africans. So if our grandmother had died two years later it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, for us to join our parents" (1990: 16).

Soon after joining her parents in Cape Town, Magona's family's house was raided by the police and she began to learn more about the complexity of the pass system, and the legal authority it gave the state officials to harass the indigenous population. "I had just witnessed my first liqueur raid... Possession of liquor by an African was forbidden by law"³⁹(1990: 20). In her late teens she moved to Nyanga West to search for teaching work, and learned more about pass laws. "I had known of the pass before coming to Nyanga West; but a pass raid was new to me. I understood liquor raids which could include pass raids. But, for the police to go out, in full force, with no other objective than arrest people whose passes were 'wrong' or who had forgotten their passes at home, was something I had not been exposed to" (1990: 95). She would learn still more later, after a long separation from her husband (he left one day for a few weeks and contacted her

again only several months later – a not uncommon experience), when he wrote asking that she join him in Johannesburg. Her response:

This was a suggestion bordering on insanity! Africans in South Africa did not just move from one town to another at the drop of a hat, or because they so wished. My husband was asking me to break the law. Moreover, by leaving the area of the Western Cape where I had permission to live and work, I would be risking losing that permission, to say nothing of the jail sentence I faced if found in Johannesburg where I had no business to be without permission. Permission to reside or work in one urban area was not only not transferable, it excluded the right to be in another (1990: 171-172).

Thus it is perhaps not too much of a generalization to suggest that pass laws formed a predominant influence in shaping the indigenous population's realities.

In Badr's "A Land of Rock and Thyme", a reference to a more subtle sort of pass is made – in the sense that identity – Palestinian identity – is a 'pass' that leads to despair. The nightmarish reality of the characters' lives is conveyed best in a moving episode in which Yusra and her mother must pass by the body of her murdered brother at the side of the road without acknowledging him for fear that they too will be killed. They were all warned to say they were Lebanese if anyone asked. Her brother, who had hurried ahead of the rest of the family, was approached and asked: "Lebanese or Palestinian?" 'Palestinian,' Jamal answered. A bullet to the head, just like that... We passed him – he'd gone on ahead of us because he was impatient. I just glanced at him, receiving such a shock my feet could no longer move forward or hold up my body. My nerves shattered, but I couldn't stop or lean over him and touch him with my hand. If any of us were to

stop by somebody who'd been killed, they'd pick us out and finish us off at once" (1993: 14). In this case, albeit a broader interpretation of the meaning of a 'pass', a physical document was not needed to prove Yusra's brother's identity.

In Wild Thorns, Khalifeh writes of another aspect of the pass system, in this case the border check for Palestinians entering the West Bank. As Usama is returning home he witnessed the treatment of Palestinians within this setting, where a soldier need only to ask a question about the validity of a pass for an interrogation, include a strip search and other forms of harassment, to follow. Such is the case of the woman Usama overhears: "The shouting and screaming broke out again. The Arab girl was sobbing while a female Israeli soldier yelled, 'Open your legs! Open your legs! I've got to see up there! Open your legs! ... There came the sound of slaps: 'You swine! You swine! Oh! Oh!'" (1994: 14). The unidentified female voice resists the search, as do hundreds of Palestinian women daily. The pass system, together with the requirement that individuals must always carry special identity documents, have served not only as a means of indirect control of the indigenous populations, but also as a form of intimidation. As seen above, once stopped by a soldier any Palestinian individual can be searched without warrant or just cause.

More traditional forms of passes also figure in Badr's stories. For instance, in "A Balcony over the Fakihani", a story is told of how identity documents were used as a form of harassment in Israel. "Once the National Guard took a woman off the Jerusalem to Jericho bus because she had green eyes and long hair like my mother. They searched her

and examined her identity card, and when they were sure it wasn't my mother they asked her if she was a communist too" (1993: 67). In "The Canary and the Sea", a return visit home is marred by pass problems: "I saw Palestine – then my permit expired, and they flatly refused to renew it. I remembered my grandmother who'd died in exile and had seen her lost son just once, behind the frontier line" (1993: 92). Abu Hasim, thinking of his own difficulties, recalls how something so simple as a 'permit' tore his family apart. As in South Africa, the Israeli system of pass and permits leaves individuals open to search and harassment at any moment, and has become an integral part of the lives of indigenous peoples. This is reflected in Hanan 'Ashrawi's poem, "Women and Things":

Women make things cold
sharp and hard
like a legal argument thrust
before the threat of search and detention;
Or warm
And gentle like
Justice in a poem,
Like the suggestion of
The image of freedom
As a warm bath and
A long soak, in an undemolished home. (1992: 336).

