Towards Radical Consciousness Liberation:
Palestinian, Israeli Recounting Decolonial of Trans/formation

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Sommaire

Abstract

At the center of this dissertation stands the unending quest for liberation consciousness(es) through radical and critical thought. The epistemological knowledge developed by bell hooks and Paulo Freire, on consciousness transformation towards liberation has been the primary guide in this research. The empirical study expresses what trans/formation of political consciousness means to these participants - several Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli political actors within the geographical boundaries of the State of Israel. Through long conversational interviews, the research strives to understand the biographical paths which lead the participants to counter-hegemonic performances in their daily life.

Colonial consciousness relates to questions both of knowledge and of power and is connected, according to the participants, to a hegemonic position of power, violence and arrogance. The research has shown that while Zionism is defined by all participants as a basis to oppression and to institutionalized domination, it does not determine the fate of the Ashkenazi Jewish-Israelis, the Mizrahi Jewish-Israelis and Palestinian participants in the same way. To engage in liberation trans/formation processes was perceived as an entrance into an unknown site of transgression from which one acquires knowledge and tools throughout the journey. Vision appears to be a crucial sense through which the participants recount the perpetuation of colonial consciousness, as well as the possibility to develop a counter-hegemonic gaze, which liberates.

The participants' accounts of liberation entail ongoing critical thought that constantly examines reality and unveils the truth about the world. Likewise, it seems that all participants, while in different stages within their processes of liberation, understand the trans/formation of their political consciousness and thus their quest for liberation from colonial structures of thought as a quest for genuine feminist objective knowledge.

The accounts have shown that stepping out of binary positions, enables a complex understanding of reality and of one's own standpoint within it, and are crucial within liberation processes(es). The two first chapters, which comprise the first station called The Gaze, describe what colonial consciousness means to the participants and then outlines the process of liberation, and presents the asymmetric reality from a national standpoint. With the

development of a complex reading of Israeli coloniality, the dissertation follows a more multifaceted analysis. It is presented in the second station, called, Act(s) of Liberation: "Doing Critical Thinking", and presents the acts and tasks one takes in the quest for constant liberation. In Chapter Three, entitled 'Presencing' and Chapter Four, entitled, 'Radical Encounters' I present the way the development of an oppositional gaze entails constant self-reflexivity on one's own position within the relations of power. How can colonial consciousness be undone within the Israeli structure of coloniality? How can people work their way towards alternative ways of living together? These questions and some other vital ones, are at the basis of this work.

Résumé

Vers une conscience radicale de libération: Récits palestiniens et israéliens de trans/formation décoloniale

Au cœur de la présente thèse se trouve la quête inachevée d'une/de conscience(s) de libération au moyen d'une pensée radicale et critique. Le savoir épistémologique développé par bell hooks et Paulo Freire quant à la transformation de conscience en vue d'une libération a été le premier guide dans cette recherche. L'étude empirique exprime ce que signifie une trans/formation de conscience politique, pour les participant.e.s – plusieurs acteur.e.s politiques palestinien.ne.s et israélien.ne.s situé.e.s à l'intérieur des frontières géographiques de l'Etat d'Israël. À travers de longs entretiens sous la forme de conversations, cette recherche ambitionne de comprendre les voies biographiques qui conduisent les participant.e.s à opérer des performances contre-hégémoniques dans leur vie quotidienne.

La conscience coloniale est en rapport avec des questions de savoir et de pouvoir et est liée, d'après les participant.e.s, à une position hégémonique de pouvoir, de violence et d'arrogance. Cette recherche montre que si le sionisme est défini par tou.te.s les participant.e.s comme un fondement de l'oppression et de la domination institutionnalisées, il ne détermine pas de la même manière le destin des participant.e.s juif.ve.s israélien.ne.s ashkénazes, juif.ve.s israélien.ne.s mizrahi.e.s et palestinien.ne.s. L'engagement dans les processus de trans/formation est perçu comme l'accès à un site inconnu de transgression où l'on acquiert du savoir et des outils tout au long du voyage. La vue apparaît comme un sens crucial à travers lequel les participant.e.s racontent la perpétuation de la conscience coloniale ainsi que la possibilité de développer un regard contre-hégémonique libérateur.

Les récits de libération des participant.e.s impliquent une pensée critique suivie, qui examine constamment la réalité et dévoile la vérité sur le monde. De même, il semble que tou.te.s les participant.e.s, tout en se trouvant à différentes étapes de leur processus de libération, comprennent la trans/formation de leur conscience politique, et ainsi leur quête de libération des structures coloniales de la pensée, comme une quête de savoir objectif

authentiquement féministe.

Les récits montrent que le fait d'abandonner des positions binaires permet une compréhension complexe de la réalité et du propre point de vue du sujet dans cette réalité, et est essentiel pour le(s) processus de libération. Les deux premiers chapitres, qui composent la première section intitulée « Le Regard », décrivent ce que signifie la conscience coloniale pour les participant.e.s, puis tracent les contours du processus de libération et présentent la réalité asymétrique d'un point de vue national. Avec le développement d'une lecture complexe de la colonialité israélienne, la thèse poursuit une analyse à plusieurs facettes. C'est ce qui est présenté dans la deuxième section, intitulée « Acte(s) de libération : faire de la pensée critique », où sont présentés les actes et les tâches assumées dans la quête d'une libération continue. Au troisième chapitre, sous le titre « Rendre présent » et au quatrième, intitulée « Rencontres radicales », est présentée la manière dont le développement d'un regard oppositionnel implique une constante réflexivité quant à la propre position du sujet au sein des rapports de pouvoir. Comment la conscience coloniale peut-elle être défaite au sein de la structure israélienne de colonialité ? Comment peut-on se frayer un chemin vers des manières alternatives de vivre ensemble ? Ces questions et d'autres, tout aussi vitales, sont au fondement du présent travail.

Mots-clés : Colonialité, conscience radicale, libération, trans/formation, palestinien.ne.s/ israélien.ne.s, phénoménologie critique, recherche biographique, bell hooks, Paolo Freire

To my Sana

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While academic research necessitates spending long and prolonged periods of time alone, reading and writing, the achievement of this research was not done alone. This is my opportunity to thank many of you who accompanied me throughout this very long journey and path of learning to become a researcher.

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"Decolonization […] continues to be an act of confrontation with a hegemonic system of thought; it is hence a process of considerable historical and cultural liberation. As such, decolonization becomes the contestation of all dominant forms and structures, whether they be linguistic, discursive, or ideological. Moreover, decolonization comes to be understood as an act of exorcism for both the colonized and the colonizer. For both parties, it must be a process of liberation: from dependency, in the case of the colonized, and from imperialist, racist perceptions, representations, and institutions, which unfortunately, remain with us to this very day, in the case of the colonizer […] Decolonization can only be complete when it is understood as a complex process that involves both the colonizer and the colonized."

(Samia Nehrez in hooks, 1992, p.1).

Foreword

> "Je suis un expérimentateur en ce sens que j'écris pour me changer moi-même et ne plus penser la même chose qu'auparavant."
>
> "[…] I am an experimenter, in the sense that I write in order to change myself, and in order not to think the same things as before."
>
> Foucault, 1980, p. 41 [2000 p.240][1]

I have been living in Paris for ten years and in effect the years of learning to become a researcher were followed by a constant quest to find balance(s) between my feminist anti-colonial activist performance and the quest for entitlement as a researcher. In a certain sense, this process comes to an end with the writing and the defense of this doctoral dissertation. Spending hours alone in front of my computer, books and articles had been foreign to me when I was in the field in action and leading actions as an activist. Yet, the knowledge I accumulated during my first years of activism, within the radical anti-Zionist scene within the State of Israel, which actually started in parallel with the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada, was more formative than anything else.

In 2008 I was introduced to my research advisor, Nacira Guénif-Souilamas by my dear friend Joëlle Marelli. In my first conversation with Nacira in metro n° 12 on our way to a conference at EHESS, I told her that I am determined to conduct a doctoral research that would allow me and my comrades back home to better understand the profound processes of trans/formation through which we have all gone. In English, as I was not yet fluent in French, I shared with Nacira, that I am looking for a supervisor who would agree to converse with my anti-Zionist positions.

I learnt very early that there are no short cuts and that a graduate research is important in order to continue to a post-graduate level and to the completion of this doctoral research. After studying French for a whole year, in October 2008, I engaged in a Masters program. I

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[1] The use of square brackets throughout the dissertation indicates the English translation of French orginal literature from which I quoted.

know today that my concern to better understand individual counter-hegemonic liberation processes of Israeli and Palestinian political actors within the Israeli colonial formation was formed through my graduate research. There I sought to better understand the learning processes of Jewish-Israeli political actors in their multiple paths towards Anti-Zionist performances. In October 2010, I finally embarked upon the journey of this doctoral research.

In the summer of 2008 I went *back home* for a visit. Two of my newly acquainted Parisian friends who had never been to Palestine/Israel before decided to join the trip in order to understand what this land was all about. A land, a space, and a part of the world that was so present in my speech, in our speech. From my Israeli, Ashkenazi, feminist, queer and activist position, I took it upon myself to explain everything at which we looked. I wanted my friends to dive into the way I perceive Israeli occupation and political Zionism. I wanted them to understand the way in which I gaze at my home. I sought to describe my reality phenomenologically, the way it was perceived, yet also through my counter-hegemonic, and anti-Zionist consciousness. Everything in our landscape had a political meaning, an objective knowledge that I was eager to share. I wanted to explain it all. It was a gaze into myself, into my life and into my political consciousness.

I wanted them to critically gaze at the landscape. I wanted them to understand how the Nakba is still part of the landscape within the State of Israel. I wanted them to see how the occupation was vivid in all daily livelihoods. I was still very much an activist, very much into my political engagement. I thought, at the time, that just letting people look would not be enough to understand Israeli coloniality. I was convinced that there is more to it than a physiological explanation of the vision, that one's perception was the foundation through which actions and senses unfold and experiences are interpreted.

This is what I thought at the time, this is how I read reality. Perhaps because this is how I experienced things before my own trans/formation of consciousness. I would like to believe that it was not an act of colonial arrogance on my behalf. My friends asked me: "What happens that makes one start seeing things that could not be seen before?" "What happened that made you start gazing at reality with critical eyes?" This study is an attempt to find answers to these question(s) for which at that time, I had no answers.

When I was young, my family doubted that I would finish high school and I actually barely did. Today as I write the last lines of my doctoral research dissertation, I know that my

liberation processes from colonial consciousness, are processes through which I did not only develop political counter-hegemonic consciousness, I also acted within processes that sought liberation from the "Tali is dyslectic" label within my family.

While English is my mother tongue and in many ways my emotional language, writing academically in English was a task I had to learn and actually teach myself as I never went to an English speaking school or University. I know today that my political trans/formation influenced my sense of entitlement and encouraged me to read. My passion and feminist willfulness[2] to learn are central incentives for the achievement of this research as well as for my capacity to overcome linguistic difficulties.

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2 Sara Ahmed, Feminist Consciousness (Posted on October 18, 2015). Accessed on December 2, 2016, https://feministkilljoys.com/2015/10/18/feminist-consciousness/

Introduction

Matters of Entitlement

Overview

My quest to better understand liberation processes of Israeli and Palestinian political actors within the Israeli State started with a phenomenological approach. In this sense, when conducting the interviews and writing this dissertation, I was concerned with the way in which the participants themselves make sense of their own processes (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Schutz, 1967). I am therefore committed to understanding the phenomenon of trans/formation from colonial consciousness within Israeli social formation in the way it is lived and experienced by the participants in the research. It is for this reason that I choose to call the political actors whom I interviewed 'participants', as their analysis, point of view and account of oneself (Butler, 2005) are that which constructed the epistemological and empirical enquiry of this dissertation.

In the attempt to engage in a research that strives to understand the biographical paths of the participants, to follow Hedjerassi (2016b), I conducted long conversational interviews with a relatively small number of people. It is important to highlight that the participants are actors within a small *milieu* of people, who in many cases, work and act together and are involved in joint political actions. The in-depth interviews were accompanied by five years of ethnographic participation. My bi-yearly trips to Tel-Aviv were accompanied by participations in numerous events, actions, demonstrations and activities within the State of Israel and in the occupied territories of the West Bank; these included discussions with activists, and visits to cafés and other places where the very small scene meets and dialogues.

I particularly sought to encounter engaged experienced political actors. The participants are all either in their thirties' or forties', except Esther who is the eldest participant, born in the nineteen fifties. The participants are part of a political *milieu* that is in constant quest for knowledge and theorization of both a critical understanding of history and critical reading of one's position each within their own context. Their accounts reveal that they are all involved in attempts at understanding the question of consciousness. Their preoccupation with

understanding their own processes of change and their construction of a counter-hegemonic consciousness ends up being a life project.

Within the long conversational interviews I was concerned with perceiving the self-reflexivity of the participants thus understanding the way they give sense to their long processes of trans/formation. The research shows that the participants learn and are formed through their liberation process, which changes their life and their encounter with the world. The possibility to look at their microhistory (Levi, 1992 [2001] p.107), in which they perform their counter-hegemonic tasks reveals itself through the interview as the participants take a distance of space and time in order to comprehend the sociological and educational phenomena through which they went.

Insider/Outsider dialectic

"[…] the privilege of giving a performance on one's home land; one has the opportunity of conveying information about oneself through scenic means but no opportunity of concealing the kinds of facts that are conveyed by scenery" (Goffman, 1959, p. 60).

The fieldwork of this research was, and still is, in some way my home. The conversations took place within a familiar scene of home, in Goffman's (1959) sense, in which I know closely the discourse and codes, the internal power dynamics, the spaces of encounters, the journals, and many of the actors.

My process and those that I accompanied throughout the years inspired my intuition, which led to the very first stages of this research. It made me feel entitled to enter the field, ask questions and at times difficult and sharp questions, which allowed a critical and open dialogue with the field. Having said that, throughout the research I was concerned with the dialectics of my insider/outsider position. In particular, I was concerned with the way this dialectics influences the power dynamics within the interviews. When I decided I wanted to understand the trans/formation processes of both Jewish-Israelis and Palestinian political actors within the State of Israel, I was, for quite a while, reluctant to proceed to the task of interviewing. Numerous discussions with my advisor were needed in order to feel entitled to interview Palestinian political actors.

My critical work and feminist critical thought in particular, taught me to understand my own position within the Israeli matrix of domination and thus struggle to liberate myself from reproducing oppressive dynamics: "…the matrix of dominations refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression" (Hill Collins, 2001, p. 18). I sought to come up with a research inspired by the feminist standpoint, a theory which is itself in an ongoing quest for (re)creation. Its epistemological contribution, allowed conducting a methodology of critical thought and dialogue with the field (Motzafi-Haller , 2012). My research focuses on a small group, and at times a marginal one, within the Israeli colonial power relations, so I could not but be concerned with the existing power relations within the research itself. Therefore, I sought to constantly position myself and reflect to myself my own hegemonic position in conversation with the participants. The participants all recount the importance of their own understanding of the question of power within the development of their counter-hegemonic knowledge, and the need to question and enquire as a way of life. This radical position, I felt, should also apply to me as a researcher.

In her book "In the Cement Boxes: Mizrahi Women in the Israeli Periphery" Motzafi-Haller (2012) presents the way in which she was constantly self-reflexive on her own position as a researcher. Drawing her argument from Hill Collins (2004b), she argues that a researcher who is led by the principles of Feminist standpoint epistemology is aware of, what she calls, the sites of epistemic privileges. Understanding my own location as a researcher, as well as my position within the Israeli matrix of domination was a constant task to which I was devoted throughout the research. I was led by the thought that knowledge is socially situated (Motzafi-Haller , 2012) and is furthermore constructed through dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981; hooks, 1994, 2003).

"[…] a feminist standpoint is not something that anyone can have simply by claiming it. It is an achievement. A standpoint differs in this respect from a perspective, which anyone can have simply by 'opening one's eyes'." (Sandra Harding, 1991, p.127 in Motsafi-Haller, 2012). To follow Harding (ibid.), I was, throughout this research devoted to working on opening my eyes. I considered self-reflexivity about my insider/outsider position as a potentially epistemic advantage that requires constant work to create a praxis of feminist scholarship within and as part of research (Motzafi-Haller , 2012).

In agreement with Guénif-Souilamas (2000), I understand that the subject of this research was created through my encounters within the field. In this dissertation, I shall be content if I succeed to translate and facilitate the accounts of the participants in the most accurate manner that respects the way in which they perceive themselves. Inspired by the work of Guénif-Souilamas (ibid) throughout the fieldwork and during the writing of this dissertation, I sought a form of humbleness that would allow me to critically gaze at any attempt I could have of dominating the subjects (ibid, p. 20). At times, when I encountered tension between, on the one hand, my passion and willfulness to research and on the other, the academic limits of my study, I had to draw my sense of entitlement from constant doubt and from my attempts at understanding my own subjectivity (ibid).

One of the ways I found most dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981) to discuss power dynamics within the research was to bring these questions into the conversation during the interview. Throughout the dissertation and in the introduction in particular, I present the way in which I conversed with the participants during the interviews. The following account with Johayna, one of the participants in the research, illustrates the way in which, in the course of the interview, I brought into the conversation my dilemmas and contemplations concerning my position as a Jewish-Israeli researcher in front of a Palestinian participant.

> *TD: [...] at first I was in a dilemma if I had the legitimacy to interview Palestinians, it was like: "is it a hegemonic position to be in?" I contemplated a lot and at the end I decided to deal with the question of liberation from colonial consciousness also within the oppressed, even the oppressed of the collective to which I belong. The oppressive collective [...] it is complex [...]*

> *Yes, it is completely different, from that of the Jews. Really, I see it in my work, because what we try to do is to liberate from a colonial consciousness to a liberated consciousness, Palestinians and Jews, they are almost opposite processes but [...]*

> *TD: What is the difference?*

> *The difference is, it's like for the Palestinians, to bring them to a place that they understand that the state fucked them up, that they are discriminated against, that there is the Nakba[3], massacre, this is very easy [...] really two workshops (clap*

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3 "As surprising as it may sound, the first to use the term "Nakba" in reference to the Palestinian's disaster was

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hands) and fix! All […] they don't know the figures but they will know to recount […] the harder level is to bring them to understand, to understand the responsibility to change, that they take responsibility and change […] so I say that for the Palestinians, the hard thing is to go to the place of responsibility, and the place of solidarity with those who are weaker than I, and also solidarity with those from the oppressor side who are willing to give me this solidarity. Ahh for the Jews, it is harder to convince them that they are […] that the state did; one, two, three. It's like, or perhaps the way is longer to bring them to the understanding of reality the way it is today. That is a stage […] but after you reach it, the passage towards responsibility is much clearer, there is something that does not allow to 'sit' (do nothing), "I have to act, I have to do, I have to clean my conscience, I have to get this burden off me" […] it is a stage, it is easier. (Johayna, political activists, Jaffa, 2013)

Johayna does not, for the moment, talk to me about my own position in the interview with her, she rather insists to map the difference between the trans/formation processes. According to her, contrary to Jewish-Israelis, the Palestinians hold internal knowledge about reality and thus the first step to unveil reality and know it critically, is an easy task. Having said that, the second step towards action, or in her words, responsibility is a harder step for the Palestinians. Furthermore, within her educational work with Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian youth, she has noticed that building a sense of solidarity within a complex understanding of power dynamics is furthermore hard. According to Johayna, the trans/formation process takes shape on two levels, while the first step is an easier educational task with the Palestinians youth, the second task is easier to convey to the Jewish-Israeli youth.

Liberation from colonial consciousness: a trans/formative process

In my graduate research I was particularly concerned with whether the participants in the research would define their activism as drawn from a clear Anti-Zionist agenda. Cautious not to influence their discourse, I did not mention the word Zionism within the interview before

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the Israeli military. In July 1948, IDF (Israeli Defense Force) addressed leaflets to the Arab inhabitants of Tirat Haifa who resisted the occupation. In excellent Arabic, they called on them to surrender: "If you want to be ready for the Nakba, to avoid a disaster and save yourselves from an unavoidable catastrophe, you must surrender." Bronstein Aparicio Eitan "A brief history of the 'Nakba' in Israel" (posted on May 16, 2016). Accessed on December 10, 2016, http://mondoweiss.net/2016/05/history-nakba-israel/

the participants brought up the term themselves. My hypothesis was confirmed when all the participants without exception positioned themselves and their political engagement as opposing Zionism.

All the while, during this present doctoral research, which officially started at the end of 2010, I knew that the way in which I frame the interviews and bring in content would influence the conversation I could hold with the participants. My goal was to have an open dialogue that would lead us to reflect about the participants' consciousness and allow them to be active within the analysis. In this presentation, aimed to layout the theoretical framework in which the research was situated, I need to clearly bring out the terminology I had chosen when introducing the research to the participants.

This research is situated within the rich literature and epistemological knowledge that critically analyzes the establishment of the Israeli state in Palestine as a colonial project (Said, 1979, 1997; Shafir, 1989; Shohat, 1989, 1999a, 1997, 2006; Pappe, 2006; Shenhav, 2006). In this sense political Zionism "is understood as a settler colonial movement, and accordingly, Israel as a settler colonial state" (Weizman, 2016, p.2). The choice of the term 'colonial consciousness' is drawn, first and foremost, from the results and the validation of my graduate research. The achievement of that research encouraged my sense of entitlement to continue conversing with (post)colonial epistemological knowledge, theories and literature. In the dissertation I found it useful to employ the term political Zionism, as it appears in Butler's (2012) analysis and critique of state violence and colonial subjugation conducted by the State of Israel. Political Zionism, she argues, "[…] would include the massive dispossessions of Palestinians in 1948, the appropriation of land in 1967, and the recurrent confiscation of Palestinian lands that continues now with the building of the wall and the expansion of settlements" (ibid., p.2).

Influenced by the work of Fanon (1952) I sought to understand the way in which political Zionism, and thus settler colonialism, is reproduced within an individual subjective consciousness, and in consequence, to understand the way in which one could eventually liberate oneself from the internalization of such violence.

During the first contact I had with the participants, I asked them if they would agree to participate and thus be interviewed for my research in which I am concerned with understanding liberation processes from colonial consciousness. I clearly stated that the

research aims at understanding these processes, as they appear among members of the oppressed and oppressor collectives in the Israeli matrix of domination.

My first objective when entering the fieldwork was to create a site of dialogue. In order to do so, I sought to present the subject of the research in the most intangible and comprehensive manner. Through this task, my goal was to allow the participants to decide whether they feel comfortable to take part in such a long and intimate conversation or not. In most cases the first presentation took place on the phone. To my surprise all my initial conversations, whether on the phone, or by directly approaching a person of interest, in which I presented the research and asked whether the actors agreed to become research participants, ended with an interview. Adi was the only participant who demonstrated reluctance to participate, yet she ended up agreeing to meet with me. In the course of the interview, Adi explained that her initial reluctance to participate was due to her questioning of the pertinence of the use of the term "colonial consciousness". This interrogation is presented in her forthcoming accounts. I was, furthermore directed by one of the participants to interview one of the veteran Palestinian feminist activists, yet all my attempts to contact her failed.

At this point, I would like to reflect upon my approach in choosing the participants. I wonder whether the way I chose whom to interview, was not, at the end of the day, directed by a preconceived orientation. The writing of this dissertation enables a critical gaze into the empirical approach and the quest for a veridical overlook for the analysis (Bakhtin, 1993). I take my inspiration from Bakhtin's (ibid.) work, in which he contends that critical thought towards truth is inherent to the act of thinking: "It is pointless to speak of some sort of special theoretical thought; insofar as I am thinking, I must think veridically; veridicality or being-true is the ought of thinking. (ibid., p.4). He continues his argument when he says: "It is precisely on the condition that it is pure that truth can participate answerably in Being-as-event; life-as-event does not need a truth that is relative from within itself" (ibid., p.10).

I presume that the fact that in many cases I was referred to participants by people who had confidence in them, facilitated the task of participating in such an analytical exercise. Furthermore, as I have mentioned earlier, the small milieu which concerns this research, is often composed by actors who themselves are in constant conversation with the theories and the epistemological development of knowledge that is derived from critical thought. And therefore, find great interest in conversations that propose a site of self-reflexivity.

The interviews were all conducted in Hebrew[4], when referring to liberation processes I employed the term *Shihrur*, clearly referring to an internal and individual matter that concerns questions of consciousness. My choice to understand the transformation of consciousness through the term liberation, rather than emancipation, is namely inspired by hooks' work, and more precisely her trilogy on radical education, (1994, 2003, 2010). Hedjerassi (2016a) highlights the way in which hooks' understanding of liberation enables an active stance rather than perhaps, a passive posture of acquiring of right implied by the term emancipation (Sardinha, 2013 in Hedjerassi, 2016a, p.42). By liberation hooks (1994, 2003), refers to one's own process of change and mutation of consciousness, yet she is also inspired by Freire (1970), who relates to the praxis of changing reality and the world in which one lives.

During the study, I was concerned whether the participants relate to their numerous acts of deconstructing hegemonic knowledge and the construction of new knowledge as learning processes of liberation. In other words, whether they thought that their tasks of "putting forth" (Butler, 2001) knowledge that was unknown to them before, doubting, questioning and constant verifications (Rancière, 1987) were part of what they would call liberation from colonial consciousness.

"The « putting forth » is an act which limits the power of the law, an act which counters and rivals the workings of power, power at the moment of its renewal. This is the positing of limitation itself, one that takes form as a question and which asserts, in its very assertion, a « right » to question" (Butler, 2001[5]).

The unfolding of the analysis through the coming chapters reveals that liberation is an ongoing process with no final victorious position to which one must reach. Liberation is rather a quest in action, the trans/formation of what one ignores into forms of knowledge (Rancière, 1987).

While leaving open the possibility for a renaming process, my concern had two main

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4 In the attempt to expose the task of translation, in Annex Two, I present two long sequences of the interviews with Kholod and Hila in their original language, Hebrew, alongside with my own English translation. To follow Gardey (2016), translation "is more than a simple conversation from one language to another, and includes an active part of appropriation, knowledge production and enabling a common ground for encounter between different cultural contexts" (ibid., p.37). I shall be content if the translations I have proposed show a faithful picture of the paricipants' manner, content and performance.

5 Butler, Judith (2001) What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue. Accessed on December 17, 2016, http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/butler/en/

directions: The first was to question the use of terminology and the other was to query the participants' self-reflexivity on their own process.

My own understanding is that the concept of trans/formation is an ongoing process through which one perceives the world, and one's positions within it, as a constant dialogue between tasks of acquiring knowledge on the one hand, and praxis evolving towards profound change on the other. The profound change, often recounted by the participants when using the word Mahapach[6], is bound up, I argue, with what Dufoix (2014) calls formative processes. It is therefore, the quest for change, that leads to self-realization and thus the (re)creation of reality (ibid.).

Trans/formation is the task of "answerability" (Bakhtin, 1993, p.2), it is the performed act of dialogue with thought. The trans/formation towards radical thought and praxis is essential to the building of a sense of entitlement to act from a marginal and excluded position (hooks, 1990). It is the conversation, in Boubeker's (2011) sense, between precariousness and agency that, in Merleau-Ponty's (1945) sense, questions that of which one is capable.

To follow Ahmed (2006) trans/formation is "transcendental in the « queer » commodity" (ibid., p.43), it is bound up in strength and "opposition" (Butler, 1993, p.18). I found that conversing with the term trans/formation allows multiplicity and enables crossing fluidly into a dynamic recreating of the world and of one's own performativity within it. In Kosofsky-Sedgwick's (1993) sense, trans/formation, rather than transformation, travels the world queerly, destabilizing and troubling the hegemonic commonsense: "Queer is a continuing moment, a movement, motive-recurrent, eddying, *troublant*. The word « queer » itself means *across*-it comes from the European root twerkw, which also yields the German quer (transvers), Latin torguere (to twist), English, athwart (ibid. [1994] p.xii).

Drawing from the work of Boubeker (2011) in which he argues that a sociology of ethics is the way in which a researcher can understand the condition that enable identifying the positions of social actors, I seek to unveil, through the individual experiences of the participants of this research, their orientations in the space (Ahmed, 2006), their choices to act and their own definition of their trans/formation of counter-hegemonic performance(s).

Hedjerassi, (2014) has shown that the way in which hooks (2003) understands the

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6 Mahapach means a dramatic turn or essential change in Hebrew.

possibility to engage within formative processes, through willful learning and a constant quest for wellbeing, is central within one's liberation process(es) (ibid., p.46). Liberation, thus defined as dialectical and dialogical trans/formative processes of consciousness, is according to hooks (2003) and to Freire (1970) the process through which one furthermore engages in self-formation when one enters into the quest for radical thought. I am therefore concerned with the subjectivity of the participants through which they resist domination (Boubeker, 2011; Scott, 1990) and engage in dynamic processes of trans/formation.

The participants recounting of their paths, when giving an account of oneself, in Butler's (2005) sense, was more than a mere narration of a story, it was filled with their self-reflexivity, with their own analysis of reality and of themselves within it, and at times with a critical gaze at the power dynamics that were taking place within the interview itself (ibid.). As part of their processes of *giving an account of oneself* (ibid.), the participants, at times, were perhaps drawn by an attempt to control or guide the impression I might make of their accounts, or in other words while recounting their path of life they at times tried to 'correct' the context, and their own appearance or manner according to what they imagine I might expect from them (Goffman, 1959). While Dufoix (2014) urges the readers to use the terms formative rather than performative, he illustrates, drawing his analysis on Austin (1962), that the performative is a discourse in the action. Along the same line of thought, the participants' accounts, or in other words their performativity within the interview is not judged in terms of good vs. bad. I sought rather to critically examine the way through which they choose to present themselves, the world and themselves within the world (Butler, 2001).

I understand performativity, through the reading of Butler (1993) when she urges not to understand the term "as self-expression or self-presentation, but rather as the unanticipated resignifiability of highly invested terms" (ibid., p.28). Therefore, this study sheds light on the counter-hegemonic performativity of the participants; yet furthermore, I am concerned with their performativity within the interview itself. In Merleau-Ponty's (1945) sense, within the interviews I sought to allow for a site of spontaneous speech that is self-reflexive on matters of form, as much as content:

"Life of consciousness – cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life is subtended by an 'international arc' which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, or physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this international arc which brings about the unity of the senses of intelligence,

sensibility and mobility [...] it is a projective activity, which leaves objects all round it, like traces of its own acts, but which nevertheless uses them as springboards from which to leap towards other spontaneous acts, then it becomes understandable that any 'content' deficiency should have its repercussions on the main body of experience and open the door to its disintegration, that any pathological degeneration should affect the whole of consciousness" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945 [2002, p. 157])

Opening

My own learning process throughout the research has clarified to me that my own performance within the interviews was derived from my own attempt to appear in front of the participants. As much as the participants were involved within the investigation, my own presence and my own path were also present in the encounter (Devereux, 1967). I am aware that the way in which I conducted the interviews framed the conversation; while aware of that, I sought to leave a large enough open space for genuine dialogue. The following quote is the presentation of the way I opened that conversation with the participants when starting the interview:

> *TD[7]: My doctorate is a continuation of my Masters in which I researched that which Israeli anti-Zionists learn in their process from Zionism to Anti-Zionism. I actually tried to understand the learning process from a hegemonic consciousness to an anti hegemonic consciousness of Jewish-Israelis. In this doctorate my research question is, or what I am trying to understand is the liberation processes from colonial consciousness(es) of the colonized, the oppressed, and also of the powerful one, the ruler, the colonizer within the Israeli context; the Palestinians and the Jewish-Israelis. I am interviewing both Israelis and Palestinian 48' to try and understand what their transformation[8] processes from colonial consciousness are. What I would be very happy to do with you is to learn about you, you can start where ever you want, speak about yourself [...]"*

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7 TD stands for Tal Dor and refers to my interventions within the interviews.

8 Within the interview in Hebrew, the word that was often employed was, Shinui Toda'a – consciousness transformation. The trans/formation to which I refer in this dissertation, relates to the way I choose to analyze the processes.

All of the interviews included a clear opening and closure. It was important for me to clearly yet shortly, explain that which concerns my research. In some cases, participants directly started recounting, as there was no need for opening questions. In others, participants had a harder time finding their way to start the conversation. I then asked them to start by telling me about themselves. This question allowed the participants to situate themselves and in all cases opened up a fluent conversation about their political processes of trans/formation.

"Sometimes the individual who dominates the show in this way and is, in a sense, the director of it, plays an actual part in the performance he directs" (Goffman, 1959, p.60).

To follow Goffman (ibid.), the methods of conversational interviews in general and that of open questions in particular, allowed the participants to decide on the order and coherence of their account, on the one hand, and it orientated the conversation on the other. While seeking to create a site of dialogue the interviews were spaces of co-performance in which both the participants and I were active. I therefore do not perceive my presence within the interview and the research as a whole as neutral, yet I worked towards participation that self-reflects on power and perhaps control on my behalf.

The participants show that the task of question asking, and constant doubt is derived from their curiosity to know and discover (Freire & Faundez, 1989; Rancière, 1987). Critically gazing at their paths and having a space to recount their stories, the participants re-give life and existence to their own process and narratives (Fanon, 1961). Rather than seeking a chronological narration of life, the interviews, the analysis and the writing of the dissertation are focused on the understanding of each one's biographic path as a whole (Hedjerassi, 2016b).

Throughout the introduction I seek to present the participants in a phenomenological manner. I hope that the way, through which I choose to present their lives and positions within the Israeli matrix of domination enables exposure to the way they presented themselves to me and consequently the way I learnt about them through our conversations.

Dialogue

Moshe: "I was very much a kibuztnik"

After the introduction of the subject and setting the frame of the interview, I asked Moshe to tell me about himself. He started by recounting where he was born and the way in which he ended up growing up in a Kibbutz:

> *I was born in Tel Aviv[9] [...] Next to the Safari, when I was eight months old my parents moved to the Kibbutz, I am the youngest in our family. My own parents were born in S' (southern Tel Aviv neighborhood) they are both children of immigrants from Turkey and Greece [...] so my parents wanted to escape from the fate of their class of S' neighborhood, they moved to S-H'[10], but they discovered that it wasn't a good neighborhood either.*

> *TD: What did they discover?*

> *It became a neighborhood of crime [...] after a year they sold the house, gave all their money to the Kibbutz, my father was already a worker in the factory [...] at the time it was one of the richest Kibutbzim [...] If you want to talk about political consciousness I think that on the level of consciousness I was very much a kibbuztnik. My whole consciousness [...] in fact, to understand that I was not Ashkenazi, like the others, I had to leave the Kibbutz at the age of thirteen. (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012).*

Moshe positions himself within the Israeli matrix of domination. He was in his early thirties when I interviewed him in Paris where he had lived with his partner for several years. When I called Moshe to ask him to participate in my research, he was happy I had thought of him. Moshe is actually one of the first participants I interviewed for this study. His account was important in the development of the interviews that followed. While my frame of the interviews was set in advance, each conversation with each participant developed the following interviews. In a certain sense, dialogue took place between the interviewees

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9 In order to understand my mobility conducting the conversations, Map I in Annex One, clearly states and highlights the cities and locations where the interviews took place. This map will also, I hope, give a better understanding of the geographical colonial reality to which the participants relate in their accounts.

10 The name of a marginal neighborhood in the south of Tel Aviv, on the Eastern side of the Ayalon highway and thus far from the center.

themselves.

In Moshe's account, we see the way in which the presentation of the subject of the research is present in his thoughts while he recounts. He starts off narrating factual events that constructed him, yet very quickly Moshe starts giving an *account of oneself* and reflects on the way these events influenced his political trans/formation processes.

Through self-reflexive dialogue my goal throughout the interviews was to understand the world the way it is experienced by the participants. Influenced by Bakhtin's (1981) work, I sought to create dialogic conversations that would describe the truth(s) of the participants.

"[…] it is always an individual act or deed [postupok] that does not affect in the least the objective theoretical validity of a judgment, an individual act or deed that is evaluated and imputed within the unitary context of a subiectum's once-occurrent actual life." (Bahktin, 1981, pp.4-5).

I sought for a genuine understanding of the participants' own sense of the world, through praxis of what I have called in Chapter Four radical encounters, which work against the reproductions of power dynamics. Seeing myself as part of the dialogue, I introduced my thoughts in the form of questions in an attempt to create a space that allows contradictions and conversation.

Avi: "The different life courses from which we choose"

Allowing the participants to choose their own words was an important task I took upon myself as a researcher. I sought for a genuine dialogue that would develop the knowledge the participants have about themselves and about reality (Bakhtin, 1981; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994, 2003). Furthermore, it was important for me to create a space of acceptance rather than judgment. I sought to make it clear to the participants that there are no right or wrong answers, and that through the course of the interview, I would ask open questions and dialogue with them in order to better understand their account.

In a certain sense, within the interviews, the participants thus take upon themselves, in the Gramscian (1971) sense, the role of the intellectual when they challenge the hegemonic knowledge from a critical point of view. Along the same line of thought, Said (1978) understands the role of the intellectual as a responsibility to stand for the truth, even if it

entails confronting those who hold power. The intellectual, he argues, is the one who is ready to criticize and who is capable of criticizing any power in the world.

The presentation of the accounts throughout the dissertation shows the participants' vigilance not to enter relations of power. In other words, in agreement with Foucault (1990), they are aware of the danger of holding an intellectual position as the one who pretends to be the truth teller. All the participants show the way in which they perceive their role as being the ones who expose the way the power/truth system functions rather than claiming to 'know the truth' (ibid.).

The choice of analysis, and the theoretical framework is also drawn from the accounts of the participants. The interviewee understand that their biographical path is to be grasped within the context and frame in which they found themselves during the interview, which is their subjective interpretation of reality (Schutz, 1967). The participants are all experts not only on their own lives but also on the development of knowledge on the subject of the research. Throughout the forthcoming chapters the accounts unfold the way in which every development of knowledge is drawn from each one's own socio-political position within the Israeli formation (Schutz, 1967).

My interest in the participants' biographical path continued to the later stages of the reading and analyzing of the accounts which refer to the socio-political context in which they live, act and per/form. Drawing her argument on what Bernard Lahire terms as "social biography", Hedjerassi (2016b, p.172), pleads for an approach that would comprehend one's social context. Along the same line of thought, this research does not aim at being a representative approach; it seeks to understand each participant within his/her singularity, rather than as an illustration of a larger group or category (Lahire, in Hedjerassi, 2016b, p.172).

To follow Schutz (1967) within the interview, the participants in the research interpret the social reality surrounding them, yet they also interpret their own position within it and their own dynamic process of change. They are constantly concerned with making sense of their life and I was consequently interested with the way in which they make sense of their reality.

Dialogue tasks continued throughout the analysis of the accounts, and during the writing of the dissertation in which I seek to understand the connections and relations referred to by the participants (Bakhtin, 1981). The dialogue with the participants, during the interviews and

later through the writing, allowed me to furthermore get a perspective on my own formative tasks. Following Dufoix's line of thought, in which he suggests that "fomativité" (Dufoix, 2014, p.20) is a realization of an action, of the *doing*, it seems to me that it is also the possibility to create a body of knowledge that is part of a process. Rather than focusing on the description of the world, the formative task is thus a site that seeks to be part of the building of reality (ibid).

I heard Avi speak about his doctoral project in a conference about questions of sexuality and ethnicity in New York. I was fascinated by the way Avi politicized his discourse in front of a public that knew little about the Israeli matrix of domination. I approached him after his talk and asked him to participate in my research. Avi was more than happy to recount his process and participate in the research. I was eager to converse with him when we set our appointment a couple of months later in a little café in Jerusalem:

> *If you had come to ask me, five or ten years ago, the same things, it would have sounded completely different. Why? Because the same events also changed the interpretation and the vision towards the same things and the form they take. Sometimes I ask myself if what I remember is really what happened or is it in fact the level of interpretation I provide? It's like, at the end of the day, I don't know what happened, it is clear to me that if I go and ask my mother she would interpret it differently, also the stories I was told about myself, it goes without saying, that I provide them with interpretations that frame them into a certain context. All these things, in my opinion, is what distinguishes between one who has a certain life course and one who has a different life course, between the different life courses from which we choose. (Silence). I don't think that one can know what distinguishes really." (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Avi, in his early thirties, was born to a Jewish Ultra-Orthodox family in a small town in the south of the country. During the interview he is astounded that I am familiar with his hometown. Since the age of eighteen and his rapture from religious life and consequently his family, Avi lives and works in Jerusalem. His account elucidates his own reflexive thought, his intersubjective account of oneself. He is aware that his own experience of the world is situated and is related to the stories he chooses to tell at this given time, to the order, the choice of coherence, all that creates meaning and exposes the way in which reality is experienced (Scott, 1990). Avi highlights the self-reflexive task through which he thinks and

rethinks himself in the world and the way in which he makes sense within it.

Avi's interogation concerning his own memory invites us to think of his account as a metaphor concrning his own life: "[…] what has been "drawn" from the collective or individual memory and "authorizes" (makes possible) a reversal, a change in order or place, a transition into something different, a "metaphor" of practice or of discourse […]" (De Certeau, 1980 [2011, p.87]). Avi's account demonstrates the importance the study lays on the new creation of the participants within the space of the interview: "space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformation into term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts" (ibid., p.117).

Avi's account allows understanding the dialogue with the participants as the possibility to construct thought through their individual theory drawn from their life experience (Foucault 1975). That which the participants choose to recount, at the given moment of the interview, is at the heart of this study. At times, Avi's counter-hegemonic trajectory and his conversation with the theories while telling his own stories, draws a heuristic line in the construction of this dissertation.

The interview with Avi, and those of the other participants were, in Hedjerassi's (2016b) sense, sites of formation and perhaps, trans/formation. She argues that in order to better understand an individual formation, the enquiry should seek for a critical understanding of one's relationship to knowledge - "rapport au savoir" (ibid., p. 171). In this sense, several participants recounted that the interview was furthermore a site through which they would learn about their own self. Halfway through the interview, Johayna says: *Amazing, I am discovering things about myself.* Johayna was not the only participant to express contentment with her participation. While it was not my initial intention, the interviews turned out to be important tasks of liberation and trans/formation. The participants were all eager to make themselves known (Fanon, 1961), to have the possibility to speak, and thus to give their counter-hegemonic performance an existence that allowed the possibility for a fruitful narrative account. The participants have shown that the conversations turned out as important moments of reflection, and accounting of one's own self (Butler, 2005, 2006; Bakhtin, 1993, 1981; Goffman, 1990). Similarly to Johayna, when I asked Kholod if she is ready to embark upon the journey of the interview, she answered: *Very, very, very much. I am for it. I will be*

happy to learn about myself, for me it is another form of learning. With all what I have gone through in life.

Language

Imad: "Are you recording?"