'Ashrawi merges the political reality of legal documents that have created a life of instability and harassment, with the very identity of 'woman', making the two inextricably connected.

South African writers Ellen Kuzwayo and Miriam Tlali both remind the reader of the history of the pass laws under British rule. In “Dimomona”, Miriam Tlali takes on the pass laws, however in this case she considers the pass laws as they existed under the British – evidencing that little had changed⁴⁰. Set in Sophiatown, in May 1932, a young couple – Boitumelo Kgope and his wife Dimomona live in a tiny room. He is a milk deliverer and has in his care a rare possession – a shiny bike that belonged to his employer. On his way out one morning to use a shared toilet, he forgets his pass and finds himself in the middle of a pass raid. “One could hear them running in all directions. There was also a loud commotion of footsteps and voices yelling insults... all these could only mean one thing: it was yet another of those police raids. And the unforgivable tragedy of it was that Boitumelo had left his passbook on the bench in the room!” (1989: 46). He is immediately arrested and sentenced to an undetermined period of hard labour for this transgression. His pregnant wife is left to her own devices. Dimomona goes to report his condition to his employer, and also to tell them about the bike – so that nothing happens to it while her husband is in detention. When the owner’s wife hears the story, she comments: “Arrested! For a pass? One would expect them to know by now that they must always have their passes on them. It is always the same story... Amazing how they always manage to get themselves into the gaol!” (Tlali, 1989: 55). Boitumelo returns months later from the hard labour term a sick man, and can no longer work. The family is ruined. Ellen Kuzwayo’s “Ask the Ostriches” is also set in British ruled South Africa. Already in this period, Africans could only remain in a location with their employer’s permission: “They could remain there only as long as their employer needed their

services and approved their stay” (1989: 3). The protagonists of this story, the Mokote family, were one day told that they had to leave immediately. They were given no warning: “The farmer had given them their *trek* pass (removal document) late the previous afternoon, with firm orders to be off his land that day” (1989: 3). Their lives, thus, were left to the whims of their white employers. The employed member of this family, the husband, had lived and worked on this farm for ten years. At the whim of a white employer this family found itself thrust into even greater hardship.

The deep and un-erasable impact that pass laws have had on the lives of the indigenous populations is reflected most succinctly in Sindiwe Magona’s “Now that the Pass has Gone”. This is the story of the reaction of two women, a mother and daughter, to the end of the pass laws. The daughter’s immediate reaction is to join in on the jubilation: “In 1987, the unthinkable had happened. The pass laws were rescinded. The pass was no more. It was dead. The jubilation! Never had I seen Africans so united in joy; except perhaps the day Doctor Verwoerd was assassinated” (1991: 156). Her mother was hesitant in her acceptance of the idea: “Today they say the pass has gone. Where did it go? Who sent it wherever it is that it has gone? Where had it ever come from, and why? Why was it ever here? Had we known once that we would live, have to live with it?” (1991: 157). The mother explains her reluctance by a story, the story of a man, China, whom she met at a train station. He had been looking for work, but unable to find any because of his inability to obtain a pass. As a result, he has for years collected cans and begged at a train station, sending all he can back to his wife and mother who he has never told how he earns his ‘living’. Through the story, the daughter understands that there

should be no euphoria over the pass laws being removed “For I have not escaped the ravages of the pass. None of us have escaped. The pass is in our souls” (1991: 168).

Magona is surely right when she writes “The pass is in our souls”. The impact of separate development and the policies and practices of displacement, migrant labour and pass laws – among many others – cannot be undone. However, by putting pen to paper these six women writers have spoken back to those would implement such laws and policies. They have written back to the state. These women have asserted agency by expressing the injustice done to their communities and to women in particular. Their writing ensures that the stories of their communities, of the strong women and men, will not be lost, and more than this, they ensure that women’s experiences will not be forgotten.

Conclusion – Women (re)writing History

The uprootings caused by displacement, the political instability, the creation of a migrant labour force where women are left as single parents and the pass laws, have all contributed to immense changes within the character of the family structure among both Palestinians and African South Africans. Even a preliminary examination of the stories of these six indigenous women authors attest to this. However, another predominant theme emerges in reading these works: the goal of re-writing a particular history – a woman’s history. Their stories and poetry contributes to re-inserting the absent history of women’s stories into the pages of present, of the ‘known’. In writing these stories the

women assert their space as not only active members of civil society, but as the creators of their own history.