Imad's interview is the last I conducted for this research. We met in Paris. Imad and I met through different political activists. In particular, I was present at several screenings of his first film in which he tries to understand his own political process concerning the Israeli occupation as a Palestinian citizen of the State of Israel. I called Imad and explained that which I sought to research. He was eager to participate in the study:

> *Is it going to be part of what you are recording? I mean like, what we are saying now, I think it is important, the issue of the language, for example.*
>
> *TD: Why does it seem important to you?*
>
> *Are you recording?*
>
> *TD: Yes*
>
> *Because language is identity. I mean like, I mastered the Hebrew language, but I have not spoken it for a while. And now I have been living in France for a while now, so sometimes there are terms or words that I use more in French so I forget Hebrew, I am like, even in Arabic if I speak Arabic, depends what I'm talking about in Arabic…*
>
> *TD: Would you have asked the same question if I were Palestinian?*
>
> *What?*
>
> *TD: If I were Palestinian and spoke mother tongue Arabic, would you ask which language should be spoken? Would it have come up?*
>
> *Ahhh maybe not, no, I would not have asked. (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)*

Imad is in his early thirties. He was born in a Palestinian city in the north of the country and has been living in France for the last few years. Before giving me the chance to present

the subject of the research and the setting for the interview, Imad would like to make sure that I am including in the recorded material his query about language. The question of language is essential for Imad in order to start unfolding his trajectory. Imad is aware that language is related to identity. His account resonates with the work of Hall (1990), and the way he theorizes questions of identity: "Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation." (Hall, 1990, p.222)

Imad's reflections bring the question of the power relations within the interview at the very beginning of the conversation. At some point he asks me to tell my own story of trans/formation as he finds it fascinating to meet a Jewish-Israeli that, according to him, thinks the way I do. I promise Imad that once we finish our interview I would recount and share my own process with him.

Johayna: "What are you looking for?"

At the end of my interview with Johayna I ask her whether she could recommend other participants for the research. Fortunately, the recording machine continued working, as our conversations opened up to other directions of thought concerning her process:

> *TD: Do you have other ideas of people, Palestinian men and women […] who could be interesting for me to meet? I am looking for people your age and older, who have already come a long way.*

> *Do you want to hear like how they experienced their consciousness transformation? Ahh there is a woman called Kholod. Do you want people who have left colonial consciousness or also people who will not know how to tell you that they are in colonial consciousness, or have left it, what are you looking for?*

> *TD: Interesting question. (silence) I am interested in this exact reflexive thought.*

> *Yes, Yes.*

> *TD: This self-reflexivity, of "where am I? What is my consciousness […]?"*

> *You know, you have really adopted a French accent (laugh)*

TD: You are not the first to say that (laugh). Is that my own colonial consciousness? (laugh)

Nooo! But to be honest when I was in high-school, I used to speak with a complete Ashkenazi accent, also during my first year in University, and then I decided no! the R' I will say correctly [...] I always knew I was deforming the letters and that it was more linguistically correct to speak with' חand 'ע[11] and all that but I did not have the guts to do it. No one spoke like that.

TD: Is there a political statement in it?

Yes!

(Johayna, political activist, Jaffa, 2013)

Johayna, who at the time of the interview was in her early thirties, was born in a Palestinian town in the center of the country, however for several years she has been living and working in Jaffa. At the time of the interview, Johayna was the director of an organization that leads encounters between Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian youth within the State of Israel. At one time, we had been active in the same circles, but never very close. However, I feel comfortable to call Johayna and ask her to participate in my research. As I did with all the participants, I briefly explain my work and Johayna agrees to meet me in a new Palestinian café in Jaffa. I had never been to this café and I was excited to get to know it.

When Johayna suggests I speak to Kholod, I write down her name in front of her. She then looks at my writing and corrects the spelling. Later in the year, I came across a blog published by Johayna in which she spells out her name and suggests to her Jewish partners in the struggle to learn Arabic spelling. Johayna's direct action to correct the way I write Arabic names, happens at the very end of our interview at a point at which I asked her to recommend other Palestinian participants for my research. For her, it reflected my lack of knowledge and my Jewish-Ashkenazi standpoint.

Interestingly after our long conversation about her own process, Johayna still asks me to be more precise about what I am looking for in order to think of other participants. Our

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[11] H-ח, A'A-ע, and R-ר are guttural consonants of the Hebrew language. The guttural pronunciation of the Mizrahi Jews was stigmatized by the Ashkenazi hegemonic commonsense.

conversation takes another direction as Johayna comments on my French accent when speaking Hebrew. Our conversation about language and accent illustrates, in Fanon's (1952) sense, the colonial hierarchy of language. Within Israeli commonsense, Arabic is considered an inferior language to Hebrew. Along the same line of thought, French is seen as more prestigious than Hebrew. My internal knowledge concerning this hierarchy allowed me to make a joke in a self-reflexive manner questioning my own performance, wondering together with Johayna whether I was in the process of reproducing colonial practices. I did not expect my comment to open up a fascinating conversation about Johayna's own connection to the Hebrew language and to the issue of accent in particular.

Having gone to an elite Jewish school, Johayna had adopted an Ashkenazi pronunciation of the Hebrew alphabet. To follow Fanon (1952), Johayna positions herself in relation to the colonizer language, Hebrew: "All colonized people - in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local culture originality has been committed to the grave-position themselves in relation to the civilizing language." (ibid., [2008] p.2)

In her own liberation process, that takes place during her studies at the Tel Aviv University, she goes back to the *correct,* according to her, way of pronouncing namely the guttural letters ר ע ח. Performing this pronunciation is part of Johayna's learning processes towards liberation.

Kholod: "(Hebrew) obliges me to think like you"

"To speak a language is to appropriate its world and culture" (Fanon, 1952 [2008, p.21]).

Several days after my interview with Johayna, she calls me to let me know that Kholod has accepted to take part in my research. After a short telephone conversation, Kholod agrees to meet me and we set an appointment in Jaffa at the entrance to the office of the organization where she worked. While the office and the organization are extremely familiar to me, I had never met Kholod before. When I turn on the recording machine, someone she knows enters the space. She quickly changes to Arabic and exchanges laughs with a young woman who was tying up her bicycle. I smile at her as well. I managed to understand a few words. Kholod turns her head back at me, and with what seems to me as an easy task she switches back to Hebrew.

I kept feeling that I hate the Hebrew language, that is was the language of the

occupier until I started writing poetry in Hebrew. I think it (Hebrew) is a tool that I can touch people who don't speak my language; I can reach Jews in their language.

TD: Like what is happening between us now?

Yes! For example

TD: Do you think […] I will change my […] How would this interview look differently if it were done in Arabic?

I could tell you dirty jokes, just kidding. It could have been much more intimate, with words that I don't have in Hebrew. It (Hebrew) obliges me to think like you, in your language, so you can understand. I am in your space, I am telling you my story, but how much are you in my story? Again like any other story you don't hear it in my language, within the images, because language is also images, memories.

TD: How would it look different if I were Palestinian?

If you were Palestinian WOW (raises her voice) it could have been awesome!! I think I could have told you, ummm more into depth the nuances, I could have exposed you to the pain and distress, umm you could have through words and emotions a sense of the deep pain in which I was, what happened on the way, what hurts, where it broke and were it didn't break. The advantage is that I am sharing with you something that I would like to say to Jews. You are Tal the Jew here, which is part of the issue. I can't ignore it within the interview that you are Jewish. I know that you are a different Jew but […]

TD: I would like to share with you dilemmas I had when I started the doctorate, at first I refused to interview Palestinians, and my advisor shook me up in this story. She told me to assume the hegemonic position as a doctoral candidate, "take responsibility for the hegemonic position you are in, and this is the presencing with which you bring (to the interview)" she really shook me.

I can really identify with what you are saying. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod's account illustrates the self-reflexive praxis I sought during the interviews. The

question of language held an important role when thinking about the power dynamics within the interviews, in particular when interviewing the Palestinian participants. Hebrew is not only a second language to Kholod, one that she learnt at school, it is also the dominant langue and the language of the Israeli institutional domination. In her own process, Kholod speaks about a period when she refused to speak Hebrew, as part of her anger, a stage which she recounts was important to go through when seeking liberation. In Fanon's (1952) sense, it is an understandable preliminary stage towards liberation: "It is understandable that the black man's first action is a reaction […]" (Fanon, 1952 [2008, p.19]).

Kholod argues that speaking in Hebrew, forces her to think like me. While my goal is to better understand her story, according to Kholod the fact that we are conversing in Hebrew, limits my capacity to genuinely enter her world. Having said that, she also contends that speaking Hebrew has an advantage. Within our encounter, Kholod directs her account at me as a Jewish-Israeli, and for me, an act of importance for Kholod.

Closure

Eitan: "This conversation was good for me"

I met Eitan in a little café in Tel Aviv. I had never met him or heard of him before the interview. A friend of mine suggested I talk to him and I called Eitan to explain the purpose of my research. He agreed to talk to me while he was finishing the writing of his doctorate dissertation.

The interviews were in most cases about two hours long. Towards the end of the interview, I made a point to mention that we are approaching closure. My goal was to allow the participants to bring up any more subjects about which they felt a need to converse. My last question was, in all cases: *is there anything else you would like to add?*

Eitan's choice of meeting me in this little café near Arlozorov Street in the center of Tel Aviv, positioned the interview within a traditional Ashkenazi middle class surrounding.

TD: I have one last question

Yes.

TD: (laugh) but it seems to me that I have exhausted you.

No! No! to be honest not at all. The truth is that this conversation was good for me, this conversation was really like, there is something in it that legitimizes, most of the things I said, I have already said before, there were things I said for the first time, but most of the things I already said, they exist in my discourse with myself and with the world, but when one puts it in perspective, like we are doing now [...] (Eitan, political educator, Tel Aviv, 2013)

Eitan, who at the time was in his early thirties, was born in Tel Aviv. During the whole interview he was extremely self-reflexive upon his own performance. When Eitan recounts the powerful affect his participation in group encounters, has had on his trans/formation of consciousness, he reflects upon the physical reactions he was experiencing due to the difficulty of the spoken subject. He recounts that he is under stress and therefore his hands perspire. After a very long interview, I was eager to ask Eitan a very last question, yet I wanted to make sure he was not too tired to continue.

It seems that the practice of recounting one's processes of trans/formation, was an important task for Eitan to reflect upon his own process.

Adi: "They don't know in which square to put me"

Esther, who is active within the same organization as Adi, suggested that I contact her. I called Adi, and told her that Esther had referred her to me. After contemplation, Adi agreed to meet me for an interview. She chose to meet in the apartment where I was staying in Haifa. Adi, who is in her forties, a researcher and University professor herself, accepted to take part in the research, yet at times, she expressed her reluctance to expose her personal and intimate stories. At the end of the interview, she went back to questioning the way I presented my research to her, recounting how it puzzled her, as she was not sure of my use of terms:

[...] It is very important for me that my women students know that I am a Mizrahi woman and you know, that my colleagues will know that.

TD: That you act from that position

Not only that I act, you know when I am asked [...] people in my department are very frustrated, they would have liked me to be completely Ashkenazi, (laugh). It is not like

in the sense that they would like that I would be like [...] it is more that I must be, you know (what I mean), they like me and everything is ok, but there is [...] my whole trajectory is abnormal, "so what if my work is excellent, and I do things", they don't know in which square to put me. There is no square.

TD: When there is no square, it is hard

There is no square and it is my big struggle so they can contain me, as I am [...] it might not work, it is still a very very hard struggle, very very hard, to say that there are all kinds of options [...] I think I am wiser today than what I was before, I know that it is more complex, but I also know that around us all kinds of very surprising things are happening. (for example) I have a research assistant, who has an Arab name, but she is [...] but when I met her, it was like, I would not hear, she did not look Arab, she did not speak [...] you know nothing! Nothing! Her Hebrew was like mine, it means, these kinds of things that you say [...] I start looking at my story, since I was a little girl, I look at my parents' generation, and today I look at my children, and I say to myself, umm, it is clear to me that these hybrid processes are the essence of the story. It is a whole story. And it is going towards that place.

TD: Do you mean that there are no longer automatic stereotypes that are black and white?

I don't know, there are stereotypes but they must be different, it's like something is in creation, yes, in these processes other control systems are taking form, or all kinds of system patterns, that maybe we no longer [...] you know (perhaps) we don't know what is happening differently, I can't identify [...] I know that while I teach my children about '48 or about the Holocaust, ahh while I explain to them that we are Jewish, but you know, we are a specific kind of Jews, or you know, while I am busy, in a meaningful manner, with feminist issues, and it's like also at home, also in the world all the time with women, ahh many women from a lot of places, ahh and with issues of violence and oppression, so while doing all of this, so you know something is happening in the world, and sometimes it can be that other things are happening. (Taking a deep breath) this is why I don't know if your question about colonial consciousness is relevant, let's say to my life yes, it is relevant, but for my son, I don't know. I just don't know   (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)

The first lines of this account highlight the way Adi confronts her hybridity in her professional academic life. She reflects upon her position as a Mizrahi woman within academia, a subject that is present in Adi's account throughout the coming chapters. Furthermore, in the following chapters, Adi recounts the way her hybrid identity is central in the construction of her political performance. Namely, Adi is concerned with understanding the world through non-binary categories that leave place for her hybridity and for other hybrid performances. During the interview, Adi recounts the way she at times passes[12] as Ashkenazi despite her, in her words, darker skin color. In the account above, Adi would like to make present her Mizrahi identity, and perhaps, in Ahmed's (1999) sense, she strives to destabilize the hegemonic power relation within academia and in general. Adi recounts her need to understand reality in a complex way. It seems that the way she understands the world she is contracting with her children, is not the same coloniality in which she grew up.

Ibtisam: "It is out of the closet[13]"

At the end of each interview, I thanked the participants for opening up and for agreeing to meet me. I was truly honored to converse with the participants and grateful that they shared their reflections and thoughts:

TD: Thank you very much

I hope you find it useful

TD: of course!

And if you are not sure whether to use things or not

TD: in any case, I must tell you that I do not put down the names, and when you speak about people, I will not put that in, the names you have mentioned.

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12 Passing is a term that first appeared in the late nineteenth century, during the racial segregation of "Jim Crow" and refers to a technique that allowed appearing white within the racial space. The term has taken epistemological directions and the development of knowledge through numerous political practices that relate to racial, gendered and sexual destabilization of systems of knowledge and vision. (Zdanowicz, 2015). While positioning the praxis of passing as a radical and transgressive task, paradoxically, Ahmed (1999) argues, it secures relations of power rather than destabilizing hegemonic constructions. For more reading: Belluscio, 2006; Bennett, 1996; Wald, 2000.

13 Ibtisam refers here to the epistemological term "coming out of the closet". This term is further developed in Chapter Three. It refers to the numerous tasks of confrontation with the hegemonic heterosexual world.

I have no problem with my name, personally, but a thing like A'[14], well I almost didn't use names (of people) but ahh I have no problem with the content, not even about incest, I don't hide it. It is out of the closet (laugh)

TD: How do you say out of the closet in Arabic?

Sifah El A'aqurab. I actually didn't come out of the closet and all that, but I accept it that I can't, I can't preserve it, from who I am, it is my first encounter with humanity, unfortunately. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

I called Ibtisam when I got to Haifa in June 2013, asking her to participate in my research. Ibtisam, who is accustomed to recount her story of trans/formation, was happy to meet me. We set an appointment in downtown Haifa in a Palestinian café. At the entrance to the café, behind a small glass showcase and beside the menu, was a sign saying: "*you are all welcome, but no guns and army uniforms are allowed into this café*". I was impressed by the brave act of positioning.

At the time of the interview, Ibtisam was in her early forties and was living in her home village in the north of the country. It was important for Ibtisam to tell me that while she was '*outed*' as a Palestinian lesbian, and after years of struggle, she has chosen to go back to live in her village.

In order to close our interview, Ibtisam sets the final rules of the interview. She gives me permission to bring out all the information she had recounted during the interview except the name of a city, which she insists that I keep covered.

Mapping Israeli coloniality

Hila: "The world was divided into two"

I met Hila during an action led by a political group called *Ta'ayush-Jerusalem*[15]. I joined

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14 A name of a city she had asked me not to mention.

15 Ta'ayush - Israelis & Palestinians striving together to end the Israeli occupation and to achieve full civil equality through daily non-violent direct-action. "Ta'ayush is a grassroots movement working to break down the walls of racism, segregation, and apartheid by constructing a true Arab-Jewish partnership. For more than a

them on their Saturday morning direct action to prevent the Jewish settlers' aggressive harassment and the Israeli army violence towards the Palestinian residents of the south mountains of Hebron. A friend of mine introduced us, telling Hila about my research and I asked her to participate. She agreed immediately. Her following account illustrates how colonial arrogance, to which Fadi refers in the following pages, is strongly related to ethnic and class positions within the Israeli matrix of domination:

In the 90s, that was the case in Jerusalem, probably all over the country, in Jerusalem that way I remember it, more or less, it's like, the world was divided into two, today it is no longer the case, it's like mostly, but not always, but mostly, Ashkenazi, not always. There are some Iraqis here and there let's say, but mostly Ashkenazi were dressed "muznah" (in a neglected way) and leftist in their opinions, not leftist like the people we saw in Ta'ayush, what we thought was leftist muznahim a little and there were more "Arsim[16]", more "metupahim" (well dressed) usually, namely from Edot Hamizrah[17], wearing terribly expensive (clothes). Right (wing) and religious.

Even my young opinions, really from first grade were atheist, and as much as I could understand it (then) leftist, but I think that I moved and changed according to the school in which I learned. You know it's like an Ashkenazi 'goy' (gentile).

TD: Is that what was said about you?

Yes. It terribly insulted me, as if I was 'tameh' (unsacred) because I was a little more 'maskila'[18] (educated).

TD: Is that what you felt? That you were more maskila?

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decade, Ta'ayush has been working in area C of the occupied Palestinian territories, especially in the South Hebron Hills, to support Palestinian residents in their struggle to retain their homes and agricultural lands." Accessed on December 10, 2016 http://www.taayush.org/?p=2846

16 Arsim, plural for Aras, literally means 'a pimp' in Arabic. Within Israeli hegemonic slang, designs the stereotypical Mizrahi man who is associated with crime and violence. Revital Madar, published an interesting article in Ha'aretz news paper, in which she critically gazes at the way the Mizrahi male performance challenges the Ashkenazi, hegemonic space. Accessed on December 10, 2016, http://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/black-flag/.premium-1.2608666 10.04.2015

17 Until the 1990s, the common terminology when referring to Jewish immigrants from Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern and Balkan countries was bnei edot hamizrah (descendants of oriental ethnicities). This terminology and the invention, in Shohat's (1999) words, of the term Mizrahi, will be elaborated upon throughout the following chapters and in Chapter One in particular.

18 The word Mskila means, she who has haskala – education.

When we moved to M', my sister and I, it was like integration, there were these secular Ashkenazi, children of doctors and us, my sister and I. we were not that either because we were, because we were also in 'metzuka' (economical distress). We actually lived in a relatively ancient "Arsi" neighborhood. It was not a "Ma'abara[19]" but they brought immigrants there from [...] I think most of them were Moroccans. (Hila, teacher, Jerusalem, 2013)

Hila, who is in her mid-thirties, recounts the way in which ethnic binary divisions of the Israeli matrix of domination were central in her growing up. While situating herself as Ashkenazi, she also experienced throughout her life, marginal positions as her family encountered financial difficulties. From Hila's account, we understand that being *'maskila'* (she who carries knowledge) and *leftist* are performances reserved for Ashkenazis. Furthermore, performing *Ashkenazi* seems to involve distancing oneself from the Jewish religion. While being *Arsi*, poor, less educated and traditional refers to that she calls, *Edot Hamizrah*.

Hila's account exposes the way the interviewees impacted the empirical work, and led me to my decisions about who I should interview. Her account shed light on the three major ethnic/national groups that compose the sociology of the State of Israel: Palestinians, Ashkenazi-Jews and Mizrahi-Jews[20]. The study thus focuses on the trans/formation processes of thirteen Jewish-Israeli (Esther, Moshe, Shira, Eitan, Adi, Hila, Avi) and Palestinian (Imad, Ibtisam, Raya, Johayna, Kholod, Fadi) political actors who live and act within the geographical boundaries of the State of Israel[21].

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19 Levi Eshkol who was the head of the settlement department of the Jewish agency after the establishment of the State of Israel initiated the Ma'abarot (Plural for Ma'abara) project. Ma'abarot were camps built in the 50s by the Israeli government, mainly inhabited by Mizrahi emigrants. While promised as temporary housing, in most cases the Ma'abrot turned into towns and were then called 'development towns'. The main difference between Immigration Camps from 1947 namely for emigrants from Europe, was related to financial support. The residences of the Ma'abrot were expected to self-provide their livelihood while the residences of the Immigration camps were fully supported by the state.

20 It is interesting to go to Marelli's (2005) text on the internal ethnic and national bourders within the State of Israel. According to Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein (2004) the State of Israel population counts approximately 7.5 million people 80% of whom are Jewish. The other 20% are mostly Arab-Palestinians and other small minorities who don't enter the Jewish-Arab binary national identities.

21 Throughout the writing of the dissertation I included, in some occasion, accounts of political actors I interviewed in 2009 as I felt that they resonate within the presented account of this research.

Shira: "Left was a curse word […] the mityafyefim"

Along the same line of thought led by Hila, yet from a Mizrahi standpoint, Shira recounts:

I lived in an environment in which left was a curse word. And I think I didn't define myself as leftist […] I grew up in A' the discourse was much more right wing, my family, my family is right wing, and even extreme right, some of them I mean, the right of the settlers […] I mean it is most of my family if not all I think there is not even one leftist (laughs).

TD: What does it mean to be leftist? It is a curse word?

[…] It is a little like today, at the time it was the same, the left are the mityafyefim (beautified), I don't know a kind of a curse word. But again I did want peace, I did believe in peace, I remember myself in the ceremony for Rabin[22] and stuff but the reason I did not go to the ceremony for Rabin after a year, is because for the second year it was a demonstration of the left, I mean the left parties […] (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013)

The interview with Shira took place in Be'er Sheva where she lived and worked at the time. Shira and I had worked together in Mahapach. I had not seen her for seven or eight years when I picked up the phone and called her. Shira, who is in her thirties, is strongly engaged in political activism and her professional work is interconnected to questions of political transformation. The question of consciousness transformation[23] is familiar to her and she is eager to recount and reflect upon her own process in the conversation with me.

Her expression implies that it is perhaps a rare phenomenon, or at least for her at the time, it was a huge surprise. Within Israeli commonsense, right wing politics or racist performances are often allied to Mizrahi individuals and communities. Whereas *leftist* or liberal politics are mostly associated to Ashkenazi-Jews (Dor and Weksler, 2011). Accordingly, the Israeli civic movement tends to be characterized by a political dichotomy. On the one hand, there are organizations which are referred to as political as they address the so-called Palestinian

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22 Shira is referring to the memorial ceremonies done in commemoration for the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin

23 The use of the word transformation here, refers to the Hebrew word, Shinuy Toda'a, thus the changing of consciousness.

question and Israeli occupation. On the other hand, there are organizations which are referred to as social as they address Israeli socio-economic, ethnic and gender questions within the Israeli state (ibid).

Later in the dissertation, we will see that Shira holds a complex gaze at Mizrahi politics when she critically analyzes the right-wing political choice of a vast majority of Mizrahi Jews. She urges us to understand the historical context in which these politics were constructed. Shohat (2006) seeks a complex gaze at Mizrahi feminist political agenda and calls against a reductionist Ashkenazi left view towards Mizrahi politics. Having said that, she is also concerned with an essentialist identity of political discourse that must be transformed into a dialogue on relations of power and positionality. Shohat (ibid) thus critiques the simplistic understanding of a so-called Mizrahi agenda which frames all Mizrahim as "right wing" Zionists.

Raya: "Am I silencing myself?"

> *I really hope I fit your niche and that I am liberated from colonial consciousness, I am not sure, but I hope I am.*

> *TD: Do you think one can completely liberate oneself?*

> *Not, that's it (laugh) one can't liberate oneself completely, would you like to ask something?*

> *TD: Perhaps you can start by telling me about yourself?*

Raya, in her early thirties, was born and lives in a Palestinian city in the north of the country.

I met Raya in a café in downtown Haifa. It is actually Raya who contacted me as she had heard about my research from a mutual friend and was eager to meet and converse with me. I had never met her before. While she initiated the conversation, Raya is not sure she is 'good' enough for the interview. She doubts her own process and position. It seems as conversing with me, is part of a self-reflexive work to which she is devoted. During the conversation Raya elaborates about what she understands as colonial consciousness as being part of the Palestinian community. When I try to go further, she recounts:

TD: What other things do you understand as part of colonial consciousness of a Palestinian woman living from within the colony, within the State of Israel?

Listen, I didn't speak about something very obvious, my name [...] in Arabic is sacrifice. It is a very political name [...] it was given to me in 1976 after the first 'Land Day' [...] very political name, "we are here, proud Palestinians". As a woman part of a minority in a Jewish state, it is a daily struggle in front of the [...] ahh [...] Jewish colonial control on me. It is a daily struggle. Do I really say what I think or feel? Or am I silencing myself? (Raya, general director of a Jewish-Palestinian educational organization, Haifa, 2013)

Raya's account reveals the way she perceives her orientation within the Jewish state space. In her short account, she positions herself as a Palestinian woman. Performing her gendered and national positions, within what she calls, *Jewish colonial control* is a daily struggle. Raya's account echoes with the accounts of the other Palestinian participants and those of the Palestinian women participants, in particular. Raya questions her sense of entitlement within Israeli matrix of domination and furthermore wonders whether she has internalized the violence directed at her.

A phenomenology of colonial arrogance

"The naming of the world, through which people constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of arrogance." (Freire, 1970 [2000, p.90]).

A trip to South Africa

In my home context, the Israeli matrix of domination and coloniality, I am positioned within what Ahmed (2007) calls 'whiteness'. I was born into an Anglo-Saxon, South African family. I never lived in South Africa but always wished I could be part of the life that my grandparents had left behind. Today I understand that the reason life "*there*" seemed better than "*here*" was drawn from a commonsense of arrogance. At the age of twenty-one my grandparents took my cousin, who is more like a sister to me and I to visit what they

transmitted to us to be our mother land, South Africa.

I felt connected to that land in a fascinating way. I did not expect that during that trip, the cracks within my colonial consciousness would start. In particular, the encounter with Mable, the woman who had to depart from her own home and family in order to raise my mother and her siblings. When Mable saw me after not seeing me for twenty years, she opened her arms and said: *"My grandchild"*. I was touched by her connection to me but did not share the same love. And then she turned to my grandparents and said: *"Master, Madam"*. I do not think I would be able to ever forget this scene. My cousin and I looked at each other and realized that we were unfamiliar with the codes. My whole journey through Southern Africa that followed my encounter with Mable was filled with strong emotions and with the deconstruction of the stories I had been told about that country and namely about the position and responsibility of my own family during Apartheid.

To follow Ahmed's (2007) line of thought I know today that at the time, I was in a process of understanding the habits and that which is unseen, or in hooks (2010) terms that which is under the surface. At the age of twenty one, in South Africa, I was not yet able to explain the way in which I could change those habits in order to liberate myself from, what I suggest to call in this dissertation, and inspired by Ahmed (2007), a phenomenology of colonial arrogance.

Processes of understanding and unveiling the habits that followed that long trip, allowed dynamic ongoing critique to take place. It illustrated to me the way in which, in Ahmed's (2007) words, I was *stuck* within a system of thought, within the production of knowledge drawn from colonial frames (ibid). I know today that my South African formation, to which I am to this day extremely connected, and my Ashkenazi Israeli performance, are filled with patterns of colonial arrogance from which I'm working hard to liberate myself.

As I mentioned earlier, the philosophy of this research and the writing of the dissertation are drawn from feminist scholarships and knowledge. In particular, the methodological philosophy throughout the research was inspired by the reading of Ahmed's (2007) text "A Phenomenology of Whiteness", in which she argues that a phenomenology of whiteness enables to understand that which is considered an institutional habit: "it brings what is behind, what does not get seen as the background to social action, to the surface in a certain way" (ibid., p.165).

Along the same line of thought, I argue that colonial arrogance, to follow Ahmed (2007), orientates bodies to precise directions and determines the way in which they perceive the world. It thus determines what bodies can do and perhaps what bodies are entitled to do. Likewise, liberation processes enable the participants to determine their own orientation within the space of Israeli coloniality as well as in the interview with me. They position themselves in relation to the colonial reality and to the consciousness they build throughout the years as a consequence.

"If orientations are about how we begin from 'here', then they involve unfolding […] Phenomenology asks us to be aware of the 'what' that is 'around'. The world that is 'around' has already taken certain shapes, as the very form of what is 'more and less' familiar." (Ahmed, 2007, p.151)

Ahmed (2007) argues, drawing her analysis from Fanon (1952), that racial and historical dimensions influence the way one perceives the world and thus the orientation of thought about the world and oneself within it. She (ibid) argues that colonialism makes the world white. In agreement with her, I suggest to understand the way in which coloniality makes the world arrogant. In consequence liberating oneself from colonial consciousness would refer to the constant quest to undo arrogance.

Within the colonial space to follow Ahmed, (2007) some bodies would thus feel entitled while others do not. Is there a way to feel entitled without reproducing arrogance? Ahmed (ibid) argues that classical phenomenology (Husserl, 1969 and Merleau-Ponty, 1945) is about 'motility': 'I can', which is derived from hope and a sense of entitlement. Fanon's (1952) phenomenology, according to Ahmed (ibid), is derived from the restrictions of the body: that which one cannot do. The experience of a body to be successful and able is a performance of entitlement. The liberation from colonial arrogance reveals that one's sense of entitlement - thus the feeling of success and agency in the world - is related to one's position and bodily experience within the colonial space.

Fadi: "Post-Zalame"

After a brief description on the phone, Fadi, who was in his mid-forties when we met, agrees to talk to me and participate in the research and we set an appointment in a Palestinian café in Haifa, where Fadi is a regular customer. The café is politically situated as a cultural space of many well-known Palestinian artists, movie actors and musicians. Before I get to

present the research and the structure of the interview, Fadi, a writer himself, is greeted by numerous people. After an hour of conversing, I was interested in Fadi voicing his relation to the feminist question:

TD: In the interviews I have conducted with Palestinian women, the need for gendered consciousness liberation came out very strongly. Where do you find yourself in this?

For years I joke that I am not a Zalame. Zalame means a man (in Arabic). I say I am not a Zalame; I once defined myself as postzalame

TD: (laugh) postzalame

Postzalame in the existing terms

TD: Because what is the sense of Zalame?

The word Zalame in Arabic can mean just a man, but it is also the Alfa man. You know. Zalame! There is something very condescending, very violent. Very ahh and also very stupid. Also very stupid. There is arrogance in it that is incomprehensible and inexplicable

TD: When did you understand that you are 'postzalame'?

I started ahh look my most important feminist education I got, before knowing this term 'feminism', I learn it from my mother, that I learnt from my mother. Look, within the environment and atmosphere of our small village, a very conservative village very simple most of the men are employed in what is called "Zro'ot Habitachon" (security forces), arms, fingers and legs[24], the Israeli octopus. So to be an active feminist woman is not an easy thing. She was not alienated and arrogant and distant. No! she was there. She was also active, and with consciousness and an activist. So this model, this model not being a submissive woman, I grew up on that, I learnt that from her [...] later I was simply, ahh I was active, I was active ahh in feminist structures, ahh 'Isha-l'Isha', I used to go to lectures and workshops [...] in the 90s I was part of the women and men initiators who established a forum we called (at the time) Badil, against murders, what is called "honor killing" [...]

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[24] Zro'ot literally means arms (limbs)

TD: You know, when I interviewed in 2009, I also interviewed women active in Isha-l'Isha, and one of them recounted that you conducted a workshop about masculine feminism.

Yes, yes it's true (smile)

TD: I can't remember exactly, but she spoke a lot about this workshop and what it did for her, something very [...]

Interesting, interesting!

TD: Something in your workshop [...]

Now I remember, right, eight.

TD: Something in this workshop influenced a very very important process on feminist issues, the Palestinian issue and manhood.

Because, look Tal, at the end of the day, I can't think like, to think of myself as someone who demands, now to be a holder of a consciousness of liberation, and of, also of, of self respect, without, without a gendered consciousness, not only, not only feminist but also everything that is related; everything that is related to it. A political consciousness of liberation, perhaps, a liberated political consciousness, must take a very very clear position on this issue, this struggle, the social struggle, which is socio-political, there is no other way. (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)

In this long account, Fadi presents himself and describes the space from which he speaks. Furthermore, he recounts that liberation processes from colonial consciousness involve a complex understanding of power dynamics and that of gender dominations in particular. Coming from a Druze[25] village, Fadi explains the gendered division in which he was formed. He explains the way in which men, at all levels of the race hierarchy, are expected to participate within the militaristic structures of the Israeli matrix of domination. Within this

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25 In the early years of the creation of the state of Israel the leaders of the Druze communities, and some leaders of the Bedouin different communities, made a form of a loyalty pact with the leaders of the Zionist movement, which included Druze, Bedouin men within the obligatory military service. This accord continues to this day. For more reading go to: Halabi Rabah, 2006; "Be Druze, not Zionists" by Rabah Halabi, accessed on December 10, 2016, http://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/.premium-1.2526641; Merza Eléonore, 2012.

context his mother was a role model for him and was his first initiator into feminist discourses.

Fadi's account seems to look at the male gaze in a way analogous to the Eurocentric views of the norm (Shohat, 2002, p.73). In other words when Fadi defines himself as a *postzalame*, I understand his call as a quest to step out of the male gaze binarism. Fadi is engaged in a process of knowledge that refuses hierarchization or identical positioning but rather enables reading the historical context in a larger picture (ibid.). His critical gaze is drawn first and foremost from his mother's activism and later, according to him, from the epistemologies and knowledge he develops through his encounter with feminist thought.

It seems that for Fadi, feminism is the possibility to build a critical cartography of knowledge (Shohat, 2002). In the following account Fadi positions himself within a complex standpoint. On one hand, he finds himself within the masculine dominant group, yet at the same time, being Palestinian within the Israeli matrix of domination, he refuses to gaze at himself as part of the dominant oppressing group. Fadi seems to challenge a simplistic, culturalistic view of gender and seeks to understand domination through a complex reading:

> *TD: It is interesting that you use the word arrogance because it is something I have been encountering a lot, before the interview and within the interviews, a sense that colonial consciousness is very much connected to the issue of arrogance, and that perhaps one of the difficult moments of liberation is the understanding of the arrogance of oneself, and the need to liberate from it. There seems to be something very strong in the arrogance issue.*

> *Look, in a certain sense. It's like, to be in general, my being as a man what one calls it, my being as a man within a society that is particularly more conservative, it is, it is, it is seemingly to be like, part of the powerful group. The dominant group, how should we call it? The privileged group, ok? [...] But for me I don't have this feeling that I am on the powerful side, no [...]*

> *TD: You don't have this feeling anymore or you never had it?*

> *I don't remember ever having it. But maybe, honestly, I don't know. I don't feel part of the powerful side. No. I am on the side of, on the side of the oppressors, exploiters, arrogant, violent, ahh that just maintain ahh the power dynamics ahh that there is no*

way to come and explain to them, or reason with them, and accept them. I just don't have this! This is why I call it stupid arrogance. Stupid arrogance. And I have some shame, I have some shame. Because there are those who associate me with this ruling group and I don't want to be in this group. And not to be there, look, it is not the issue of being a man or a woman. No, no, no, it is just to act again, not only to change this division, the structure, to break it! To break! In the most radical and revolutionary way. A very clear stance, a stance and with a very clear will. Simply because it is part of the oppression. It is part of this trampling of dignity and liberty of people and also mine, also mine, I mean, look, people who are part of the majority group believe that they are themselves not criminals, but do not interfere when the process of crime carries on, "no sorry you²⁶ are part of it. You carry personal responsibility." Not a bypass responsibility, no, personal and direct responsibility. (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)

The following chapters elucidate the way in which *non entitlement* is an experience of negation, of being out of place (Ahmed, 2007). While on the other hand, experiencing entitlement is to perform in a manner that is derived from colonial arrogance as the standpoint of knowledge and thought. In this study, I seek to reveal whether processes through which the participants trans/form their consciousness in to a stance of liberation, describe the work towards a sense of entitlement that is not drawn from, in Fadi's word, violence and arrogance.

Esther: "Sense of entitlement"

Ahh I was born […] here in Haifa […] I was born in the fifties to a low-middle class family […] we lived in the 'Hadar', where the Ashkenazi Jews lived. (Esther, feminist, political activist).

In June 2013, I went to meet Esther in my hometown Haifa. Esther invited me in to her home. Situated in a close by neighborhood to where I had grown up and where I was staying at the time. Walking to her house, I crossed through my childhood scenery. Esther is one of the veteran feminist activists. While Esther and I had never worked together, I have read her work and was familiar with her political and academic activities. I was eager to listen to her

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26 One of the lacking issues that this research carries is that the translation of the interviews to English has erased gender distinctions that could have been an asset in the analysis. In this case, Fadi is saying "you", as singular masculine, clearly "speaking to a man".

account of trans/formation. Within the interview she situated herself as a Jewish-Ashkenazi, lesbian, feminist activist. Esther finds the subject of my research extremely interesting and important. We spend the first part of the interview discussing the importance of understanding the transformation processes of activists who are engaged in decolonization processes:

> *But all of us who resist the occupation, no matter the level, hope that the colonial project of Zionism fails or stops, right? But it does not stop and this consciousness, I think, is fascinating to understand in general what happens here. There are several levels because the separation from Zionism is really a process. I am very curious to see what you have done, because really it is a process that has a lot of layers, I always said that, I have several sisters, and one of them in particular, I said that if I try to convince her of what I think it will be like forcing her to separate from a hand or a leg, it is like, separating from a physical organ, right? (Esther, Feminist political activist, Haifa, 2013)*

My concern in consciousness trans/formation of Israeli and Palestinian individuals within Israeli state started earlier than this research. Namely with my own activist and political work in 'Mahapach'[27], facilitation of Israeli and Palestinian encounter groups, the recognition of the Nakba and the right of return, namely through the work of Zochrot, participation in direct anti-occupation actions and activities against the Israeli army, to all I was strongly devoted and very much engaged from the start of the Second Intifada. In Mahapach, our choice to speak about *Toda'a,* consciousness, was drawn from Freire's (1970) work. Conscientização according to Freire (1970 [2000, p.35]), refers to the dynamic movement when one learns to perceive, in a complex way, the socio-political contradictions. A better understanding of reality, Freire (ibid) argues, leads political actors to actions in order to change reality and resist against oppression. The language of consciousness transformation was constantly present within our speech and work, yet we had not taken the time to stop, reflect and in Butler's (2005) sense give an account of our processes.

My encounter with Paulo Freire, bell hooks and Frantz Fanon's works all happened through activism. Their understanding of consciousness construction within contexts of domination, racism and colonialism are at the center of this research, and account for the

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27 The work done in Mahapach was engaged in questions relating to transformation of consciousness and the possibility to engage in processes towards liberated consciousness. This research starts in 2007 when I decided to leave my professional and political life within the State of Israel and move to Paris. After many years within the activist scene I was eager to understand the processes many of us went through.

passage from activism to research in which they all accompany me. In the encounter with Esther I find her eager to speak about her own processes and try to analyze what she experienced throughout the years.

The participants recount the way in which consciousness is a world project and rather than being an attempt to control the world, it is their direction (Merleau-Ponty, 1945 [2002, p.13]) and their orientation (Ahmed, 2007) that allow them to perceive the world and themselves within it. Their interactions with the world thus define their objectified knowledge that is then translated through their consciousness:

"Now a pure consciousness is capable of anything except being ignorant of its intentions, and an absolute freedom cannot choose itself as hesitant, since that amounts to allowing itself to be drawn in several directions, and since, the possibilities being ex hypothesi indebted to freedom for all the strength they have, the weight that freedom gives to one is thereby withdrawn from the rest. (Merleau-Ponty, 1945 [2002, p.512]).

Esther situates herself as part of the minority that resists the occupation and works to stop Zionist colonialism. Her account illustrates that the processes through which she has gone, and that of her counterparts, is a hard and even physical one that is often foreign to one's loved ones. Furthermore, Esther recognizes the importance of researching these processes on an academic intellectual level.

In the following account, at the very beginning of the interview, Esther relates to my work in Mahapach:

> *TD: At first when I started this project, the thought to take it to academia, was "ok I come from the field, I led, was led and went through processes [...]"*

> *And the name of the organization, 'sits' exactly on that, what you are doing is a 'Mahapach', it is the point of the Mahapach in the life of a person (excitement in her voice)*

> *TD: I didn't think of that...*

> *Because what is Mahapach? It is to say we want to make a difference for you, we have done it, it is possible, why Mahapach? It is very interesting.*

Esther is excited and eager to answer, I don't get to finish my sentence and she positions me from within the organization I used to direct. In effect Esther illustrates that I am not foreign to her and that she knows of me, perhaps, as much as I know of her. Furthermore, Esther strengthens my hypothesis that accompanied the fieldwork, and that a *Mahapach* - thus a profound transformation - is involved when liberating oneself from colonial consciousness within the Israeli matrix of domination.

Esther was not the only one to bring in to the conversation the fact that several of the participants had some knowledge about me. At the very end of my interview with Moshe, he also, mentions that he situated me when seeing me for the first time:

> *"Ahh you were in Mahapach, I remember, I did not know you then but when I saw you here I recognized you, I knew you were in Mahapach." (Moshe, Psychologist, Paris, 2012)*

Interviewing counterparts was a challenge for which I was prepared when starting the study. I presumed that on the one hand, my internal knowledge as being from the inside, would allow me to scrutinize issues and subjects that would come up during the interview. On the other hand, I constantly sought to make present the possible power dynamics drawn from such a position in the work to construct a research led by objective scientific knowledge (Haraway, 1988).

After shutting the recording machine, Esther adds that in her processes she understood that to liberate herself from colonial consciousness was to confront her sense of entitlement. She went further and said that being Jewish-Ashkenazi in Israel creates a performance of a *master of the land*. According to her, deconstructing this performance is an important part of her liberation process to radical consciousness.

Esther's account of oneself concerning her sense of entitlement has been preoccupying my thoughts ever since. At times, I wondered whether I identified with Esther as also being an Ashkenazi woman from Haifa, who went through similar, yet not identical processes. In Esther's account, the sense of entitlement is a performance from which she would like to liberate herself. Throughout the processes of this research and the writing of the dissertation, I wondered about my own sense of entitlement as a researcher.

The Power to Transform[28]

The research has shown that Feminist epistemology and knowledge has had an important influence within liberation processes for all of the participants. While feminist theories of third world, Black and Mizrahi feminism(s) in particular, as well as critical queer theories have had a tremendous influence on my own liberation consciousness, and on the completion of this research, I did not imagine that I would discover that for all the participants of the research, situated within the various gendered, sexual, racial, ethnic and class positions, it would be in effect central and crucial knowledge and praxis within their trans/formation processes. The participants' accounts show that the liberation of colonial consciousness is in effect a construction of critical feminist consciousness(es). Throughout the accounts, we observe that the encounter with what they call radical feminism, whether through theory or political actions, allows to question, self-reflect and thus become complex subjects in the construction of their own story and reality. The participants' accounts follow hooks' (1984) philosophy in which she contends that the purpose of feminist work is bound up with processes of transformation of consciousness (Hedjerassi, 2016). And in which she argues that feminism is the strength through which men and women strive to transform the world through the trans/formation of their own consciousness:

"Feminism is the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform, in a meaningful way, all our lives. Most importantly, feminism is neither a lifestyle nor a ready-made identity or role one can step into." (hooks, 1984, p.28)

The conversations with the participants taught me that liberating oneself from colonial consciousness is also and importantly, the liberation from an essentialist binary analysis of reality. Drawing on the results of my graduate research the layout of my initial hypothesis presumed that the participants would recount their liberation processes as their departure from political Zionism and the internalization of Zionist coloniality as central in their liberation processes from colonial consciousness. The results of this present research reveal that a critical and complex reading of reality and of oneself within is in the heart of each one's process. It is in effect the complex discourse that is offered by what the participants call

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28 hooks' (1984) 'Feminism Theory from Margin to Center'

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radical feminism(s), which actually refer to feminism(s) that hold an overlapping understanding of oppressions.