Several of the authors indicate this intention directly in the prefaces or dedications of their books. Ellen Kuzwayo dedicates her book to her six grandchildren, “and to all the children of my nation, with the hope that they will grow to appreciate and value their heritage... It is their duty to commit themselves to an education, and to the national struggle, so they can earn liberation and that of their people” (1990: i). In an interview with Cherry Clayton in 1986, Kuzwayo comments that in her writing she has “tried to give a record of the lives of black women and the contribution they made to the development of this country, which people just close their eyes to” (MacKenzie and Clayton, 1989: 59). Sindiwe Magona prefaced To My Children’s Children, as follows: “From a Xhosa Grandmother When I am old, wrinkled and gray, what shall I tell you, my great-granddaughter? What memories will stay with me of days of yesteryear? Of my childhood, what shall I remember? What of my young womanhood, my wifehood, and my motherhood? Work has been a big part of my life. Of that, what memories will linger, what nightmares haunt me forever? How will you know who you are if I do not or cannot tell you the story of your past?” (1990: i). The desire to retain memory, to write the stories of women and of the community, is shared by both the South African and Palestinian authors whose works have been reviewed.

Mona Fayad comments that “the need to retrieve memory in many Arab women’s writings becomes only a counterpart for the re-reading of history” (1995: 151). This

certainly is the case in the work of Hanan 'Ashrawi, as many of the poems are actually recordings of moments in Palestinian contemporary history. Consider, for instance her poem "From the Diary of an Almost-Four-Year-Old"

Tomorrow, the bandages
Will come off. I wonder
Will I see half an orange,
Half an apple, half my
Mother's face
With my one remaining eye?
I did not see the bullet
But felt its pain
Exploding in my head.
His image did not
Vanish, the soldier
With a big gun, unsteady
Hands, and a look in
His eyes
I could not understand.

If I can see him so clearly
With my eyes closed,
It could be that inside our heads
We each have one spare set
Of eyes
To make up for the ones we lose.

Next month, on my birthday,
I'll have a brand new glass eye,

Maybe things will look round
And fat in the middle-
I've gazed through all my marbles,
They made the world look strange.

I hear a nine-month old
Has also lost an eye,
I wonder if my soldier
Shot her too – a soldier
Looking for little girls who
Look him in the eye-
I'm old enough, almost four,
I've seen enough of life
But she's just a baby
Who didn't know any better.
June 1988 (1992: 340-341).

This poem was written after a young girl lost an eye in March 1988 when she was hit by a rubber bullet shot by an Israeli soldier. At the time the young girl was standing on the balcony of her grandmother's house near Ramallah. Work such as this, however, does more than record a story, more than evidence the involvement – indirect in this case perhaps, but certainly brutal - of women in history. Such work obviously also inserts itself into the realm of the political. By writing in the voice of the young girl, 'Ashrawi forces the reader to understand the incident from the girl's perspective – an innocent bystander, and a soldier who is represented as having intentions of destroying that innocence. The poem, more than a simple remembering, is a political call to action.

Remembering is also central to Liyana Badr's A Balcony over the Fakihani. While her stories, on the one hand, remain historically accurate and thus can be understood as a recording of the events – the bombing of the Tal al-Zaatar and the Sabra and Shatila camps – from the perspective of those who lived in the camps⁴¹. However, as Mona Fayad points out, this insistence on remembering is what makes Badr's characters more than just passive victims of war and dispossession. “Caught in circumstances beyond their control, they bravely choose to reject the comforts of amnesia. Their strength also shows in their resilience and adaptability, in their ability to start all over again by forming substitute homes and communities” (1995: 151). Remembering, recording a history that has remained invisible in the traditional accounts of both South Africa and Palestine, are vital elements in all of these texts.

While many of the realities portrayed in these stories are bleak, the meanings derived from them are positive and powerful. Many of the stories illustrate the bonding together of communities in the face of structures and events that break down the traditional structures of the family. Badr's three novellas denote her ability to represent the experience of exile without shrillness but with much pathos. She depicts people who, amid tragedies of loss and uprootedness, are still capable of intense personal relations, of love and commitment. Despite their fragmented existence, her characters constantly struggle to create narratives of hope and continuity. These six authors share a conscious motivation: that of resistance to the oppressive structures of the state. For instance, in an interview with Cherry Clayton, Miriam Tlali responded to the question of whether she considered writing as her form of fighting, with a simple “Yes” (MacKenzie and Clayton,

1989: 77). However more than resistance literature, these stories are often meant to provide a sense of connectedness and hope to the younger generations, in particular to the young women who will read the stories. Sindiwe Magona perhaps best sums up this intention in the last lines of To My Children's Children: "By now I understood also that I was part of the stream of life – a continuous flow of those who are still alive, and the spirits, our ancestors. I knew I would never be alone. Know this too, child of the child of my child... you are not alone" (1990: 183).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our experiences have a cognitive component: they can yield insights about our social and cultural identities, both those we inherit and those we wish to remake in the light of our moral and political commitments. There is a continuity between experience and identity, and literary works are often the best places to perceive this. They help us see how (gendered) experiences and identities are not merely the personal views or perspectives of an individual, but rather the spaces where political meanings are articulated, spaces where an accurate knowledge of our social world can be sought (Mohanty and Mohanty, 1990: 3).