As my enquiry unfolded, I discovered that while each participant has her/his own life story and path, which entails different lived experiences, the processes of liberation take place in two main stages. The First Stage, which I have called, The Gaze, presented in Chapters One and Chapter Two, relates to the understanding of reality from a critical point of view, and the understanding of oneself within it; while the Second Stage: Act(s) of Liberation: "Doing Critical Thinking", presented in Chapters Three and Four, refers to the acts and tasks one takes in the quest for constant liberation.

To describe what Laclau (1996) calls the *oppressive forces,* from which one seeks emancipation, I employ the term "colonial consciousness". The hypotheses that accompany the fieldwork are that I would probably find that there is no single linear process of liberation, such as there is *"no single linear process of knowledge"* (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.3). In Chapter One, entitled 'Colonial Consciousness', my goal is to first understand whether the term, colonial consciousness can fully describe the experience of hegemonic power and therefore, whether it is a term to which the participants can relate when elaborating on the way they gaze at reality, and at themselves within it, prior to their trans/formation. As I have mentioned earlier, it led me to pay particular attention to my choice of terminology, when conducting the interviews. As a second step, I sought to develop the term namely through the participants' definitions. I thus presented Israeli coloniality through the accounts of the participants. That which they brought forth was the content that built the sociological analysis of the Israeli matrix of domination. The first part of Chapter One concentrates on the way the Jewish-Israeli participants give meaning to their own colonial consciousness from their domination standpoint. Whereas within the second part of the chapter, I sought to describe the way in which the Palestinian participants view the very same concept.

In order to denaturalize the dynamics of domination within a routine livelihood, in Chapter Two entitled 'Liberation From Colonial Consciousness', the participants have shown that the work in which they are engaged involves critical tools that allow, what hooks (1992) calls, the development of an oppositional gaze at reality. The accounts in this chapter reveal that the development of an oppositional gaze is a dynamic process through which the participants liberate themselves from colonial structures of thought and further develop a liberated, counter-hegemonic consciousness. The accounts demonstrate that the development of an

oppositional gaze is interconnected to questions of gazing at power. The trans/formation of consciousness to which the participants clearly refer is bound up with their vision that exposes power and domination. However, it is also and importantly, the way in which they expose their own position within the hegemonic power relation of society.

In Chapter Three, entitled '*Presencing*' and Chapter Four, entitled, 'Radical Encounters' I present the way the development of an oppositional gaze entails constant self-reflexivity on one's own position within the relations of power, constant acts of *presencing* and the participation in radical forms of encounters with the other. All which allow to first undo and unlearn the colonial consciousness of Israeli coloniality and furthermore, work towards alternative ways of living together. Chapter Three demonstrates the way in which the act of positioning, self-reflexivity and understanding oneself within the matrix of domination is crucial within such processes. *Presencing* of power dynamics of domination and oppressing appears to be crucial first, for understanding reality, and second for understanding one's self position within it. In Chapter Four, I seek to expose the way the development of self-reflexive critical analysis, through the re(de)fining of the participants own identity, is central within what I have called, radical encounters. The process of consciousness trans/formation has led the participants to acknowledge that their identity is in effect a positioned performance rather than a natural definition of the self. Radical encounters enable critical thought, and the *presencing* of power dynamics rather than hegemonic encounters that reproduce domination and oppression. Radical forms of encounters and critical dialogue are crucial performances of liberation for the building of the genuine tasks that Butler (2012, 2015) has called, alternative forms of living together.

In this study, I seek to elucidate the way in which the engagement within liberation processes from colonial consciousness is also an epistemological question, and not only a political project (Ziv, 2013). The accounts and the conversation with the epistemologies show that objective and alternative knowledge, constructed throughout trans/formation processes, is crafted from the participants' standpoint and situated knowledge. The participants recount that within their processes of liberation they trans/form from being an object of oppression into a subject of action, through their renaming and redefining of the world.

All the participants have expressed that an important step towards liberation is the possibility to *step out* of the binarism that is often produced within colonial consciousness when one's vision of the world is framed by the colonial male gaze, drawn from Eurocentric

norms of dominations (Shohat, 2002).

Developing an oppositional gaze at reality is recounted by the participants as the possibility to read the subtext, or in hooks' (2010) terms, that which is under the surface which enables alternative and innovating ways of resistance to domination (Scott, 1990). The Palestinian participants in this study, through their life experience develop sociological tools to decrypt dynamics of domination both within their own community and within the public sphere (Scott, 1990; Hill Collins, 2000). For the Jewish-Israeli participants engaging in constant doubt and working towards a critical and oppositional gaze at reality allows them to analyze the essence, the origin, the roots of "political conduct" (Scott, 1990, p.17). It appears to be an effective way to talk, to understand reality and live reality. It challenges the relations within the triangle of speech, belief, and ideology (ibid).

Inspired by Ziv's (2013) work, I shall be content if within this dissertation the layout of the theoretical formulation of insights in dialogue with the participants' situated knowledge of marginality makes it possible to further generalize and build a common perspective.

First Station[29]

The Gaze

29 In her account, Kholod refers to her processes of consciousness transformation in terms of stations. I have chosen to adopt her terminology to the structure of the research.

CHAPTER ONE

Colonial Consciousness

> "In the present and in perception, my being and my consciousness are at one […]"
> Merleau-Ponty, 1945, [2002, p. 493]

The Process

"There is no emancipation without oppression, and there is no oppression without the presence of something which is impeded in its free development by oppressive forces." (Laclau, 1996, p. 1)

"Consciousness transformation is to open one's eyes[30]"

> *[Consciousness transformation] is to open one's eyes. After that, they can no longer be shut, and it is not necessarily to a better reality or a better world it is actually the opposite and it creates frustrations but [it shows] that I can point-out a consciousness transformation process through which I have gone. (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013)*

Shira outlines the importance of thinking about and reflecting upon a process. According to her, consciousness transformation is an act of eye opening. Furthermore, from her account we understand that the process to which she refers is an irreversible action. While that which she discovers once opening her eyes creates frustration, she can no longer go back to who she was before. Now that she has learned to open her eyes, she can no longer shut them and the reality surrounding her seems to get a new meaning.

The action of eye opening appears to be an action vigorously taken by Shira as opposed to a result of an external power on her body. Shira relates to a causative process. I understand

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30 Shira

her explanation within a frame of dynamic actions that construct a process of change, and therefore as a responsible active movement rather than a passive consequence on her life. In this research I seek to examine the processes to which Shira clearly relates.

Shira introduces us to the question of vision. Yet she is not alone. In the following chapters the participants elucidate that the question of their gaze towards the world, and their gaze towards themselves within the world, is crucial to understand: first what colonial consciousness means to them, and second, the way in which they liberate themselves from the colonial gaze (Shohat, 2006). Thirdly, presented in chapters three and four, we learn about the actions the participants seek to take in order to develop a counter-hegemonic gaze and therefore their ongoing performance of liberation.

The participants demonstrate that the action, referred to by Shira as eye opening, is in effect the development of a critical counter-hegemonic gaze, discussed by hooks (1992), as the oppositional gaze (ibid., p.115). The oppositional gaze reframes the way in which the participants live reality and then carry out the action of critical thinking as empowered agents within it.

Shira's account elucidates the force needed for a deconstruction process of that which Tversky and Kahneman (1981) call a 'frame of reference'. They argue that a frame of reference is a complex schema of unquestioned beliefs, values and wisdom which one uses when inferring meaning (ibid.). Accordingly, the possibility to trans/form one's vision engages subjects within a reframing process. One's interpretations are influenced by the expectations of the world, developed throughout life in terms of previous experience and the language that is available for describing that experience.

To follow Derrida and Owens (1979) when Shira relates to her consciousness transformation process as an action of eye opening, I argue that she understands the possibility to reframe as a result of the way she constructs what she sees. In this chapter I seek to elucidate the way in which the development of an oppositional gaze is interconnected to the way the participants' gaze at reality within their process of trans/formation. In the Derridian sense, Shira critically reframes reality within her vision (ibid.). Reframing reality was recounted by the participants as a first step within a process which enables the experience of a new vision.

This is the first step and perhaps the task of reframing as a whole. It is the embarking on a

long journey that I propose to understand as a process of liberation. The task of reframing embraces numerous actions of critical thinking and performances of liberation. All of which will be presented in the following chapters.

When Shira refers to her experience of trans/formation as a process, I understand the act of reframing as dynamic and dialectic rather than a stable given. Shira works towards making sense of the world surrounding her. The conceptual frames, which she used to decode the world before her trans/formation, were so naturalized that they became invisible. Making the frame present is therefore already an act of trans/formation and is engaged in processes of critical thought.

Shira's account illustrates that the possibility to reframe reality and thus enter processes of trans/formation, are bound up in tasks of deconstruction. In this sense, the focus is on the centrality of Shira, and the other subjects, rather than on the frame (Spivak, 1993). It is her standpoint, her own vision and the development of her possibility to critically envisage the world that interests us here. I, therefore, understand deconstruction as a political project that aims to make the constructions of unsettled issues present.

Reading the trans/formation process, to which Shira refers, as performances of liberation allows a critical gaze within a constant dialectical movement. Here is where the participants' accounts reveal that the possibility to understand reality in a complex manner is an important part of their liberated consciousness. It is thus their trajectory of question asking and doubt of their dynamic movement towards constant trans/formation that allow this critical thought to take place.

Shira's account, and those of the participants presented in this chapter, refers to the sense of vision as a preliminary task, in Merleau-Ponty's sense, their 'visual representations' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, [2002, p.157]) define the way they perceive the world surrounding them. In the Oxford English Dictionary "gaze" is defined, among other definitions, as a "*steady or intent look*[31]." I understand from this definition that the gaze refers to the act that includes practice and its analysis, hence seeing and reflecting upon that which one visualizes. Perhaps we could consider the gaze in the frame of the vision and the act of reflection upon the angle and the position from which one looks. I would like, therefore, to reflect on the gaze

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31 The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Edited by Lesley Brown. Vol. 1 A-M Clarendon Press 1993

as a dynamic action, a process that leads one to critically perceive (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) the world and oneself within it. In other words, I would like to ask, what is the process through which the participants develop that which hooks (2003) refers to as an enlightened consciousness.

According to Merleau-Ponty' (1945) "[…] consciousness freely develops its visual data beyond their own specific significance, it uses them for the expression of its spontaneous acts, as semantic evaluation clearly show in loading the terms intuition, self-evidence and natural light with increasingly rich meaning" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945 [2002, p.158]). I seek to illustrate that the enlightened consciousness to which hooks (2003) refers and that which is present within the accounts of the participants is often recounted as the possibility to start seeing the truth. A critical reading of the accounts shows, I hope, that the way in which the participants relate to the *truth* is in effect their possibility to read reality in a complex way and hence perform accordingly.

The way in which the participants relate to the development of a complex gaze, makes it possible for them to develop a vision that avoids binary oppositions (Haraway, 1988). The participants acknowledge that their gaze does not appear from nowhere and has a position in the world through their centrality as agents who gaze at objects in the different worlds.

The trans/formation of consciousness, or in other words the performance of a liberated consciousness, is therefore, the deconstruction of the colonial gaze which holds power on vision and on the possibility of the dominating subjects to stay hidden while projecting representation on the colonized "marked bodies" as their objects (Haraway, 1988, p.581). Consequently, the development of an enlightened gaze resists what Haraway (1988) defines as the "conquering gaze from nowhere" and strives towards a situated gaze drawn from critical feminist scientific projects, which create and recreate situated knowledge (ibid., P.586).

What I have earlier referred to, in Shohat's (2006) terms, as the colonial gaze, could be furthermore understood in the way Foucault (1963) critiques the pure gaze, which holds the truth, and considers it to be a myth. According to him the eye that would speak observes and moreover makes a subject of domination (ibid.). Within the interviews, when the participants attempt to define their colonial consciousness prior to their liberation process of change, they relate to their dominant gaze as an outcome of the hegemonic forces and the commonsense

knowledge in which they were formed.

The action, which enables a critical gaze, resist the reproduction of structures of power to which the observed subjects are subjugated. In this sense I therefore understand the hegemonic colonial gaze within the power dynamic of the gaze that examines and controls the vision, which does not share information but is rather formed by domination (Foucault, 1963). The automatic functioning of power, referred to by Foucault, is the reproduction of the existing power dynamic (ibid.). We shall observe that processes of reproductions, which maintain hegemonic power dynamics of separation and oppression, can either be interiorized towards oneself and/or exteriorized towards the Other.

The definition of who is considered the Other, is interconnected to relations of the power of the gaze. If images one sees around oneself enter into frames of domination, one identifies them according to Ahmed (2000), as strangers. Or in other words, the way in which one gives meaning to the surrounding world is framed within hegemonic structures of power.

The way in which the participants relate to their liberation processes illustrates, I argue, that whilst being observed by the examining oppressing gaze, the body, the 'I', the subject, can trans/form into an agent that resists and therefore critically gazes back. To follow hooks (1992), to gaze back is a place of agency, of empowerment from which the body can act.

From an automatic colonial gaze the accounts reveal the trans/formation to a critical gaze as a task of change. A task of trans/formation aims to bring upon change and struggle against oppressing forces. The automatic reproduction of power dynamics ceases to take a principle place and critical thought becomes the frame of the 'I' (Martuccelli, 2004). The act towards liberated agencies, according to hooks (1992), is the ability to develop the critical gaze, the oppositional gaze, which resists structures of dominations.

That at which Shira now gazes, that which she had not seen before, does not seem to be a better reality. Her new vision seems to be a source of frustration. Does she now gaze at the reality around her with what Malcolm X calls "new eyes?" (Malcolm X in hooks, 1992, p.9). Are her eyes "new" or did she get a new perspective? Is she standing in the same space where she stood before? What has then changed in (or around) Shira which brought her to open her eyes?

Finally, drawing from Shira's account, while the active action of eye opening creates

frustration, it is also the result of a trans/formation. Is this trans/formation a liberating emancipatory movement? Does it engage strengths?

At this point, we might be eager to ask whether Shira considers the active process of consciousness trans/formation, to which she clearly refers as *an* emancipatory project of liberation and a place of resistance. I shall explore whether she and the other participants in this doctoral research analyze their trans/formation of consciousness as an empowering act regardless of the difficulties.

"A stage of consciousness together with actions[32]"

In the following account, Johayna positions herself within her trans/formation process and development of consciousness.

> *University was the most important stage, it's like, who I am today is the continuation of University. I am still in the same stage. A stage of consciousness together with actions. That is when all the demonstration against the wall[33] started. 2003, 2004 and I used to go [...] even before the buses that used to leave from Israel. (Johayna, political activist, Jaffa, 2013)*

As Shira, Johayna relates to the question of consciousness trans/formation in terms of a process. She positions herself within stages of change. In her account she explains that the most important stage happened at University, and according to her it continues to this day. What Johayna refers to as a stage of consciousness together with actions, I propose to look at through the reading of Freire (1970). The movement, which he calls 'radical consciousness', refers to a dynamic ongoing movement of learning to perceive, and the capacity to analyze the objective reality in its social, political and economic contradictions (ibid.).

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32 Johayna

33 In November 2000 Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, of the Labor Party, approved the first project to build the wall which the State of Israel refers to as "the separation barrier". According to 'The Stop the Wall Campaign' http://stopthewall.org/the-wall, a Palestinian grassroots "Anti-Apartheid Wall campaign", the construction, including land confiscation and the uprooting of trees, began in June 2002 west of Jenin: "As of summer 2010, 520 km of the planned 810 km, or 64%, had been completed. When completed, the Wall and its associated regime will *de facto* annex some 46% of the West Bank, isolating communities into Bantustans, ghettos and « military zones ». This means that the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including almost 1.5 million refugees, will be encircled on only 12% of mandate Palestine."

The next step for Freire (1970) is the movement to action through praxis; not acting for the sake of acting, but rather the responsibility to struggle against oppressive structures and acting through constant reflections and question asking. When one is engaged in the process of liberation, whether from the position of the oppressed or that of the oppressor, Freire claims that one can no longer hold a passive stance towards violence and injustice and it necessitates to steps into a stance of responsibility (ibid.).

The second part of Johayna's account positions the readers within the political period during which she was at University. Positioning herself within the period of the Second Intifada, she recounts the way in which her activism against the building of the Israeli Wall[34] into the West Bank influenced her own process. As she mentioned earlier, the possibility to act in parallel to her development of, what Freire (1970) calls radical consciousness is a crucial step in her process. Johayna's account echoes the account of other participants of this research, who also highlight the very important role the Second Palestinian Intifada played in their trans/formation of consciousness.

Part One: "Acknowledging the Truth of Our Reality[35]"

TD: You mean not to have to be in constant control?

Not to have to be in constant control. You take a moment (and say) "this is the situation, this is it", and it provides you with something, and then you can carry on. (Eitan, Tel-Aviv, 2013)

Eitan relates the meaning of liberation from colonial consciousness to questions of control. According to him, acceptance of a situation as it is without trying to influence it while carrying on with life, is already a liberated stance. About an hour later, within the interview, I directly ask Eitan to define colonial consciousness:

TD: What does colonial consciousness mean to you? About yourself, how would you define colonial consciousness?

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34 In Annex One map II shows the route of the wall to which Johayna refers in her account. This map furthermore shows the divisions of zones within the West Bank, and thus freedom of movement.

35 Hooks, 2006, p.248

Oh yes, you know [...] colonial consciousness is related to the fact that you know better, that you know better for someone else, for everyone! "If things turn out the way you think they should, everyone will be in a better place." (Eitan, Tel-Aviv, 2013)

Eitan seems to think I know what he means. Perhaps as an Israeli, as an Ashkenazi, he presumes I should already know what colonial consciousness means. Eitan relates colonial consciousness to questions of knowledge and power. According to him, it is interconnected to a position in which one thinks that one has the ultimate knowledge about oneself, about the other and about the world. During other interviews some participants related colonial consciousness to arrogance. When I try to understand whether Eitan refers to the same concept, he actually has another explanation:

TD: Is it a kind of arrogance?

It is also arrogance and also commonsense. Within arrogance there is something that necessitates maintenance; if someone is arrogant he then needs to use it. There is no need for this in colonial consciousness; it is completely unnecessary.

TD: Because the power dynamics maintain it for you?

Yes! Exactly, this is the reality, you just live, you just lead your life, you just exist, you exist and everything will arrange itself [...] I don't know, it is a lack of vision of privileges. (Eitan, Tel-Aviv, 2013)

Eitan relates colonial consciousness to commonsense. I understand by his definition that colonial consciousness, as he mentions earlier when relating to processes of liberation, is the stance of taking things for granted. He differentiates it from arrogance as for him being arrogant entails work and maintenance of a stance. Colonial consciousness, according to him, is a structural given where one is found. At the end Eitan sounds as if he surrenders to the explanation and says that it is all about the question of vision. From his account I understand that holding a colonial consciousness means that one lacks a critical gaze towards one's own privileges within a structured dynamics of power.

When the whites are excluded from something, they say: "it is unequal [...] we don't have a problem (with them), we are all human beings [...]" this is colonial consciousness, that they can't see. (Eitan, Tel-Aviv, 2013)

Yet again Eitan relates colonial consciousness to the vision or rather to lack of vision. In order to illustrate, he brings an example of, what he calls a white performance that seeks control. From his short account I understand that performing whiteness, is a performance of colonial consciousness. Eitan's account reveals that a colonial consciousness ignores questions of relations of power.

To continue Eitan's line of thought, about the interconnection of knowledge and control, Esther chooses to answer my opening question through recounting her childhood formation. Esther situates herself within a historical timeline and thus positions her age and life experience within her account:

> *[…] I went to Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir[36] in the 60s, at the time there were still plenty [Palestinian] villages that you could see destroyed and nothing! We didn't see anything, we only saw Jewish country of Kibbutzim and Moshavim[37] and development towns that were being constructed, they completely ignored [...] they constructed in us an imaginary consciousness. It was imaginary because we saw other things rather than seeing them. (Esther, feminist, political activist)*

Esther feels familiar with questions concerning consciousness trans/formation. She quickly recounts a particular story upon which she can reflect. Looking at her account, we notice that Esther starts her account in the first person: *I went to […]* yet she rapidly changes to speak in *we*, a collective form of speech. She is not alone when she says: *We didn't see anything […]* she is part of a community, part of a collective that did not see. In her story we understand that when saying we she is referring to her peers, the other teenagers in the movement.

The *we* could be seen as symbolic. It could be the we of Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir, or perhaps the we of Jewish Israelis in general, or perhaps only those who were hiking all over the land in the 60s. I argue here, that Esther is well aware that the collectivity of Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir had a powerful influence on her formation and construction of knowledge. By speaking in we she is not taking herself out of the responsibility of not seeing. Interestingly, she does not tell in her account anything that was told about the villages, or perhaps questions that might have

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36 Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir –"The Youth Guard" in Hebrew Socialist–Zionist, secular Jewish youth movement founded in 1913 in Galicia, Austria-Hungary, later belonged to Mapam, the party to the left of Mapai, Israel's ruling party.

37 As part of different political parties from right to left of political Zionist movement, Kibbutz and Moshavim are two forms of collective Jewish settlements.

been asked about them. She is saying that they were simply not seen.

How then, did the Shomer Ha-Tza'ir construct an imaginary consciousness without naming the ruins? I suggest looking at Ahmed's (2000) definition of home and community as She argues that: "The forming of communities that create multiple identifications through collective acts of remembering in the absence of a shared knowledge or a familiar terrain" (ibid., p.79). According to Ahmed, we can then understand that the mere sense of community, unity and belonging form what is familiar and consequently, what is then foreign. Does it thus mean that if it is foreign we do not see it?

Ahmed urges us to think differently. The production of knowledge according to her should be in the investigation of 'strangeness' (Ahmed, 2000). The stranger is in fact a subject of knowledge, she argues. This turns the focus of the discussion from whether or not the stranger is seen or not, but and rather sheds light on the representations to which the stranger is subject (ibid., p.79).

Esther starts her account when explaining that her own formation was framed during the 1960s. It is interesting to go to Zertal's (2000), work where she urges us to critically look at the way in which the memory of the Holocaust was mobilized, within Israeli politics particularly during the 1960s'. According to her: "[…] the Eichmann trial[38] was a turning point in creating and shaping a specific Israeli memory and political narrative concerning the Holocaust" (ibid., p.99). Similarly, the 1967 war was according to Zertal: "[…] the first successful test and application of this memory discourse in the context of Israel's wars" (ibid., p.99).

She goes further and argues that there is an obsession with the form of memory and rituals of commemoration, which in effect leads to a very poor ability to understand the past and further justifies present atrocities.

In the following account Esther explains the way in which she unlearned the knowledge of Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir:

Zochrot[39] for me is really a very very important organization, concerning raising

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38 The Eichmann trial was held within the State of Israel in 1961

39 Zochrot ("remembering" in Hebrew) is an NGO working since 2002 to promote acknowledgement and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the Nakba, the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948 and the

awareness and the undoing of Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir education. Why? Because one of the very fundamental principle things of the Shomer Ha-Tza'ir was to hike all over the land and know the country, right? With our own feet, and really we walked a lot, and with all due respect, they showed us, as I said before, they drew anew, and here comes Zochrot and allows me to do the undoing [...] and I am grateful for that. (Esther, feminist, political activist, Haifa, 2016)

Reading Ahmed (2000) and Zertal (2000) together enables an important critical gaze at the *Shomer Ha-Tza'ir education.* Esther gazes at the frame that surrounded the action of w*alking the land.* From her account we understand that this action formed her awareness. Reading Esther's accounts, we understand that by walking the land, the Shomer Ha-Tza'ir created, at the symbolic level, an imaginary consciousness. When Esther encounters Zochrot, she is able to undo the hegemonic knowledge that the Shomer Ha-Tza'ir instilled in her. This undoing leads Esther to critically gaze at the formation she got as a child, and it further enables a critical and oppositional gaze at the history of the destroyed villages at which she now gazes within her landscape.

It seems fair to assume that the leaders of the Shomer Ha-Tza'ir knew the existence of the destroyed Palestinian villages, however, they could not afford to create a platform of questioning. In Ahmed's (2000) sense, the formation of the Palestinians as strangers led to the denial of their existence. The Palestinian villages were, and still are gazed at through the colonial male gaze of domination (Shohat, 2006). The formation of a community, of a unity, which is distant to the villages, allows the creation of a violent gaze. The violent colonial gaze is what enables Esther to say: we did not see, while in fact it seems that she, and 'they', did see the ruins as there were many of them in the landscape.

In 1948 the Israeli state was formed on part of Mandatory Palestine. Palestinians refer to the event of 1948, which continued into the 1950s, as the Nakba: the destruction and the loss of the Palestinian homeland and livelihood (Khalidi 1992; Kadman, 2008; Pappe, 2006). The

reconceptualization of the Return as the imperative redress of the Nakba and a chance for a better life for all the country's inhabitants. In 2014 Zochrot published the first Nakba map in Hebrew: "It includes the localities in the country that were destroyed between the beginning of Zionist colonization and the 1967 war." http://zochrot.org/en/article/54772 (last accessed on January 3, 2016). In addition, their map can be visited through Google Maps in English; here are some examples: For the City of Haifa and its surroundings: http://zochrot.org/en/site/districtView/38, Jaffa: http://zochrot.org/en/site/districtView/1 and Bir-a-Saba (Beer Sheva) http://zochrot.org/en/site/districtView/36

Nakba marks the beginning of a long exodus, dispersion and diaspora story of the Palestinian people. A process that starts with the destruction and depopulation of 418 Palestinian villages and carries on with the occupation of more than a dozen major cities and towns (Khalidi, 1992). While approximately one million, two hundred thousand residents inhabited that land until the Nakba, Esther, who was a young adult in the 1960's, was formed with a colonial gaze, which envisioned the land as vacant.

These inhabitants were mostly Arab Muslims, Christians with a small Druze minority (Khalidi 1992; Kadman, 2008). Morris (1989) estimates that the Arab-Palestinians lost most of the land they had owned. In 1949, the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture estimated that more than eighty percent, (16.6 million dunums) of the State of Israel, are lands belonging to Palestinians turned refugees (Peretz, 1958 in Kadman, 2008). With the aftermath of the destruction of Palestine there were, within the State of Israel, four hundred Palestinian villages totally emptied of their inhabitants, in addition to eleven cities from which most of the Arab population had been expelled. The Palestinian real estate that was left behind included: homes, schools, clinics, mosques, churches, commercial centers, banks, hospitals and kindergartens (Khalidi, 1992). Khalidi estimates that in the mid 1948 the total figures of Palestinian refugees stood between 714,150 - 744,150. Consequently, towards the end of 1948 the figures rose to 758,300 (ibid., p.582).

Esther's account provides a time line of destruction. She is comparing the landscape of the 1960's to that of today. According to her, at that time there had been many more destroyed villages in the visual space of Jewish Israelis. However, while the ruins[40] were part of the landscape, thus part of her colonial gaze, Palestinian livelihood was not seen. Tremendous efforts were made to erase Palestinian history and everything that belonged to the land of Palestine. Villages were erased, houses were destroyed and names were changed and replaced (Kadman, 2008)[41].

Esther recounts that her landscape included many destroyed Palestinian villages. In retrospect, she analyzes her own process, searching for an explanation for her not seeing the

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40 It may be interesting to go to Eyal Weizman's book *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability*, to learn more about the exposure of state violence through his investigation of sensory matirials.

41 To get a better understanding of the the Nakba - the destruction and the loss of the Palestinian homeland and livelihood refered to by Khalidi (1992), Kadman (2008) and Pappe (2006) in Annex One I map IV shows the erasing of the names. The map was made by the Research and Art laboratory - 'De-Colonizer' http://media.wix.com/ugd/ee48f0_4a696ef9756a47b88d2df13df168d6d7.pdf

villages, although they were actually there. If we follow our line of thought, Esther did actually see the villages, yet they were unperceivable as the colonial gaze defined her frame. The last sentence of this account reinforces our claim when Esther recounts that the imaginary consciousness led her to see other than the truth. Therefore we understand that there is an action in place, a deliberate construction of consciousness.

Esther problematizes the interpretation she had given to the villages that entered her vision when gazing at the space. Going back to Ahmed (2000), the ruins were the representations of the known stranger. I propose to read Esther's recounted experience in a critical manner that might challenge her own interrelation. Rather than understanding her, and the whole group of which she was part, as 'not seeing' or ignoring the Palestinian existence and livelihood, I would claim that they actually did see the villages but rather 'protected' themselves from the constructed image of the Palestinian Arab as the dangerous stranger, on one hand, and innocent victims of confiscation exposing Zionism to be a colonial project constructed on 'criminal' foundation, on the other hand. The erasure of Palestinians from the landscape, in Esther's account, is derived from colonial binaries in one's perception of the world.

The danger, represented by the Palestinian villages, is engraved in Israeli commonsense. Esther's new critical gaze, or in other words oppositional gaze, allows her to look back and understand her own trans/formation. It further permits a reading of the Zionist matrix of domination in which she was formed and from which she now wants to depart. The development of an oppositional gaze resembles a radical tool she has developed over the years, a tool of liberation, perhaps.

They, in Esther's account, are the leaders and educators of HaShomer HaTza'ir youth movement. The responsibility for the false construction of consciousness is laid on the Zionist youth movement. Later in the interview she even says she would like to take them to court. Esther is angry with HaShomer Ha-Tza'ir youth movement, which in her words is responsible for her not seeing the villages. It seems that until Esther starts seeing, and thus enacts an oppositional gaze at the ruins of Palestinian villages in her landscape, she was in complete coherence with the ideology of HaShomer Ha-Tza'ir. Perhaps she thought of herself as part of the left wing and thus believed in the so-called humanistic approach of the movement.

Pappe (2006) argues that HaShomer Ha-Tza'ir had an active role in the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands during the first years of the Nakba and the establishment of the

Jewish State of Israel: "Expulsion and flight were not enough to save the villages. Many of them were hunted down by the Marxist kibbutzniks of HaShomer HaTza'ir; who swiftly and efficiently looted their houses before detonating them" (ibid., p.109). Furthermore, he shows that early in 1949 when the JNF[42] faced financial difficulties in purchasing lands from Palestinians, Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir was the most avaricious towards Palestinian owned property: "What the JNF failed to purchase, the three kibbutzim movements, the moshavim movement and private real-estate dealers were happy to divide among themselves. The most avaricious of these proved to be the leftist kibbutz movement, Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir that belonged to Mapam, the party to the left of Mapai, Israel's ruling party. Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir members were not content only with lands from which the people had already been expelled, but also wanted lands whose Palestinian owners had survived the onslaught and who were still clinging onto them." (ibid., pp.215-216)

Esther's account illustrates that colonial consciousness relates to the understanding of the space in which she lives. The internalization of settler colonialism to her own consciousness is what she refers to as her personal colonial consciousness.

"That which can't be seen[43]"

In the following account Avi explains the way in which colonial thought forms the gaze of its subjects:

> *Inventing words has always been one of the central colonial ways, new names that can enable covering the crimes. Foucault coined the term myopia "that which can't be seen". (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Avi's account reveals that the appropriation of the landscape by political Zionism is a process of what Benvenisti (2000) calls "replacing and renaming" (ibid., pp.17-20). Avi speaks about the creation of a language inventing words he says is the colonial way. In hooks' (1992) work we read the necessity she attributes to the creation of language in order to transform consciousness and create agency. She advocates her choice of terminology as the

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42 The abbreviation JNF stands for "The Jewish National Fund"

43 Avi

need to create language. For instance, she claims that the use of the term White Supremacy is helpful to make the analysis more complex concerning the multiple forms of racism (hooks, 1996).

Like Esther, Avi is also puzzled by the question of seeing. In his own trajectory there was a time in which his vision was framed by colonial gaze. His trans/formation process brought him to hold an oppositional gaze at reality. From his academic position Avi finds help in Foucault's work. According to him, the creation of names conceals the crimes. In other words, the colonial language fabricates a false reality, while constructing a commonsense of absolute truth.

In Avi's account we understand this as a deliberate action of domination, which as a consequence leads subjects to avoid seeing. This avoidance could be understood as a construction of a consciousness that accepts colonial language rather than engaging in processes of deconstruction or undermining: processes that would probably necessitate a performance of an oppositional gaze.

In his groundbreaking historical research Walid Khalidi (1992) manages to disclose the atrocities of political Zionism. While the State of Israel tries to cover and conceal many of the facts and realities, the following quote of Moshe Dayan[44], brought by Khalidi (ibid.), strengthens Avi's explanation about naming reality:

"Jewish villages were built in place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exist, not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahlal arose in the place of Mahulul; Kibbutz Gvat in the place of Jibta; Kibbutz Sarid in the place of Humeifis; and Kefar Yehushu'a in the place of Tal al Shuman. There is not one single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population[45]" (Moshe Dayan in Khalidi 1992 p.xxxi)

Avi and Esther strengthen my argument that the investigation should be on the interpretation of the vision, therefore critically understanding the system that veers the language in order to conceal reality. It seems that the hegemonic system put in place by political Zionism produces

44 During those years, Moshe Dayan was the minister of defence

45 Moshe Dayan- Address to the Technion (Israel Institution of Technology), Haifa (as quoted in Ha'aretz, 4 April 1969).

a scene, a stage, for Israeli Jews not to see. In a cinematographic context in which Shohat and Stam (1994) analyze colonial representations through cinema, they argue that a powerful apparatus of gaze is created through the relationship between the spectators and the setting of cinema that creates a frame that proposes reality (ibid., p.103).

If we follow Derrida and Owens's (1979) understanding of the possibility to reframe, in which they claim that there is no frame, but rather an action of framing that is a result of the way in which one constructs what one sees, I argue that when Avi and Esther vision reality through an oppositional gaze they actually critically reframe reality.

Following Avi's line of thought, merely looking does not lead to an oppositional gaze. Gazing should include seeing while processing and interpreting the gaze. Therefore, the Palestinian villages to which Esther refers were gazed at within the frame of HaShomer Ha-Tza'ir. This frame gave meanings through colonial representations and formed that at which the youth were gazing. Their development of critical thought happens through their own understanding of their gaze. In order to deconstruct the frame, Avi and Esther need to actually examine their gaze and understand its construction.

In Esther's account we learn about villages that were destroyed and have become ruins. In Avi's following account we learn about villages that exist, that are inhabited and yet, they are unseen. It seems that until a certain moment in their trajectory, both Avi and Esther held what Haraway (1988) calls, a conquering vision towards these villages. Whether destroyed or inhabited, they are framed in the stranger/danger dichotomy (Ahmed, 2000). However, there is a moment when the colonial language transforms into a language derived from a standpoint that perceives the strangeness of the Palestinian village as injustice. At this moment Avi seems to enter into a process led by an oppositional gaze that enables agency, thus, perhaps a sense of entitlement to act within that which Boubeker (2011) calls, the public space:

> *I went hiking on Shvil Israel[46] for a month and a half. It was the first time I understood the gaps between Palestinians and Jews in Israel. At the time I called it Arab Israelis and Jews. The one thing I clearly remember from the 'Israel Trail', are the beautiful houses on my left, and the houses of I don't know which village on my right. It is a town that looked like a refugee camp [laugh] I have forgotten its name. The wide road*

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46 Shvil Yisra'el (The Israel National Trail) is a hiking path that was inaugurated in 1995. This path crosses the state of Israel from north to south.

ends and a narrow trail starts and then one gets to Mashhad[47]. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)

Avi did not go hiking Israel Trail in order to deconstruct his vision or construct an oppositional gaze. He decided to go hiking for the sake of hiking. He left with the colonial language that was familiar to him. However, the trip opened up an alternative visual scope and created the possibility for a new critical language to emerge. This is a horizon for which he was not prepared. He is surprised; it is the first time he gazes at injustice within his own society. The dichotomy he now gazes at, is not stranger/danger versus the 'we', the dichotomy is between those who live in beautiful settings and those who live in a refugee camp. At that moment the division becomes clear to him. Those who live in a refugee camp are Arabs and those who live in beautiful homes are Jews.

It seems that Avi further acquires a new language when he says: At the time I called it Arab Israelis and Jews. At the time seems to refer to a period before a trans/formation occurred, prior to the development of new language. We understand from his formulation that he no longer uses the terminology Arab-Israelis to refer to Palestinians citizens of the State of Israel. Avi's choice of words joins the critical thought that analyzes the Israeli state denial and repression of the national self-definition of the Palestinian minority in Israel, who are referred to as Arab-Israelis (Bishara 1995 in Suleiman, 2002). In Avi's account, this change in terminology is a change in his consciousness. According to him, he is now more politically aware.

Avi's new consciousness concerning the naming of the Palestinian citizens of the State of Israel follows Bishara (1993) and Rabinowitz's (1993) work, in which they claim that while defined by Israeli institutions, and referred to within Israeli commonsense, as Arab-Israelis or 'the Arab minority in Israel', the Palestinian native population of the land is fully part of the Arab-Palestinian nation.

In May 2011, Azmi Bishara, a parliament member of Balad[48] proposes a bill in the Knesset[49]

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47 Mashhad (Hebrew: מַשְׁהַד, Arabic: مشهد, Mash-hed) - an Arab-Palestinian town located 5 kilometers northeast of Nazareth, which can be located on map I in Annex One.

48 Balad-National Democratic Assembly, in Arabic at-Tajamuʿ al-Waṭanī ad-Dīmūqraṭī was formed and registered as a political party in 1995, by Azmi Bishara and other Arab-Palestinians intellectuals. It is today led by Jamal Zahalka as Bishara is wanted by the State of Israel for crimes against the state and is thus in exile.

49 Knesset is the Israeli Parliament

entitled Basic Law: The Arab Minority as a National Minority: "To anchor in a basic law the status of the Arab minority in Israel as a national minority entitled to collective rights and full civil equality" (Rekhess, 2002, p.22).

Rekhess (2014) argues that the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1993, which did not include the condition of the Palestinian citizens of the state of Israel as well as the enormous increase of anti-Arab bills within Israeli legislation, which commenced in the year 2000, influenced the change in self-perception of the Palestinian citizens of the state of Israel[50]. The Arab elite population and the Palestinian intellectuals within Israel reclaimed their collective national identity. When Avi rejects the naming *Arab Israelis*, he follows the popular academic and legal demand of the Palestinian population to recognize the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel as a national minority (Jamal, 2011; Bishara, 1993; Rekhess, 2014).

Avi's new gaze at injustice brought him to name reality differently and therefore reframe that at which he gazes. This reframing process seems to annoy him:

> *I started seeing the annoying things, that is how I called it (laugh). I didn't have words to name it. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Not having words to name his new gaze, Avi turns to emotions: *it is annoying*. Perhaps these emotions are a step towards an attempt to understand why one side looks like a refugee camp and the other is beautiful. It seems that *getting annoyed* is a step towards asking difficult questions that can lead to a critical gaze at what he sees.

Contrary to Esther, Avi is questioning the reality at which he gazes. He might not have the tools to name what he sees, but he is disturbed and feels uncomfortable.

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50 For more information go to: Mossawa Center, the Advocacy Center for Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel http://www.mossawa.org/en (06/09/2016). "In 2010, the Mossawa Center, a leading Arab advocacy group in Israel, found that in 2009, there had been 21 "discriminatory and racist" bills proposed in the Knesset – 75% more than the previous year" (Rekhess, 2014, p.1992).

In the late 1990s, after the Oslo Accord, and in the early 2000s following the Second Palestinian Intifada, a new wave of organizations sprung up within the political civic sphere. Organizations such as (to name only a few): Adalah, a human rights and legal center, that promotes and defends the rights of the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel; Mahapach-Taghir, a grassroots Jewish-Palestinian social change organization; Hakeshet Hademocratit Hamizrahit a Mizrahi movement which strives to bring about meaningful change within Israeli society; Zochrot, which acts to challenge the Israeli-Jewish public on the Nakba and the events creating the state of Israel; Haokets an independent platform for critical discussion, where hundreds of writers publish on socioeconomic, cultural and philosophical issues, human rights activism, feminism, and especially Mizrahi politics; Coalition of Women for Peace is a feminist organization against the occupation of Palestine and for a just peace; Hirakuna, that promotes reciprocal social responsibility, volunteerism and leadership throughout Palestinian society in Israel.

"Connection to my Arabness[51]"

The following account sheds light on yet another aspect of colonial consciousness. From Shira's account, I understand that colonial consciousness is the alienation of Arabness. Shira understands that reconnecting to her Arabness is an important part of her trans/formation of consciousness. She understands colonialism within the frame of political Zionism. The account shows that naming political Zionism as colonial is, in hooks' (1990) terms, an act of transgression:

> *I think that if we speak about colonialism and consciousness, it is the connection to my "Arabness", the understanding that until Zionism reached these countries, Mizrahim and Arabs lived well together, and that you know that there are many right-wing (Mizrahim) is a result of the oppression, and this is part of the liberation [...] also part of the liberation is the understanding that we (Mizrahis) have a lot in common with the Palestinians. (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013)*

Shira demonstrates, in Dahan-Kalev's (2001) sense, the internal oppression and domination to which she is subjected. Shira explains what colonialism means to her. In her sense, when trying to understand what colonial consciousness means, she has to first connect to her Arabness. Her account follows Shohat's (1992) line of thought, when she claims that Mizrahi Jews were not only ousted from their lands and national-political right in the Middle East and North African countries, they were furthermore dispossessed of their culture and identity. According to her, these colonial processes that dispossessed the Palestinians, and later the Mizrahi Jews, create an ambiguous relationship to the State of Israel. This ambiguous connection was, and still is, expressed by the subjugated desire of Arab-Jews to embody, gendered and racial Ashkenazi physiognomies and way of life (ibid.).

As many other Mizrahi Jews, Shira internalized the hegemonic colonial consciousness which denies Arabness and Arab identity to the Arab Jew. She now reclaims an Arab-Jewish identity, developed and reclaimed by non-Zionist Mizrahi intellectuals, however, rejected by most Mizrahi Jews (Lavi, 2011). Liberating herself from colonial consciousness Shira reclaims her "Arabness".

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51 Shira

Gibson (1988) shows that the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa understood early on that within the mind of the subordinated, self-love and Black cultural affirmation are crucial steps for "real political action" (ibid., p.6). For Black Consciousness the possibility to transform reality is grounded, drawing from Fanon (1961), in the cognitive self-liberation of the oppressed (Gibson, 1988).

Shira's account also highlights the dual position of the oppressed/oppressor within the Mizrahi consciousness construction. Sami Shalom-Chetrit (1999, 2000) and Ella Shohat (1988, 1999) have shown, that Mizrahis enter into self-hating processes as the image of the Arab is so despised by Ashkenazi hegemony that the Mizrahi "I" hates his/her own-mirrored image and hates the Arab reflections Palestinians might create of him/her. In Guénif-Souilamas's (2000) sense, such processes could be defined in terms of racism towards oneself (ibid., p.330). According to her, this form of racism is twice as alienating.