This thesis aims to point to the verity of the above quotation from Chandra and Satya Mohanty – that the literary works of this study are indeed spaces where political meanings are articulated; where a clearer picture of the social and political worlds within which indigenous women live are being engaged with. This thesis has been an exploratory work. Informed by a critical feminism and the sociology of literature, it has attempted to develop a theoretical framework for a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of the writing of indigenous women writers from the settler societies of South Africa and Israel/Palestine. These women have seen their experiences and identities manipulated by specific policies emanating from their contemporary state's British colonial heritage. The thesis has argued for a state-centered analysis of the literature produced by indigenous women. Women have typically been the invisible subjects of both the theories and the political policy and legal formations of the nation-state. Having historically been relegated to the realm of the private within the public/private divide,

women have been perceived as not having a role in the public domain. As Souad Joseph (1996, 1997) among others, has noted, the concept of the public/private divide is in fact a fiction. Women have both been affected by 'public' policy and have also been actively engaged in the 'public' and the political.

In order to highlight the relationship between gender and the state, the thesis has isolated particular themes within the writings of South Africans Ellen Kuzwayo, Miriam Tlali and Sindiwe Magona, and Palestinians Sahar Khalifeh, Liyana Badr and Hanan Mikha'il 'Ashrawi. The themes have been chosen to elucidate the representations of certain common elements of the state's ideology of separate development: displacement, migrant labour and pass laws. This thematic review of the literature has dispelled the notion of the private/public divide. The literature evidences both the direct impact of state policies on women, as well as women's active resistance to these policies. The thesis argues that the act of writing itself must be considered as an aspect of women's active resistance. These six indigenous women authors, having put pen to paper, have actively begun to inscribe their own histories – as women – and the histories of their communities into the annals of a Eurocentric history that has attempted to silence them. Their writing figures as dynamic elements within civil society – engaging with the patriarchal state.

However, as noted in Chapter Two, the women authors live within a double patriarchal bind. On the one hand, they have been situated under the oppressive patriarchal rule of the British colonial administration and also that of the settler state. On the other hand, they live within traditional patriarchal cultures that have informed the nationalist

movements in which they have participated. The patriarchy that has informed the national liberation movements of both South Africa and among the Palestinians has led women participants in these movements to bypass many concerns of a strictly feminist nature in order to support the overall goals of the movement⁴². This thesis has not examined the role that the patriarchy of nationalist movements has played in women's lives, however this would clearly be an area deserving of further research.

Related to this point is the question of whether these writers themselves can be considered feminists. While an investigation into the role of feminism within the writings of these six women has not been the object of this thesis, I fear that to avoid reference to this question will simply presume a direct feminist stance on the part of the authors. The question of the relationship of their writing to something that could be termed a more general feminist enterprise is something that needs to be considered. While their texts clearly resonate with political consciousness, and with an interest in gender concerns, they cannot be unquestionably equated as feminist.

The history of feminism, emanating from the West, has also been one of exclusion, and in particular has been criticized for lacking a race and class consciousness. Traditional feminism, with its single focus, has prioritized women's rights over a broader spectrum of community rights. It thus cannot reflect the realities, the subjectivities of indigenous women, or women generally who identify themselves with broader concerns – whether these be of nationalism or anti-colonialism, or with regard to concerns of anti-racism or anti-classism. Moreover, a dualistic tendency of universalizing women's experience

while simultaneously exotisizing the “other” has been evidenced in much Western feminist writing, particularly concerning the subject of women from Middle Eastern countries: “The construction of Arab and/or Muslim women as the “different other”, as objects of passivity, silence, submission, veil, and seclusion has occupied many Western feminists for the past decade and a half... instead of perceiving them as historical subjects with real life experiences” (Abdo, 1993: 33). While calling for a ‘universal sisterhood’, Western feminism is nonetheless embedded in a Eurocentric, Orientalist, and patriarchal culture, and is inherently ethnocentric (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 5). Active, politicized women who do put these other concerns at the forefront of their struggles have attempted to re-invent new forms of feminism, some trying to re-name it ‘womanism’, for instance. Miriam Tlali has commented that she is much more at ease with the concept of ‘womanism’, as it distances her from white middle class feminism (Hunter, 1993: 64). Thus the question of understanding if and how feminism informs the work of these authors, or how their writings work to redefine feminism, would be a fruitful area for further study.