Shira holds a complex gaze on Mizrahi politics. Within the specific politics of the Israeli state, Shira critically analyzes the right-wing political choice of a vast majority of Mizrahi Jews. Her account joins the extensive literature that analyzes the political consciousness of Mizrahim in Israel. Shohat (1988) argues that from very early on Mizrahi Jews were eager to serve as a bridge for dialogue between Palestinians and Jews. As early as 1959 the Workers' Party of the Land of Israel (Mapai[52]) violently repressed a popular Mizrahi uprising in the Wadi-Salib neighborhood in Haifa. Later in the early 1970s, the Israeli Black Panthers called for all oppressed by the Ashkenazi regime, in which they included Mizrahi-Jews and Arab-Palestinians, to join forces to bring down the regime and fight for equal rights for all inhabitants of the land.

The Black (Israeli) Panthers, a political group established by young Mizrahi Jews, called for 'real dialogue' with Palestinians and the PLO[53] as their political leadership. They understood the need to link their struggle with other anti-colonial struggles and analyze their oppression within this colonial context[54]. In the late 1970s, Mapai's suppression of the demonstrations and uprisings organized by the Black Panthers, together with the deception of

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52 Mapai, de facto, built the Ashkenazi hegemony. They were generated by colonial Zionism; building collective villages (Kibutzim), cooperatives, Unions (to name a few). These social structures first repressed, deprived and uprooted Palestinians and any sort of solidarity with them, and later excluded Mizrahi-Jews.

53 The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

54 Accessed on October 28, 2016, http://matityaho.com/ (in Hebrew)

integration of the Mizrahi population into the State of Israel, resulted in a large number of Mizrahi-Jews voting for Menahem Begin, and the Herut party[55]. Herut's discourse left room for Jewish tradition and therefore became an alternative to the left that represented European secularist politics. While one cannot say that Mizrahi-Jews have a united political orientation, the rupture of Mizrahim with the colonial social-democratic party was substantial[56].

Shohat's (1992) work leads us to a complex understanding of the imbrication of dominations constructing Israeli colonial formation. While Israeli society is commonly looked at as homogeneous, Mizrahi scholarship, developed throughout the last decades, enables a critical and radical gaze at it. What Shalom Chetrit (2004) calls 'The new Mizrahi discourse', also understands the Zionist project within its colonial context, and reads Israeli state and society as a result of a colonial project (Said, 1978; Shohat, 1988; Shalom Chetrit, 2004). This discourse refuses the Jewish-Arab Zionist binary logic which silences internal conflicts and divisions within the Israeli Jewish society.

Until the 1990s, the common terminology when referring to Jewish immigrants from Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern and Balkan countries was *bnei edot* hamizrah *(descendants of oriental ethnicities)* (Shohat, 1999). Shohat (ibid.) explains the definition "Sephardim", that was commonly used until the 1980s (and is still largely employed in Europe and France in particular), when referring to Mizrahi Jews, is not only historically incorrect it is also a Eurocentric point of view. This Eurocentric definition participates yet again in the exclusion and marginalization of non-European Jewish livelihood. Official Zionism universalizes the Jewish experience through a Eurocentric reading of Jewish history, rejecting Arab Jewish identity and history (ibid., Shohat, 2003). During the 1990s the term Mizrahi, which literally means 'Eastern' or 'Oriental' in Hebrew, was coined in Israel.

Mizrahi does not only refer to geographic origin but rather to an analysis of the oriental aspects of Israeli-Zionist hegemony. Mizrahi struggle movements were strongly influenced by the Black liberation movements in the United States and particularly the Black Panthers. In this sense, it is important to understand that the category Mizrahi is relevant particularly to the

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55 Herut: Freedom in Hebrew, the right-wing political party of those years.

56 Amir Goldstein "Menahem Begin, Haherut Movement and the Mizrahi Struggle: The case of Wadi Salim and its lessons." paper in conference (11-12 January 2010) "Leaders and Leadership at the Start of the State" at The Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute.

Accessed on December 5, 2016, http://in.bgu.ac.il/bgi/past_events/amir_goldstein.pdf (in Hebrew)

sociology of the State of Israel. Furthermore, this category brings together Jewish communities and individuals, who did not necessarily share a joint history or past (Shohat, 1999, Swirski, 1981). Rather it is the colonial context of the state that, firstly, uprooted them from their countries and lands of origin and secondly created a common trajectory of oppression.

The use of the word Mizrahi within the Israeli colonial context can be understood in the same way the word Black was redefined by the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa (Gibson, 1988). In the early 1970s Black Consciousness, a movement in which Steven Biko was an important figure, acknowledged the importance of the mind of the oppressed. In this regard, they argued that the self-definition Black is an important emancipatory action, as it challenges the term 'Non-White', which the founders of the movement regarded as a negation of their being (Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane in Gibson 1988).

The large and institutionalized immigration of what is called Mizrahi-Jews started after the creation of the state of Israel during the 1950s. At this time, the majority of Jews in Palestine living in the so-called Old Yishuv[57] were either European-Ashkenazi Jews or Sephardi-Jews from Turkey, Greece and the Caucasus Mountains (Swirski, 1981; Butler, 2012).

Since the very early years of the Zionist movement and later the establishment of the State of Israel, immigrant Mizrahi Jews were expected to erase their Arab identity, culture, and family structure and assimilate into the Ashkenazi character of the state (Shalom Chetrit, 2004). Contrary to the Palestinian citizens of the state, they were seen as part of the Jewish nation, yet inferior to Ashekenazi Jews.

Shohat (1999) draws from the groundbreaking work of Edward Said (1978) to show that Mizrahi Jews are looked at and treated with the same Oriental gaze as Palestinians. While Palestinians were denied their national identities, Mizrahi-Jews were expected to choose between their two identities: Arab or Jewish Since the nineteenth century Zionist nationalism was led by a binary understanding of Jewish identity, which was associated with the West and

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57 For more reading on the Old Yishuv, go to Hercbergs (2016): "Prior to Zionist immigration in the 1880s, Sephardi Jews—the Ladino speaking members of the Spanish and Portuguese diaspora who settled largely in Ottoman lands—made up the majority of the Jewish community in Palestine (Kark and Glass 1999, p.80). Middle Eastern and North African Jews who spoke Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Aramaic made up the second major community. The third significant group was comprised of Ashkenazi, or Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews who had immigrated in small numbers since the eighteenth century, and who settled in the four holy cities of Safed, Tiberias, Jerusalem, and Hebron. Collectively, these groups formed the "old yishuv," the non-Zionist community in Palestine." (Hercbergs, 2016, p.149)

nullified the East. This binary perspective deprived them from the possibility of a holistic Jewish-Arab identity (1993, 1999).

Interestingly enough, Shohat's (1999) work highlights the ambivalent gaze of Zionist nationalism towards both the West and the East. While Zionism is seen as a liberation force from the West, the West is also considered the norm that must be followed. In the same way the East is framed within an ambivalent gaze, following colonial dynamics, it is considered as backwards and underdeveloped, yet it is also seen as home, and even as the motherland. Along the same line of thought, in his text, "Zionist Return to the West and the Mizrachi Jewish Perspective," Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, (2005) argues that to better understand the "modern discourse by and about Jews" (ibid. p.162) the analysis should focus on the link between postcolonial and Judaism studies.

Shira's account reveals the importance of ethnic positioning within Israelis colonial formation and furthermore within possible processes of liberation from colonial consciousness. Sociological researches done on ethnic inequality within the State of Israel show that to this day, one's ethnic origin defines mobility on various levels.

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics[58] a person's ethnic origin is defined by one's country of birth or by one's father's country of birth. One third of the Israeli-born Jewish population who have Israeli-born parents, are therefore said to be of Israeli origin. This institutionalized definition makes it harder to identify possible inequalities for third, and sometime second, generation Israeli-born people (Cohen and al 2007).

Within the new millennium ethnic inequality is still found in the work place, in education and in earnings (Cohen and al 2007). According to this definitional method, Ashkenazi-Jews are either immigrants or Israeli-born to a father of European and/or American origin while, Mizrahi-Jews are either immigrants or Israeli-born to a father of African and/or Asian origin. However, this binary ethnic classification ignores the growing number of Israeli-born to parents of mixed ethnicity (ibid.).

In the early 1950s the Jewish population in Israel doubled as a consequence of the arrival of immigrants from Asian and African countries as well as European survivors of the

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58 The Central Bureau of Statistics Israel: http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/cw_usr_view_Folder?ID=141 (Accessed on October, 28, 2016)

Holocaust. Throughout the following two decades some 800,000 Jewish immigrants arrived in the new Israeli state. Fifty five per cent of this immigration came from Arab especially North African countries while the others migrated from Europe, the Americas and Australia (Cohen and al 2007). By the mid-1970s the Ashkenazi-Jewish immigrants were fully integrated in terms of schooling, occupation and earnings, however their Mizrahi counterparts remained excluded and in a precarious condition (ibid.). In 1977 almost every other Israeli-born Ashkenazi was employed in academia or held a scientific position, yet only one out of seven Israeli-born Mizrahis was in the same fields of work. Over a third of Israeli-born Mizrahis were proletariat workers (Swirski, 1981).

Recent research (Cohen et al, 2007, Heberfeld et al, 2007) has shown that the hierarchy within the Israeli labor market between men and women has not changed during the last fifty or sixty years. Throughout these years, the economic gap between Ashkenazi men and women has not narrowed despite the fact that by 1990 the educational gap between these two groups had completely disappeared. In the new millennium, Ashkenazi men are still at the top of the income scale. Mizrahi and Palestinian men, and then Ashkenazi women follow. At the very bottom of this scale one first finds Mizrahi and then Palestinian women (ibid.).

While a university degree has become indispensable for success in the Israeli labor market, and although the educational gap between Ashkenazi men and women seems to have narrowed, the ethnic gaps in higher education remain. The relative situation of different ethnic groups of third generation Israeli-born has not changed significantly (Cohen et al, 2007). Israelis born from two Ashkenazi parents are at the top of the ethnic hierarchy, followed by persons with at least one Ashkenazi parent. Persons of mixed ethnicity are almost twice as likely to succeed as their Mizrahi counterparts. At the bottom of the list are Israeli-born with no Ashkenazi descent (ibid., Dahan et al, 2002).

A common hegemonic assumption is that the inequalities between the major ethnic groups within Israeli society have narrowed to the point where they have almost disappeared. However extensive research on this subject shows the opposite. Swirski (1981), in his early book "Not Backwards but Made Backwards", analyzes the "ethnic" division of labor, which has brought the majority of the Mizrahi population into precariousness. While a common Israeli discourse claims that over time Mizrahi Jews will access positions traditionally held by Ashkenazi Jews, Swirski (ibid.) predicted that the system of Israeli integration would sustain the gaps and injustice rather than the opposite.

Shira goes further into her self-reflexivity and explains what liberating oneself from colonial consciousness means to her:

> *To liberate oneself (from colonial consciousness) means to liberate (oneself) from the thought that Ashkenazi culture is the superior culture, is the good culture that is you know, the right culture... this is the liberation process we all have to undertake. (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013)*

Part of Shira's liberation process is to accept her own Arabness, but further it is to recognize her internalization of colonial arrogance. It is often referred to within the Israeli context as "Léhishtaknez" which literally means to become Ashkenazi, or in other words to embody Ashkenazi performance. Applying this terminology promotes feelings of guilt and shame rather than processes of radical consciousness (Mishali, 2009). Shira's daily liberation work involves ongoing confrontation with the Ashkenazi hegemony and surroundings and further with her own feeling of inferiority. Shira is taking responsibility as being part of the oppressed and is liberating herself towards a free mind, which is an important step in the work towards liberation (Hill Collins, 2000).

Shira's critical gaze at her own Arab identity and at Mizrahi politics shows a complex understanding of reality. Following Shohat's (1999) work, Shira does not seem to idealize the relationships Jews held within the Arab and Muslim world, yet she is aware that the arrival of political Zionism, which carried Western colonial dynamics, designed the path of the Arab-Jews and later Mizrahis in the state of Israel.

"That is when I understood that I was not Ashkenazi[59]"

As we have seen earlier, the Israeli education system is organized and structured to marginalize, at best, Palestinian existence. It further creates an image of Palestinians as perverse subjects. Through the reading of Limbrick (2012, pp.106-107) we observe that the frame of deviance applied to Palestinians radicalizes the discourse within the entanglement of gender and sexuality heteronormative dominations. In this sense, within Zionist supremacy, it is Arabness, if we follow Shohat (1988) that is acutely made deviant. In this sense, Mizrahi Jews are similarly perceived within sexual-gendered ethnic, or racial deviance (ibid.; Yosef, 2004). Neither the Arab Palestinians nor the Arab Jews fit the Ashkenazi colonial fantasy

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59 Moshe

(ibid.). Shohat (1988) and Yosef (2004) refer to theories of colonial discourse particularly in Fanon (1966) and Said's (1978) work, in which they unfold the way through which political Zionism radicalizes Palestinians and other Arabs while reserving the mantle of nationality only for Jews, thus admitting the Arab who is a Jew but not the Arab who is a Palestinian.

Moshe encounters his Arab deviant identity through school:

> *We lived there, in the region, in which retrospectively I understood, most of the people living were (silence) Mizrahim. (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012)*

Moshe explains the composition of what he calls "region schools", high schools that bring together students from several villages of the same region:

> *A region school that included these kinds of Ashkenazi moshavniks and collective workers settlements, and the region around Kfar Saba, and Yemenite (yeshuvei sfar) and these kinds of locations of young couples who came from the less successful cities of Israel; that is when I understood I was not Ashkenazi (laugh).*

> *TD: What happened? How did you understand (that)?*

> *School was a crazy cultural shock. First, in the kibbutz I was in "small groups", the move to a school with 40 students in class, lots of kids. One of the first things I felt not being Ashkenazi; it was considered bad to come from our yeshuv (settlement). There was a real division between the more "mekubalim" (accepted) and the non-"mekubalim" those who came from the good moshavim were blatantly the elite.*

> *TD: So it was the Ashkenazim who told you, you were not Ashkenazi?*

> *Yes, yes, I was "meshuyach" (associated). Two years later I went back to the kibbutz. I was very uncomfortable with the new place in which I was put. I felt disempowered, jailed, and one of my entry cards into the elite of the school was to actually say that: "I was not from there, I am from the kibbutz". And it was true I was very much a kibbutznik. I didn't know anything else, my language, the way I looked.*

> *TD: And still you were not allowed to be Ashkenazi*

> *Slowly slowly yes. The truth is that during these two years I fit in but through*

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alienation to the place and children who came from the same town. (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012)

From the very early years of the state, Swiski (1990) argues, Mizrahim were subjugated to a highly neglecting educational system, lack of general high schools[60] and only elementary schooling (a large majority did not continue to high school studies). From their arrival in the State of Israel, they were placed in *Ma'abarot* in geographically marginal regions of the state and in some case within Palestinian villages that were evacuated of their residents (Eliav and Alfi, 2006). They were assigned to separate schools and were obliged to choose between the two currents of the popular Ashkenazi Zionist educational system: the secular or the Zionist religious. They were expected to integrate into the Zionist Ashkenazi culture and thus, as we mentioned earlier, erase their Arabness and non-Ashkenazi culture. Their identity was not in coherence with the symbol of the Tzabar[61].

While the Zionist Ashkenazi educational system worked to separate and control the Arab-Palestinians, Mizrahi Jews were expected to integrate and assimilate through the Zionist educational system (Weksler, 2015; Swirski, 1990). In 1968 the educational system went through a big reform, which was imported from the American integration system (Shohat, 1994). The politics of integration namely functioned in high schools within the big cities. The reform narrowed in some sense the large gap between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, as an elite of Mizrahi students was granted the possibility to get their Matriculation (Swirski, 1990; Weksler, 2015).

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60 The term 'general high schools' refer to the normative school system where most of the students obtained, or were directed towards, their *Bagrut* (Matriculation). The majority of the students who had the possibility to go to these schools were of Ashkenazi origin. In reality, a small number of Mizrahi pupils could enter the 'general high school system' through boarding programs, which separated the students from their homes with the aim to create an elite assimilated Mizrahi population. For more reading on the influence of the integration program of Mizrahi students within elite high schools, through boarding programs, go to Tikva Levi 1990 "Thieves what have you done with the Other 29 Children?" Iton Aher pp.10-12, 26-27 (Hebrew). In parallel a system of vocational schools, in which the attainment of a full *Bagrut* was rare and impossible, existed. In these school, most of the students were of Mizrahi origin (for more reading on this subject go to Weksler, 2015).

61 The Tzabar is the prickly pear cactus that was brought to Palestine some 200 years ago, and served as a natural agricultural barrier. The *Sabar* (in Arabic, also means patience) is still present within the landscape and in most cases indicates the former existence of a Palestinian village (Carol, 1998). As part of the Zionist discourse the Tzabar refers to Israelis born in the State of Israel. Shohat (1989) has shown that the Tzabar is the image of the New Jew that settles that land and build the State of Israel. The performance of the Tzabar is necessarily in contradiction to the feminine, diaspora image of the Jew and adopts a masculine, European performance.

"One doesn't need eyes[62]"

After Shira's account that reconnected colonial consciousness to Zionism and reframed her complex position as an oppressor who is also oppressed, Hila relates the question of colonial consciousness to the definition of the State of Israel:

> Asymmetry of justice should differentiate that one can't define a state Jewish, irrespective of religion, race or sex (laugh), it can't be defined in the same sentence.

> TD: How come you didn't see it before? How come others didn't see it before? In your mind, what is your opinion?

> *I didn't see it before. I saw, no I didn't see, because every Jew, and so do I, has the feeling that "they are rising up to kill us." (Hila, teacher, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Hila quotes a sentence from Megilat Ha'atzma'ut[63] - the Israeli Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel - in which the state is declared Jewish and respectful of all religions, races and sex. Hila laughs, this sentence has ceased to make sense to her. She goes further to an ethical reading and claims that when putting the two together there is no justice. This understanding according to her is recent. When I try to understand what brought the change in her gaze toward the Declaration of the State of Israel, Hila seems confused in her answer: *I didn't see it before. I saw, no I didn't see.*

While Hila is confused when trying to understand whether or not she saw that at which she gazes at present, her explanation that follows is very clear. She ends up explaining the reason she did not see is related to her position as a Jewish member of the State of Israel. According to her, all Jews feel a constant threat of being killed. That is the explanation for why she did not see the injustice in the definition of the State of Israel.

Azoulay and Ophir (2012) argue that for Jewish Israelis showing commitment to the state is tight knit to the commitment to the concept of a Jewish state. The unremitting concern with *security* and thus the essential perception of Israeli nationalism conceals the contradiction of

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62 Hila

63 The sentence to which Hila refers is drawn from the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel: "The State of Israel would be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex" http://main.knesset.gov.il/About/Occasion/Pages/IndDeclaration.aspx

understanding the Israeli State as democratic, yet at the same time Jewish, thus a national-ethnic state (Weizman, 2016). In a recent publication on the possibility to decolonize Israeli society, Weizman (ibid.) argues that within Jewish-Israeli commonsense, one envisions one's own condition and the condition of the Jewish state in terms of existential danger.

It seems that the knowledge Hila holds from her position as a Jewish Israeli, the hegemonic knowledge she has acquired throughout the years, prevents her from seeing the construction of a national state as a safe haven for all Jews, a formation from which it seems Hila seeks to rapture and find new ways. Her way of reading the world has changed and it creates great difficulty. Hila recounts: *I am in crisis*. Interestingly in the following account Hila recounts in binary categories of taking "sides". If earlier she refers to all Jews, here she speaks of the settler woman vs. (the) Palestinian(s). It seems that the settler woman, who is Jewish, does not necessarily have the same formation as her:

> *I always thought that the Palestinians were poorly treated and it's easy to feel sorry for them. So one's heart leans more towards the underdog and the Palestinian is definitely the underdog here, big time! But anyway, I always thought the Palestinian side is the more pitiful side and it is easier to feel pity for the Palestinian side […] One doesn't need eyes, when I was 5 I saw it was natural, I was born with the understanding. I do not understand how there are people who are not born with this understanding at all. (Hila, teacher, Jerusalem, 2013)*

While Hila was not born with the understanding that a state cannot be defined simultaneously as Jewish and inclusive for all religions, races and sex, she claims that gazing at settler mothers with yearning compassion is unnatural to her. She goes further to the extent that one does not even need eyes. This metaphor seems to be important for her in order to explain how obvious it is that one's heart should be directed at the Palestinian side. The Palestinian side defined as pitiful, a word that is repeated four times, is where her heart is directed. Here her heart seems to be her vision. At this point there are no contradictions for her. We can observe that she does not identify with the Jewish settler; however, she identifies herself with the Jewish state formation from which she is now trying to depart.

Part Two: Colonial Consciousness of "*the Occupied*[64]"

Consciousness must be "a comprehensive project, or a view of time and the world which, I order to be apparent to itself, and in order to become explicitly what it is implicitly, that is, consciousness, needs to unfold itself into multiplicity" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, [2002, p. 493]).

"Attempts to please and be liked in the eyes of the master[65]"

Half way through the interview I ask Johayna to recount what colonial consciousness meant to her:

> *TD: What is colonial consciousness for you? Does it "speak to you"?*
>
> *You mean like, as the occupied?*
>
> *TD: yes.*
>
> *I don't identify it within myself, I don't identify I had it and then liberated myself, but I identify it within others. (Johayna, political activist, Jaffa, 2013)*

Johayna cannot relate to my question. According to her, she never had a colonial consciousness from which she had to liberate herself. Having said that, she understands that others, colonized as her, have gone through processes of liberation she could describe.

> TD: What for example?
>
> [Ahh] it is like to know and feel that the Jew is like a little bit more than you. To try and be liked. Attempts to please and be liked in the eyes of the master. (Johayna, political activist, Jaffa, 2013)

Johayna recounts the process of internalization of colonial consciousness, referred to by Fanon (1952), as the white masks of the Black man. In his work he exposes the psychological

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64 Johayna
65 Johayna

effect colonial structures have on the colonized subject. Johayna defines colonial consciousness of, what she calls, the occupied, as a feeling of inferiority towards the Jew. Furthermore, according to her, to perform colonial consciousness as a Palestinian within the Israeli State means to try and resemble and be liked by the Jew.

Johayna continues and adds yet another aspect to what it means to hold a colonial consciousness:

> *Thanks to my parents, I grew up on the fact that the Jew can be our partner in struggle, we struggle together against the state of Israel, against the government. In this sense I think that colonial consciousness is to identify all the Jews as one block: "they all developed us, they are all [umm] Westerners, all of them. After all if you ask a Palestinian "describe me a Jew" he will not describe you one who resembles him, even though half of the Jews resemble him, but he will describe you a blond European Jew, the white who gets burnt in the sun and his food is disgusting. (Johayna, political activist, Jaffa, 2013)*

Johayna situates her account within the education she got at home. She thanks her parents for not transmitting a colonial thought about Jews. While earlier Johayna explains that colonial consciousness is to internalize inferiority, here she adds that holding a simplistic vision and perhaps essentialist view of Jews is furthermore drawn from colonial thought. Her account illustrates that a Palestinian commonsense thought about Jews is that they are all Western and white. Johayna insists that the Jewish hegemonic group within the State of Israel is far more complex and includes within it people who resemble her and are perhaps also Arab.

On the same line, throughout the research several Palestinian participants recount that their understanding of the Jewish majority group as complex and constructed by oppression, played an important role within their process of consciousness trans/formation.

> *So […] ahh […] but lets say that I said that I didn't have it (colonial consciousness) I didn't have it in the sense of… I always knew that there are political Jews that think differently, but the issue of the different ethnicities, the human and cultural variety of the Jews, it was not something I always had. I think that it is only recently during University years that I started to understand the issue of Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, and the issue of the oppression within the Jewish society.*

TD: You mean that at school, you already saw that there were different Jews but it was at University that you managed to do the naming?

Yes.

TD: Politicization?

Yes at school I didn't choose my friends according to their origin and all that, but come to this of it, yet, perhaps I did. At the time I didn't understand that that was what I was doing. I think that during University, I can't remember how and from whom, but I can remember that something was built, the understanding of the Mizrahi oppression.

TD: Sounds that it came with a complex political discourse

Yes (Johayna, political activist, Jaffa, 2013)

"*The oppressing Zionist institution*[66]"

Johayna's account reveals that she lays great importance on the education she had at home concerning the construction of her consciousness. Later in the research Kholod will also refer to her family when speaking about her liberation process from colonial consciousness. Having said that, at the moment Kholod illustrates the way in which colonial thought was delivered at school, an Israeli educational institution:

We learn about your Hagim (holidays), we take Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) for matriculation!! It's like […] I can say that we know you better than you know us. We learn your language, holidays, Tanakh. And also history ends with the British mandate, nothing after and we take Citizenship to be good citizens in this country that continues to run itself in this way, discriminates, and oppresses and is very racist. It's like, school in my opinion, then and today are socialization agents for the oppressing Zionist institution. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

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66 Kholod

Kholod does not waste time and quickly situates us both within the external power dynamics. When she says *your holidays* she directly positions me as part of the Other from the hegemonic group. When Kholod says, *Hagim* she clearly refers to the Jewish religious holidays about which she is obliged to learn while being Muslim. Kholod speaks in 'we', *we know you*. *We* who have to be good citizens despite racism and discrimination. Later in the interview Kholod explicitly positions herself within the Palestinian collective. Yet at this point, we both understand that when she says *we*, she already refers to herself as an individual within the oppressed Palestinian society within the State if Israel.

Kholod's account follows the pedagogical assumption that individuals from the hegemonic group know little about the oppressed groups while the oppressed are much more knowledgeably aware of their own oppressors since the oppressors represent the norm and the commonsense (hooks, 2003, 1994; Helms, 1990; Hill Collins, 2000; Halabi, 2004).

Giving an account of her childhood, from her position as an adult, she critically gazes at reality. Through school Kholod is subjugated to what she calls, the oppressing Zionist institution. In a Freirian (1970) sense, Kholod introduces to the conversation the way in which colonial knowledge was 'deposited' at school.

Freire (1970) highlights the important role and function of school system and schooling institutions in particular on the consciousness of the oppressed. To describe an education he refers to as oppressing, Freire (ibid.) coins the term 'banking schooling'. Banking education thus refers to an oppressing methodology to which students are subjected, yet it further refers to hegemonic content delivered to the students. Weksler (2015) argues that Freire chooses this definition within his Marxists discourse, in order to illustrate the 'deposit' action of the teacher.

The teacher in this sense, deposits hegemonic information within what s/he considers a vacant container, the student. According to Freire (1970), and later hooks (1994, 2003) the oppressing banking education can be challenged and transgressed by a critical dialogue lead by the educators. While the definition of this education refers to formal institution and teacher/student relations, critical dialogue further refers to the importance of radical, reflexive dialogue with adults and within non-formal educational dynamics. Critical education understands that learning processes happen not only within the formal education system but also on a daily basis in various situations of human contact and exchange (Freire, 1970,

1974).

Within the Israeli context Peled-Elhanan (2009) argues that the educational system to which the Arab Palestinian population is subjugated, works to promote Jewish identity on both special and national levels. The way in which these dynamics are perpetuated is through a denial of any kind of Palestinian identity or existence. The processes of denial apply both on the Palestinian citizen of Israel, but furthermore relate to the Palestinian living under military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza (ibid.).

Earlier Eitan defined colonial consciousness as a stance of control over knowledge. In Kholod's account we observe a similar analysis yet from the standpoint of the subaltern subject. She critically gazes at her schooling education, realizing that she was subjugated to hegemonic knowledge that was a form of control over her existence. In order to explain the perpetuation of colonial thought in the Israeli educational system, Kholod, as Eitan, insist that a critical gaze is needed in order to understand the relations of power that produce and reproduce the knowledge.

Later on, within the following chapters, Kholod elucidates that while understanding the oppression of Israeli institutions is crucial, it is also important for her to develop a larger complex understanding of her life experience. Liberating herself from colonial consciousness is bound up, according to her, with the entanglement of gender, religion, race, ethnicity and age categories of domination, in addition to her national oppression as a Palestinian.

The dominant knowledge she has of Jewish holidays, and Israeli citizenship classes in school, are all part of *the oppressing Zionist institution*. We understand from Kholod's account that while Zionism is the oppressing regime where Jewish Israelis and Palestinians are formed, it does not determine their fate in the same way. In this sense I find it interesting to look at Zionism in the same way hooks (2000) urges us to examine sexism: "Sexism as a system of domination is institutionalized, but it has never determined in an absolute way the fate of all women in this society" (ibid., p.5).

Reading Kholod, we understand that political Zionism is perpetuated via institutional and social structures, such as school. While both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians are formed and perform under the same oppressing regime, they however, do not live the oppression in the same way. Kholod's account follows the line of thought led by hooks (2000). She clearly relates to Zionism as a system of domination that is institutionalized, yet she demands the

understanding of the socialization process that is relevant to her as a Palestinian citizen within the Zionist state. From her account I understand that racism is perpetuated within citizen classes in a way that Kholod, as Johayna mentioned earlier, is expected to internalize institutionalized racism directed at her.

To follow Scott (1990) school is where Kholod is taught the public discourse to which she is expected to adhere. At the same time, Kholod explains that her position as an oppressed grants her wisdom. While she considers the hegemonic knowledge at school as oppressing, it actually also provides her with strength. Kholod masters Hebrew, the hegemonic language. Her situated knowledge furthermore enables the reading of the commonsense and the knowledge to distinguish where and how to speak on the different level of discourse (ibid.)

Within a liberating process to free mind, the power of the oppressed is to first read the oppressing language and reality and then further create one's own history and thus write one's own story (Freire, 1970, Colins 2000). Freire argues that while it is important to read and write the hegemonic language, it is further liberating to strive for alphabetization and thus writing one's story within one's own language (Freire and Macedo, 1989).

In the following account Ibtisam also considers school as a harsh institution. As for Kholod, Ibtisam critically gazes at the oppressing banking education to which she was subjugated:

> *My home is not like the whole society of K'[67], it is my home. School is like day and night, it is the hardest institution that one can be in, school. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

There seems to be a large gap between home and school, a contradiction. But there also seems to be a contradiction between her home and the village and the society as a whole. Ibtisam continues and elaborates on what she went through at school:

> *What we learn at home is completely different. (In high-school) we had to, of course, learn the history of the Jews, (it was) required, even if we were always skeptical towards what was taught because you know, you know that you have a completely different history, and then you see it with skepticism, not as something real, it is fiction that one has to learn, because what we learn at home or in general from personal*

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67 I have removed the name of the village to maintain confidentiality

knowledge, or even from my grandmother is completely different. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

In school Ibtisam confronts the hegemonic knowledge of Israeli social formation. Her historical formation from home, her Palestinian story to which she was exposed with pride by her grandmother's stories, becomes subjugated knowledge (Foucault, 2001 [2003]). Similar to the Jewish-Israeli participants, who develop a critical gaze at Zionism, Ibtisam develops her own oppositional gaze at the dominant Zionist history taught at school. However, unlike the Jewish-Israeli participants, Ibtisam is not confronted with an epiphany or a discovery. Her situated knowledge, the institution works to deny, guides her within her quest for a critical gaze. Her subjected knowledge refers to historical content that is systematically erased both on the ground and within history books.

Ibtisam *does not buy* the story at school, she rather believes her grandmother. Unlike Esther and Shira who spoke about the task of developing a critical eye that first unlearns the dominant story, Ibtisam experiences school through her situated wisdom (Hill Collins, 2000) and refuses to internalize the hegemonic knowledge.

Both Ibtisam and Kholod refer to political Zionism and its institutionalized practices as the power dynamics that led the knowledge at school to be considered as objective and scientific. However, while Kholod does not recount whether she already had her counter-hegemonic knowledge, Ibtisam is confronted at school with a story that contradicts all which she knows. When Ibtisam speaks about school, she relates to it as a harsh institution. In this sense, while not putting it in so many words, I understand from Ibtisam that she specifically relates to her experience as a Palestinian within the Israeli State rather than to a general pedagogical statement.

We could argue that what Ibtisam and Kholod present is a process where school becomes the formative system to create what Shenhav (2006) calls the *Zionist Subject*. According to him the creation of a Zionist subject is the creation of a Zionist identity for an individual, group or community that encompass power dynamics of domination. Within the Zionist project, he argues, the Ashkenazi Zionist subject and the Arab Zionist subject are necessarily different constructions (ibid.).

Shenhav's (2006) elaborates on the way in which Zionism should be conceptualized as an ideological practice that was originally anchored in a triangle of three components:

nationalism, religion and ethnicity. When Shira earlier recounts that liberation from colonial consciousness is interconnected to her Arabness she demonstrates that ethnicity is intertwined within Zionist thought. Similarly Kholod and Ibtisam reveal that religion and nationalism is furthermore interchangeable within political Zionist thought. Shenhav (ibid.) thus argues that each of these categories is needed for the construction of the subject and thought, but each of them is insufficient outside the whole.

Following the same line of thought, understanding political Zionism as a form of hegemonic domination, creating a Palestinian Zionist subject and a Jewish-Israeli Zionist subject is inherently different. Both Ibtisam and Kholod attribute a central place to the schooling system where they were formed and educated.

Numerous researches have shown that the Israeli educational system is historically and traditionally influenced and based on colonial dynamics of political Zionist movements. The empirical results demonstrate the racist, orientalist and discriminatory dynamics that shape the multiple relations the state holds with its Jewish-Mizrahi and Arab-Palestinian population (Abu-Asba, 2004; Weksler, 2014; Cohen, 2006; Al-Haj, 2003; Swirski, 1990, 1999). Moreover, Israeli sociologists reveal that education is central in the production and reproduction of inequality within Israeli state (Cohen and Haberfeld 2004, Shavit 2004, Mazawi 2004).

To follow Swirski (1990) the general term 'Israeli school' is artificial, as it comprises within it numerous engagements of oppression. In order to fully understand the complexity of the Israeli educational system, Weksler (2015) argues that one must acknowledge the politics of separation and discrimination it encompasses from the very early years of its creation. With the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 the different political Zionist groups agreed upon three major educational currents (Swirski, 1990): The general public system, the religious-Zionist public system and the independent Orthodox system. When speaking about the 'Israeli school', one implicitly refers to the first hegemonic current that is the so-called secular public system.

In reality the hegemonic secular public system is also divided in to three types of schools: schools of the wealthy neighborhoods, where most students are Ashkenazi; schools in development towns and the southern neighborhoods of the big cities, where most of the students are Mizrahi; and the Arab schools (Swirski, 1990). The first internal school system

of the secular public system which (ibid.) is referred to as the Ashkenazi Israeli school, was at the time of the creation of the state the most politically influential. It is known as the *Yishuv*[68]*,* that was the Zionist elite, composed of the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* that had control over the official educational material. It is within these schools that the Zionist political, military and security elite were and are formed (Weksler, 2015; Swirski, 1990).

The third type of 'Israeli school' within the hegemonic secular public system referred to by Swirsk (1990) as the Arab school, encompasses most of the Palestinian population that were, until 1966, under Israeli military regime (Al-Haj, 2003). This educational system is divided into two main subsystems, the public Arab subsystem on the one hand and the Druze public system on the other. With the establishment of the State of Israel, Weksler (2015) demonstrations that what is defined by the state as the Arab section within the educational system was created in the goal to survey the Arab Palestinian population. While at first this section included Muslim and Christian Arabs, thereafter the Druze and Bedouin communities were also transferred to this educational section[69].

The division of the Arab educational system was done, according to Weksler (2015), in order to have better control over the Palestinian population. This form of division was far from the cultural needs and specificities of the Palestinian community as a whole. Furthermore, he argues that the state educational approach towards the Palestinians and Arabs was led by the different relations these communities had (and still have) towards the army service.

The Eurocentric approach of the Zionist institutions further separated the Christian Arab population from the rest of the indigenous Arab population of Palestine. The Israeli State adopted the Muslim and Christian division of communities elaborated during the British mandate in Palestine. Shavit (2004) has shown that Christian Palestinians are more likely to attend private, and thus reach higher educational achievements than Muslim Palestinians and Mizrahi Jews.

Ibtisam and Kholod's accounts demonstrate that which Bishara (Bishara in Suleiman,

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68 The word Yshuv, literally means, settlement, colony or a populated zone in Hebrew. In this case it is a common term that refers to the Jewish population that inhabited *Eretz Israel* (the land of Israel) prior to the establishment of the State of Israel.

69 Weksler's (2015) recent research shows that this categorization continues to exist within the education administration.

2004) argues; the educational system plays a key role in the creation and reproduction of processes of exclusion and marginalization of the Arab-Palestinian population in the Israeli State. Abu-Asba (2004) argues that the Arab education in Israel functions in conditions of extreme inequality, on the one hand, and lack of parental and community leadership involvement on the other. As a result of the national, religious and civic position of domination to which the Arab Palestinian minority in Israeli State are subject, the Arab educational system in Israel functions in a more conservative manner, of hegemonic structures and state apparatus, than most educational systems.

According to Abu-Asba (2004), the condition of the Arab-Palestinian education within the Israeli state should be tackled from two main aspects: the political on the one hand, and the ideological on the other. The political aspect concerns more the questions of funds and resources, while the ideological concerns the question of content, to which both Ibtisam and Kholod refer.

Golan's (2004) results strengthen Ibtisam and Kholod's accounts when she shows that the Arab educational system highlights and reinforces Jewish-Zionist values, neglecting and overlooking the Palestinian national identity. Golan (ibid.) further argues that Arab-Palestinian students are taught fear through denying their history. On the same line, Jewish-Israeli schools don't include the Arab-Palestinian (hi)story. These dynamics deny the Palestinians their violent history of expulsion and destruction to which they have been subjugated since the creation of the state of Israel. Yet it further denies the Jewish-Israeli students the possibility to critically gaze at the creation of the state to which they belong and in which they are formed.

Golan (2004) analyzes the discrimination to which the Arab Palestinians are subjected within the educational system through three major aspects. Her analysis is "by analogy" to the three major feminist waves; the first discriminatory aspect she calls 'discrimination in funds'; the second 'Arab educational leadership discrimination'; and the third, 'educational material discrimination'. In the first two aspects, Golan (ibid.) reveals results of researches showing the high funding discriminatory dynamics and the lack of representation of Arab educators and intellectuals within decision-making concerning educational content.

The Palestinian students in Israel study materials that strengthen an uprooted confused identity (Golan, 2004; Suleiman, 2004). As mentioned by both Kholod and Ibtisam, a big part

of the content taught in school relates to Jewish history and tradition while the Palestinian history and tradition are at best marginalized (ibid.). The Nakba, expropriation of and expulsion from lands, the thousands of Palestinian refugees, and the Palestinian occupation, are neither taught in Arab-Palestinian schools nor in Jewish-Israeli ones (Peled-Elhanan, 2010).

"Do You Understand The Racism?[70]"

Imad describes the racist frame to which he has been subjugated since a very young age, when trying to explain what colonial consciousness means to him. Throughout the interview Imad refers to Zionism when elaborating the sense of colonialism:

> TD: What do you mean when you say "a Zionist position"?

> A Zionist position is that the Palestinian doesn't exist the Palestinian is the number one terrorist in the world, the figure of the Arab Orientalist, the ugly terrorist image of the Orientalist. The Zionist propaganda of the 50s, "people without a land, land without people […]" We can do with them, the colonial consciousness, whatever we want, displace them, the Palestinian, in order to create a space with no Palestinians. Do you understand the racism? (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)

Imad presents Zionist positions on two main levels. The first level relates to the image of the Arab man, while the second is recounted in terms of understanding historical injustice. Both levels referred to by Imad enter the frame of racism.

When he asks me if I understand the racism, I feel Imad would like to understand my own political position before recounting his own trajectory. At this point he places me within the entanglement of dominations; I am a Jewish-Israeli researcher and perhaps his account is furthermore addressed at me within these frameworks.

I suggest reading his act to make sure that the hegemonic racist frames are not invisible to me within the work of Ahmed (2008). In this sense, I wonder whether Imad is verifying that my intellectual posture is not hiding behind an imaginary prohibition on racism that which

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70 Imad

carries a discourse about racism as something negative, yet reproduces racist dynamics on daily levels (ibid.).

At this point Imad does not recount if his own gaze is Zionist, yet he elaborates the hidden transcripts (Scott, 1990) of political Zionism. While we don't know if Imad has interiorized a *Zionist position,* we do understand that holding such a gaze positions him, as Haraway (1988) sensed, within the frames of the 'marked bodies' (ibid., p.581). The Zionist "hostile white gaze", referred to by Ahmed (2007, p.153) is directed at Imad. He is the object of this gaze while treated as a body *not* at home (Fanon, 1952).

Imad sounds angry. Understanding Zionism as racism and understanding the influence it has on his life seems to be a step towards a departure from colonial consciousness. In the following chapter we shall see that his own liberation process is bound up with the work to unlearn the colonial knowledge about himself and his Palestinian community. Along the same line of thought, in the following account Fadi unfolds the way the Zionist space is a constant threat on his livelihood as a Palestinian man, living within the State of Israel:

> *If today I would like to come and explain what is a sense of strangeness and alienation as a Palestinian, as an Arab in Israel, I would give you this example… because it simply describes the way in which the space in threatening for you, you are in the space, you are in a space that sees you as a danger, as if you are the cause of the threat, but in reality it (the space) threatens you, it threatens you all the time. You don't belong, you are a stranger, you don't have a place here.*

> *TD: "You are even dangerous."*

> *Yes, you are dangerous! […] you are a dangerous stranger, un accepted, persona non grata in this space. From here it is very easy to get to all kinds of thoughts about transfer, and about the Nakba and about ethnic cleansing. This consciousness, the consciousness of the Nakba, and ethnic cleansing of 48' exists everyday. It exists everyday […] Transfer exists, in the most violent form of Zionist Israeli racism, it exists there. (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)*

Fadi's account reveals that for a Palestinian living within the state, the way he perceives the world is interconnected to the historical events that brought to the Nakba and to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine (Pappe, 2006). On the historical level, Imad relates racism within the

framework of settler colonialism. The possibility for the non-Palestinian colonizer to displace Palestinians and in his words "do with them what we want" is according to Imad, racist. Imad's understanding of racism is in coherence with Memmi's (1957) definition of colonialism. Colonialism, Memmi argues, is "one variety of fascism" which is based on economic privilege, despite the suggestion of more noble goals of religious conversion or civilization (ibid.). Furthermore, he elaborates that racism is embedded in every colonial institution, which establishes the "sub-humanity" of the colonized, nurturing inferiority self-concepts for the colonized. The colonizer will always believe that the western colony has brought development and 'modernity' not only to the colonized but also to the whole world. Hence, one outcome will be that the colony will eventually benefit and develop humanity as a whole (ibid.).

In the early 1940s, when discussing the possibility of settling Palestine within the frame of political Zionism, Rabbi Kook[71] declared the exact same vision referred to by Memmi (1957): *"all the civilizations of the world will be renewed by the renascence of our spirit. All religions will don new and precious raiments, casting off whatever is soiled, abominable, unclean"* (Rabbi Kook in Rose 2005, p. 24).

While Imad speaks about the propaganda of the 1950s his analysis clearly places Zionism within an earlier historical, colonial reading. Racism, according to him, is based on settler colonial power dynamic of displacement. He refers to Weizmann's declaration within a Zionist meeting in Paris in April 1914, where he formulated Zionism on the twin issues of land and people: *"there is a country which happens to be called Palestine, a country without a people, and on the other hand, there exists the Jewish people, and it has no country"* (Weizmann in Abu-Lughod, 1988 [2001, p.200])[72].