This thesis has attempted to set the groundwork for a future and much more in depth study of the writings of indigenous women from South African and Israel/Palestine. The thesis has only examined a sampling of the writing by these women, and has only slightly touched upon the wealth of themes contained within their work. Their works provide a testimony to the strength and courage of the women of their communities and countries. I can only hope that their stories, novels, and poetry will someday be published and distributed more broadly, and be understood as not only works of resistance against the

patriarchal structures they live within, but also as actively participating in a (re)writing of history.

Endnotes

¹ "The basis for an alliance, however stormy, between historicists and many feminists lies in the conceptions of history and of culture which they are likely to share. For both, 'historicizing' the text means reading in a context to which it is integrally related. History is not a 'backdrop', not something of inferior interest which the text emerges in order to transcend it. Nor is history construed as a unitary world-view or zeitgeist, nor even as explanatory narratives of cause and effect. Rather, history is a problem: fact, causality, cultural unity combined into question as the possible creations of hegemonic groups. Text and context are alike discursive, and contribute together to cultural self-construction... Historicists and feminists share an interest in the ways texts trace the creation, subversion, containment and conception of power" (Goodwin, 1994: 249-250). In new historicism: 'there is the notion that 'history' is best told as a story of power relations and struggle, a story that is contradictory, heterogeneous, fragmented. There is the (more debated) notion that hegemonic power is part but not all of the story, that 'history' is a tale of many voices and forms of power, of power exercised by the weak and the marginal as well as by the dominant and strong" (Judith Lowder Newton, 1989 in Goodwin, 1994: 250).

² Goodwin writes that feminism and historicism should come naturally to comparative literature, considering that De Staël, who is most known for her *De l'Allemagne* (1813), also wrote *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800) - a text that is both historicist and feminist (Goodwin, 1994: 248).

³ From the United Nations International Labour Organization Convention 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, 1989. Part 1. General Policy Article I,

1 (b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of the present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

2 Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply (ICHRDD, 1996 : 146).

⁴ I met Ms. Vester at a conference on 'Multiculturalism in the New South Africa', organized by the International Sociological Association in December 1997. She is currently working on an anthology of women's prison writing in South Africa.

⁵ I met Ms. Naidoo in 1991. She was working on a Ph.D. dissertation concerning Asian women's writing in South Africa, specifically regarding the work of Farida Karodia.

⁶ Mr. Esack has also written a great deal on women's involvement in the South African struggle for liberation, and is currently working on a book that compares the use of liberation theology in South Africa and Palestine.

⁷ In the 1950s and '60s, Drum was one of the primary journals that published non-White authors of fiction and poetry. I had the opportunity to have extensive discussions with Mr. Bunzee, who is currently Communication director within the South African parliament, in December 1997.

⁸ Over the course of my visits to South Africa, I also had the opportunity to meet many women activists by attending, for instance, the 1991 ANC National Congress (Durban), the SADTU (South African Democratic Teacher's Union) Annual Conference (1991, Durban), the ANC Youth League National Congress (1991, Port Elizabeth), the ANC Women's League Conference on Violence Against Women (1991, Isipingo).

⁹ This was the official reason for the canceling of the program, as explained to me in an e-mail from Kim Kahlhamer, coordinator of exchange programs at Birzeit University.

¹⁰ In 1995, 150 women writers and twenty-six publishers from throughout the Arab world converged on Cairo for the first Arab Women Book Fair, which exhibited more than 1500 titles: "With this depth of field, there is no reason that any one writer or group of writers should shoulder the daunting responsibility of representing a whole culture" (Amireh, 1996: 1).

¹¹ There has been little study, in the West, of Arabic literature. Andary writes that in his perception studies of Arabic literature have become quite static in recent years. "Most articles published in the Western journals include few citations from Arabic journals; and whenever they do, the names of the journals are often not new. Most specialists in the field want to stick to convenient authors. Rarely have I seen any focus on writers who have not been translated. Scholars want to publish what sells, but Arabic literature does not sell. So who has the power to control information on the Arab world? Critics can make a difference in how people see the Arab world" (Andary, 1996).

¹² Note that while this study recognizes the presence of other colonial powers in each of these countries, the focus is on that of the British.