Earlier in the chapter, Esther recounts the way in which colonial consciousness for her, was the imaginary thought that the land was vacant of inhabitants. Throughout the research, we observe that deconstructing the Zionist aphorism is an important task of liberation. Having said that, for the Jewish-Israeli participants it is often a task that is recounted as an eye

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71 Harav (Rabbi) Kook was the founder and the spiritual leader of the Zionist religious political current. After the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, in the early years of 1970s this political current was the ideological foundation of the settlements in the Palestinian occupied territories.

72 Important to point out that Weizmann did not coin this aphorism: "orignated by Restorationist Clergyman Alexander Keith (1843), it nods in the direction of Britain's imperial states in Ottoman territories." (Dittmar, 2012, p. 177)

opening, or a discovery while for the Palestinian participants it is more about the reclaiming, to make their personal, family and national story present.

I find it interesting to critically gaze at the contradiction of both declarations. On the one hand, we have Rabbi Kook declaring benefits and enlightenment to the colony and the colonized. Yet at the same time he bases his speech on British restorationism that declares the land as vacant. We understand these two parallel declarations within the same colonial, Eurocentric view political Zionists enforced when building the settler project in Palestine.

Suleiman (2002) shows that political Zionism, prior to the creation of the State of Israel continually centralized the idea of *Geulat Haadama* (redemption of the land). As recounted by Imad, this ideology regards the indigenous Palestinians as temporary inhabitants from which the land needs redemption, by its "true" owners, the Jews.

Imad situates the analysis within the large literature that examines the State of Israel and political Zionist nationalism through colonial and settler colonial frames of reference (Said, 1978; Shohat, 1999; Suliman-Jabary et *al.*, 2012; Shafir, 1989; Shafir and Peled, 2002; Weizman, 2016).

When Imad relates to Zionism as racism, we can understand that political Zionism regards the lives of Palestinians, in Butler's (2004, 2009) sense, as non-grievable and therefore as *non-lives* at all. Whether they were inhabiting and living on the land, or whether they were absent, the ideology of political Zionism did not consider their livelihood within the frames of humanity. Furthermore and through the reading of Shohat (1999), when excluding Palestinians from the frame of humanity, Weitzmann's position refers to the Jewish people as a homogeneous people. Official Zionism, she argues, universalized the Jewish experience through a Eurocentric reading of Jewish history, rejecting Arab Jewish identity and history (ibid.).

Contrary to Weitzmann, Theodor Herzl, some twenty years earlier in 1897, did not deny the existence of the population of Palestine (Abu-Lughod, 1988). He clearly viewed the coming of the Jewish European settlers to Palestine, as did Rabbi Kook, in the same way that European colonialism was viewed; as benefiting the Afro-Asian people it had colonized. The coming of the Jewish-European settlers to Palestine was led by the same 'Universal' and 'Civilizing' mission that Europeans had when building their colonial empires. The orientalist gaze related the Palestinians to the other Arab countries, considered inferior in the eyes of the

Western colonizers. Furthermore, it aimed at framing them as nomadic and Bedouin, in order to deny any kind of collective or personal ownership of land or country (ibid.)[73].

When drawing on the groundbreaking scholarship of Edward Said (1978), Shohat (1999), argues that the view of the East as aberrant, underdeveloped, and inferior, exists in order to constitute an Israeli-Occidental self as rational, modern, and superior, as well as to justify its privileges and aggressions. *Orientalism* identifies the orient as the Other. A colonial consciousness would therefore include processes through which the hegemonic I would aim to distinguish him/herself, from that Other. The distinction is the way in which the orientalist constructs his/her Eurocentric identity. Orientalism perceives the Orient, contrary to the West, as exotic yet primitive, violent, emotional and dirty.

"Listening to all kinds of racist comments[74]"

Ibtisam's account allows a glance into her own experience with Israeli dehumanization processes towards Palestinians:

> *In job hunting, working in general and listening to all kinds of racist comments such as "Kill the Arabs". I was also (in Tel Aviv) not at the best period, it was the first Intifada[75], 1992, it was still (the period of) terrorists. "All the Palestinians are terrorists" "all Arabs are terrorists" and it was not a comfortable environment to be in, and at the university of Tel Aviv it is even harder, because we were barely 3% Palestinian students. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam goes to Tel-Aviv University during the First Palestinian Intifada. This, according to her was a bad period to be in an Israeli institution, as an Arab Palestinian. She encounters yet again racism within all aspects of her life. It seems that during the Palestinian uprising, radicalized discourses within Israeli social formation are amplified. Like Imad, Ibtisam brings to the forefront the essentialist hegemonic frame of Israeli social formation to which Arabs

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73 There is more to Herzl's idea, a political tone, whereby he advocates for Jews to govern themselves. For him, in this, there was no religious tonality, but the belief in a Jewish people, a community of people with a political program.

74 Ibtisam

75 Uprising

and Palestinians are subjugated (Zureik 1979).

Limbrick (2012) argues, drawing his analysis from Ferguson's (2003) work in relation to radicalized discourses to which African Americans are subjugated in the United States, that Palestinians within the State of Israel, as well as Mizrahim are labeled as aberrant and deviant. In Ibtisam's account, we observe that this pathological performance assigned to Palestinians, frames them all as terrorists and murderers. This position assigned to "radicalized" Palestinians, following Kipfer (2013), is what enables violent and racist comments such as "*Kill the Arabs*".

Ibtisam is aware of her marginal position as a Palestinian within the Jewish-Israeli institutions. While engaging in the demand for a more humanizing environment she does not interiorize the hegemonic definition of what Guénif-Souilamas (2000) defines as "republican integration" in the French context. Within (post)colonial France, Guénif-Souilamas argues, migrants and their descendants are expected to assimilate into French society, while constantly assigned to the margin (ibid.). Within the entanglement of race, gender, sex and religion dominations to which they are subjected, migrants of (post)colonial countries, and their descendants, are constantly reminded of their otherness and deviance (2006, 2012).

Along the same line of thought, and within the South African context of Apartheid, Biko (1987) argues that one must question what the word integration means. In this sense, he is ready to consider the possibility of being part of a society in which Blacks and whites cohabit, yet refuses the term integration if it is understood as assimilation into the white society. Therefore he acknowledges that Black unity is an act of negation to white racism, yet finds it an important political step to resist domination and violence.

In Boubeker's (2011) sense, and within the French context of immigration, the sociological knowledge developed through the struggle by the political actors, creates a political subjectivity that challenges the French hegemonic model of integration and use of immigration and by so doing, builds their own history through their new representations and role models.

"At the heart of true integration is the provision for each man, each group to rise and attain the envisioned self. Each group must be able to attain its style of existence without encroaching on or being thwarted by another. Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-

styles of the various groups. This is true integration" (Biko, 1987, p.22).

Conclusion

My concern to better understanding individual counter-hegemonic liberation processes of Israeli and Palestinian political actors within the Israeli colonial formation, starts with this first chapter entitled "Colonial Consciousness".

This chapter starts with Shira's account where she outlines the process of trans/formation from colonial consciousness. Shira relates to her process as a task of eye opening. Vision appears to be a crucial sense through which the participants recount the perpetuation of colonial consciousness, yet furthermore the possibility to develop a counter-hegemonic gaze, which liberates. Following Shira, I present Johayna's account in which she elucidates the argument that the liberation from colonial consciousness is bound up in long and profound processes.

While conducting the interviews with the participants, I was concerned with my choice of terminology. Inspired by hooks' (1996) I chose to use the term colonial consciousness, when defining the complex hegemonic stance from which the participants seek liberation. This chapter shows, I hope, that the participants found the language of the research pertinent to their experience.

The first part of, this chapter, concentrates on the way the Jewish-Israeli participants give meaning to their own colonial consciousness from their domination standpoint. Whereas within the second part of the chapter, I sought to clarify the way in which the Palestinian participants view the very same concept.

Within this chapter participants elucidate the writing of the dissertation by showing that the question of their gaze towards the world, and furthermore, their gaze towards themselves within the world is crucial in understanding the performance of colonial consciousness.

In the following chapter I am concerned with the way in which the participants refer to their self-liberation from colonial consciousness. The accounts demonstrate that the chosen terminology, Shichrur, liberation in Hebrew, accurately describes their experience. The accounts demonstrate the way in which the participants liberate themselves from a colonial gaze at reality.

CHAPTER TWO

Liberation From Colonial Consciousness

> "The lie, the perfect lie, about people we know, about the relations we have had with them, about our motive for some action, formulated in totally different terms, the lie as to what we are, whom we love, what we feel with regard to people who love us… that lie is one of the few things in the world that can open windows for us on to what is new and unknown, that can awaken in us sleeping senses for the contemplation of universes that otherwise we should never have known." Proust, The Captive in Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 1990 [2008 p. 67].

Overview: "The Power to See[76]"

In Chapter One I was concerned with the way in which the participants recount what colonial consciousness means to them. My goal was to first understand whether the term, colonial consciousness, can fully describe their hegemonic experience and therefore is a term to which they can relate when elaborating that at which they gazed at prior to their trans/formation. As a second step, I sought to develop the term namely through the participants' definitions.

Along the same line of thought, in this chapter, I am concerned with better understanding the way in which the participants developed what hooks (1992) calls an oppositional gaze at reality. I argue that the development of an oppositional gaze is a dynamic process through which the participants liberate themselves from colonial structures of thought and further develop a liberated, counter-hegemonic consciousness. The proposed analysis is drawn from hooks' (1992, 1994, 2003) scholarship in which she argues that a liberated consciousness is rooted within critical thinking that transforms lives and realities.

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76 Haraway, 1988, p.585

In most cases the participants outline their consciousness trans/formation as processes of liberation and emancipation. Nevertheless, this profound trans/formation divulges a difficult process that, in Derrida and Owens's (1979) terms, requires constant work (ergon) on numerous levels (ibid., p.18). The ongoing *ergon* is understood as the possibility to reframe the vision and thus deconstruct hegemonic conceptions of gazing at the world: The acquisition of tools that allow one to differentiate between the setting, backgrounds and content.

At the heart of this chapter, which seeks to outline processes of liberation from colonial consciousness of both Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian political actors, stand the following questions: What is the importance and interpretations the participants attribute to a critical understanding of reality? In which way do the participants elaborate the development of their critical reading of reality?

The accounts demonstrate that the development of an oppositional gaze is interconnected to questions of gazing at power. In Haraway's (1988) words: "Vision is always a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices" (ibid., p.585).

Harawy's (1988) definition of the vision and its relation to power echoes within the results of this work. For all participants, it seems that the oppositional gaze is the possibility to develop a vision at a new reality they define as *the truth*. I understand the way in which they define the truth through their ability to reframe that at which they gaze and thus understand the power dynamics that influence one's vision. The participants' accounts thus reveal that reframing reality, is an act of decoding the lens through which one understands the unspoken assumptions, including beliefs and schemas that are being used to interpret reality.

The trans/formation of consciousness to which the participants clearly refer is bound up in their vision that exposes power and domination. Yet it is also and importantly, the way in which they expose their own position within the hegemonic power relation of society. In this sense, the development of an oppositional gaze within a power dynamic of domination and colonization cannot be symmetric. Members of the dominant collective, in our case the Jewish Israeli participants, and members of the dominated group, in our case the Palestinian participants, do not share the same apparatus of the gaze.

Part one entitled "Per/forming an Oppositional Gaze at Zionism", namely presents the

accounts of Esther, Adi, Moshe, Hila, Maya, Anat and Alon[77], who are positioned, within the Israeli matrix of domination, in the dominant group. From their Jewish-Israeli position, their accounts disclose that their liberation from colonial consciousness is bound up in processes of departure, in Butler's (2012) sense, from Zionist formation. Critically gazing at Zionism involves first understanding that they were lied to and then developing the possibility to gaze at *the truth*.

Conversely, Part two, entitled "Oppositional Gaze at Racism" namely presents the Palestinian accounts of Kholod, Imad, Ibtisam and Fadi who illustrate the development of a critical gaze at racism, to which they are subjected. Their radical vision describes the way in which racism enters every element of their life. In some cases, they recount the internalization of racism and the need to liberate themselves, and in other, their liberation processes are recounted in terms of resistance to Israeli hegemony. In both stances, their Palestinian identity is of paramount importance.

Part One: Per/Forming an Oppositional Gaze at Zionism

"When the truth is replaced by silence, the silence is a lie." Yevgeny Yevtushenko

"The realization that you were lied to[78]"

In the following account Esther reveals a fascinating analysis of her own process of trans/formation. According to her, consciousness is built slowly, yet can be changed or even destroyed. In Chapter One, Esther recounts the way in which she had not seen the Palestinian villages while walking the land with her youth movement, the *Shomer Ha-Tz'air*. In this chapter, Esther explains that the reason for which she did not see is due to the lies. It appears to me that the acknowledgment that she was lied to, is an important step in her deconstruction

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77 The interviews with Anat, Maya and Alon, were held in 2009 as part of a prior research in which I sought to unfold the learning process through which Israeli Anti-Zionist go. I have brought part of their accounts here as I found that they echo with the account of the participants of the current research.

78 Esther

of colonial consciousness:

> *So this realization that you were lied to, but really, bluntly. Horrible things were done. They (Arabs) were driven away, expelled.*
>
> *TD: What happened? How did you realize that the Shomer Ha-Tz'air lies?*
>
> *Ok this is the process that I separate myself from Zionism, right? (Esther, feminist, political activist, Haifa, 2013)*

Apparently in order to critically gaze at the lies Esther has to separate herself from Zionism. Her parting from Zionism, in Butler's (2012) terms, enables a process that develops a critical analysis of reality and the creation of an oppositional gaze. The oppositional gaze forms an anti-hegemonic vision at the dominant Zionist story and therefore 'reveals' the lies. It seems that understanding that, *horrible things were done to Arabs,* is the harshest new knowledge for Esther. Understanding the historical context, and that which happened in 1948, during the Nakba in Palestine and in her city, Haifa in particular, continues to be her principle concern:

> *What happened here in Haifa (in 1948) is a horrible catastrophe. And it still exists to this day. It is not only that I can't go to where I could go before it is also that there is something bad here, that we didn't see before, it is not that it was not bad before, but we didn't see it. We were not aware of it, etc. (Esther, feminist, political activist, Haifa, 2013)*

Esther's new vision that forms her oppositional gaze, now guides her movement. It appears that before the trans/formation of her gaze and separation from Zionism she felt free to walk and travel the land. Today her critical gaze at reality and the understanding of the lies create a prohibition from hiking and traveling. Esther no longer feels entitled to walk in places she had hiked before. It is no longer possible for her to perform within the space of her city and of the land as a whole without holding a critical reading of history. Her oppositional gaze at the *horrible catastrophe* that took place in 1948 furthermore gazes at violet dynamics that continue to present days.

Esther is aware that she is the one who has changed, not reality. The fact that she did not see the truth before is because, in her words, *Zionism blinded* her *eyes*. Now from her newly

political position and performance she seeks more knowledge. Esther can now learn the truth since she has separated herself from her colonial Zionist reading of reality. She is an agent of her own knowledge and is determined to be active in the construction of her radical consciousness:

> *I read and I get interested and slowly slowly I understand things that I couldn't see before because Zionism blinded my eyes. I felt that a process that I can't explain is taking place, it is not (only) that I am separating myself from Zionism and that I am not Zionist, it is that I am angry and this is the place where I can say I am anti! I don't like saying about myself that I am anti, I am a feminist, I am not anti men, I am not interested in being anti, I am not anti to anything, but on the other hand sometimes, why are you anti? Because you are angry, right? It evokes rage. There is something here with a lot a lot of anger and it continues to create anger and it does not end, and every time you see it anew. (Esther, feminist, political activist, Haifa, 2013)*

Esther's new performance includes anger, rage and *being anti*, in her words. Being anti is a new position for Esther. Her feminist formation and language excluded the possibility of performing *anti*. However, her complex reading of reality brings her to embody anger as a form of resistance to injustice. Perhaps this resistance is her new radical feminist performance that can no longer stay silent at the sight of violence and injustice. Later in the dissertation Esther unveils the development of her feminist discourse due to her anti-occupation activism.

In a former research (Dor, 2010) I have shown that the process through which Israeli Anti-Zionists 'come-out of the closet' and perform their anti-hegemonic position within Israeli formation is bound up with strong feelings of anger. The participants in the research all recounted that their first step towards Anti-Zionism included complicated emotions of dissonance and anger towards the State and at times towards their parents. To follow Fanon's (1952) work, it appears, that anger is important within the preliminary steps towards profound consciousness trans/formation. When Esther recounts that at times she felt she could no longer explain what she was going through, her account echoes in Eitan's account, earlier in Chapter One, when he relates colonial consciousness to the need to control.

One gets the feeling that Esther enters into an unknown zone without the tools to determine its process. At the end of our conversation, after shutting the recording machine, Esther attempts to summarize the interview. She says that as a Jew in the State of Israel, as an

Ashkenazi Jew, one walks the land with a strong sense of entitlement. Deconstructing this performance appears to be, for Esther the possibility to perhaps, liberate herself from colonial consciousness.

In the following account, Esther, after her departure from political Zionist formation (Butler, 2012), reveals the possibility to take actions for a better understanding of reality, or perhaps for a truthful gaze at the world surrounding her:

> *And slowly slowly I am more interested, and the more I read the more I visit my Palestinian friends, and started learning Arabic [...] it is a collection of things, you know the details, details, details build your consciousness, and you don't even know, and one day you wake up and you say my consciousness has completely changed! Mahapah[79]! But where exactly did it happen, how did it happen?*

> *TD: Is it hard to put your finger on it?*

> *Exactly! Because consciousness is something that is built slowly and gets destroyed or changes, the undoing of consciousness is precisely a complex process, right? (Esther, feminist, political activist, Haifa, 2013)*

As for the other participants in the research, my conversation with Esther started with a brief, yet precise explanation of the research. As we have seen throughout Chapter One and in the current account, Esther relates colonial consciousness to Zionism. Moreover, her liberation process is recounted through the understanding of her profound trans/formation process. Esther is unable to pinpoint a specific moment when she trans/formed. She repeatedly recounts that radical consciousness is built through a process that first deconstructs her old hegemonic consciousness.

Whilst Esther cannot *put her finger* on the change, she recounts that one day she woke up different. Learning Arabic, reading, and acquiring anti-hegemonic knowledge is a constant trajectory that builds the persons she is today. The *Mahapah,* the turnover, is powerful, yet we understand from Esther that it is fragile and necessitates ongoing work.

As I have mentioned before, critically gazing at the Zionist hegemonic formation through

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79 Mahapach means massive transformation, coming from the verb *Lahafoch* which means: to turn over. Mahapecha which means: revolution comes from the same linguistic root.

the frame of lies is recounted throughout many of the interviews and conversations while constructing this research. Similar to Esther, in an interview held in 2009, Anat is preoccupied by the lie that was told to her about the people who were expelled:

> *Mainly, of the story that was told. Like a child whose parents did not tell her the truth, we were not told that there had been people here and that they were expelled, it was told in a way. [They] did not tell the Palestinian side, that this movement did not have the guts, and still does not have, to find any kind of solution or reconciliation. I am not coming from the place, which says that Jews have no place in 'Eretz Israel' (land of Israel). I feel like a daughter that her parents did not tell her [...] I mean if I were told and others, we could have first, maybe most people would not have wanted to live here. (Anat, Mizrahi political activist, interviewed in Tel Aviv, 2009)*

Anat's account is filled with emotions. While Esther explicitly expresses feelings of anger, Anat recounts childlike deception. Anat makes an analogy between the Zionist movement and her relationship with her parents. She positions herself within an infantile position in front of the body, which has not provided the truth. While she does not use the word anger, like Esther, her account seems to express anger and frustration at her lack of choice. It appears that if Anat knew the truth she would have not chosen to live in *Eretz Israel,* however, the possibility to choose was taken from her. She does not negate the right for Jews to inhabit the land, yet she reclaims, drawing from hooks (1994), the possibility to choose as a task of liberation.

In the same way, Sara realizes that she has been lied to for a very long time:

> *When I started checking out what this picture was, How did Israel sin in its relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? There was a collapse, as if the floor under my feet collapsed, I lost everything I was leaning on that day; the childhood songs, the holidays, good, friends and suddenly there was a void in my soul, an abyss emptiness. I was very confused and did not want everything I knew/ I lost trust in the media, in the symbols; the flag, I had a huge void and did not know how I would fill this space that had been created. I did not know what the replacements would be, I only knew that I had been lied to till then, so what do we do now?? (Sara, socio-political activist, interviewed in Jerusalem, 2009)*

Sara's account illustrates an experience of extreme feelings of instability. She literally

recounts that she lost the ground on which she had stood. The understanding of the lies is recounted as a violently embodied experience. The lie in Sara's account confronts existential question of love and belonging. Similarly to processes of *coming out of the closet,* in Kosofsky Sedgwick (2008) sense, Sara now questions the basic issues of whom she can love and whether she can ever love again. She looks back at her beloved childhood feelings and wonders if they were genuine.

Earlier Esther recounts that the long hard worked process of building a radical consciousness, is bound up in *undoing* the old hegemonic consciousness. The work of undoing, or that which I have earlier called unlearning (Dor, 2010), appears to be the stance in which Sara has found herself. Sara has not yet, within this precise account, found a *replacement* for the lies.

Esther's account leads us to Said and Mohr's (1986) work, in which they argues that one should query the reason for which the Western forces, involved in the establishment of the Zionist project in Palestine, ignored the presence of its natives (Bhandar and Toscano, 2016). Said and Mohr (1986) contend that Palestinians as people and as a people, were gazed at and treated during those years, as 'vanishing races' just like other indigenous people of colonial powers.

On the same line, Pappe (2006) argues, that in earlier years there was no total agreement within the Zionist movement. Having said that from the beginning of the twentieth century, political Zionism associated the project of a Jewish state with the colonization of Palestine. In the first Zionists' minds, Pappe (2006) argues, strangers occupied the land. While the movement secularized Judaism, the ideology was based on the promise of the Bible. In their sense these strangers were a danger for the project and had to be dealt with in a way that would permit the establishment of the state (ibid.).

In the following account Alon recounts the way he encounters, *what really happened in* 1948:

> *[...] I didn't know it would direct me to something else. But the Mahapach[80] was in 82'. Two things happened that year, I think. The first was that I started understanding what happened here in 48'. At that point I had already worked in the archives for a year and a half and I was in total shock. I did not expect it, it was a shock! I started*

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80 Mahapach – Massive transformation.

getting into it and was in shock!

TD: Shock of what?

Of my findings. Of the story, the testimonies of expulsion and massacre. I expected to discover something else, that which I grew up on. I was searching for the heroic story; I did not look for the injustice. And I found it. And it was a hit. It came from all directions. I mean, it was amazing, I think I felt deceived. (Alon, University professor, interviewed in Tivon, 2009)

The archives to which Alon refers did not contain the knowledge Alon had always held about 1948. He uses the word *shock* three times to describe his feelings at that moment of his life. While looking for heroic stories Alon found injustice. The ethical gaze that Alon develops is clearly related to a new knowledge he had acquired from the archives.

Alon grew up, according to him, on heroic stories that took place during 1948. As Esther, Anat, Sara and Kholod, Alon reveals that he was lied to. At the end of this account, Alon says he felt deceived. Discovering the truth about the way in which the State of Israel was formed on the destruction of Palestinians and Palestinian livelihood, puts Alon under Shock. Alon's account demonstrates that the construction of a radical consciousness, in the Freirian (1970) sense, or the development of an emancipatory consciousness in the Fanonian (1961) sense must start with the acknowledgment of the historical contexts, which created the unjust order.

"Not buying the story[81]"

"[…] What is put forward as truth is often nothing more than a meaning. And persists between the meaning of something and its truth is the interval, a break without which meaning would be fixed and truth congealed" (Trinh T. Minh-Ha 1990, p. 76)

The question of truth and the acknowledgment of reality seem to be key elements within processes of liberation from colonial consciousness. Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1990) refers to the meaning and perhaps sense that one gives to the truth. Her definition opens the possibility that the truth, as Esther related to her processes of trans/formation, is dynamic and requires a

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81 Adi

complex reading of reality.

The possibility to position oneself within a context that critically understands power dynamics and political structures of power is shown to be crucial for the participants as part of their liberation trajectory work. In the following account, Adi reveals the powerful effect the realization of truth has on her trans/formation of consciousness:

What happened in 2000 is that I found myself on the wrong side of the conflict, the wrong side of history. Why? The fact that everyone is buying the story and you are not! What can you do? You are not buying it! Until then I was like everyone else, and there is a moment you understand that you are in a different place. So I can imagine that this moment interests you, right? This moment is when you understand that you are in a different place, I don't know what to tell you about the fact that I think that it is about the question of taking risks. "Can you take the risks?" this issue to take a risk, it is a very dangerous step, ahh you need to be, in general, an irresponsible person, or that you have nothing to lose, in a certain sense, and then you can be on the wrong side. Or that you are an irresponsible person, it's like, or that you are just naïve.

TD: it is very interesting, you are the first to bring out this issue.

I think the question of risks is a very very central question in this situation. What do we loose when I choose, consciously or not, it doesn't matter how it happens, but when you choose to go against your collective. It's like, against the group to which you belong, (or) that I feel belonging to, listen, I am telling you, I am recounting to you that I am Jewish, right? I am not… I am not a person who felt a stranger within my own people. Ok I have identity problems, because of my hybridity, it is hard for me to find myself, but still I was in the army, at University, I don't feel that there was something that prepared me, despite all, to be in this moment in history, on this side, I don't feel, and besides, I probably had a sense of danger that I didn't feel I was taking too many risks, or I didn't understand.

TD: Because otherwise you would not have gone in to it?

I didn't understand what I was loosing, or what I could loose in such a situation, now part of it is naivety, and I think that with time we discovered the risks, so part of it was

naivety and we didn't know what it meant. We first spoke and thought, you know that is was ok to demonstrate and all that, that at the end of the day it will work out (laugh) [...] It is a learning process, and there is a learning process here. So it is like, the moment of the turnabout, it is not personal it is a historical moment, of a structure and it happens, during Homat Magen[82], in April 2002, Homat Magen is the turnabout, the turnabout in general of the Intifada, it's like, within the official history, it is a turnabout and also within the personal history of many people, it is a turnabout and what happens, that there is very harsh violence, very harsh violence from our police, (the police) is hurting us! Shooting at us! Right? This dissonance was a kind of a moment that even if you didn't understand that it is dangerous (laugh) now you had to understand that it is dangerous. That it is dangerous. Of course it was a nonviolent demonstration, according to all the rules, and it didn't work, someone decided to stop it, I think that during this even many people decided to stop going to demonstrations.

TD: So it worked

Yes, it worked.

TD: Did you continue demonstrating?

Yes I continued going, but I think that I was less consistent, I namely went to things that were related to women, actions of women, because the origin of my activism was feminist. I was part of a very very supportive group, I mean, I was part of the feminist community that is very very supportive and very very coherent, it enabled me to do, it enabled me to think, that even if I take risks, there is someone who will support me, do you understand? The community is very important within the danger concept, if you have a community perhaps your concept of danger changes, the estimation. (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)

Adi uses the idiomatic expression *to buy a story* when referring to her stance of no longer believing, what Esther, Anat, and Sara, refer to as the lies. The four accounts, in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) sense, reveal that Zionist hegemony constructs an "archaeology of silence"

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82 Homat Magen, translated to English as Operation "Defensive Shield", is the official Israeli name given to the massive military invasion by the Israeli army of the West Bank, in the spring of 2002.

that is perceived as the truth (ibid. [2001, p.7]). *The story* appears to be a structure of knowledge, which built her reality to the point that she chooses to deconstruct and undo it. In other words, Adi recounts that which seemed obvious to her, as a reality, became a false hegemonic story. Adi recounts that in the year 2000, she realized that she was different to *everyone else*, as she no longer believed the hegemonic story. Adi's critical gaze at reality positions her within a stance that refuses relations of domination. Her racial thought, now envisions subordination as illegitimate (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

To follow Hill Collins (2000) Adi is engaged within the construction of a liberated radical consciousness to 'free mind'. No longer *buying the story* appears to engage Adi, in, hooks' (1994, 2003) sense, in a praxis of dynamic proclamation and question asking which leads to liberation. Both hooks and Freire claim that this stance is an important position in one's process as it allows being in constant doubt, which develops the ability to think dialectically rather than performing what Freire (1970) calls a domesticated dialectic.

The liberation process to radical consciousness requires critical awareness of oppression through praxis of struggle. Becoming subjects rather than objects of liberation implies that the process cannot take place only during the task of unveiling the reality and thus coming to know it critically. It must also take place in the task of re-creating that same knowledge. The *raison d'être* of liberatory education, Freire (1970) argues, lies in its drive towards reconciliation.

In a problem-posing education (Freire, 1970), people develop their power to critically perceive the way they exist in the world within which they find themselves (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings, who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative trans/formation (ibid., hooks, 1994, 2003).

Esther, Anat, Sara, Adi, and Alon reveal a trajectory that first includes the need to undo hegemonic knowledge followed by reconstructing alternative anti-hegemonic knowledge. While the undoing process entails the unveiling of lies, learning new knowledge appears to include fully understanding the truth.

In hooks' (2003) terms, an educational process, through which I propose to gaze at the trajectories of the participants, is the long journey of critical thought: "Education is about

healing and wholeness. It is about empowerment, liberation, transcendence, about renewing the vitality of life. It is about finding and claiming ourselves and our place in the world" (ibid., p.43).

Adi recounts being in a different place than those surrounding her. It appears that not only is she in a new position, but her account reveals that she has changed profoundly. Adi does not question her new position and performance, she sounds empowered and convinced, in hooks' (2003) terms, to claim her position and place within the true knowledge about the world (Freire, 1970 [2000, p.80]).

I am concerned with the way in which radical consciousness is thus led by tasks of liberation, which critically gaze at hegemonic knowledge as forms of ignorance in respect to *real* knowledge (Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 2000). The praxis of liberation would therefore include processes in which the subjects dynamically seek to challenge ignorance of true knowledge (ibid.), in the quest for the truth about the reality.

In the following account, Gal recounts that understanding himself as part of the *bad-guys* was insightful. Earlier, Adi recounts that finding herself on the wrong side of history, was an illuminating moment of trans/formation. Both Adi and now Gal, visualize reality through relations of power of domination. Understanding themselves as being in the *bad* or *wrong* positions that made them to be oppressors, is, according to Freire and hooks a difficult task, yet one that could lead to liberation (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994, 2003):

> TD: *You said several times that it was very strong and fast, what were your insights?*
>
> *Fast! insights?!? that I am totally, but totally on the bad-guys side, I bought the story, maybe somewhere in a small place inside of me I knew it was a lie, but I bought the story. When I saw it in front of my eyes I knew it is a lie, of course it is a lie!*
>
> TD: *What was a lie?*
>
> *That we are defending ourselves, that Zionism is a wonderful thing, that the Jewish people bla bla bla. (Gal, film director, interviewed in Tel-Aviv, September, 2009)*

Esther, Anat, Sara, Adi and now Gal all appear to have confronted, in Freire's words; *"the accumulation of facts that do not go 'hand in hand' with existing assumptions"* (Freire, 1970 [2000, p.49]). The accounts reveal that the contradictions, to which the participants are

confronted, lead to internal agitation and even in some cases crisis, as recounted by Hila in Chapter One.

The emotional turmoil when understanding oneself to be an oppressor, is perhaps a preliminary step within a larger liberation process, yet according to Freire (1970) it requires the performance of a radical posture, which is true solidarity with the oppressed. To follow Butler (2005) I argue that for the oppressor to perform a radical stance implies to *give an account of oneself*. Giving an account of oneself entails processes of self-reflexivity and critical understanding of structures of domination. In this sense, I understand Gal's concern as he critically gazes at his position rather as, in Memmi's (1957) terms, self-concentrating on his image as a colonizer.

The radical stance challenges, that which Memmi (1957) calls, the Nero Complex figure[83]. True solidarity of the oppressor against the injustice to which the oppressed are subjugated cannot, according to Freire (1970), remain content with just reflecting upon the image of the colonizer; it furthermore entails taking responsibility and acts towards change. The oppressor is in true solidarity, in the Freirian sense, with the oppressed only when he/she stops regarding them as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the selling of their labor. Contrary to radical consciousness, radicalization, according to Freire, is the reproduction of hegemonic structures and could occur if subjects from the dominant group do fully go through a critical educational process of liberation (ibid.).

The new information to which Gal was exposed, brought him to new political contexts, which filled him with new knowledge and allowed the process of unlearning the old knowledge to occur (Dor, 2010). Critical reading of reality is thus a preliminary step towards liberation. For the oppressor, as for the oppressed, understanding critical reading of reality as an educative task is an important step towards self-change (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994, 2003; Weksler, 2015).

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83 In his article, *Jewish Nationalism and The Question of Palestine* Cocks critics Memmi's concept of the Nero figure in relation to the colonial question in Palestine: "The Nero figure seeks absolution by rewriting history, extinguishing memories, glorifying his own merits, harping on the faults of the group he usurps and physically crushing that group to prevent it from demanding recognition of its humanity from him. But the more he oppresses, the more illegitimate he becomes in his own eyes and the more he hates his victim for turning him into a tyrant" (Cocks, 2006 p.33).

"Second Palestinian Intifada, a formative event[84]"

> *Motherhood brought me to a place of no return, I think, as if there was no other choice. And I think that the second Palestinian Intifada in general was a formative event in my life. I think it is a dramatic historical event of the 20th century and of the conflict [...] (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)*

Adi defines the Second Palestinian Intifada as a formative event in her life. In Hebrew she employs the words *Eirua'a Mechonen*. Her account sheds light on two events that led her to stop, that which she defined earlier, *buying the story*. No longer *buying the story*, according to her, is a result of being in a different place. It seems that her new position in the space brought her to further relativize the position of the others around her. It is interesting to look at she importance she gives to place and position.

I propose to look at Adi's account in movement. The first event that, *"brought her to a place of no return",* and which will be elaborated upon in chapter Four, is motherhood; this new position within her personal space brought her to a task of acknowledgment. Earlier Adi described a binary division of reality, in her experience she transformed into a bad person. Her account of oneself as bad, occurs due to the Palestinian Intifada, which is described as a central drama of the century. I suggest understanding The Palestinian Intifada, to follow Fanon (1952) as a condition created by the oppressed through which Adi is able to enter processes of liberation that trans/form her consciousness. Adi confronts the objective reality and critically analyzes the oppressive matrix of Israeli domination. It seems that her understanding of self as an oppressor is a difficult and painful moment of truth (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970).

These two events trans/form her gaze and lead her to acknowledge the truth about her reality and that of the space in which she performs. Drawing from Hill Collins (2000) it seems that acknowledging the truth through critically gazing at reality can help construct a liberated radical consciousness of free mind. From that point on, she was able to look at her position, within the space and place, of historical context (Scott, 2011).

Adi deconstructs her personal and political conditions in the imbrications of her positions. Motherhood, a newly gendered performance and her position as the colonizer, which she

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84 Adi

discovers through the Palestinian resistance, can no longer be analyzed on separate levels and take an important turn when understood together.

Adi recounts, throughout our conversation, that her participation within the feminist circles in Haifa creates platforms of dialogue through which she learns about herself and trans/form her consciousness. Her account and that of Esther, show the great influence the Palestinian resistance has had on feminism within the State of Israel. Shiran (2007) argues that the second Palestinian Intifada was a moment of truth for feminism in Israel. The Intifada created a condition through which the oppression of Palestinians within the Israeli State and the occupied territories entered the Gaze of Jewish Israelis. Feminist activists and scholars, Shiran (ibid.) continues, found themselves within a condition that could no longer ignore the objective reality. According to her, the feminist task to achieve what she calls, 'a new world' is doomed for failure while occupying others.

In Freire's (1970) terminology, the Intifada enables Adi to develop a consciousness that is based on an alternative reading of reality. Therefore Adi now understands reality within the contradiction of power dynamics of oppression. This reading furthermore could allow a critical gaze at history and the understanding of the processes of oppression to which the Palestinians are subjected. Her new consciousness, if we follow Freire (ibid.) and hooks (1994) enables her to look at the Palestinians as human beings that have been unjustly treated by the collective group to which she belongs. Adi actively takes this confrontation towards critically analyzing the oppressing matrix of Israeli domination.

Likewise, Esther's account reveals that The Second Palestinian Intifada was an important event that constructs her radical consciousness. For Esther it brought yet another dimension to the understanding of the matrix of domination, but it further constructs action and praxis. Esther is also confronted with her position as an oppressor, yet furthermore, like the confrontation with the imaginary Arab man, she is obliged to look at the dehumanization processes to which Arabs are subjected. At this point she realizes that it is not only the global Zionist hegemony that positioned Arabs as inhuman, but also the feminist circles of which she was part.

Esther places herself in a transnational context (Hill Collins, 2000; Yuval-David, 1997). For Esther the Second Intifada, more than the First, was a moment of truth:

During the Second Intifada it was no longer possible to say 'ok I am a feminist but I

don't have to say my political opinions concerning peace'. It was no longer possible during the second Intifada to stand behind this contradiction. It was no longer possible to live in gray zones! You are either against the occupation and you understand very well why people blow themselves up, you don't support the violence, you don't become a supporter of violence but you can understand the incentive and the processes etc. etc. Or you don't understand and then you think that Arabs are not human-beings and one should just murder them. (Esther, feminist, political activist, Haifa, 2013)

The Second Palestinian Intifada forces Esther to confront the contradiction. Contradictions, according to her, are grey zones. Perhaps zones in which political stances are unclear. It seems that the contradiction to which she refers is the hegemonic feminist discourse, which refuses to take a political stance. Therefore, we can presume that to be a feminist, for Esther, is to clearly take an active position against occupation. For a radical stance, feminism *tout court* is not enough. It seems that a radical feminist stance, furthermore tackles questions of racism and the dehumanization processes of the Arab. Esther is reclaiming a complex reading of reality. She refuses violence but insists on understanding the conditions, which create violence. In this sense, she criticizes essentialist dehumanization processes to which Arabs are subjugated within the Israeli hegemony.

The Feminist circles, in which Esther was active, were driven by the Zionist ethos that was often identified with the so-called Israeli Left. The Israeli feminist agenda was developed within a liberal-capitalist context holding a Western-European or North American secular perspective (Dahan-Kelev, 2001). According to Esther, the feminist groups in which she was involved did not have to deal with a radical stance until the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada. This Palestinian uprising forced them to go further in their liberation process to radical consciousness.

Esther is confronted with her position as an oppressor, yet furthermore, like the confrontation with the imaginary Arab man, she must look at the dehumanization processes to which Arabs are subjugated. At this point she realizes that it is not only the global Zionist hegemony that positioned Arabs as inhuman, but also the feminist circles of which she was part. Esther is stepping out of the hegemonic feminist-peace movement and is searching for more.

Contrary to Adi and Shira, who first had to confront their oppressions as Mizrahi women, the Mizrahi Feminist discourse came as a second step for Esther, in her process to hold a complex understanding of reality. In parallel, Mizrahi feminist thought and political praxis further obliged the liberal feminist peace groups, mostly led and directed by Ashkenazi women, to take a radical stance.

"Ok, I am not a Zionist[85]"

> *Suddenly I had the understanding that, "ok I am not Zionist" and it was not an easy understanding. I understood what Zionism was, that it is really a movement of which you are not obliged to be part. (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013).*

Shira, similarly to Anat, brings into the conversation the question of choice. Her liberation from Zionism takes place when she realizes that she is free to choose her political belonging. Shira recounts a sudden moment in her life in which she understands that she is no longer a Zionist. It sounds as though it was an epiphany, perhaps a liberating one. It is a revelation moment in which she says she understood what Zionism really was. Interestingly enough, understanding Zionism does not translate into content, at least not yet. Understanding Zionism is translated as a connection to a movement, perhaps a political movement and the possibility to discard obligations. To follow hooks (2004) when she underlines the pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking whilst knowing and learning new approaches, Shira describes her process as difficult. Furthermore, it is described as a sudden understanding when she can no longer see Zionism in the same frame. I would argue that this is a moment when she starts developing an oppositional gaze as her analysis understands Zionism within its objective reality and historical context.

It seems to me that up to Shira's insightful moment, she was part of a hegemonic project named Zionism. A project becomes hegemonic when its assumptions, actions, way of functioning in organizing reality and understanding penetrates all aspects of society, from the formal and structural to the private, influencing morals, leadership, religion and culture, penetrating to the level of commonsense where beliefs becomes 'natural' (Williams, 1960).

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85 Shira

Zionism, within Israeli hegemonic commonsense, is taken as natural and is thus not questioned by Israelis unless engaged in a critical transformative process (Dor, 2010). In the following account, Alon recounts that while being scared and finding it difficult, understanding he was no longer Zionist was a stance of liberation:

I remember, I think I was liberated in a way. I had no problem saying I am against Zionism and even, that Zionism is a bad thing. It is very difficult for an Israeli to hear something like that, to say it. (I felt) good! But it was hard, I was a little scared of people's comments, it is hard, it freed me. (Alon, University professor, Tivon, 2009)

Alon starts his account by saying that he was liberated and ends his account when saying he was freed when he could say he was against Zionism. However, his description illustrates the difficulty for a Jewish-Israeli to transgress Zionism. It seems that Alon realizes that Zionism controlled and dominated him. To follow Gramsci (2004), Alon illustrates the way in which control is maintained not only through violence and political and economic coercion, but also through a hegemonic ideology, which has become everyone's 'commonsense' values. This helps maintain the status quo and prevents revolting against it.

It seems that being part of Zionism is characterized by almost automatic collaboration, as it is the ruling power. Here we can understand Zionism in the way Williams (1960) describes hegemony, as a moment in which the philosophy and practice of a society fuse or are in equilibrium, an order in which a certain way of life and thought dominates through social, political, religious, and cultural means. Rose (2005) bases her analysis on the understanding that Zionism is one of the most potent collective movements of the twentieth century, whose influence urgently needs to be understood. "It has the capacity to foster identifications that are immutable as indeed, the ineffable Name. As a movement, Zionism has the power, that is, to sacrilege itself" (ibid., p.15).

In the following account Esther brings to the forefront the difficulty for an Ashkenazi feminist political actor to transgress Zionist hegemony:

But all of us who resist the occupation, no matter the level, hope that the colonial project of Zionism fails or stops, right? Separating from Zionism is like forcing one to separate from a hand or a leg, it is like physically separating from an organ right? (Esther, feminist, political activist, Haifa, 2013)

For Esther, separating herself from the Zionist political agenda is not only a cognitive and emotional process of liberation, it is further a physical one that entails suffering, like an amputation. In her experience she embodied Zionism, however, at this point of her process to free her mind, she can no longer identify with the Zionist hegemony. In this research, I am concerned with the understanding of the process of disembodying Zionism as praxis of freedom despite the tearing conflict it might involve.

"A sense of disgust towards Israeliness[86]"

Similar to Adi and Esther, in the following account, Moshe expresses the powerful effect the Palestinian Intifada had on his life and consciousness. Furthermore, Moshe's account reveals that his process of trans/formation is accompanied by strong emotions:

> *I think when the Intifada broke out I was quite in shock. Something very strong happened to my consciousness. That was the first time I understood I was not a Zionist.*

> *TD: How?*

> *Ahh the Intifada, something broke inside me, the hope, it is like I think that really until that moment there was something, there was optimism concerning the peace process, I mean I hadn't yet seen, I didn't understand that I was pulling myself out of Zionism. I think that during the Intifada I felt astonishment from the Zionist left, like a big deception, a strong sense of solitude and betrayal, of righteousness, also a sense of suddenly you feel really in the minority (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012)*

As I have mentioned earlier, Israelis who became anti-Zionists go through five stages of change, while *queering Zionism*. During the first stage, the actors describe preliminary encounters with themselves, the 'truth' and with the 'other'. These encounters brought the participants in the research to question and challenge their own social commonsense. The Anti-Zionist account of oneself, highlighted in the discourse, elaborated strong feelings of *dissonance* when faced with contradicting knowledge to the hegemonic commonsense to

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86 Moshe

which they adhered (namely expressed in terms of; *shock*, *discovery* and *sudden* unveiling of the lies) (Dor, 2010).

Moshe describes his experience in terms of shock. He goes as far as saying that something broke inside of him. He can no longer identify with Zionism and the Zionist left of which he was part. Moshe did not expect to feel such a deception of the Zionist left. In retrospective, he can critically gaze back at his own process and say that the Intifada drifted him away from Zionism.

Moshe could no longer stay indifferent towards the Palestinian resistance nor could he stay silent towards the Zionist left in which he was formed. In the Freirian (1970) sense, Moshe takes a moral position, by placing himself side by side with the oppressed at the price of becoming a minority or in hooks' (1994) terms at the price of entering spaces of marginality.

The processes of undoing Zionism, for some Israeli Anti-Zionist activists is tantamount to processes of undoing gender and sexuality in the confrontation with the Zionist heteronormative surrounding. Furthermore, tasks of *coming-out* of the Anti-Zionist closet are recounted as moments of truth requiring courage (Dor, 2010). Drawing from Butler (2000), and her call for deconstruction of the biologic commonsense understanding of gender, Israeli Anti-Zionists enter processes in which they deconstruct natural common sense perceptions of Zionism. Just as much as gender is culturally constructed, Zionism is politically constructed when growing up as Jewish Israeli in the State of Israel. Deconstructing gender according to Butler challenges the determinism of gender and thus hegemonic cultural destiny (ibid.). On the same line, deconstructing Zionism is recounted as a task of liberation from a political determination to a radical consciousness of free mind.

We understand Anti-Zionism, in the Israeli State context, as the reading of the Zionist project in Palestine as a colonial one from the start (Rose, 2005). Furthermore, the Anti-Zionist critic of the Zionist left, calls against the narrow analysis of the conflict. This narrow analysis is preoccupied with the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (in some cases the Golan Heights as well) rather than acknowledging the earlier historical injustices (Shenhav, 2006). Shenhav argues furthermore, that Anti-Zionism criticizes liberal Ashkenazi left discourses and consciousness and thus engages in a complex reading of entanglement of ethnicity and nation oppressions. In addition, he criticizes the economical profits this 'Moderate Left' movement has gained from Palestinian land and properties confiscated since

1948 (ibid.).

Anti-Zionism concentrates on Jewish rights in the Middle East rather than on Jewish National identity. Particularly when Palestinian rights are constantly and systematically violated, the acknowledgment of Palestinian rights should be thought of whilst considering Jewish ones as well with the aim of creating a bi-national democratic discourse. This discourse challenges the ambivalent contradictory definition of the Israeli state as being both Democratic and Jewish at the same time (Raz Krakotzkin, 2007).

In this sense, Anti-Zionism among Jewish Israelis, can be understood within the reading of Memmi (1957) and his definition: "The colonizer who refuses" (ibid. [1965 p.160]). 'The colonizer who refuses, recognizes the colonial system as unjust and is aware of his/her illegitimate privileges, and may withdraw from the conditions of privilege or remain to fight for change. Zionist performance would be, according to this definition, the colonizer who accepts his/her role as superior. The accounting of oneself deconstructing colonial performances, involves a social subversion of the Israeli commonsense.

In the following account we see the way in which deconstruction of Zionism leads Moshe to question his gendered and nation performances. Drawing from Yosef (2004) we observe that through queering Zionism Moshe challenges the Zionist new Jewish masculinity notion:

> *TD: Let's go back to you, so the second Intifada started, you were at University, you said that there was a moment when you understood you were not a Zionist. What happened?*
>
> *A sense of disgust, a sense of disgust towards Israeliness (Israeliyut), a sense of disgust, a sense that I don't belong and that I don't want to belong and that I don't feel I belong. Such a sense, to this day, that I was betrayed, and (it is not) me who betrayed them (laughs).*
>
> *TD: Who betrayed you?*
>
> *The Israeli left. I did exactly, I went exactly as I believed the values upon which I was educated, I believed certain things, Zionism dovetailed with the ideas of nation fellowship and socialism, and when I became to loyal to the two principles of Hashomer Ha-Tz'air, and less to Zionism, then I felt that I don't have a place that I*

am not part of this mass. That there isa great hypocrisy and a deep contradiction. When I started analyzing it; I am Jewish, I am a man, I am Zionist, what does this mean? It is like a game of identity, what will happen if I say I am Palestinian? What will happen if I say I am a woman? (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012)

The second Palestinian Intifada leads Moshe to read Zionism through an oppositional gaze. He can no longer, as we mentioned earlier, be part of the Zionist left, nor does he want to stay part of the *Shomer Ha-Tz'air*. This moment of truth, and his quest to solve contradictions, leads him to question his own identity. He realizes that if Zionism can be deconstructed, perhaps other identities, which he considered as natural, can as well. Moshe questions his nation and gendered positions. What makes him a man? What if he performs as a Palestinian, or even as a woman?

Drawing from Yosef (2004), Moshe takes the queer theory, which questions the seemingly "natural" status of epistemological assumptions of sex, to a complex reading within the entanglement of race, ethnicity, and nation categories. His new consciousness leads him to feelings of queerness, and strangeness. He has become a stranger to his own surrounding of which, until not very long before, he felt a part.

What Adi earlier called *the story* seems to reappear in Moshe's account, yet in a different manner. Moshe speaks about processes of hypocrisy, thus we can understand that for him to stay within the Zionist circles entails living lies and a life of contradictions. Moshe describes the whole process of shedding the lies as difficult and even painful, however, and drawing from Kosofsky-Sedgwick (1990), it seems that this critical gaze at the lies becomes an opportunity for building his liberated voice to a radical consciousness.

In the following account, while Anat grew up in the same Zionist leftist environment of the kibbutz as Moshe, she did not feel the need to, in her words, *kick*. In other words, contrary to Moshe, who felt disgust of the Zionist left and of Israeliness, Anat is reclaiming a trans/formative process that is gradual and constructive:

TD: It is interesting, you are saying that as opposed to others, you did not 'kick' and did not go through a transformation, but suddenly things came together.

Things made more sense, became more complete. With passion I read texts like, um, in my experience it was not an action of throwing (the old knowledge) rather adding

other experiences. There are things I became very critical about and now it is hard for me to relate to them.

TD: like what?

This feeling of longing, for example, the beginning of the Kibbutz, if I were to go now to Rachel's[87] tomb, if I were to go with my daughter, I could read the book through her, if I were to go alone I would find it hard to get close to the place, I allow myself less and less to get emotional of these things, the Givatron[88] it is part of my identity, but the things I have acquired, today I am more critical to these things but I did not really say my goodbyes. I felt that others are trying to force me to do so but I keep hanging on. (Anat, Mizrahi political activist, interviewed in Tel Aviv, 2009)

Anat contradicts herself. On the one hand she feels things make more sense while on the other hand, she can't allow herself to entirely let go of Zionist-Ashkenazi symbols. Furthermore, she acknowledges the need to *say her goodbyes* and the unfinished process she is in, yet she does not want to deconstruct it all. The socialist background of the Kibbutz is also a part of the Ashkenazi oppressing hegemony she would like to unlearn and abandon. In his book *The Mizrahi struggle in Israel* Shalom Chitrit's (2004) argues that while the Israeli Kibbutz are founded on the Zionist-left ideology, an Israeli myth of socialist humanist left, they are in fact a capitalist construction that achieved power through the confiscation and expulsion of the Arab Palestinian population. Furthermore, he discusses the way in which the Kibbutzim from very early on exploited the Mizrahi Jews, often living in the *Ma'abrot* that we constructed in proximity to the Kibbutzim, and until today continue to exploit cheap labor, namely by employing foreign workers.

Anat looks for a complex view where she could be critical, yet keep the ideologies in which she still believes, and with which she feels most at 'home'. Anat compares herself to others in her community of learning group, in her own words she refuses to be forced to 'kick' the known and wants to still hang onto her beliefs. However, her beliefs and values are strongly related to the hegemony she is trying to challenge. Anat is searching for her identity, and in her account of herself she finds herself most comfortable within the oriental discourse, which in her words combines it all:

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87 Rachel Bluwstein is known to be a constitutive Zionist poet.

88 A choir known to be the musical of the country establishers, pioneers, hence the Ashkenati-Kibbuts narrative.

TD: What would you say first?

Today I would say Mizrahit" (Oriental woman)

TD: When did the priorities change?"

Within the K[89] the discourse is more complete, everyone would bring in the socialist issue in to the discourse, no one is for privatization, it is more complete, in the (Ashkenazi) socialism it did not exist. I am speaking about experiencing things in a deeper way, it only happened in social activism (Anat, Mizrahi political activist, interviewed in Tel Aviv, 2009).

"Weaning from colonialism"

Esther recounts her departure from Zionism as a loss of a body organ. In the following account Hila also relates to physical processes when she describes the need to *wean* (herself) from colonialism. Her choice of words is interesting; we understand the need to wean oneself from a disease. Furthermore, she depicts extreme feelings of confusion. She goes back and forth between the two concepts: colonialism and Zionism, perhaps taking for granted that they are synonyms. Her oppositional gazes at Zionism lead her to even compare Zionism to Anti-Semitism:

> *Most Jewish Israelis, including me, until not so long ago, think of ourselves as really 'ok people'; this is the colonialism that we don't get out of. At the moment I am going through disengagement, weaning from colonialism, ok?*
>
> *TD: How do you do it?*
>
> *I don't know if I can tell you I am going through weaning, I don't know if I can tell you that I even want to wean, because I have very mixed feelings. My feelings are very confused. But I understand more and more that Zionism is like saying Anti-Semitism! It is a bad word. Zionism is a bad word! (Hila, teacher, Jerusalem, 2013)*

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89 The Name of the organization

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Hila starts her account positioning herself within the Jewish-Israeli collective.

Her account brings to the forefront the need to disengage from Zionism, which is for her colonialism. Like Alon, Hila describes Zionism as a *'bad thing'*. She would like to distinguish herself from other Jewish Israelis who believe themselves as being good while being Zionist. Within this context, believing oneself 'as good' is actually, in her sense, a colonialist performance. Therefore, we could assume that she is critiquing this way of thinking and believes that in reality when Jewish Israelis think of themselves as "good", they are actuality "bad".

It seems that to be "good", one needs to wean oneself from colonialism and thus separate from Zionism. At this point I would like to propose to consider Hila's account through reading Butler (2012). Genuine cohabitation, Butler argues, cannot take place under conditions of colonial subjugation in which she includes Israeli State violence, settler colonialism and Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinian land disposition and the creation of the Palestinian refugee condition since 1948.

Perhaps when Hila recounts: […] *until not so long ago, think of ourselves as really 'ok people', that is the colonialism*, we understand at least two things: First, that she has changed, and that she no longer thinks of herself as "good". Second, that when one does think of oneself as "good", he/she is part of colonialism. It seems to me that Hila has found herself in what Butler calls, "sense of wrongness" (Butler, 2012, p.10). In Levinas' sense Hila thus takes the ethical demand to think of the temporality in which she lives (Levinas in ibid.). However, she is confused and perhaps, in Butler's (2012) words, is disorientated within her orientation. Her counter-hegemonic path towards ethical frames is confusing. As she introduces the values in which she was formed to understand what is good and what is bad, her account seems to denote that her ethical task obliges to separate from her own formation, refusing to assume that which her own group does.

"I can love without being Zionist"

Freire (1997) and hooks (2003) have argued that consciousness trans/formation which transgresses domination and violence is an act of love (Freire, 1997; hooks, 2003; Shor, 1987; Weksler, 2015). Drawing his argument on Erich Fromm, Freire (1970) explains that one of

the characteristics of the oppressor's consciousness and it's *necrophilic* view of the world is sadism: "the pleasure in complete domination over another person (or other animate creature) is the very essence of the sadistic drive, another way of formulating the same thought is to say that the aim of sadism is to transform a man into a thing, something animate into something inanimate, since by complete and absolute control, the living loses one essential quality of life-Freedom" (Erich Fromm,1966 *The Heart of Man* in Freire, 1970 [2000] p.32).

In the following account, Shira transgresses Zionism through and by love, which appears to be contrary to that which Freire (1970) calls, sadistic love. He argues that sadistic love, thus the love of the oppressor, is a perverted love or in other words the love for death (ibid.).

> *The fact that I am not Zionist does not mean that I don't love the country, as they try to portray. I can love the place in which I live without being Zionist. (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013)*

I propose to understand Shira's account about love for *the place* in the way Butler (2012), reads Jewish diasporic thought that according to her could create "workable « living together »" (ibid., p.6). I argue that love for *the place,* for Shira, is a quest for a genuine cohabitation associated to the ethical task drawn from equality and justice.

To follow Ziv (2013), the analysis in the research looks at processes of politicization as the transformation of an individual from being an object of oppression to a cognitive subject. This is the trans/formation of a liberating project. As in Black feminist epistemology, the power of Black women to create opposing knowledge emerges from their own experiences and position (Hill Collins, 2000). In Shira's account we look at the way in which she chooses to liberate herself from objectivist views of Zionism. And thus from being an object of oppression of hegemonic knowledge, hence she is acting towards becoming a cognitive subject to a free mind. Earlier we have seen that being Zionist for her is no longer a given stance, or a natural fact but rather a choice, and further a political choice. Following Ziv's (2013) thought, this is a queering stance of liberation (Butler, 1990).

The example Shira recounts, as an embodied condition of Zionism is love. Zionism was to that point the reference for how and who to love. Hill Collins (2000) in her work on Black feminist thought and Kosofsky-Sedgwick (1990) in her work on Queer theory epistemology, both claim that the frame of who one is permitted to love, and how love is performed, is framed by the construction of, on the one hand, the hegemonic white patriarchy and on the

other hand, heterosexual domination. It is thus controlled by gendered, sexual and racial constructions of domination. In her account, Shira rather insists that her love is drawn from her choice to stay, in hooks (1990) terms, in the margin. She refuses to take part in a nation love centered within the hegemonic frame, but rather would like to speak of love for people.

On the same line, I propose to look at Arendt's answer when being accused of failing to love the Jewish people: "[...] I do not "love" the Jews, nor do I "believe" in them, I merely belong to them as a matter of course, beyond dispute or argument" (Arendt in Butler, 2012, p.52). We could draw from Arendt's letter and Shira's account that they are both positioning themselves within a context and perhaps chose to act from within this context.

Interestingly Arendt, while challenging the hegemonic automatic assumption that she is obliged to love the Jews, accepts that she is part of "the Jews". Having said that, Arendt is merely positioning herself within what Fanon (1952) calls 'historical-racial' architecture. We could understand Arendt's account as an act of responsibility from which she can critically gaze and later act. In this sense, Shira's oppositional gaze at Zionism enables her to define her ability to love. Rather than loving a country, perhaps nation love, she refers to her love to the place, perhaps love for people and thus love for dialogue (hooks, 1994). Furthermore, love for her is part of her praxis towards change within her life context.

I suggest reading Shira's account, through a complex understanding of her own position and identity within Israeli formation. Earlier in the first chapter, Shira explains that liberation from colonial consciousness is for her to connect to her Arabness. In this sense, I find it interesting to read her account about love within the work of Smadar Lavi (2011). Her research shows that Mizrahi consciousness confuses between the love for the land *'Havat Haretz'* and loyalty and love for the governing of the State.

In her reading of Ronit Matalon's novel 'The One Facing Us' in which the characters are Jewish immigrants to the State of Israel from the Levantine, Hochberg (2004) examines the way the novelist deals with "the violence of the national discourse in terms of its attempt to overcome the complexity of cultural identification by obliterating the conflicts between home and homeland, language and national language, the desire to belong and the location of belonging" (ibid., p.234). Hochberg argues that Matalon's novel challenges "the nation's self-image of normality" (ibid.) when the novelist chooses to focus on the movement of her characters from the old home, ''which was never a homeland but was a home'' (Matalon,

1995 [1998, pp.122–122]), to the new homeland, which was never a home, The One Facing Us emphasizes the displacement experienced by each of the characters, which, while not directly introduced by the Zionist project, was certainly enforced by it (Hochberg, 2004, p.229).

Perhaps, Shira highlights her need to love in order to stay connected to where she comes from, to her family, that has not gone through her processes, to her surrounding that is still left, according to her, in colonial consciousness. Perhaps as Freire (1970) argues, Shira would like to enter into dialogue with her surroundings. Her oppositional gaze at Zionism has revealed to her processes of domination of which she refuses to be part. She insists on love in order to create alternative relations, alternative to the known forms of domination. Deconstructing the objective reality to the point of having to separate oneself from ones collective emotionally, cognitively and physically, is recounted as a difficult and complex step in one's perception of self, however, it seems to be a liberating process of change.

Along the same line of thought, Esther's account throughout both chapters reveals that constructing an oppositional gaze at Zionism is followed by the praxis of separation. This seems to be a difficult and painful process. Esther has shown that this is a cognitive, an emotional and even a physical process of separating oneself from Zionism. Consciousness trans/formation seems to be more than a technical moment and requires courage and great force: *This is the process through which I am actually, ...ahh... separating myself from Zionism, right?* says Esther. The oppressive forces, from which Esther feels she needs liberation, are put together under one concept: Zionism.

Zionism is the frame in which Esther analyzes, in Laclau's (1996) sense, the hegemonic matrix of domination. She draws a direct analogy between, *holding* a colonial consciousness and *being* a Zionist, or perhaps embodying Zionism. Through her process of deconstruction Esther understands that to go further in her radical consciousness she has to detach herself from Zionism. Interestingly she chooses the word *Nifredet*[90] in such a context. A word often used when describing the end of a love relation, a moment of grief, or the creation of a distance from loved ones. Reading Esther, one could consider asking whether a process of liberation from colonial consciousness(es) necessarily includes acts of separation, which involve affective transitions related to emotions and attachments.

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90 Nifredet in Hebrew means: 'I am separating or detaching myself'

Esther and Shira express the need to separate and distance themselves from Zionism. At this point I find it useful to go back to Butler's (2012) Jewish critique of Zionism. My understanding of her introduction leads me to look into her own account of oneself from within her Jewish formation. To that effect she acknowledges the power and place this formation takes within the critique of political Zionism she has developed.

When referring to her own formation she argues: "[…] it must be repeated in new ways, and where a departure from formation becomes ethically and politically obligatory" (Butler, 2012, p.27). I would like to suggest relating to the departure to which Butler (ibid.) refers in the same way separation is called for by Esther. Furthermore in this sense, we can also understand Shira's call for embodiment of love freed from Zionism as a departure from ones formation while demanding to stay connected to her *home.*

What then permits these processes of love and departure that to a certain point in their lives seems impossible? Understanding Spivak's (Pui-Lan, 2010) relation to love could perhaps help us develop Shira's quest to love outside the frame of political Zionism and better understand Esther's demands to departure from her Zionist formation and thus embodiment of Zionism. I argue that both Shira and Esther, within their trans/formation processes found justice and ethics to which they can adhere. Pui-Lan (ibid.) argues that Spivak (1999) offers a love that embodies justice as she calls for creativity and the belief that one can experience that which seems impossible, at a given moment. Within the colonial context of political Zionism this is a radical claim. It seems that to love outside the frame of Zionism was for Shira, an impossible act which became possible as a result of her liberation from Zionist consciousness. In this sense she seeks for love that is driven from a critical and oppositional gaze at colonialism.

Within an educational frame of change, hooks (2006a) urges us to think of love as crucial within a personal and collective search for liberation. On the same line, Spivak (1999) claims that: "learning can only be attempted through the supplementation of collective effort by love" (ibid., pp.382-383). For hooks (2006a) love permits dialogue that collectively turns "away from an ethic of domination" (ibid., p.243).

Hooks (2006a) differentiates between the personal quest for freedom and the collective liberation struggle. In her text "Love as the Practice of Freedom" she argues that subjects must feel self-interest in change for them to critically examine what she calls "*blind spots*"

(ibid., p.244). Therefore, ethics of love, she claims, is needed in one's self-longing for change. Here I understand what Pui-Lan (2011) calls "planetary love" or "love 'in other worlds'" (ibid., p.32) is what hooks (ibid.) refers to as ethics of love. Love ethics is the ability to acknowledge blind spots and thus develop the oppositional gaze at domination. *Love in other worlds* is concerned with the condition of the other and thus situates the subject first as an agent within the entanglements of dominations to which the subjects are subjugated.

Earlier in the chapter, when Shira and Esther critically gaze at Zionism and realize what *Zionism really is*, they confront their blind spots and acknowledge their existence. In this sense we could argue that they have developed an ethics of love that makes an expansion of their gaze possible (hooks, 2006a). Shira's demands to go further, she understands that the culture of domination, to which Zionism is assimilated functions through that which hooks (ibid.) defines as anti-love, which is perhaps based on violence and exclusion. Shira chooses love as a task of resistance to violence. Esther separates herself form Zionism and thus refuses to embody the violence she has come to acknowledge. They both struggle for liberation, first personal liberation from their own embodiment of violence and later liberation that might lead them to change the reality in which they lo(i)ve.

Finally hooks (2006) invites us to look at love as an act of will, an act that one chooses to take. The choice derives from the will to li(o)ve in community. Being part of a community permits collective and joint trans/forming. Let us then understand the "collective effort by love" to which Spivak (1999, p.383) refers as the quest to learn together through a love ethic that resists domination and oppression. In the following account we gaze at Hila's quest for what she calls, Ahavat Tzion (*love for Zion*):

> *Zionism is not love for Zion, I hope that love for Zion is still OK.*
>
> *TD: That you haven't checked yet?*
>
> *That I have not yet figured out with myself, but love for Zion, it is ok that a person has a heart desire, a sacred ground (land), but and I, and I believe in sacred ground (land), and I believe in love for Zion, but having said that Zionism means Jewish state and that's like saying negroes for sale, saying Jewish state its offensive like saying "negroes for sale." (Hila, teacher, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Hila introduces us to the Jewish terminology of love. While refusing to embody political

Zionism, Hila reclaims her love for Zion. It seems as though Hila tries to understand and in her words, *to figure out*, what she can love outside the frames of Zionist nationalism. While her Zionist, Israeli formation connects the two, she is clear that love for Zion is not Zionism. Perhaps the way in which Hila refers to *love for Zion* could be understood through what Butler (2012) calls "Jewish values*"*, values she claims, could provide a basis for a critique of Israeli state violence.

Hila does not want to lose her *heart desire* and sacred ground when she parts from political Zionism. Love for Zion is her sacred ground; it is, in Butler's (2012) terms, her embedded framework for valuations drawn from Jewishness. If she manages to separate love for Zion from political Zionism she still, perhaps, belongs *at home*. Both Shira and Hila have a quest for love, which departs from nationalism, and in their case, from political Zionism. Shira does not speak in Jewish terminology as Hila, yet in a very clear way she speaks about love for people.

Part Two: Oppositional Gaze at Racism

"We have to change our own mind [...] We've got to change our own minds about each other. We have to see each other with new eyes. We have to come together with warmth" (Malcolm X in hooks, 1992, p.9)

First Step of liberation

In the following account Kholod describes her liberation from colonial consciousness as steps she must take. After recounting her own encounter with the lies and the hegemonic knowledge of Zionist regime, Kholod says she was filled with anger and strong feelings of victimization. When I ask Kholod whether feeling a victim is part of liberation she recounts:

> *I think that until I finished my first degree, you know, I was in the nationalist Palestinian (phase). It was important for me to remember, because I had no memory to that day. It was important for me to know, because I didn't know anything. It was important for me to connect myself to this place, to this land, because I have no*

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connection. To be the victim in this story, because what is hard with a bloodshed catastrophe it that it is has to be proud of it, there is nothing to be proud of.

I used to tell me father, "listen, don't tell me that you fought for this place, don't tell me that that you resisted, you are like all the other. The Jews came, they took what they took, and you sat quietly and you are still keeping quiet. You will not refuse anything!

TD: Sounds you were angry

Of course it came out with anger. There was blame in it: "that you didn't do, and it means that you will not do in the future neither, so don't fuck with me." No! "Because if you had resisted, the reality would have been different. They wouldn't have been able to take our lands, my uncle would have been living in Jordan, ahh 365 villages would not have been erased from this map."

TD: Do you know Elia Suleiman's movies? There is something very powerful in his film 'Divine Intervention', about the intergeneration question. Ok you are a younger than him, he is older than us, I think you and I are about the same age, so perhaps he is the generation between your father and you, but there is something about this anger that […]

Yes, yes, the constant feeling is that the generation of our grandfathers, and our mothers, not only that they didn't do, that they are a coward generation. They didn't stand tall, and they also didn't educate us to refuse to this fear. They educated us to be exactly like them, things I understood terribly late. You understand that first of all, it was important to know, it was important to play the victim. Because you know nothing else. This is what I am trying to say. And this is the victimizing identity, these are the guidelines of this identity, it is ful of anger, very passive, very blaming. And this is a phase that could continue forever unless at some point you say "OK so I parents didn't do, they didn't take responsibility", and within all this, and despite it all, where is my responsibility? One these questions rise that is when the passivity is challenged.

TD: Is that the liberation?

That is the first step. The liberation, which I don't feel I have reached yet, is to act! To

believe you are able to change, also that you have the voice to change, and that this situation is changeable, that the occupation can end just like the Apartheid, or any other occupation, or colonial system, one must believe that it is breakable. And it is! (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod recounts that she still seeks to take a further step towards the act. It appears to me that that which Kholod understands by the possibility to act, is related to that which Esther called earlier, sense of entitlement. She elaborates that to be in the position to change, entails a belief in oneself, the possibility to be heard and furthermore, an analytical gaze at reality that show that change is attainable.

Kholod continues and recounts that liberations is related to her understanding that she has a place in the struggle:

The liberation is also to understand that you can be part of this struggle. Look it is terribly hard! It is hard because once you say to yourself that you are not a victim, you first have to admit that you are a victim. Really. Really to understand it. It is one of the stations in the way. It should not be the whole station nor should it be the whole way. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Earlier Gal recounts that his realization that he is part of the *bad-guys* is a difficult stance, yet it is a step towards liberation from colonial consciousness. A consciousness that follows lies constructed by political Zionism that positions the Jewish people, in his words, as victims. On the same line of thought, Kholod positions herself within the matrix of domination realizing that she is a victim of history. The realization does not seem to be an easy task, yet according to Kholod it is a necessary step in her process.

Presuming an analogy between Zionism and heterosexual hegemony in an earlier research, I have shown (Dor, 2010), drawing from Freire's (1970) phases of consciousness transformation of the oppressed, that subjects from the dominant group, thus Zionist Israelis, who go through a becoming process to Anti-Zionism, undergo five stages of critical thinking: (1) Confrontation with the lie(s); (2) Confusion; (3) Acquiring knowledge; (4) *Coming out* of the Zionist closet and finally (5) Acceptance. The last stage, I call *Acceptance* implies taking a radical position and thus bringing to praxis the anti-hegemonic performance of the Actors.

In Freire's (ibid.) work, he elaborates a process involving three consecutive phases through

which go the oppressed during their transformative process to critical awareness. Within this process, according to him, the subjects engage in a becoming process of their own history rather than maintaining dynamics that regard them as objects of oppression[91]. And finally the individual becomes capable of acting in order to change, even if the change is not immediate or promised (Freire, 1974; Gramsci, 1971; Weksler, 2005). These critical consciousness phases to the liberation of the oppressed are neither 'peaceful' nor easy.

Kholod insists that the station of understanding her victimhood is crucial in her liberation process, yet she argues that it cannot be the whole process of liberation. In this sense, Kholod's account echoes with the work of Fanon (1961) in which he argues that the development of consciousness, which leads to an emancipatory project, passes through what he calls, the pride to be Black. Having said that, Fanon insists, that one must surmount this stage in order to avoid essentialist processes, which according to him, are psychologically dangerous as the internalization of racism. Negritude and thus finding self-dignity should be a step that allows going further to action (ibid.).

In order to emancipate oneself from inferiority, passing through negritude and the pride to be Black is crucial. This is the moment that the colonized ceases to gaze at him/herself within the embodiment of the white man, but works to change the oppressive structures of society.

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91 Freire's steps of change are divided into three stages: The first is the mystic phase: the oppressing reality and surroundings that the subjects are experiencing are analyzed as deterministic and are seen through the lens of non-rational beliefs. The consciousness is that of an individual person who has no power to change or influence. Furthermore, the reality is understood as static, and thus non-dynamic and impossible to change. In the eyes of the subject, at this point the only powers, which could make a change would be external 'super powers'. At this phase, the person is an object of the history rather than an active subject. The second is the naïve phase: This is a middle phase during which the person starts analyzing and interpreting in an independent way, thus becoming a subject with the ability to change the surrounding environment. Having said that, the person does not believe that he/she could do it alone. Change is viewed as dependent on external powers. Not mystical power this time but people of 'knowledge' for the person does not believe in his/her own knowledge as being power. Most importantly, throughout this phase, the individual does not see the oppression as a global one and can't necessarily understand his/her own oppression as associated with the oppression of the others. Rather the oppression is viewed as being a personal one. Hence, the individual cannot criticize the hegemonic structures of the social elite in a conscious way, and cannot be in solidarity with the other oppressed. And the third is the critical consciousness phase: the individual interprets, criticizes and eventually changes the surrounding reality. At this point the individual acts as a dynamic subject, creating history in a constant dialectic aiming for change. In this phase, one is able to generalize in relation to the hegemonic structures and in terms of the various forms of oppressions. Here is where the person can be in solidarity with the others surrounding him/her and has the tools to carry out self-reflections through the criticism of the others. He or she can activate his/her ability to observe the reality, yet analyze it from a critical point of view.

"I started to understand that I am inferior because I am an Arab[92]"

In the following account Imad continues the line of thought led by Kholod in which she develops the idea of understanding her victimhood within Israeli colonial matrix of dominations:

> *I always saw the Palestinian, when I was young, as inferior, that he is inferior to the Israeli, that he is culturally inferior even humanly inferior. And I started thinking that even I am like that! That I am like, inferior to the Israeli, I am not on the same level as the Israeli. The truth is that yes, I am inferior, not as a human being, I am inferior because, again, if you speak about the whole process of consciousness, yes I started to understand that I am inferior because I am an Arab, and that an Arab is an inferior race to the European Israeli race. I started thinking that there are reasons for discrimination to? the social political situation. (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)*

Imad directs the conversation to the question of the internalization of inferiority in the colonized. He ends his account, through elaborating the way in which he develops an apparatus of the gaze that deconstructs colonial formation (Shohat and Stam, 1994). To follow Shohat (ibid.) Imad's account elucidates the experience of he who bears the weight of the colonial gaze.

In Chapter One, Imad demonstrates what colonial consciousness means to him. According to him, colonial consciousness is a Zionist position that gazes violently at the Palestinian man as deviant. Here Imad continues the same line of thought, yet this time he elucidates the influence the racist structures have on his own consciousness. He shows that, as a Palestinian man within the Israeli state, his colonial consciousness entailed an embodiment of the inferiority of the Palestinian man. The way in which he manages to liberate himself from colonial consciousness is through understanding, to follow Fanon (1961), that racism is a structure and therefore that the Zionist structures position him as inferior.

Imad refers to race as an epistemological category rather than a biological racial difference that which Shenhav and Yona (2006) have called the non-race racism. Imad's account takes us to read racialization formations that refer to biological, social and cultural characteristics within essentialist frames of colonial inferior vs. superior hierarchy.

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92 Imad

In Imad's account we read that his consciousness transforms throughout the years. It follows Soleiman's (2002) claim that the building of a Palestinian ethnic identity within the State of Israel, as a Jewish ethnic state, is a constant dynamic process and is profoundly related to political events and to the ongoing conflict with and occupation of the Palestinian people. We could say that his development of consciousness is, in Hill Collins' (2000) terms, a dynamic sphere of question asking rather than a fixed entity. When he was young he thought he was inferior to Israelis. Imad recounts the way in which he looked at the world around him. To put it in Haraway's (1988) terms, the knowledge he develops about himself resulted from the *game of knowledge.* This game of knowledge, she claims, is bound up in a power dynamic of domination.

Similar to Esther's account, concerning the destroyed Palestinian villages she recounted not to have seen in the 1960s, Imad's account takes us to 1948. Imad's liberation processes, and those of the other participants in the research, is bound up in the development of that which Butler (2012) has named 'deauthorized forms of knowledge' (ibid., p.12). Developing a performance that resists racism and inferiority, or superiority when positioned within the Jewish dominant group, and therefore striving for knowledge that is deauthorized, is interconnected to the development of a critical gaze at that which took place during the Nakba years in Palestine.

Imad engages within a process that critically reads history and power dynamics of reality. To follow Rekhess (2014), Imad is part of a generation that actively chooses to reopen the "1948 files" (ibid., p.199) he argues, that "Four major factors molded this renewed emphasis on the Nakba memory since the late 1990s: the emergence of a new generation of Arabs; the implications of the Oslo process; the 50th anniversary celebrations of the state of Israel; and the Arabs' growing sense of marginality and inability to identify with the collective Jewish memory" (Rekhess, 2014, p.198).

When Imad internalized inferiority, he embodied a gaze, to follow Haraway (1988) that conquered his body and was invisible. The "conquering gaze from nowhere" (ibid., p.586) to which Imad is subjugated defines for him the way he perceived himself. He, as a Palestinian within the State of Israel, bears the gaze of the colonizer (Shohat and Stam, 1994). According to Haraway (1988) one visualizes the *end product* rather than understanding the process, which brought the creation of the product. The *end product,* within Imad's vision, is the hegemonic knowledge that claims that Israelis are superior to Palestinians.

For a young person living in the State of Israel, Imad draws the conclusion that even he is inferior. His self-vision seems to result from objective and scientific knowledge, to which he has to adhere in order to be cohesive with the world surrounding him. At a certain point Imad's vision about himself changes and he starts to gaze at the processes, which lead to the *end product* of inferiority. The way in which he formulates his words, reveals a process of trans/formation that leads him to find truth.

According to Imad the question of consciousness is about understanding reality from another perspective. Perhaps Imad develops something analogous to what Haraway calls, a situated feminist objective knowledge (1988). Rather than embodying inferiority, Imad is now performing positionality. He is an agent in the world rather than an object defined by oppressive forces. Imad gazes at his inferiority from a situated embodied position of an oppressed. Inferiority is no longer his, he no longer embodies inferiority, and he rather, I suggest, decodes it from: "a feminist vision of objectivity" (ibid., p.578). It is now the truth*,* it is objective and it is the real world in which he lives and acts.

Imad critically gazes at domination; he analyzes the reality and the unjust order. It seems that what he calls *the whole process of consciousness* brought him to gaze at and thus understand the existence of oppressive forces. These forces place and position him as inferior. In his own words, he no longer sees himself as *humanly inferior*. In the Freirian (1970) sense Imad is now aware that he does not feel inferior but rather *was made* to feel inferior. His current account of self distinguishes hegemonic structures, which position Palestinians as dominated through his own internalization of domination. This distinction seems to be an important part of what Freire (ibid.) calls *radical thought*.

Within Freire's (1970) stages of consciousness transformation among the oppressed, development of radical thought is a crucial moment of liberation. Within Imad's account we observe that the development of radical thought is entangled with a politization process of identity. In his account he starts by identifying himself as part of the Palestinian collective and ends with a self-definition of an Arab, which is in opposition to, in his words, the *European Israeli race*.

The symmetry, Arab vs. European Israeli race, to which Imad relates, echoes with a research that examines the way in which both Arabs, as a minority, and Jews, as a majority, in Israel grasp the collective identity of the former. The research shows that both sides grasp

Palestinian and Israeli identities as contradictory (Suleiman, 2004). The marginality of Palestinians as citizens is inevitable within the definition of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. Therefore, a full civic and civil equality is denied from the Arab minority and, on the other hand, given to any Jew who is not even a citizen of the state (ibid.).

Suleiman (2002) urges us to understand the internal power dynamics of the State of Israel through its internal division of domination: understanding that the Jewish Israeli majority is the dominant group and that the Palestinian minority is the dominated. Furthermore, he argues that the State of Israel policy, as an ethnic Jewish state, is categorized by strategies and practices of domination towards the Palestinian minority in Israel (ibid.). As in the vast work of Shohat (1988, 1989, 2003), Suleiman (2002) argues that in order to understand the functioning of domination in general and the exclusion of the Arab Palestinians in particular, within the State of Israel, one must tackle the question and understand Zionistic ideology within a critical historical perspective. A critical examination of history necessarily scrutinizes that which, happened during the Palestinian *Nakba* (catastrophe of 1948).

According to Rouhana (1998), the remaining of a minority of Palestinians during the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 created a profound contradiction. The contradiction, to which Hila also refers earlier in Chapter One, is based on the state's declaration to be committed to an ethnic Jewish statehood, yet at the same time devoted to equality to all its citizens (ibid.). As a Palestinian citizen of the State of Israel, Imad positions himself within this *grille de lecture* of the oppressed, colonized people. In his account, he explains the domination and power dynamics under which the Palestinian citizens of the State of Israel are subjugated.

It seems to me that the understanding of the historical and geopolitical events that led to his dominated position, and according to him inferiority, enables Imad to actually liberate himself from interiorizing the hegemonic commonsense. His account shows a process of agency through which he transforms his consciousness of domination and in Martuccelli (2004) sense, resists the automatic function of subjugation. He no longer defines himself by Israeli hegemonic categories of domination.

We have already seen in Chapter One, that within a critical orientalist reading of the sociology of the State of Israel, Shohat (1988, 1992) and later Shenhav (2006) argue that othering processes were first applied to the Palestinians. However, later with the construction

of the Israeli state, the same processes were also employed when referring to Mizrahi-Jews.

In the following account Esther, from her Ashkenazi gendered position reveals the way in which her colonial consciousness is related to the racist structures, mentioned earlier by Imad, that frame the Arab Palestinian man as deviant:

> *We never met Arabs, we didn't know who they were. It was as if we were captured in the normative stereotypes of 'the Arab with the Keffiyeh[93] that might be the one to come and rape you', right? (Esther, feminist, political activist)*

Esther claims that an imaginary consciousness of who and what is an Arab was constructed in her. Without even encountering Arabs, while geographically living close to Arabs in Haifa, she already had an imaginary representation of who they were. These preconceptions, according to her, are the normative stereotypes of Israeli commonsense developed within the hegemonic discourse. From Esther's account I understand that the imaginary representation of the Arab stranger, in Ahmed's (2000) sense, made it very difficult to step towards an authentic encounter, it also formed Esther's consciousness when gazing at Arabs in her surroundings. Her colonial consciousness towards Arabs was a stance of an oppressor who does not perceive the oppressed other as human but rather as a violent deviant masculine figure. In this sense, the Arab man is gazed at as a sexually deviant object, while the Arab woman is not even taken into consideration and is transparent within the equation.

Esther's colonial consciousness resembles the construction of consciousness of white women in the United States. The white woman subject, Hill Collins (2000) argues, can only refer to herself as feminine and human. As a white Ashkenazi woman, Esther's womanhood is considered pure and fragile, attributes for which one should seek protection from the "Arab rapist". The non-humanistic view of the Arab, and more specifically of the Arab man, is framed within gendered-colonial boundaries. One gazes at him, in Ahmed's (2000) terms, as the stranger-danger binary; he is not seen as a neighbor, a father, a friend, or a comrade but rather as a deviant enemy. He is the rapist.

The way, in which Esther recounts her colonial consciousness towards the Arab man, echoes in Guénif-Souilamas' (2006) work within the French context. She explains that, within the French (post)colonial context, hegemonic consciousness in general and white feminist

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93 Palestinian traditional headscarf

consciousness in particular, the Arab man is dehumanized and further diabolized. The two roles assigned to the Arab man, or in her terms the garçons arabes (ibid.), are the uncivilized rapist or the veilier (he who forces his Arab wife, daughter, sister to veil herself). To follow Boubeker (2011), framing the Arab man within such imaginary fantasies, is derived from what he calls a symbolic domination.

On the same line, Shohat (1988) argues that in order to fully understand the fabrication on which Israeli consciousness is based; it must be examined from the perspective of *Orientalism*. She examined and researched early Zionist propaganda films in which she found that the Ashkenazi pioneers embodied the humanitarian and liberationist project of Zionism. They carried with them the very same banner of a "universal," "civilizing mission" that European powers propagated during their surge into the "underdeveloped world" (ibid.; Yosef, 2004; Nagar-Ron, 2007).

Israeli Jewish Ashkenazi identity is aimed at constructing a so-called Western image of self, which is distanced from and contrasts with representations of the passive oriental body. This 'passive' representation, which might perhaps have had some relevance in the context of diaspora Europe (Boyarin, 1997), was then projected onto the native Palestinian population and the immigrant Arab-Jews. To this day the norms of Israeli commonsense entangle rational, enlightened and secular performance with body and gendered representations. These social expectations come from the dominant Ashkenazi Zionist hegemony.

Esther's account is situated within the city of Haifa. A city that is inhabited by both Arab Palestinians and a Jewish population. Yet, her experience shows that she never met Arabs. In the following account Maya reveals a similar experience:

> *One of the things that really influenced me, I am a very intellectual person, was to discover these intellectual Arabs, it was so much fun and exciting […] but you can say that Holon, and this is very important, this issue, which had a part in the circumstances, is a city where I didn't see any Arabs, you know, besides the cleaning person that came from the territories and stuff like that. They were completely invisible […] (Maya, feminist political actor, interviewed in Haifa, 2009)*

Maya recounts that growing up in the city of Holon, in the center of the country, prevented her from meeting Arabs. She starts by saying that there are no Arabs in Holon, contrary to her experience in Haifa, yet continues to an account that acknowledges their presence. Within

Israeli commonsense language, when saying *the territories* one refers to the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Maya's hegemonic encounters with Arabs who were assigned to jobs of cleaning did not deconstruct her racist colonial consciousness.

That which trans/forms her consciousness and allows her to enter processes of self-reflexivity about her own racism is when she meets an intellectual Arab like her.

Understanding Dehumanization[94]

Esther's account illustrates what Freire (1970) and hooks (2003) define as required processes of individuals of the supremacy group to embrace, and enter solidarity with the oppressed. Those individuals must also develop their ability to listen and especially to embark on detailed self-reflection on their own role and place in society. For the hegemonic group, raising awareness of the power dynamic could create an uncomfortable dissonance. Yet, according to hooks (1994) it could bring about profound change and bring about transformation and transgression. The liberation process of the oppressor is possible only when dehumanizing thought and praxis are understood as a concrete historical fact and the result of an unjust order, rather than as a given destiny.