¹³ "No society known to human history has ever existed which has not been governed by power and authority, and, as Gramsci says repeatedly, every society can be divided into interlocking classes of rulers and ruled. There is nothing static about these basic conceptions, since if we consider society to be a dynamic distribution of power and positions we will also be able to regard the categories of rulers and ruled as a highly complex and highly changeable pair of categories. To use only Gramsci's terminology for the moment, we can divide society into emergent and traditional classes, into civil and political sectors, into subaltern and dominant, hegemonic and authoritative powers. Yet

standing over and above all this activity is at least an idea, or set of ideas, and at most a group of agencies of authority, which gain their power from the State” (Said, 1983: 168).

¹⁴ Walby points to the exceptions of Cynthia Enloe, Kumari Jayawardena, Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (Walby, 1996: 235)

¹⁵ The question of citizenship and its relationship to contemporary nation-states, particularly with regard to the status of indigenous women, could easily account for a thesis in itself, and thus will not be broached upon in the current undertaking. It is clear however, that the concept of ‘citizen’ is closely related to concept of ‘nation’, as citizens are members of a nation, whose rights are protected by the ‘state’, or ‘nation-state’. Clearly the contemporary relationship of ‘citizen’ to ‘nation’ is not as straightforward as this. Feminist debates around citizenship rights and gender are few, particularly those accounting for a non-Western framework. For a particularly interesting overview of citizenship rights and gender see Nira Yuval-Davis (1997b) “Women, Citizenship and Difference”. Feminist Review, No. 57, Autumn, pp: 4-27, or her 1997 book: Gender and Nation. See also Joseph, Souad (1997) “The Public/Private – the Imagined Boundary of the Imagined Nation/State/Community”. Feminist Review, No. 57, Autumn, pp: 73-92.

¹⁶ See Abdo, N. and N. Yuval-Davis (1995) and Yuval-Davis (1997a, b), for instance, for more on citizenship rights of Palestinians within Israel.

¹⁷ Gender relations within (non-state) nationalisms is an other immense area of discussion. Generally, I think it is fair to say that nationalist movements – liberation, revolutionary, post-colonial – tend to construct their concepts of ‘nation’, of belonging, within the same sort of gender framework as discussed earlier in this chapter. As a result, women’s position within these movements is often manipulated. For more on this see for instance, Abdo, N. “Feminism and Difference: The Struggles of Palestinian Women”, Canadian Women Studies. 15.2-3, pp: 141-145; Haleh Ashfar, ed. (1996) Women and Politics in the Third World, London: Routledge; A Parker, ed (1992). Nationalisms and Sexualities, New York: Routledge.

¹⁸ Within this Mandate document was an agreement that Palestine would become a ‘home’ (not at this point an independent state) for Jews (Palestine Commission Report, 1937: 28-29). It is important to note that Zionism emerged as one of the responses within the European Jewish community to the major crises of economic and political displacement and of growing anti-Semitism and persecution in Eastern Europe and of the emergence of biological anti-Semitism towards Jews in Western Europe. The three primary goals of the Zionist settler movement have been identified as: the conquest of land (*Kibbush Ha’adamah*), the conquest of labour (*Kibbush Ha’avoda*), and the conquest of the market (*Totzeret Ha’aretz*) (Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995: 292).

¹⁹ Jewish settlers began to arrive more steadily in Palestine through a fund for colonization created by Baron Edmond de Rothschild between 1883 and 1890, and later with the foundation of the Zionist Organization in 1897 by Theodor Herzl.

²⁰ For instance, in the British-ruled territories (pre-1910), reserves were established under the rule of appointed chiefs for people deemed 'Native' (Unterhalter, 1995: 216).

²¹ For more on the relationship between colonialism and capitalism, see for instance Nahla Abdo (1984). "The Development of Capitalism in Palestine: The Expropriation of the Palestinian Direct Producers". *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 13: 88-107; and S. Meer, ed (1997). *Woman, Land and Authority*, Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.

²² See for instance Elia Zureik (1979). *The Palestinians in Israel: a Study of Internal Colonialism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; and Harold Wolpe (1975). "The theory of internal colonialism: the South African case", in I. Oxaal, T. Barbet and D. Booth (eds), *Beyond the Sociology of Development*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

²³ As recently as late November 1998, the debate was taken up in the *McGill Tribune*, a student newspaper. In a letter to the editor entitled "Decrying Historical Inaccuracies", Aaron Finkelstein reiterates the popular Zionist slogan that the Palestinian refugees (who, according to Amnesty International represent the largest refugee population in the world) are a myth constructed by Arab nations.