In the following account we observe that not only members of the dominating groups must deconstruct dehumanizing thoughts about the oppressed, but also the oppressed themselves have to liberate themselves from these same thoughts:

> *TD: You said something happened with the beginning of the Intifada*
>
> *I also admired Israel, and I had a feeling of denigration towards the Palestinian or the Arab, or the Arab world, then with time and with the beginning of the Intifada in particular. In the second Intifada I was already 19 or 20 and several things happened within the whole process I went through. I started understanding that there is a process of dehumanization. (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)*

It would be interesting to read Imad's account within the framework of South African Black Consciousness thought, and the reading of Steven Biko (1979) in particular. In Biko's

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94 Imad

work we understand the definition he attributes to Black Consciousness within the quest of a new humanity. Within the South African context and the service roles Blacks held within white households during Apartheid years (and still hold today), he argues that a humanizing process is to understand that Blacks are not "*an extension of a broom or some additional leverage to some machine*" (ibid., p.51). On the same line, and drawing from Fanon's work, he argued that the consciousness of the Black South African allied the good and the positive with white. This internalization of white supremacy thought leads Blacks to experience an incomplete humanity, as humanity was associated with whiteness (Gibson, 1988).

Until the Second Palestinian Intifada, just as in Biko's (1979) argument, Imad associated everything that is good to Israel, to the extent of admiring the state. Admiring Israel came together with feelings of denigration of himself as an Arab. Interestingly, something transformative accrued with the Second Intifada that changed his gaze at himself, at Arabs, at Palestinians and at the Arab world. While Imad does not specify the way in which he realized that he was dehumanized by Israeli supremacy, he clearly mentions the importance this acknowledgment has on his own consciousness trans/formation. He continues to explain and give specific examples of the dehumanization processes to which Palestinians are subjugated:

> *There was always the same scenario: the Palestinians want to kill us, the Palestinian hates us, the Palestinian loves violence, the Palestinian is disorganized, the Palestinian is ugly. For example, they would put a picture of Arafat, they would choose the ugliest picture of Arafat and show it to give you a sense of disgust 'ikhs95'. I started understanding that there is a policy. (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)*

Imad is able, with what Malcolm X (in hooks, 1992) calls his new eyes, to understand political patterns, which lead to his own dehumanization. He realizes that within Israeli hegemony, Palestinians are associated as killers, haters and aggressive. In his account, the dehumanization processes go further, from violent and deviant characteristics to physical representation of beauty and ugliness. In Biko's (1979) sense, I claim here that by understanding the political patterns behind these processes, Imad is not so much preoccupied with the oppressor as with building his own liberated consciousness. His Palestinian consciousness seeks for a new humanity, thus ceasing to regard himself through the 'speaking eye' of Israeli domination.

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95 Onomatopoeia used to expresse disgust.

Imad's account echoes with my own trajectory. The radical encounter with Imad's liberatory process reveals the way in which hegemonic practices of dehumanization, the way they are described by Imad, built my own colonial consciousness:

TD: What you are saying is very interesting. I never thought about it before, but I remember as a young girl I always thought Arafat was smelly.

Yes! Dehumanization, dehumanization of a people.

Imad understands the oppressing context in which he was formed and later transformed. According to Freire (1970), a context of oppression prohibits the subject from reading the reality and from further writing his/her own history. When one lives in such a context, which dehumanizes him/her, one loses a sense of him/herself. Imad's understanding of the political context of dehumanization permits dynamic movements towards liberation and change. Imad's account illustrates the dialectic relation between understanding the oppressing context, thus acknowledging reality, while seeking agency and liberation. This is the oppositional gaze referred to by hooks (1992). Black consciousness referred to by Biko (1979), radical consciousness referred to by Freire (1970) and the resistance gaze to the observing eye of Foucault (1963). This is a liberated consciousness of the oppressed from colonial consciousness.

On the same line, for the oppressor who holds a colonial consciousness, Freire (1970) argues, the term "human beings" within a colonial consciousness of the oppressors refers only to themselves; other people are "things". For the oppressors only one right exists: their right to live in peace. This right predominates over the, not always even recognized but simply conceded, right of the oppressed to survival. The oppressor's consciousness tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination. In Butler's (2009) terms, Imad understands that he is not seen within the frame of the grievable. His life as an Arab, a Palestinian has no sense of loss, his images are not haunting; the hegemonic viewer does not consider him to be human.

"Occupation is occupation[96]"

The following accounts illustrate the importance of the Second Palestinian Intifada on Kholod's consciousness construction:

> *I remember during my first year there was the second Intifada, and then one of the girls in one of the lectures, and it was the first time that someone from the other side, and me of course, like gets to a place of trying to say something political. First year of University. In the educational system no one speaks to you about anything. And then one day without any warning, she asks me what do I think about the Intifada, about what is going on around me. And I tell her, occupation is occupation, you are controlling another people, is that what you want to do, to continue doing? (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)*

Kholod is confronted with a political dialogue within the educational system. As she recounts, it is a practice to which she is not used. Until her first year at University, the school system, as she mentioned earlier as well, was a space and place in which political conversations were unwelcome. Going to an Israeli University during the Intifada seems to be a praxis of resistance for a Palestinian living in the Israeli State. While fully exercising her civil rights to higher education and political freedom, Kholod is, paradoxically "out of place" (Limbrick, 2012, p.106). Limbrick (ibid.) elaborates that Palestinians living within the state of Israel are paradoxically out of place, as their roots and origins are long established in the physical space of Palestine, while their experience within the state is considered deviant to the Zionist national norm (ibid.). In Ahmed's (2000) sense we could understand that Kholod is hegemoniclly gazed at within the stranger/danger dichotomy.

Kholod is obliged to give an account of the Intifada to an Israeli Jewish woman. Being Palestinian becomes visible. She recounts: *then one day without early notice she asks me what I think about the Intifada.* It seems, from this formulation that the same person who confronted Kholod was not a partner in dialogue before this incident. As in Ahmed's writing we can read in Kholod's account that her strangeness was visible in the Zionist hegemonic space, yet treated as a threat. Now that the Intifada was in act, she is obliged to take sides and to declare loyalty to the Zionist state in front of the confronting student. The encounter with

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96 Kholod

the other side, in Kholod's words, confronts her with her strangeness. The following account illustrates how for Kholod the encounter with her own relatives, during the Intifada, also plays an important role on her trans/formation of consciousness:

> *I think this was the second Intifada, I think. Um they came from Tul-Karem to us and spent three months. And then I like suddenly understood. With all their clothes and all, just came to live with us, they could not live there under siege. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)*

The two accounts illustrate her own trans/formation and understanding of political context. However, the two accounts put together, furthermore show Kholod's position as a Palestinian from within the state of Israel. At University, she confronts her minority position as a Palestinian and as a citizen who refuses to accept Israeli state violence. In the confrontation with a Jewish Israeli student, she feels obliged to take a stance. She is not part of this collective that is occupying the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. On the other hand, when her family flees Tul-Karem due to Israeli military invasions and seeks refuge at her home, she furthermore is aware that she does not live under occupation like them. When understanding herself as Palestinian, she perhaps, also actually realizes the different conditions in which they live their lives.

"To see the racism[97]"

Ibtisam answers my opening question about colonial consciousness and its process of liberation by defining her own gaze:

> It is also my gaze and my way of looking at things, how in general I examine people or surrounding, or how I accept surrounding or don't accept. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

Ibtisam starts her account of self from her own located position. From her account, we can draw that she is aware of the strength of her gaze. In this sense her gaze is a tool with which she reads the world and reality. Moreover, it is her relation with and to the world. It seems to me that her account is that of an active agent who chooses critical thinking as a tool for reading her vision. According to her, colonial consciousness is about basic power dynamics of

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97 Ibtisam

day-to-day life.

After Ibtisam's general definition about colonial consciousness in Chapter One, she chooses to give an example through which she explains her own confrontation with colonial consciousness directed at her:

And then you get to Tel Aviv, thinking that finally you will have freedom, liberty. Then you are confronted: let's say my first slap was to see the racism, to touch it really; you know you don't get it until you don't get it in your face. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

Ibtisam moves to Tel Aviv at university age. She is eager to leave home and the village and find what she defines as freedom and liberty. Throughout Ibtisam's account she talks about herself as being *"out of context"*:

I am very connected to my society and to Palestinian culture and even to my land and roots and on the other hand, I feel out of context. If you summarize my life, it is always the war between belonging and not belonging. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

At the age of 18 Ibtisam thinks she will resolve the profound question of belonging when moving to Tel Aviv. However, Tel Aviv is where she confronts racism and Tel Aviv turns out to be a slap in the face rather than freedom. She continues:

My whole life I identified myself as a Palestinian, I grew up in a Palestinian home [...] in general my Palestinian identity was very crystallized, I never doubted it. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

I would like to propose to examine Ibtiam's account through Guénif-Souilamas' (2000) notion *"injonctions paradoxales"* (ibid., p.25). Within the French (post)colonial context Guénif-Souilamas (ibid.) argues that *"les beurettes",* female descendants of (post)colonial north African migration to France are expected to automatically seek for emancipation from their family and traditional education while searching for liberty and freedom in the French republican system (ibid.). When Ibtisam says, *out of context,* we could read it through the understanding of the paradox of integration to which Guénif-Souilamas refers (ibid.).

Reading Ibtisam through the analysis of Guénif-Souilamas (2000, 2005) we understand that when she says about herself that she is *out of context* she refuses to position herself within paradoxical injunctions. She would rather considers herself in the margin than to have

to obey the two normative injunctions: on the one hand, Palestinian culture and tradition, yet on the other hand, to perform emancipation through the negation of her national identity and thus assimilate into Israeli society.

Ibtisam does not discover she is Palestinian in Tel Aviv. Her Palestinian national identity had been crystallized by the age of eighteen. Unlike Imad, she did not view Palestinians, and as a consequence herself, as inferior. She claims to have grown up in a home that was aware of their Palestinian national identity and determined to transmit it throughout generations. Having said that, she realizes that her belonging to her own community deprives her of liberty and freedom. Freedom, which she thought she would find in Tel Aviv, a predominantly Jewish environment, however, the encounter proved otherwise.

Similar to Imad, Ibtisam gazes at racism from that which Haraway (1988) calls, a feminist situated objective knowledge. At a young age, she is aware that what she encounters in Tel-Aviv, at University, should be defined as racism. To interject her words, using Freirian categories, it seems that she acknowledges the oppressive power dynamics of domination, which lead to racism (Freire, 1970). While Ibtisam recounts that she did not find freedom in Tel Aviv, I argue that her oppositional gaze is in effect a process towards liberation as it decrypts objective realities.

Ibtisam's internal wisdom (Hills-Colins, 2000) from her oppressed position (Helms, 1990; Halabi, 2004), enables her to critically read the frames of racism into which she enters when moving to Tel Aviv. The encounter with the other, the predominantly Jewish society, reveals to Ibtisam her oppressed position. Ibtisam's Palestinian experience of Tel Aviv University, a normative Jewish-Israeli institution, is what Limbrick (2012) calls the 1948 Palestinian experience from the interior (ibid., p.99).

Through the examination of Aljafari's film *The Roof,* Limbrick (2012) argues that the director, a Palestinian 48' himself, manages to create "*a queer genealogy by undoing of normative equation between family, nation, diaspora, exile and place*" (ibid., p.99). In this sense Ibtisam is experiencing similar queer dynamics when she says she is *out of context.* To follow Marelli's (1992) analysis of Elia Suleiman's film "Chronicle of a Disappearance", when she claims that exile is not an identity, Ibtisam seeks to undo her own family and gender normative equations, yet in parallel she is reclaiming an equal non-racist environment, as a citizen, within the Israeli normative equation of nation, diaspora, exile and displacement. We

could perhaps consider her, to furthermore understand Ibtisam, when she defines herself as being *out of context,* throught the reading of Dufoix (2011) and his understanding of the term diaspora. It seems to me that her account presents, that which Dufoix (ibid.) calls her diasporic *formation,* in other words, her crossing and movement between sense of beloning and stances of exclusion.

This process allows her to come to know the reality surrounding her critically with radical analytical tools. We could consider here that these radical tools, as referred to by Freire (1970), are the conditions in which the participants take action towards their emancipation.

In this sense we understand emancipation, through the reading of Laclau (1996), as a movement of liberation from oppression or oppressive forces and structures. In our case, Ibtisam and Imad are aware that the hegemonic structures of the Israeli State are oppressive and influence every part of their lives. Their emancipated position leads them to reclaim their Palestinian position within the Israeli state, ethnically defined as Jewish. According to hooks (1990), insisting to stay in the margin, as Imad and Ibtisam do in front of the hegemonic Jewish population and institutions, is a site of resistance and a liberated feminist consciousness.

While hooks' (1990) work refers to gendered and racial marginality, here Ibtisam, Imad and further below Fadi, are also faced with their civic and national identities which are, according to Suleiman (2004), necessarily in conflict. He argues that the Palestinian citizens of the State of Israel find themselves within an internal conflict of identities: on the one hand the Palestinian national identity, and on the other, their identity as citizens of the State of Israel. Interestingly, as Guénif-Soulimas (2000) argues concerning the identity and position of beurettes, Suleiman (2004) claims that the only way to solve this conflict is to create an identity that is internal and is doubly marginal.

"Lack of judgment[98]"

Through the use of the term 'judgment', in the following account, Ibtisam takes us steps further in our analytical quest to better understand liberation processes from colonial

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98 Ibtisam

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consciousness. Towards the end of the interview, I ask Ibtisam:

> *TD: Do you think that you have liberated yourself from colonial consciousness?"*
>
> *I think I never had a colonial consciousness, I see it, I recognize it, I smell it from a distance. Non- judgment, I thank God and my parents, really, for growing up in such a home. It's like I don't walk in the street and laugh at someone who is different. I have never made fun of anyone different. Judgment (being judgmental) is like determining for others what is right and wrong. It's like; I don't want the Israeli society intervening for me about what is right. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

According to Ibtisam, she never embodied colonial consciousness, although she knows exactly what it is and can recognize it. Her choice of senses in order to identify colonial consciousness is interesting. She can see it and even smell it. It is corporeal. It has a shape she can see and an odor she can smell. Earlier in the chapter Ibtisam recounts her connection to being Palestinian and the racism she discovers when going to University in Tel-Aviv. She clearly positions herself within the dominated group of Israeli colonial state formation. Is Ibtisam trying to tell us that when coming from the dominated group one can't hold a colonial consciousness? It does not seem to be the case.

Ibtisam recounts that it is her personal and spiritual formation that provides her with the tools to read the world from a non-colonial frame. She attributes this formation to her parents and to God. In Hedjerassi's (2014) work where she analyses Angela Davis' political and intellectual process, she shows that a large part of the way in which Davis explains her development for critical thinking and empowering actions is related to her mother. The same understanding could go to understanding the self-reflexive work of hooks (1990). Similarly, Ibtisam seems to attribute an important place for her family as contributing values of resistance and critical thinking. While she can critically look at dynamics that she would define oppressive within her family, she also understands their singularity within the large Palestine society.

Within modern time, Elias (1975) argues, the family has become one of the central spaces in which individuals are formed. Ibtisam's account and Hedjerassi's (2014) analysis, demonstrate the role of home formation from a gendered dominated standpoint. Ibtisam acknowledges that through her *non-judgmental* education towards others, and perhaps herself, her parents refuse to act as the agents of social formation (ibid.). I argue here, that Ibtisam's

parents, from their colonized standpoint as Palestinians within the State of Israel, positioned themselves within the margin when resisting against the incursion of that which the other participants have earlier named, the Zionist civilizing mission, into their home.

Ibtisam identifies the social norms of *judgment* as external to her being, which enables her to physically recognize colonial consciousness yet to be free from embodying it. We can understand from her account that if she had a judgmental formation, it would have been qualified as colonial. How can we then understand judgment within this context?

It seems to me important to understand Ibtisam within a postcolonial reading of race and racism, in other words, to try and understand judgment within processes of racialization. We can understand racialization as acts that classify humans into races. This classification is therefore, the judgment of their values: "*racial classification is judgment*" (Hacking 2005, in Shenhav and Yonah, 2008, p.23). According to Fanon (1952) racism is a modality that creates a systematic racial hierarchy "*modalité de hiérarchisation systématiséé*" (ibid., p.33).

Here I would like to propose reading Ibtisam's account, and her explanation of colonial consciousness through that which I name colonial arrogance. When looking up the word arrogance and arrogant in the dictionary, one finds: "*Arrogant manner of behavior; aggressive conceit or presumption; Arrogant: Unduly appropriating authority or importance; aggressively conceited or presumptuous; haughty, overbearing*[99]."

The definition of arrogance and arrogant contains processes of aggression and violence. It seems to me that judgment and arrogance are interconnected to the gaze. Interestingly the Oxford dictionary brings as an example Darwin's definition of the arrogant man: "*C. Darwin: The arrogant man looks down on others, and with lowered eyelids hardly condescends to see them* (ibid.)." It appears that Darwin understands arrogance in the power of the look and the gaze of the subject. The ability to look from higher up down at someone qualifies as arrogant. Or the subject who does not consider the existence of the other at whom s/he is looking, is arrogant. Ibtisam identifies these judgmental, colonial actions from a distance; she takes her distance and mistrusts, perhaps those who could enter the frame of judgment or arrogance.

It is interesting that Ibtisam makes a clear connection between the processes of judgment towards a person or an individual and the power that the whole Israeli society could have on

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99 The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Ed Lesley Brown. Volume 1 A-M.1993

her life. For her, judgment is an aggression that defines for others values such as *what is right and what is wrong*. Ibtisam is clear that defining values for others and exercising power over others are forms of colonial aggressions, from which one should liberate oneself. In this sense Ibtisam's views of judgment are in correlation with Fanon's (1959) understanding of the corporeal containment of racism.

While Ibtisam does not place herself within those who hold colonial consciousness, she is aware that she could, like anyone else, be in a dominant position:

> *"I had to find the key, the opening point, that also I could be [...] the minute I told myself this sentence, that I could be a rapist, a confiscator of rights of the other, then anybody could be that, and anybody can't be that, I can also be innocent! This is how I solved it." (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam tries to solve the question of domination. Her epiphany, her key, in her words, was to read domination outside the essentialist frame. She insists that the question of performing violence is a choice. When she says: *anybody could be that and anybody can't be that,'that'* refers to the rapists and the confiscator, performances of colonial consciousness. Ibtisam gazes at racism as a choice rather than a given, this vision according to hooks (2003) is what allows the possibility for both individuals from the dominating and the dominant group to transforms.

Ibtisam, as hooks (2003), demands a non-essentialist reading of reality and of the possibility to change. From Ibtisam's account we understand that liberation is bound up with the development of the ability to view oneself in other circumstances. Her critical approach led her to the possibility of gazing at herself within the position of a dominator or colonizer. According to her, as she chooses not to internalize colonialism, others, could choose not to perform oppression when found within the matrix of domination and violence.

I argue that while claiming that she has never embodied colonial consciousness Ibtisam works for a liberated consciousness and in Laclau's (1996) categories, constructs a liberated identity as a subject struggling for emancipation. Ibtisam develops her oppositional gaze through the understanding that this is the way to prevent becoming an aggressor, or in other words preventing oneself from the interiorization of dominating forces and thus the development of colonial consciousness. Ibtisam takes charge over her own consciousness by refusing to be an object of oppression. She strives towards, what Ziv (2013) calls, the being of

a cognitive subject. The liberation project trans/formation appears to intertwine questions of ethics and knowledge. To follow Shalhoub-Kevokian's (2016), Ibtisam resists the state's command when she chooses to construct her own vision.

Butler (2012) argues that *frames of power*, and in our case frames of domination and oppression, draw the limits and boundaries of what is knowable. When reading Ibtisam within this understanding, we observe that her account *"engages in a critical relation to power"* (ibid., p.12). Thus Ibtisam answers the ethical demand through her critical gaze towards her reality.

Within a matrix of power, ethical thought can emerge solely when one enters a journey that permits destabilizing *"modes of knowledge"* (Spivak in Butler 2012, p.12). Here hooks' (1994, 2003) development of knowledge concerned with the pedagogy of question asking, provides the practice through which one could, undo the commonsense. Rather than taking reality for granted, *unsettling modes of knowledge* engage one in constant dialogue with the world. Ibtisam's refusal of judgment as a hegemonic mode of knowledge engages her into an ethical trajectory that challenges colonial arrogance. Colonial arrogance, using Butler's (2012) words, is then framed with the *"limits of what is knowable"* and that which is *"established precisely by regimes of power"* (ibid., p.12).

"Self-respect[100]"

In the course of the interview, when I ask Fadi what liberation from colonial consciousness means to him, he answers:

> *As a human, I am not talking about national identity at the moment, or any other identity. Not on that level, on the very clear and simple level, a human, a citizen, within thing called self-respect.*
>
> *TD: So for you liberation from colonial consciousness is a question of self-respect?*
>
> *Of course! of course! (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)*

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100 Fadi

Fadi's account distinguishes between the Palestinian national demand and the very basic, according to him human and civic demand. According to him, the human demand is bound up in question of self-respect, or perhaps in Fanon's (1961) sense, dignity of the colonized. Fadi positions himself as a citizen within the State of Israel and demands his place.

Within a recent article on the possibility to decolonize Israeli society through resisting Zionism, Weizman (2016) argues, Israeli state should be gazed at as the continuation of Zionism and thus as a settler colonial state. Whilst the Zionist commonsense discourse leads the state of Israel to define itself as a Liberal Democracy, other definitions emerge out of current social sciences within the state. Smooha (2002), for example, argues that a more accurate term to define the State of Israel would be an ethnic democracy, Ghanem (1998) calls it an ethnic state and Yiftachel (1999), Ethnocracy. All definitions attempt to deal with the exclusion and racist structures of the Israeli state namely to its Palestinian citizens but further to ethnic discriminatory structures within the Jewish population as well.

In the following account Fadi describes his liberation process, or in other words, his emancipatory project in terms of daily struggle:

> *Look, it is a daily struggle, it is a daily struggle: First to refuse, to refuse daily, to refuse to accept the diktat, the diktat of the institution and the government, of this whole system; to willingly accept to stay in the inferior position as a citizen. As a citizen! "you are a minority, you are different, so accept this reality" No ! That is unacceptable to me. Out of the question (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)*

Fadi's account reveals, I argue, a complex position in which he, and perhaps other Palestinian citizens of the State, are found. His account poses questions such as how to be part of society without performing integration? How to demand equal rights without "giving in" to the colonial structures to which he is subjugated?

I understand Fadi's resistant to adhere to the *diktat*, in Guénif-Soulimas' (2006) categories, as a refusal to assimilate to colonialism. According to Elias (1975) assimilation and colonialism hold a dialectic relation and are bound up with a connection. When understanding their position, the dominated group, is certain to enter a phase of refusal, which is what Guénif-Souilamas (2006) defines within the French (post)colonial context, as *the unveiling* process of the French Republic. Fadi's account shows a movement towards consciousness trans/formation when he understands that the oppressive system positions him as dominated.

Furthermore, he seeks self-respect, and understands that inferiority is structured. Pursuing self-respect is his own trajectory as he is aware that social structures work against that same demand.

The racism that Ibtisam encounters at University, and the *diktat* to which Fadi refers are, using Elias' (1979) terms, dynamics that resort to colonization and are thus tools of domination. When confronting racism and the Israeli institutions, Imad, Ibtisam and Fadi, realize that they are assigned to a marginal performance as *the Other from the inside* (Guénif-Souilamas, 2006).

Smooha (1989, 1992) argues that politicization processes of Palestinian citizens of the State of Israel, over the last twenty to thirty years, are characterized by what he calls "the new Arab" (ibid.). In particular, researches have shown that the 1967 war in general, and the occupation of the West bank and Gaza in particular, strengthened their Palestinian identity (Suleiman, 2004; Tessler, 1977; Smooha 1989; Suleimanand Hallahmi, 1997). Within these processes Palestinians connected to their national identity and to the Palestinian struggle to end Israeli occupation. This process takes place in parallel to empowerment processes leading them to demand from the state their equal rights as citizens.

Like Imad and Ibtisam, Fadi refuses to accept the oppressive forces of Israeli state formation while demanding his rights as a citizen. He follows Rouhana's (1998) analysis of the State of Israel, in which he explains Israel's limited democracy. The limitations are a result of the contradiction in the definition of the state, as a democratic and ethnic Jewish state. In this sense, while the Palestinian minority strives for equal rights, the state constantly maintains its ethnic division and superiority of its Jewish population. Soleiman (2002) argues that the definition of the State of Israel as an ethnic Jewish state embodies the exclusion of the Palestinian minorities as citizens with full civil right and equal opportunities.

In his work, Freire (1970) proposes to look at the consciousness of the oppressed and oppressor in the contradiction of their relationship. For Freire, the core of the understanding of one's consciousness lies in this contradiction. Understanding the contradiction and coming to analyze it critically decodes the dialectical conflict between opposing social forces.

In order to live fully in the world and develop critical tools for analyzing it, one must critically understand what Freire (1970) calls, the objective reality. Fadi holds a radical, oppositional gaze towards the hegemonic state formation surrounding him. He understands

that there is, in the Freirian sense, an oppressor-oppressed relation to which he is subjected. The verb "to refuse" is repeated three times. This repetition signifies, I would suggest, the power involved in order to prevent internalizing and reproducing these oppressive forces. Following Laclau's (1996) definition of emancipation, Fadi is in the constant movement of struggle against the identified oppressive forces aiming to oppress him.

For Fadi an emancipatory project, as a Palestinian citizen of the State of Israel, is to resist the reproduction of Israeli oppressive forces. In his words, to reproduce these forces would be to assent to the system and accept an inferior status. In Black Skin White Mask, Fanon defines colonized people as "[…] people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root" (Fanon, 1952 [2008, p.2]). For Fanon, therefore, to be "colonized" also means that the subject has interiorized hegemonic oppressive forces. Could we then understand that if agents positioned in the dominated group, in our case Palestinians citizens of Israeli state refuse and resist embodiment of inferiority, they would thereby no longer be considered "colonized people"? In other words, could agents who resist these oppressive forces, therefore be seen in the process of liberation or engaged in emancipatory tasks?

Let us now go back to Imad who introduced us to the inferiority complex to which Fanon (1952) refers. Could we consider that Imad liberated himself from the embodying of inferiority when he says: *I am inferior, not as a human being […] I am inferior because I am an Arab, and that an Arab is an inferior race to the European Israeli race*. By bringing into the conversation the question of race, without naming it as such, for the moment, Imad defines the reality within colonial frameworks. *European Israeli race* is his definition of the dominant group or in other words the colonizer. Jabarin (2014) argues that the Palestinian citizens of the State of Israel have never gone through a decolonizing process. Their civil condition in the state is profoundly interconnected with historical and present colonial processes.

Fanon (1952) and Memmi's (1957) work illustrate the way in which the colonizer and the colony must, by definition suppress any uprising or resistance, which could threaten its existence. Hence in their sense, the colonizer is prepared to use terror and violent measures in order to retain power. By keeping constant control yet preventing any assimilation of the colonized group into the group of European settlers through cultural domination, the colonizers manage to divide and rule the colonized (ibid.). In this context we understand the 'never-ending' task of refusal to which Fadi refers. In effect Imad, Ibtisam and Fadi's

accounts elucidate the tasks of resistance to colonial attempts of control and separation.

When Fadi insists that as a citizen he has to constantly refuse, we can also understand that Fadi refuses the "Francophile" position. The Francophile, within the French colonial context, is the creation of the colonized who loves the French and the colony. According to Fanon (1952) through the creation of a Francophile group, the colonizer inserts a self-controlling internal system. This group has a slightly higher status and a few privileges. It seems to me that these three accounts highlight the participants' resistance to become a more privileged colonized group. Hence they have a complex reading of political Zionism. They refuse to be what Malcolm X[101] defined 'as the house Negro'. Liberating themselves from what Fanon (ibid.) defined as 'white masks', they refuse to protect the colonizer and colonial interests and insist on making demands for their personal and communal interests.

A liberated political consciousness holds a critical reading of reality. This reading understands that real assimilation to what Fanon (1952) calls Francophiles will always stay colonized in the eyes of the colonizer. They will never be able to 'change their skin' (ibid.).

Fadi's account, together with that of Ibtisam and Imad, illustrates the challenge in developing an oppositional gaze within the matrix of domination of the Israeli State. An oppositional gaze can also be read in what Hill Collins (2000) refers to as spaces of free mind. These spaces refer to individual tasks of emancipation. Developing an oppositional gaze would then be considered as an individual task of agency. The formation through transformation of active subjects that control the way in which they enter into conversation with the world. Imad is in the process of self-liberation when he ceases to look at himself as inferior. Imad has created the conditions for spaces of free mind as these conditions first lie in the ability to first look at domination critically and further develop alternative knowledge.

If we follow Freire (1970) here, critically understanding the objective reality does not suggest binary processes of "objectivism vs. subjectivism". Rather a dialectical relationship between subjectivity and objectivity is the essence to radical thought. Radical thought and thus consciousness essentially bring human beings to act to change their own reality and the reality of their surroundings and therefore, cannot lead to fanaticism as it is the act of responsible subjects fully living in the world in order to change it (ibid.). Here I argue that

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101 Malcolm X - Field Negro vs. House Negro. Accessed on October 26, 2016, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zUIjP4KWok

Imad now gazes at reality surrounding him with critical tools and thought.

Conclusion

To this point we have looked at the trans/formation of the participants' vision from a colonial gaze, in Shohat's (Shohat and Stam, 1994) terms, to the building of an oppositional gaze. The colonial gaze is understood through Haraway's (1988) definition of objective scientific vision of domination. The oppositional gaze, referred to by hooks (1992) is the development of critical tools in order to visualize as agents of change.

The work developed in this chapter shows that the development of an oppositional gaze transforms the lives of the participants. Likewise, it also demonstrates the importance of understanding the way in which reality was gazed at before the trans/formation, that which I have sought to present in Chapter One. In most cases the trans/formation of consciousness is related to by the participants as liberating and emancipating, having said that, the rapture from Zionism and the understanding of oneself to be an oppressor, is recounted by the Jewish-Israeli participants as painful and hard.

The Palestinian participants who find themselves, marked by Israeli Zionism, furthermore describe their liberation from colonial consciousness as a hard and difficult process of change. I propose to consider the development of an oppositional gaze through processes that critique hegemonic knowledge and refuse to remain within a frame of a violent vision. It is furthermore accompanied by the possibility to acquire new knowledge.

Esther, Anat, Sara, Adi, and Alon reveal a trajectory that first includes the need to undo hegemonic knowledge followed by reconstructing alternative anti-hegemonic knowledge. While the undoing process entails unveiling lies, learning new knowledge appears to include fully understanding the truth.

The Second Palestinian Intifada appears to be an important event that constructs the radical consciousness of both the Palestinian and the Jewish-Israeli participants. It brings yet another dimension in order to understand the matrix of domination, but it further constructs action and praxis which take into account yet another element within the entanglement of oppositions.

Second Station

Act(s) of Liberation - "Doing Critical Thinking[102]"

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102 Johayna

Overview

"Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (Freire 1970 [2000, p.79]).

In this research I am concerned with how Jewish-Israelis and Palestinian citizens of the State of Israel define the process through which they develop, that which Freire (1970) defines as radical consciousness. I propose to understand radical consciousness that develops critical thought as liberation processes from Israeli colonial consciousness. In this section that includes Chapter Three and Four, which I have called Second Station, I seek to elaborate the multiple tasks and acts of liberation taken throughout the journey of trans/formation. As suggested in Kholod's account, the first two chapters are what she calls the first station of change. The first station relates to the development of a critical gaze at the world and at one's position within it, the second station, in agreement with Freire (ibid.), Kholod argues is the movement towards the act.

Radical thought is concerned with the movement towards consciousness building. Therefore consciousness construction is a dynamic ongoing movement of learning to perceive and thus the capacity to analyze the objective reality in its social, political and economic contractions. The next step is the movement to action through praxis, therefore not acting for the sake of acting, but rather the responsibility to struggle against oppressive structures while acting through constant reflections and question asking. When one is engaged in the process of liberation, whether he or she is the oppressed or the oppressor, one can no longer hold a passive stance towards violence and injustice and therefore must step into a stance of responsibility (ibid.).

CHAPTER THREE

Presencing

"The work as work, in its presencing, is a
setting forth, a making. But what does the
work set forth? We come to know about this
only when we explore what comes to the fore
and is customarily spoken of as the making or
production of works."

Heidegger, 1975 [2001, P.44]

Overview

In this chapter I am concerned with the task of *presencing,* which Avi refers to on
numerous occasions, as a crucial act, which reveals dynamics of power and thus enables
individuals to develop a complex and critical gaze at reality and at their position within it. The
accounts reveal that the praxis of question asking to which hooks (2010) attributes great
importance within processes of liberation, is central within tasks of *presencing*. Furthermore,
it appears that presencing permits the participants to acquire trans/formation, which in Butler
(1993) sense enables one to enter the critical stance of understanding that which is at stake.

Hooks (2010) attributes a two-phased process to praxis of that which she calls *question
asking pedagogy*. According to her, when in liberation processes which seek critical thought,
one firstly strives to discover the: Who, What, When, Where, and How of reality. The second
phase is to know how to use the knowledge one has acquired. Knowing, according to hooks,
helps prioritize and thus "*determine what matters most*" (ibid., p.9).

To follow hooks (2010), critical thinking is an act that on the one hand understands
essences and on the other strives to discover their origins. In this sense, critical thinking is
praxis, as it is a way of life and a way of approaching the world, rather than a singular action.
Throughout the research we read the way in which the development of the *oppositional gaze*
and the discovery of the *real story* is, according to the participants, a critical attitude, a
performance of critique that I would argue, engages in liberation processes.

In this chapter I am concerned with the way in which the participants describe the acts of
liberation taken during their consciousness trans/formation. Furthermore, I seek to

demonstrate the way in which the act of positioning, self-reflexivity and understanding oneself within the matrix of domination is crucial within such processes.

In Butler's text "What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue" (2001) she argues that the practice of critique puts forth power dynamics. The task of *putting forth*, according to her, is not a judgmental practice, which leads to a discourse of good vs. bad. It rather promotes, in Avi's terms, processes of *presencing* of the powers under which one is governed (ibid.).

In the following account Avi recounts in the third person, in most cases, plural. It seems that Avi has taken himself out of the equation. The discourse no longer concerns him. He does not feel concerned when speaking about people who *do not see*. In particular, I find the following account important in order to draw attention to the line of thought that sheds light on the action of *presencing,* as a form of resistance to domination and as a liberating action:

> *It is exactly the myopia of Foucault; which incidentally Ann Stoler wrote about the Colonial Aphasia. Myopia comes from medicine, and also Aphasiacomes from these fields when one speaks about a disease. However, my claim is that it is not about the physical level but that it concerns the awareness, the perception, the thought. It is not that they don't see, it is that they refuse to see. It's not that they have vision problems, it is the refusal that until one doesn't [work for] presencing the existence of the refusal and the existence of power, they won't see. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

In Avi's account, we read his passion related to the question of political action and political activism. Avi refuses the hypothesis that people do not see as a passive position and insists that individuals refuse as a voluntary act that ignores domination and in his words, problems. I propose to read Avi within Rancière's (1987) understanding of emancipation. In his work Rancière (ibid.) claims that an *emancipated position* is a trajectory that an individual takes as part of an ongoing process. It is an ongoing process and work. It is a position that consciously engages in a quest for liberation through one's curiosity. Along the same line of thought, hooks' (1994, 2003) looks at liberation processes towards what she calls enlightened consciousness through one's will to know.

Avi's hypothesis, when analyzing the Israeli society, is that individuals refuse to see. According to him, both the processes of refusing to see reality and the processes towards *presencing the existence of power* are related to questions of consciousness rather than physical questions of vision. Along the same line of thought when an individual chooses to

take the path towards an emancipated position (Rancière, 1987), one is aware of the will to know. Curiosity would lead to wish for emancipation and according to hooks (2003), to the development of an enlightened consciousness.

According to Avi, the act that would permit an enlightened consciousness, driven from an emancipatory project, is *presencing* of relations of power. In the Freirian (1970) sense, Avi invites his surroundings to step towards a radical form of knowledge that demands in Rancière's (1987) sense dialectical dynamics as a way of thought.

To continue our line of thought concerning the possibility for individuals to develop an emancipated consciousness, I propose to look at the way Scott (2012) understands emancipation. Rather than an external agency, she claims that emancipation is an internal, individual issue that promotes change in one's consciousness. In her sense it is to experience a movement from being under constraints towards a certain kind of freedom. Exposure of domination, Avi argues, allows movement that refuses external constrains and is driven from within one's will for liberation from subjection.

Avi leans on Ann Stoler's concept of *colonial aphasia* (2011) to explain his argument. He refuses a physical explanation and insists that we understand his claim through questions of consciousness and awareness. When trying to understand how colonial histories and memories are silenced and erased within contemporary France, Stoler (ibid.) finds that the metaphoric concept of aphasia is helpful to explain, what she calls, the achievement of occlusions of knowledge. In this sense we can understand that Avi tried to show the way in which political forms of *knowing*, in his sense, creates *presencing* and thus reveals relations of power that become and transform into cognitive acts.

Avi draws this thought from Stoler's argument in which she contends that the lack in discourse is not a *"matter of ignorance or absence"* (Stoler, 2011, p.125), but rather understanding 'Aphasia' as adequate to speak about a taken action that could perhaps explain the difficulty in creating a language that could best describe reality (ibid.). During the interview, I wonder together with Avi whether he thought the question of *not seeing* is related to a lack of tools to *name* that which is in the vision:

TD: Do you think it is a refusal or is it a lack of tools?

No I don't believe that, I think it is a political refusal. It's like the whites didn't see the

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problem of enslaving blacks. There is no difference between the two, the minute it became part of the discourse on the surface that is was spoken about it becomes illegitimate [...] (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)

Avi insists that the reason for which Jewish-Israelis legitimize Zionist structures of domination is drawn from a political choice. His explanation makes an analogy in the way white people legitimize Black enslavement. Avi repeats his earlier argument when he recounts that a political choice to see, includes speaking about injustice and putting it *on the surface*. That is when according to him injustice is gazed at as illegitimate.

At this point, Avi does not speak about his own process, but rather he chooses to elaborate a general analysis of the possibility of other Jewish-Israelis to trans/form their consciousness. In hooks' (1994, 2003, 2010) work on the possibility to transform she draws her argument on Freire's (1970, 1974) work on consciousness transformation. Both hooks and Freire (hooks, 1994, 2003, 2010, Freire, 1970, 1973) argue that critical dialogue, constant self-reflexivity and question-asking pedagogy are fundamental tasks that, in Avi's terms, promote *presencing* of injustice that are necessary within processes of liberation.

Along the same line of thought, Martuccelli (2004) argues that players within a social construction, in their everyday performance of life, continue to follow what he calls the authority. One builds and functions within these power dynamics of domination. According to him in order to denaturalize dynamics of domination within routine livelihood, one must make them present. This is a constant and ongoing process. The work of critique, to which Avi seems to refer, would lead people, according to him to cease to gaze at domination as a given reality. This happens when a subject could insist on finding explanations. This is the critical thought, to which hooks (2010) refers as well, and to which, the participants, I argue, are devoted to in their process of change. This is where they all relate when trying to answer my question about liberation.

Part One: Questioning Reality as Praxis

"Because we all consider scientific knowledge to be Knowledge with a capital K, we come to regard it as knowledge within ourselves. That makes us powerful and thus authoritarian" (Freire and Faundez, 1989, p.45).

"To enable a discourse[103]"

> *TD: what do you mean by our society?*
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> *[...] the one between the sea and Jordan, I don't know how to call it, that which is under the Israeli Zionist regime. It is a very closed and silenced society and very closed, it is not dynamic it has no changes very clear what is allowed and what are the boundaries, and what is off boundaries. It creates a static place that doesn't change, that doesn't enable a discourse, which doesn't allow the existence of the other, which erases any identity that is different. So for me questions, enable me, first of all, to stay myself or to enjoy being connected to myself, truth would be a word that is too strong for me. Yes, to be connected to myself, or to what I think is myself, at the same time to be a little more complete in the long run. So it is like, I think, what questions provide is a lot of stress (laugh), it creates a lot of stress, because to be in these places leads to becoming annoyed and to these feeling that it is a burning (issue). And I believe that political doing and actions in general, also academic doing, can only come out of these places. That is to say, if you want to do (silence) to do political actions or to do academic, you have to, in my opinion, it has to come from these places where things are burning inside of you, this place inside, from the emotional place (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

I propose to understand Avi's account through reading Foucault (1990) and what he names *critical attitude*. For Foucault *not wanting to be governed* (Foucault, 1990 [2007, p.45]) is a moral stance one takes vis-à-vis governing forces that are illegitimate and unjust. Avi's description of society brings forth forces that create limitation and perhaps govern through domination. As hooks (2010), he goes as far as speaking about the truth. It seems that question asking is for him the only way to stay connected to who he is, to himself, to his own boundaries and to the truth. Moreover, while question asking is a difficult task it is what brings him to action. It seems that for him the stress created by question asking is what makes political action thrive. And being in the political action seems to be the place in which he would like to see himself.

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In Foucault's (1990) "What is Critique?" he argues for a historical perspective and the understanding of three major points to undergo this task: The first "anchoring point" in his sense is to refuse (ibid. [2007, p.45]). When referring to the 15th and the 16th century, Foucault argues that refusing means speaking out the truth about the writing in the Scriptures. Here he argues, as Avi recounts, that the praxis of question asking, promotes important doubt about the truth of these religious scriptures. While the first point questions the truth, Foucault's second point *on not wanting to be governed* focuses on the moral question. While the first point calls for refusing, the second anchoring point focuses on the will of non-acceptance of unjust order. In this sense critique goes further to a task of bringing forth, and in Avi's words, making present, "universal and indefeasible rights" (Foucault, 1990 [2007, p.46]). The third point, on *not wanting to be governed*, and thus performing critical attitudes, focuses on the challenging of authority. Therefore, not taking for granted an authority discourse as truth, just because an authority said it (ibid.).

In the following account, Avi elaborates on a situation in his life during which he could not accept to take part in violence:

> *I was then sent to the West-Bank, and then I made a lot of trouble (laugh), I continuously asked questions. Trouble?! I just ask questions, that is all, it seemed illegitimate to shoot at people without them explaining to me why. In short, again I fought with them, so they stopped putting me there, so they put me at the base gate and then I started holding dialogues with the Palestinians there (laugh) about the limits of legitimate violence. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Avi recounts his experience as an Israeli soldier in the West Bank: Palestinian occupied territories. Earlier in our conversation Avi explains that the decision to go to the army was his individual quest to fit into the Israeli secular world. Avi was born into an Ultra-Orthodox family. At the age of eighteen, he decides to leave the community. His army service reveals to him a violent world of occupation, a world that brings about as many questions as his former religious one. Lacking a good enough explanation, Avi refuses to shoot at people. The question of whose life counts and what is legitimate to do are essential questions for Avi. His internal ethical stance through which it seems he can feel as an agent in the world, doubts the orders he gets from his commanders.

What Avi estimates as a simple practice of question asking and a process through which he

could better understand actions he is ordered to take, is gazed at by his superiors as a performance of a troublemaker. Avi refuses to define his practice of question asking a *trouble;* as it appears that he does not perceive himself as a troublemaker. Quite to the contrary he perceives his refusal to pursue violent orders and to question his commanders as legitimate.