²⁴ This specific report examined South Africa, Canada, Newfoundland, New South Wales, and Van Diemen's Island, as well as the South Sea Islands and New Zealand.

²⁵ It should be noted that even at that stage, the Arab High Commission, recognizing the bias of the commission, boycotted their proceedings.

²⁶ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 called for the partition of the British-ruled Palestine Mandate into a Jewish state and an Arab state. It was approved on November 29, 1947. The resolution was accepted by the Jews in Palestine, and rejected by the Arabs in Palestine and the Arab states. This resolution included the Plan of Partition with Economic Union, outlining the boundaries of the respective 'states' and the Special International Regime for Jerusalem.

²⁷ "The expropriation of the Palestinian peasant producers from their land was a precondition for the development of European (Jewish) capitalist sector" (Abdo, 1984: 106). In South Africa, diamond mining was one of the precursors the development of migrant labour. In 1867 diamond mining began in what is today known as Kimberley. Labour was needed, therefore "to secure the conditions for extracting this labour from the indigenous population, the colonial government engaged in a series of wars to bring all of the African kingdoms under its dominance. Once conquered, a system of taxation was put in place that forced homesteads to send young men to work in the mines, and on the

railways and other infrastructural and service projects associated with the development of the mining industry” (Unterhalter, 1995: 216)

²⁸ “1. It is accepted Government policy that the Bantu are only temporarily residing in the European areas of the Republic, for as long as they offer their labour there. As soon as they become, for some reason or another, no longer fit for work or superfluous in the labour market they are expected to return to their country of origin or the territory or the national unit where they fit in ethnically if they were not born and bred in the homeland
2. The Bantu in the European areas who are normally regarded as non-productive and as such have to be resettled in the homelands, are classified as follows: ‘(I) the aged, the unfit, widows with dependent children and also families who do not qualify under the provisions of the Bantu (Urban Areas) Act No.25 of 1945 for family accommodation in the European urban areas’ from The Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, General Circular No.25, 1967, (in G. Mare SAIRR, 1980 quoted in IDAFSA, 1991: 24).

²⁹ It is important to note that not only Africans were removed, under the provisions of the *Group Areas Act*, more than half a million Indian and ‘Coloured’ people were resettled. IDAFSA estimated the number of people relocated between 1960 and 1982 at 3,522,900 (IDAFSA, 1991: 19).

³⁰ “The West Bank is still divided into three areas. Area A is entirely Palestinian-run except for security, water, and exits and entrances; Area B is jointly patrolled by Palestinian and Israeli soldiers, with security, water, building permits, exits and entrances entirely controlled by Israel; Area C is completely Israeli. Before Wye, these amounted respectively to 2.8 per cent, 24 per cent and 72 per cent of the land area. Wye gave the Palestinians an additional 1 per cent from Area C, and 14.2 per cent from area B, thus putting about 18.2 per cent under Palestinian control again, with the same exclusions and provisions. In addition, Israel will transfer about 13 per cent more from Area C to Area B, where - to repeat - Israel really controls things, including of course the 3 per cent designated as a nature preserve (whatever that is supposed to mean). In effect then, the Palestinians got - if that is the right word - a total of 18.2 per cent of the West Bank added to Area A, the rest to Area B. In no case did the Palestinians acquire sovereignty, control over exits and entrances, water, and overall security” (Said, 1998: 1).

³¹ The pass laws for Africans during this period were already extremely complicated. For instance, in 1921, an inter-departmental committee on the Native Pass Laws listed the following passes which black town-dwellers in the Orange Free State could be required to possess: stand permits, residential passes, visitor’s passes, seeking work passes, employment registration certificates, permits to reside on employer’s premises, work on behalf certificates, domestic service books, washerwomen’s permits and entertainment permits. Each of these cost money, and failure to possess the necessary papers led to arrest (Davenport, 1987: 554).

³² Women, while not *de facto* members of the ANC prior to 1943, did participate in the deliberations, decision-making and campaigns of the organization as well as others. The Federation of South African Women (FSAW) saw the women's struggle as a two pronged one: first and foremost was the struggle for national liberation and the overthrow of apartheid structures, and second, "coupled to the former in some hazy way", was the struggle by women against the laws and institutions that discriminated against them as women (Walker 1991: xiv). Among the various campaigns in the later era of apartheid, one of the most important came out of the Crossroads Women's Movement. Much of Crossroads was (and remains) squatter camps. Housing construction in townships was stopped in the 50s and 60s. In 1975 people began setting up their own shanty towns. The government demolished the camps at Werkgenot, Modderdam and Unibell (near Cape Town). Residents were deported to bantustans. However the brutality of the demolitions set off an international campaign - and Crossroads Women's Committee played a major part in the resistance.

³³ For more on women and resistance in Palestine, see for instance Didar Fawdry (1986) "Palestinian Women in Palestine", in *Women of the Mediterranean*, Monique Gadant, ed. London: Zed Books, pp: 72-85; Nahla Abdo (1991). "Women of the Intifada: Gender, Class and National Liberation". *Race and Class*. 32.4. pp: 19-34; Kathy Glavanis-Grantham (1996). "The Women's Movement, Feminism and the National Struggle in Palestine: Unresolved Contradictions", in *Women and Politics in the Third World*. Haleh Afshar, ed. London: Routledge, 1996, 171-185; and especially Amal Kavar (1996). *Daughters of Palestine: Leading Women of the Palestinian National Movement*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

³⁴ Keep in mind that in South Africa, 'black' refers to all non-white people.

³⁵ Bessie Head is certainly the most well known non-white South African women writer. Head's life is a symbol of the cruelty and absurdity of apartheid. Born in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, of a white mother and African father, Head first saw the light of day in the psychiatric institution in which her mother was placed after conceiving. Head, born light-skinned, was initially placed with an Afrikaner family, however as her skin pigmentation darkened, her adoptive parents rejected her and she was placed with a 'Coloured' family. Under economic duress, this family also gave Head up, and she was primarily raised in a missionary school. Head eventually left South Africa, and most of her writing concerns her adoptive country, Botswana, where she died in 1984. For more on Bessie Head see especially Gillian Stead Eilersen (1995). *Bessie Head: Thunder Behind Her Ears*. Cape Town: David Philip.

³⁶ The first known published poem being "Palestine and the New Colonization" (*Filastin wal-Isti'mar al-Jadid*) by Muhammad Is'af al-Nashashibi (1885-1948) and published in October 1910. The poem expresses the Palestinian fears, aroused by widespread land purchases by the Jews:

O young woman of our homeland!
Shed blood instead of tears if you want to cry,
Sister of exaltedness!
Palestine is lost;
nothing but blood is left now.

You will suffer and weep with blood,
when weeping tears becomes of no avail.
Restrain your rancor, people!
Give up your hatred and enmity!
The colonization [of Palestine] has gone too far with no one to stand out against it.
This disease has become grave.
You should overcome it with [real] remedies.
Awake! It is your homeland.
Do not let it be sold to the strangers!
(in Sulaiman, 1984: 9).

According to Sulaiman (1984) the poetry and fiction written by the Palestinians about the events, sufferings and aspirations which their country passed through since going from the “Turkish frying-pan” into the “Mandate Fire”, and from then till the creation of Israel in 1948, is characterized by three main features. First, the literary works express emotions, feelings and reactions of the Palestinian Arabs who were directly affected by the encroaching Zionist project: the selling of land. Second, much of the work concentrated on specific themes, such as the sale of land to Jews and the nature of the Palestinian leadership. Third, as one part of their role was to widen the struggle against the Mandate and the Zionists inside Palestine, so the other part of that role was to draw attention of the Arabs outside of Palestine to the vital danger threatening the future of an Arab land which had special significance to them (Sulaiman: 18).

³⁷ The reference is to three Palestinian villages in which massacres of civilians were committed in 1947, 1948 and 1953 respectively.

³⁸ The reference is to three young people brutally tortured by Israeli soldiers in a demonstration against the Occupation.

³⁹ To remedy the situation, the African locations sprouted shebeens. Shebeen Queens bought and sold liqueur. They paid so-called ‘Coloured’ men to get the liquor store for them.

⁴⁰ From the June 1913 *Union of South Africa Act*: “No Native may wander about without a proper pass. A Native’s pass must be signed by a white employer to prove he is in legal employment.” (Head, 1989: 120)

⁴¹ Consider for instance Chris Giannou's account of Sabra and Shatila in Besieged (1989). Giannou, a medical doctor was in the camp while it was under siege for a period of several months. His journal, re-worked and published in this book, recounts a story strikingly paralleled by Badr's work.

⁴² For instance, Nahla Abdo and Nira Yuval-Davis note that the feminist agenda within the Palestinian women's movement was, until the Intifada, largely subsumed under the larger national agenda of obtaining an independent Palestinian state (1995: 314). The same contention has been made with regards to South Africa (see, for instance, Cecily Lockett (1990). "Feminism(s) and Writing in English in South Africa", Current Writing. Durban: University of Natal Press. pp: 1-22; and Cherryl Walker (1990). Women and Resistance in South Africa. Claremont, South Africa: David Philips).

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