Avi is punished for his praxis of question asking and his recurring doubt in military authority. His commander places him as the military base gatekeeper, a military position that is often considered to be inferior within Israeli army normative codes. Avi laughs when recounting this story, as it seems that he finds comfort in his newly acquired position. Rather than experiencing his new position as a punishment, he is actually happy as he gets to speak to Palestinians. His position enables entering, in his experience, in conversation with Palestinians: He feels the need for a profound conversation on ethics and morals within the violent setting of occupation.

From Avi's account we learn that he has not interiorized the arrogance that is reproduced by the violent military knowledge. In Haraway's (1988) work, she argues that hegemonic knowledge that reproduces hegemonic power dynamics, furthermore creates arrogance. Earlier in the research Ibtisam divulges the importance she lays on challenging one's own arrogance, which is according to her, driven by aggression and violence towards the other. In this account, Avi seems to understand that his position as a soldier in military uniform, in Ibtisam's words, crosses the limits of the other. He refuses to look down at Palestinians, and seeks to understand, while wearing Israeli military uniforms *the limits of legitimate violence* in dialogue[104] with them.

Situating oneself critically reflecting at one's position and critically observing reality is, in Haraway's (1988) sense, the road towards the production of situated feminist knowledge that is objective. Therefore, feminist objectivity, according to her, understands that one does not see all, does not know all and is in the constant process of learning: "It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see" (ibid., p.583). Avi's process of question asking engages him within processes of learning. Through his praxis he strives, I argue, towards objectivity. Objectivity is the process of the quest, the seeking, whereby, when situated,

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104 In Chapter Four, I seek to develop the question of dialogue through the understanding of the different types of encounters. When reading Avi, I wonder if a critical dialogue is possible within such military setting. I hope that part one of chapter four, will clarify this point or at least will propose questions that encourage critique.

feminist knowledge is created (ibid.).

Avi's account reveals the way in which asking questions is for him an important task that challenges in Arendt's sense, routinized social behavior(s) (Arendt, 1958). The practice of question asking is in effect a task of (self)reflection. Avi refuses to accept the military hierarchal orders he gets from his superiors as objective knowledge. In Freire's and Faundez (1989) sense, by asking questions Avi resists his commanders' *authoritarian power*. On the one hand, Avi questions his right to kill and right to decide for others whether they 'live or die'. On the other hand, he questions the essence of violence through the quest for dialogue with Palestinians.

Avi's account is his own individual appropriated experience of the military service while making of it that which Foucault (1975) calls individual theory. In this sense, Avi develops his own individual theory of military domination within the Israeli army system. His ability to hold a critical gaze at military authority is what shapes his theory and knowledge. In hooks' (1990a) sense, Avi *talks back* at military authority as he speaks up within a context of power. I suggest reading Avi's acts of question asking within Butler's (2001) understanding of *self-forming*. Avi crafts his own ethical path through delimiting his moral practice (ibid.). Avi is trans/forming his consciousness, yet he is furthermore, in a formative process of learning the world and his own position within it.

Freire and Faundez's (1989) dialogue encourages us to critically gaze at authoritarian power towards other individuals or groups. In their work, they claim that one looks down at knowledge that is considered low in the hegemonic pyramid. Hence liberating oneself from colonial arrogance allows us to look at people and the world as equals and partners in dialogue and in reconstruction of new and perhaps critical, knowledge.

In the following account, Avi elaborates on his refusal to shoot at Palestinians through two specific examples:

> *There were several events that were events that changed my [...] the first time I was given an order to shoot towards an 8 or 10 year old boy. So I said Why? "Because it is an order", they said. And then one day at one of the posts of the base I was told to shoot at the direction of (someone) who was coming to ask where her son was. So I was like "why? She only wants to look for her son, let her. If you were to say that you have a reason". (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Avi recounts two main events that seem to have changed his consciousness. He does not finish his sentence yet during the conversation I understand that when he says *change* he refers to his political awareness. These events take place within the framework of the army. He gets orders to shoot at a young Palestinian boy and then at a Palestinian mother. Avi's choice of events is interesting: he specifically chooses to recount his refusal to shoot at those who are considered as vulnerable within the Palestinian society. It seems to me that these two examples are situations in which Avi clearly views himself within a context of power. The images of the child and the mother represent, perhaps, innocence. His refusal to shoot and thus his refusal to participate within violence towards innocence are accompanied by a task of asking questions driven by his curiosity.

Avi refuses the violent actions he is ordered to take and is automatically directed by his, in the Arendt's (1958) understanding of common sense, tendency to ask questions. Without a justified explanation from his superiors, he refuses to execute the order. At this point, I wonder what Avi would consider as a good enough explanation. In other words, would Avi agree to shoot at a Palestinian child and mother within other circumstances?

Elias (1975) argues, that one's capacity to resist violent orders within a military context of war, are extremely limited. Within the Israeli militaristic frame, Weizman (2016) demonstrates the way in which national identity is rooted in various state apparatus, which include the army and other military spheres. Therefore, within the Israeli social formation of domination, and within the framework of the army in particular, refusing an order is resisting larger social expectations. Avi's doubt in military authority demonstrates, in my view that even within a binary or dichotomist thought, one can find cracks that lead to refusal.

It seems to me that the possibility to act from within the cracks of a binary or dichotomist way of thought is the possibility to enter spaces of critical thought. Accordingly, deconstruction promotes reflexive processes of critical thought that seek truth found beneath the surface and thus works towards further knowledge (hooks, 2010).

Avi's account reveals his challenge towards a passive stance. His processes of refusal and question asking, mobilize him towards action and movement. Avi's acts to refuse are led by open mindedness, courage and imagination all which shape knowledge change that is necessarily dynamic (ibid.).

Along the same line, within the account, Avi sounds proud to have refused violence. While

at the time, he recounts a difficult task of confrontation we read from his account that is was rewarding. Avi seems to be empowered by his processes of question asking. I am eager to ask what knowledge Avi acquires when refusing to participate in violence and insisting to understand reality.

Drawing from Butler's (2001) reading of Foucault's concept "*arts of existence*", I suggest looking at platforms of question asking as praxis, which enable Avi and the other participants to search for their own trans/formation when being within contexts of violence. Earlier I wondered what Avi would consider as a good enough excuse for shooting at a Palestinian child and mother. At this point of the research I can only draw hypotheses, as I did not pose the question directly to Avi.

It seems to me that Avi's first refusal to shoot was derived from a humanistic gaze towards women and children. A gaze that does not necessarily contradict hegemonic structures, yet his development of critical thought, in other words, his act of thinking (hooks, 2010) developed his awareness towards a critical gaze at reality that is necessarily in conflict with hegemonic structures.

According to Arendt (1958), individual actions allow people to be themselves and give meaning to their own life. In her work she differentiates between *action* and *behavior. To behave* means to perform routinized social norms. Therefore, we understand behavior as inherently social and as a practice that excludes the possibility for a creative and individual action to take place (ibid., Hinchman, 1984). To act, according to Arendt is to think for oneself as an 'I' within a social construction of norms (Arendt, 1963). Through Butler's (2009) reading of Arendt, the failure to think is what leads individuals to genocidal and violent behaviors. Therefore thinking, in her sense, is an action of responsibility[105].

In this sense, Arendt (1963) refers, as does hooks (2010), to thinking, as the possibility to question and doubt violence and aggression, rather than executing orders. Throughout the research, the accounts illustrate, in my view, the way in which daily behavior is nourished by all forms of what Arendt (1958) calls social relations: Family stories, social relations, memories and national history.

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105 Judith Butler 2009 "Hannah Arendt, Ethics, and Responsibility." Accessed on July 30, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mq3uYFYEh8c

Avi's practice of question asking and inserting doubt appears to be part of various possible tasks towards critical thought. Through reading Freire and Faundez (1989), it illustrates that a critical understanding of reality "is essential in drawing up political pedagogical places of action." (Freire and Faundez, 1989, p.43).

Freire and Faundez (1989) discuss the way in which individuals' critical thinking is derived from the possibility to be aware of one's ability to philosophize within everyday life. The authors discuss the way in which processes of transformation rely on the development of awareness (ibid.). From this reading, we understand that they consider *being aware* as a key tool for critical thinking. Drawing on Gramsci's (1971) work, they argue that commonsense is the knowledge of the non-philosopher. Taking steps towards knowing allows individuals to transform into philosophers.

Avi's creation of his individual theory (Foucault, 1975) and his praxis of philosophizing about reality (Freire and Faundez, 1989) entail, asking questions, promoting doubt, unveiling power dynamics and creating conversations that challenge and undermine commonsense. Earlier Avi insists that the one way, according to him, to genuinely gaze at reality is through processes of making relations of power present. I understand from his account that making present is for him an important act of critique that challenges, that which Arendt (1958) calls routinized social behavior(s), derived perhaps from Israeli colonial consciousness.

We understand from Freire and Faundez (1989) that one's own reproduction of what is considered hegemonic knowledge creates authoritarian power dynamics. Therefore, according to this definition, one enters into dynamics of control and domination over another. Avi's former account takes place within a military context: a context that is bound up in power dynamics and control of domination. Having been a soldier in the Israeli army, Avi is aware of the hierarchal structures of the institution, yet it seems that he still strives for some sort of reflectivity. His refusal to shoot and act to undermine authority rejects any possible hegemonic assumption that Israeli military knowledge is, in Haraways's (1988) sense, objective.

Avi's following account, illustrates that asking questions is a praxis that he carries from childhood. In hooks' (2010) work she argues that children are *relentless interrogators* (ibid., p.8). According to her, this performance is what enables critical thought yet it is confronted with the boundaries and frames of social norms. Avi, as hooks' (ibid.) argument about

children, does not seem to need to work towards it. The development of his consciousness, presented throughout the dissertations, illustrates that Avi continues to work for acts of question asking in adulthood:

It seems to be a recurring theme in my life: asking annoying questions. For example at the age of [...] I asked "just a second, who says there is a God?" And also not to take things 'as they are', why should I? (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)

Asking questions seems to be a practice that has been following Avi since he was very young. Probably defining these questions as annoying is drawn from the reactions he has been getting from his surrounding throughout the years. The example he chooses to bring forth is when at a very young age he doubted the existence of God within an Ultra-Orthodox religious family and community. Asking questions for Avi means not taking reality for granted. Doubting seems to be an almost automatic practice for him.

During our conversation Avi is aware that when he was in constant doubt he positioned himself in a contradicting place towards the norms. At this point, Avi sounds content with his *troublemaker* position. In other words, his account reveals his satisfaction to act from the margin (hooks, 1990a). His marginal position throughout his life was accompanied by praxis of what hooks defines as 'back talk' (ibid.). In his own words his questioning performance becomes *annoying* for those who are, in hooks' terms, in the center (ibid.).

In hooks' (1990a) text "Talking Back" she recounts her own story as a child who keeps asking annoying questions. In her analytical account of self, she recounts, as Avi, that she doubts God's existence: a doubt that costs her with a spanking from her mother (ibid.). Despite the difficulty and violence to which Avi, and hooks, were subjugated, it appears that question asking is crucial for them both to live fully in the world. Furthermore, they show that it is a fundamental task towards liberation and consciousness trans/formation.

Avi's account reveals that the act, which he defines as *asking annoying questions*, is on the one hand, a practice of resistance to authority and domination, while on the other hand, it is his path led by his will to learn. "*Desire for knowledge*", in hooks' (2010, pp.7-8) words, and sense curiosity (Rancière, 1987), motivate and mobilize Avi towards radical thought and change.

At a certain point during the interview, Avi refuses my proposition to name his processes

of trans/formation of consciousness in terms of liberation. I thus insist to better understand that which he seeks to recount:

> *TD: How would you then define your whole practice of question asking, and challenging of commonsense?*

> *Ohh, before I was speaking about words. I don't like the words, liberation etc. But I see [...] I think it has certain elements, which allow me to be myself, to be myself in front of the surroundings and to make it present. I think making oneself present enables being yourself, that is, one nourishes the other, and these questions enabled me to have less post-traumas, than others my age (laugh). To be more complete, but on the other hand, also made my life much more difficult (laugh) in many aspects because it is not acceptable in our society, and because it is unacceptable in any society, but definitely not in ours. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Avi prefers describing his *will* to know in terms of the possibility to fully perform himself rather than use the term liberation. When developing a critical gaze at reality Avi refuses to carry automatic actions in his everyday life. It seems that asking questions is for Avi a dynamic path that holds constant development of critical thoughts. He argues that this dynamic way of life is what enables him to *stay himself* or, in other words, to be in the world in a complete manner. However, this seems to be a difficult process and a challenging way of life.

Earlier in the chapter, Avi spoke about the importance of *presencing* relations of power. In his present account I feel that it is the first time that Avi furthermore relates to his own self that needs, according to him, to be present. He seems to relate to two levels, on the one hand, a level that reveals the external relations of power and on the other, the influence power dynamics have on his own life and furthermore on his psychic life.

Avi's account generates the understanding that the praxis of making present, thus putting the power dynamic under which he is governed (Butler, 2001) through constant doubt, is a healing process and has prevented the development of post-traumatic disorder. In hooks' (2003) terms the mere movement from positions of subjugated silence, within power dynamics of domination, towards speech is a task of boldness and liberation:

"Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and

those who stand and struggle side by side, a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life, and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of "talking back" that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of moving from object to subject, that is the liberation voice." (hooks, 1990a, p.340).

"You keep asking questions and don't always find answers[106]"

Ibtisam starts her account when explaining that throughout her life she has always felt *out of context,* an idiomatic expression repeated several times throughout the interview, within her own Palestinian society, the general Israeli society and later the heteronormative society at large. In the following account, Ibtisam elaborates her relation to the praxis of question asking as part of her liberation process:

> *You keep asking questions and don't always find answers, and I don't care that I don't find answers, it is not something that bothers me if I don't find answers.*
>
> *TD: simply the practice of asking questions is enough for you?*
>
> *It's enough. Sometimes by asking questions, other question arise, or even, after you pose the question, you are no longer interested in the answer, because you know that the formulation of the question is problematic. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam relates to my question on the possibility to go through processes of liberation from colonial consciousness. According to her, she identifies that constant problematizing and question asking is what she defines as a liberated stance. The mere performance of question asking enables her to develop a critical vision of reality, which she seems to define as part of her processes of consciousness trans/formation. Drawing from Freire (1970), this stance is an important position in ones process of change as it allows being in constant doubt. Constant doubt, he argues, develops the ability to think dialectically rather than having a domesticated dialectic (ibid.).

Interestingly enough Ibtisam's account reveals that the knowledge itself is acquired within the practice of asking question rather than in the possible answers. She is not necessarily

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interested in the answers. By asking questions other questions arise; questions she perhaps did not think of before. This process seems to enable an auto critical process on the formulation of the question itself.

Similar to Ibtisam, in an earlier reaserch, presented in the following account Yardena exposes the importance of asking question on her own liberation process. Having said that, unlike Ibtisam, she recounts that in order to enter a performance that enables doubt and question asking, she had to go through a profound tras/formation. She uses a biblical expression to describe the frustration, which brought her to become active in *Isha-l'Isha*[107]. "*Nirashu Amot Hazifim*[108]": It is a description of divine intervention implying that she could not control it anymore.

> *In short, I grew up with stereotypes, indeed, I grew up with stereotypes, in the process I went through, I first learnt about my stereotypization process of the other [...] ahhhh [...] criticizing Zionism for me was a huge step [...]*
>
> *TD: Sounds hard*
>
> *Very hard, it is in fact undermining my identity, question asking, it is very hard to ask these questions, to be in a confused wonderment place. Till then, I was in a secure obvious place. That was it for me, I am Israeli, I am Jewish, I am proud! Listen, it all goes together, the issue of seeing the other; it is also the reflection of my own homophobia, that does not exist anymore. Accepting of, of all, I mean the understanding of the origin of hetero-sexuality and how it was constructed, to understand that it is a social construction to understand um why it is a social construction, understanding the whole range of things, the complexity of life, I think I was less complex. (Yardena, feminist political actor, interviewed in Carmiel, 2009)*

Within power dynamics of domination and oppression, it seems that one's position, influences the possibility to ask questions and doubt reality. In Yardena's account she

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107 "Isha L'Isha—Haifa Feminist Center, established in 1983, is the oldest grassroots feminist organization in Israel and one of the leading voices of women's rights in the country. Isha L'Isha's mission is to advance the status and rights of women and girls, and to promote peace, security and socio-economic justice from a feminist perspective through education, research, dissemination of knowledge and public events. http://isha2isha.com/english/

108 Translation The book of Isaiah 6:4: "The posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke".

explains that she was in a comfortable position. Her identity was clear to her and she was even proud of what and who she was. In order to enter a process of question asking and doubt, Yardena seems to have had to first unlearn the commonsense knowledge. In her words, she refers to the need to unlearn the stereotypes about the other.

Yardena's process leads her to understand that gender and sexual performances are socially constructed. It seems to be an important understanding in order to go further in her process of change. It is interesting that when explaining her learning process that reveals to her the way in which she stereotypes the world surrounding her, she stops in the middle of the sentence and relates it directly to Zionism. In order to make it clear to me, she says that to criticize Zionism is a hard thing. The direct analogy leads me to understand that for her, Zionism is the frame in which stereotypes are constructed.

As in Yardena's account, we read that Maya, in the following account, in order to go further in her process of change is required to go through an unlearning process. While Yardena expresses that her process was initiated by a divine intervention, Maya recounts the need for strong external elements to help open new channels. As if the commonsense was embodied in her:

> *My 20s' were a crystallizing process. I can say that one of the very important things taking place was drugs, I'm remembering now, I completely forgot about it, but it was a lot of drugs [...] it was more from a place of opening the thoughts than fun, meaning we also had a lot of fun but we were very busy with posing questions and with the group meetings, with the drugs we took it deeper.*

> *TD: You started digging?*

> *Exactly, exactly, to dig and identify, I don't know if you have ever experienced anything like it, but it is an out-of-body, out-of-soul and social experience. You are in a limbo looking at everything and seeing it differently, it is a consciousness short cut, and we, of course, took it to the political. (Maya, feminist political actor, interviewed in Haifa, 2009)*

Maya identifies the usage of drugs as a short cut to a process into which she was getting. However, she highlights over and over again that the drugs were a tool in dealing with the new reality rather than avoiding it. Maya, like the other participants who are *"busy with*

posing questions" wants to dig further. I understand this expression in the context of a quest for knowledge. Maya recounts the need to go through a fast process to which the drugs were very useful.

Maya recounts similar processes to that of Yardena's process of liberation from what she names her *"stereotypization process"*. Answering my question about influential people in her process, Maya says:

> *"I can say yes, there were influential figures, I don't really like these positions, I rarely found myself in them but there were some very significant figures.*
>
> *TD: What did you learn? Or what did they teach you?*
>
> *Ok we have reached the pedagogy (laugh) ok, so one minute! It is a little hard to remember, it was all very new and preliminary.*
>
> *TD: For example, things you didn't know. You spoke earlier about people, encounters and books, even if you think it is obvious and I might know about it.*
>
> *Look, one of the most basic things I understood, I probably understood it very quickly was, but it was my big shock, that there are people, Arabs who want to live in peace. That's first of all; that is something I didn't know. (Maya, feminist political actor, interviewed in Haifa, 2009)*

The digging process, through drugs and question asking, brought Maya to understand that there are Arabs *who want to live in peace.* Maya's radical encounters with Palestinians in Haifa show her a far more complex reality than the one she knew before. She furthermore recounts that the encounter with the other and the important need to build a vision entails continuance processes of questioning and doubting. Her account reveals an important aspect of domination. According to her account that follows, she, and others, when entering political circles, fear to ask the wrong questions:

> *The question of vision is really a very long process, many times I felt uncomfortable to ask, I felt uncomfortable to confront and verify things, let's say I came with a thought that was still [...] a thought that was, was... something that existed in me from the start, it was hard for me to even talk about it, and I think many go through this and if they don't and only reach to the 'other' point it is a problem. I mean to express my*

firm closed-minded places to the discourse in order to dismantle it, otherwise where will it (the change) come from? Or how will I make the change? The other option is to always hide my non-understanding or to be in a place where I think I understand (but I don't), do you know what I mean!? (Maya, feminist political actor, interviewed in Haifa, 2009)

Maya's account reveals the need for what hooks (2003) calls a community of learning. A community of learning refers to a safe platform through which she can develop a vision and feel safe to bring out issues about which it is hard to talk. It seems that when entering the group in Haifa, in which she encounters Palestinians, Maya feels she can no longer afford to '*make mistakes like before'*. The processes of asking questions opened a deconstructing performance. She can no longer afford to be in what Freire (1970) would call a *naïve position*.

It is important for her to highlight that this is a common process through which many go. At this point, she already knows enough to know which thoughts feelings and ideas were coming out of the commonsense structures of thought she tries to deconstruct. Her new critical consciousness is what is now preventing her to continue asking questions. Having said that, she highlights her lack of knowledge. At this stage Maya knows what she does not know. In her gendered discourse, Maya brings out the need to ask questions, to be in a critical dialogue with herself and with her learning community. However, she reflects on the difficulties she found in doing so and on the social representations in which she is. The learning process is done while confronting the old and known knowledge, in order to find and fill in the gaps. Maya can't just erase the old, but she wants to critically deconstruct it.

The literature taught me the nuance, the complexity; the reading came at the right time, when I had already reached for further understanding of all this knowledge about human complexity, went hand in hand with where I was. Namely I did not come with a feeling that there is something well constructed only, then, um, it started with that, I don't think, I read a lot. Ohh maybe yes! (Maya, feminist political actor, interviewed in Haifa, 2009)

Maya's discourse keeps challenging internal power dynamics within her community of learning in Haifa and the need for a more question-asking environment. In this last part of her account Maya is uncomfortable and is almost in stress when talking about the intellectual aspect of her becoming.

And, No, it's like [...] and then I started getting all the input in order and I started looking for literature, to read and I saw and understood that before anything I have to learn about this region, the history of the region, I remember I learned [...]

TD: what do you mean by 'here'? Haifa?

No, No, No, I mean here the Middle East, I mean at school we learn history of 'the people of Israel' that is mostly the European people of Israel, there is a little touch of the region but it is very poor. And there is history here. (Maya, feminist political actor, interviewed in Haifa, 2009)

Maya was able to synthesize her anger with the intellectual knowledge she acquires. It seems to have been an empowering event in her intellectual experience. In critical education terminology, Maya holds a complex regard, where, on one hand, she was able to analyze the political content and context of the course she was taking while, on the other, taking it to praxis. One of the subjects Maya was eager to learn was the history of the region in which she lives. In the first stages, Maya confronted her own oriental biographic narrative. At this stage Maya is sense making and has related her own identity question to the larger political picture.

Maya refuses to depend on an external source of knowledge and is in her own question for creating knowledge. This is the way in which Rancière (1987) defines processes of emancipation, when he relates emancipation to the act of curiosity and the process of the quest. Similarly, in hooks' (1994, 2003) terms, her will to learn is her liberation process. Maya's account follows Avi's line of thought when in Chapter Four he highlights the importance to understand where he lives. In the very large sense of the word Avi and Maya both find it important to understand the history of the land within their quest of liberation.

When Maya says that the history she studied at school was that of the People of Israel, which actually mean, the European people of Israel, hence she brings into the conversation yet again the power relation of domination between what Imad called earlier in Chapter One: *the European Israeli race* and the *Arab inferior race. (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)*

Maya's account goes back to Shoaht's (1992) work in which she elaborates the way in which the Arab culture and history was erased in order to create a single united Jewish-Israeli historical narrative. When Maya insists on learning about the Middle East, she is joining a conversation that thrives to understand reality from a situated feminist position. That which

Haraway (1988) argues creates objective knowledge. In Chapter One Imad refuses to embody inferiority as a Palestinian living in the State of Israel, whereas Maya through her critical encounter with Palestinians in Haifa, and her quest to learn the history of the land, refuses to embody superiority. Maya critically gazes domination through her understanding of reality and the unjust order.

Following Maya's account in which she situations her learning process within the Middle-East Imad situates his explanation within the context of the state of Israel. Unlike Avi, earlier in the research who has a hard time defining the geographical place to which he refers, Imad's Palestinian standpoint is clear that he is speaking about the state of Israel when relating to two groups the Arabs and the Jews.

> *I think that each and every one in Israel, who was born in the state of Israel, asks questions such as "who are we?" "Why is there all this conflict?" and one tries to find sense in all that is going on. (Mostly) Arabs Ok?! But I also met Jews who ask questions about "Who are we?" "Where are we?" "Where are we going? OK I will go back to me I was born in S' to an Arab family, in which the word Palestinan? was like in many other Arab families, who define themselves as Arab, when I define myself as Arab also because I was told I was Arab.*

> *TD: Yah*

> *You know, I also speak the Arab language, and my enviorment was Arab, that speaks Arabic.*

> *TD: You mean it is not natural, you were not born [...]*

> *No it is not natural, it is a natural environment in which everyone speaks Arabic. (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)*

It seems obvious to Imad that when speaking about the praxis of question asking, he first related to Arabs, yet he then adds that there are some Jews who might be in the same process, of question asking. According to Imad, asking question helps find sense within contexts of conflict.

Imad takes us back to questions of identity. While Maya and Avi ask questions about where they live, Imad also questions who he is within the space. He seems to make a general

statement when almost saying that all Arabs living within the state of Israel ask the same question as he does. Imad positions himself within what he calls, the conflict. From his standpoint as a Palestinian man, he is in a quest to find sense.

Is seems that for the Jewish participants in this research the process of asking questions leads them to instability within their space. They start questioning their identity. For Imad, it seems, there is a process that is unlike those of the Jewish participants, as he seems to find more and more connections to his own national identity and finds more sense within the space.

At the end of the account, Imad adds, that he has met Jews, who ask questions about the space, about who they are and finally about where *we are going,* yet they are few.

Throughout the research the participants show that their development of critical thought is a praxis that takes over all aspects of their life. In the following account Johayna, one of the few Palestinian students within a Jewish high school, analyses the consciousness of her Jewish fellows at school.

Earlier in the interview Johayna recounts that she went to a Jewish high school. She is part of the few Arab-Palestinians chosen to go to this school. Among other experiences, her participation in this school formed her consciousness. In the following account she generalizes her point of view on consciousness trans/formation through the understanding of the consciousness of the majority group. This majority group, are the Jewish Israeli high school students with whom she went to school.

> *Those who went to this school, were people who could do all kinds of steps towards thoughts alone school didn't raise them to be stupid, it raised them to be smart. To do critical thinking and all, and in some issues is very much so. But one can't develop someone's thought to be critical, that would always examine reality, that would always ask questions and then on other issues would shut one's eyes, it works until a certain age, it works until the person wants it to work and the one who does not want it to work and has no interest that it will continue to work, because he saw reality, I think many people did this judgment. We tried to write a letter to the school, because every year they use to do a panel of the graduates in which each one used to tell about his military unit in which he served, and the reason for which he chose it. And then there was a refusnic who wanted to propose himself to the school, to speak about a*

trajectory of refusal, and that they also bring a Palestinian that would speak about the Palestinian side. We tried to get organized but it never really worked, we never really cared. But it's like we gathered about 10% from each year who came out radical.

TD: That's a lot

Yes relativially to the socity, yes! (Johayna, political activist, Jaffa, 2013)

I propose to read Johayna's account on two levels. When Johayna says: *One can't develop someone's thought* the word *one* refers to her school and *someone* refers to the Jewish students in the school. Therefore, the first level is an analysis and definition of the sense of critique through examining her high school's pedagogy. In a retrospective gaze and a critical one, she reveals the profound contradiction within her high school's pedagogical project, which according to her contradicts the sense of critic. We understand from her account that her school does develop and encourage critical thought through question asking. However, it seems that the pedagogy led by the school also encourages the students to shut their eyes on certain issues.

Within the second part of her account, she helps us look at one's personal process of change. It seems that for her, the mere action of examining reality, thus questioning that at which one gazes and the reality in which one lives, is an action of critique. As in Rancière's (1987) work where he describes emancipation within the action or the process, Johayna, does not look for results but rather for a situated point of view. Or in Foucault's (1990) sense, the very action of question asking is an activity of critique itself (Butler, 2001). Therefore for Johayna, it is impossible to develop a sense of critique towards one issue, and then look elsewhere and lose one's same sense. For her, employing Rancière's (1987) terminology, a truly emancipated subject, will eventually realize that his or her view ceases to be critical.

Part Two: Critical Feminist Formation

To this point the chapter concentrates on Avi's trajectory and his individual theory when he elaborates the power of doubting power and actions which make power dynamic present within the space. In this part, I am concerned with the way the participants relate to the role that feminist epistemologies have had on their consciousness trans/formation. In agreement

with Dorlin (2008) the following accounts, until the very end of the dissertation, illustrate the way in which feminist epistemologies enable a discourse that empowers and trans/forms the consciousness of the participants.

In the following account, it appears that moving to Tel Aviv and studying feminist theories brought Ibtisam to find her belief:

> *As a child who is thirsty for a specific belief, it was very hard for me to find something that honestly had no contradictions, even at home. As much as we grew up on values, and suddenly, I started finding (it), after I got to Tel Aviv, and I started studying feminist theories etc. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam describes her condition through a physical condition of thirst for a belief. Her *thirst* seems to have accompanied her since a very young age. It is at University, when moving to Tel-Aviv, that she found the solution to her quest. Perhaps following her description, the alternative knowledge offered by feminist theories, allows a "rehydration" process. It seems to me that the act of studying, thus discovering knowledge within the context of feminist theories offers Ibtisam a liberation process. We could argue, drawing from hooks (1984) that the action of learning and the content of the feminist theories, offers her an empowering framework of movement from being the object in a situation to becoming the subject of an action. Ibtisam's curiosity in her quest to solve contradictions engages her within an emancipatory project (Rancière, 1987).

I find it interesting to read Ibtisam's quest to solve contradiction through Shalhoub-Kevokian's (2016) concept *occupation of the senses*. In specific reference to the occupation of and settler colonialism in East Jerusalem Shalhoub-Kevorkian describes the way in which Israeli hegemonic violence invades the sensory stimuli, in the realm of experience of the colonized, using Mbembe's (1992) terms (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2016). It seems to me interesting to understand Ibtisam's liberation process as she takes responsibility over her own senses. Her "thirst for a specific belief" seems to strive to resist the invasion of the contradictions into her senses. Contradictions that had invaded even her very private spaces at home, spaces she considered included values. While Tel-Aviv is a space in which she encounters racism and violence as a Palestinian woman, it is also a space in which she encounters feminist thought. A frame that enables her to appropriate her senses, and directs her towards a visual frame that resists, what Shalhoub-Kevorkian's (2016) calls the colonial

sensory stimuli.

In chapter I, Ibtisam describes her relation to colonial consciousness through her senses: I think I never had a colonial consciousness, I see it, I recognize it, I smell it from a distance. While never embodying colonial consciousness, according to her, Ibtisam's wisdom from her marginal standpoint identifies the colonial sensory stimuli (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2016).

For the moment Ibtisam recounts her encounter with the feminist theories as a debut of her consciousness trans/formation. However, we shall further explore, the way in which Ibtisam and the other participants of this research furthermore experience feminist spaces as platforms of counter-hegemonic actions and resistances to state violence.

In Domination and the Art of Resistance, Scott (1990) argues that within the social construction of domination, the dominated group is faced with a double discourse from the dominant group. "I believe that the notion of hidden transcript helps us understand those rare moments of political electricity when, often for the first time in memory, the hidden transcript is spoken directly and publicly in the teeth of power." (ibid., p.xiii). The exposed performance of social life, he continues, contains a subtext that can be read and perhaps decoded through the resistance of those who do not hold the power (ibid.). The dominant group performs reality in the way they would like things to appear and thus hide what he calls *the hidden transcripts* of their reality. Accordingly, resistance would first entail, understanding the existence of the *hidden transcripts* and then the possibility to take power as powerless groups within society.

Scott's (1990) work focuses on the power dynamic between, what he calls, the hidden (private) and the exposed (public) discourses. According to him, the two levels of discourse are in constant power dynamic:

"[…] the hidden transcripts of dominant and subordinate are, in most circumstances, never in direct contact. Each participant will be familiar with the public transcript and the hidden transcript of his or her circle, but not with the hidden transcript of the other. For this reason, political analysis can be advanced by research that can compare the hidden transcript of subordinate groups with the hidden transcript of the powerful and both hidden transcripts with the public transcript they share. This last facet of the comparison will reveal the effect of domination on political communication." (Scott, 1990, p.15)

Scott's (1990) work draws its knowledge from the point of view of the oppressed, or in his terminology, "the dominated" (ibid., p.45). Therefore the discourse of the dominated, within the private, does not represent the euphemized discourse within the public sphere. The performance within the public sphere is thus directed towards the dominant. This is according to Scott, a form of resistance to dominant dynamics within the social, public sphere (ibid.).

I propose to understand Ibtisam's quest for a reality freed of contradictions within Scott's (1990) analysis of the double discourse. Ibtisam's critical view of her own life, in my sense, leads her to want to resist the power dynamics between the two. Scott considers the hidden transcripts of the dominated as the true knowledge rather than the knowledge reproduced in the public. Rather than analyzing the performance of the oppressed within public spaces with the Marxist term of false consciousness, he claims that the dominated distinguish between the 'true' and 'false' knowledge, yet know that in order to survive within the dynamics of oppression they have to follow the dominant expectations from them (ibid.).

Along the same line of thought, Martuccelli (2004) contends, that actors within a social construction in their everyday performance of life continue to follow what he calls the authority. One builds and functions within these power dynamics of domination. According to him, in order to denaturalize dynamics of domination within one's daily livelihood, one must make them present. This is a constant and ongoing process. Martuccelli (ibid.) refers to the path of critique as work. It is the work of searching for argumentation, when domination is no longer taken for granted, and when the subject insists on finding explanations. This is the critical thought, to which hooks (2010) refers as well, and to which we see that the participants are devoted in their process of change.

In Hill Collins' text "*The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought*" she demonstrates the way in which the development of black feminist thought creates two levels of knowledge (Hill Collins, 1989). The first level is the everyday level, taken for granted, in other words the commonsense knowledge. However, the second level is the internal wisdom of those who are part of the group; it is in her words the more specialized knowledge. The knowledge developed with conditions of subjugation is understood by Hill Collins (ibid.) to be wisdom. The possibility to understand subjugated knowledge as wisdom, enables a form of critique. Within the American context, Hill Collins (ibid.) argues that the Black woman holds a large set of knowledge that has never been considered as knowledge, or perhaps, in Foucault's (2001) sense, has been "[…] hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that

are below the required level of erudition or scientificity" (ibid. [2003, p.7]). When studying feminist theories, Ibtisam finds a platform in which her knowledge and her life experience are coherent. The contradictions to which she refers seem to settle, we will learn later, with the discovery of a critical discourse.

In the following account, Yardena recounts her movement from what she calls, liberal feminism to multicultural feminism:

> *I said to myself "I want to be in this organization" It was to my liking. At first I didn't really understand what the 'Research Center' was about, H did not really explain to me, perhaps if she had explained I wouldn't have gone into it (laugh). (Yardena, feminist political actor, interviewed in Carmiel, 2009)*

While finding it hard to identify, Yardena feels, that something within the Research Center is empowering. According to her she didn't really understand what it was about. This non-understanding seemed to be an advantage at that moment. She is able to feel, experience and discover without entering an already framed thought. When thinking back on her non-understanding, she realizes that what seems obvious today, did not make sense then:

> *Then I **even** asked: "why does it say that there is a question of language, whether we speak Hebrew or Arabic?" (Yardena, feminist political actor, interviewed in Carmiel, 2009)*

The commonsense frame of reference through which Yardena read reality before encountering the women in the Research Center, did not question the legitimacy of language. When looking back she says: *then I **even** asked*, 'even' seems to indicate that today it would never be a question to her. Yardena recounts that at the time Hebrew was taken for granted as the obvious language of communication, while today, from her multicultural feminist perspective, it is clear to her that the language has to be questioned. Yardena is now able to analyze the languages within the understanding of power relations. She understands that speaking Hebrew entails power dynamics of domination. Within Israeli hegemony, Hebrew is the language of the dominant, of the oppressor.

Yardena refers to two feminist spaces that, in her words, opened for her new horizons:

> *[…] My academic studies, gender studies, and the activity with Isha-l'Isha really*

opened up many horizons for me and expanded my point of view to the question of otherness. (Yardena, feminist political actor, interviewed in Carmiel, 2009)

The question of otherness and the possibility to regard the other, happens and transforms through the feminists spaces of learning. When using the word otherness, we understand that Yardena now gazes at the world within a (post)colonial feminist reading that critically understands relations of power.

Yardena continues to recount that her consciousness trans/formation consists of passing from one kind of feminism to another:

Then I understood, while thinking that I was in the political left, that I was actually what one calls subtle right (laugh). I was not exactly left, now what happened then was, that the studies brought me to critical thinking, to a deeper understanding of exclusion. I passed from liberal feminism I had been in my whole life, to multicultural feminism, I think. (Yardena, feminist political actor, interviewed in Carmiel, 2009)

Yardena recounts that she was a liberal feminist. From her account, it seems that being positioned within liberal feminism is a not enough critical stance. Perhaps Yardena refers to liberal feminism within Delphy's (1984) definition of a feminism that follows the commonsense that, rather than analyzing oppression, chooses to lead a discourse on the feminine condition. Accordingly, Delphy (ibid.) and hooks (2000) argue that a feminist discourse must call to our attention structural oppressions as part of the gender analysis of social formation.

Yardena, *passes* to what she calls a multicultural feminism. Reading Shohat (2002) can help us understand Yardena's account when she differentiates between '*liberal* and '*multicultural*' feminism. Shohat (ibid.) argues that a critical gaze into women and queer studies is required as in many cases these epistemologies are still working within what she calls the "center". She calls for feminisms that allow contradictory *positionalities* of genders, sexualities, races, classes, nations, thus an interwoven approach that realizes the fluidity and dynamic of such categories.

Accordingly, Delphy (1984) argues that radical feminism is the demand to critically gaze at heterosexual hegemony, which thus corresponds to the use of the term oppression. Insisting on sociopolitical analysis rather than on a dogmatic definition is a way of resisting the

oppressing hegemonic powers. At this point it would be interesting to converse with hooks (2000) when she argues for feminist spaces that are dynamic and in constant dialogue. Drawing on Susam Griffin, hooks (ibid.) contends that feminist theory should not transform into an ideology but rather carry a development of knowledge that is dynamic and nurtured by the agents who perform it (Susam Griffin in hooks, 2000, p.10). In hooks' (ibid.) sense, such feminist view enables the possibility to create *critical maps of knowledge.*

As Delphy (1984), Shohat (1991), argues for a critical quest that would lead feminist theories to better understand oppression of women around the globe in relations to various forms of domination and coloniality. This critical approach developed by Shohat (ibid.) promotes a feminist discourse that *steps out* of binarism derived from oppressing structures and framed by an colonial male gaze. The understanding of a historical map of Women and Gay and Lesbian oppressions should be drawn from a critical dialogue that considers, culture, ethnicity, race, and nation. Only thus a critical gaze at the world is possible.

To go back to Yardena's account, I observe that the confrontation with new information contradicts Yardena's commonsense knowledge. As for Ibtisam, these spaces of contradictions encourage her curiosity to go deeper into spaces of critical knowledge. This process brought her to critically gaze at herself through a reflexive frame. In the coming chapter, we will read the way in which a new gendered-queer critical thought, deconstructs her discourse leading her to understand her position within Israeli society, and therefore her privileges as an Ashkenazi heterosexual Israeli. Having said that, the feminist multicultural space further opened up complex spaces in which she could also understand her own oppression as a woman in the militaristic society (Gor-Ziv, 2005; Dahan-Kalev, 1999).

As we mentioned earlier, hooks (2000) urges us to think of feminist thought as a theory in the making. *In the making* enables an ongoing critical dialogue, a question-asking pedagogy and constant self-reflexivity and critical thought. In this way, feminism in its radical form of course, has the power to transform people's lives in a meaningful manner. Thus according to hooks (ibid.), it is not a lifestyle or a role one steps into, it is the struggle to end sexist and racist oppressions.

The contribution of Black feminist epistemology, Hill Collins (2000) argues, is not merely understanding reality critically, but further developing the ability to construct new knowledge, which is a form of resistance to the contradictions, mentioned by Freire (1970). Lord (1984)

brings to the forefront the need to create alternative knowledge within the struggle for emancipation: "For the Master's tools will never dismantle the Master's house" (ibid., p.112). Lord's calls for acts of resistance, which refuse a reproduction of hegemonic oppressive actions, are vivid within the accounts of the participants. She further calls for the creation of alternative tools, which we could presumably, refuse colonial state violence. In this sense Lord (ibid.) joins Fanon (1952) when he calls the colonized to step out of colonialism and create new forms of resistances.

Avi's following account develops the conversation relating creating alternative forms of knowledge. Earlier in the chapter, Avi recounts the moment when he could not, in Ahmed's (2010) terms, turn away. In the next account, Avi recounts the way in which his encounter with the Queer theories enables a development of knowledge and in effect philosophizing, in the Freirian (Freire and Faundez, 1998), sense, instincts he already had:

> *What actually happened at the end of my B.A is that I discovered the Queer theory (laugh); it is the first time that a theory managed to explain to me things I (already) grasped, it agreed with me, about how I see things, that there is no such thing as natural existences. This issue of a normative family, or with a normative structure, it is nonsense.*
>
> *TD: What did the Queer Theory offer you?*
>
> *An opening to understand that I am not crazy. Before that I thought I was crazy (laugh). I used to say things and I would be told: "What are you talking about?[109]" (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Avi discovers the Queer theory at University. Within his account, I observe two main issues that seem to have had a great influence on his development of consciousness. Firstly, the theory he encounters strengthens and legitimizes the marginal knowledge and wisdom he already has. Secondly, it appears that it enables him to understand he is not crazy. This is the second stance where Avi refers to his consciousness transformation as a psychological healing process.

The analysis, that structures are part of normative performances rather than naturally

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109 He is speaking in the stereotypical accent of the image of the Ashkenazi teacher

existent, is something with which he feels in coherence. Drawing on Butler's (2006) work in which she deconstructs the biological commonsense understanding of gender Yosef (2004) argues that the queer theory has questioned the seemingly natural status of epistemological assumptions of sex. Avi is driven by the knowledge he acquires and takes further steps in his process of trans/formation.

Avi's account illustrates the way in which the queer theory has given him the possibility to think in a larger scope than binaries, such as a binary distinction between sex and gender (Haraway, 1988).

Referring to LGBT liberation trajectories and construction of alternative knowledge, Ziv (2013) argues that LGBT epistemology creates alternative knowledge through the experience and position of sexual minorities, who through their politicization process reject the hegemonic oppressive knowledge created about them. The alternative knowledge is a knowledge that is created from the inside. Avi's account illustrates the way his personal experience and his quest for an alternative to the normative structure found an echo when encountering the queer theory.

It appears to me that in the army, Avi's praxis of asking questions examines the external reality and *puts forth* (Butler, 2001) relations of power and domination. At this point I am concerned with Avi's processes through which it seems he is positioning himself within the field of power. In Haraway's (1988) sense, he enters processes led by critical thought and the development of a situated knowledge. When recounting his military experiences, Avi develops the way in which he resists authority, yet he does not tackle his own position as a soldier.

It seems that critically gazing at reality and the development of an oppositional gaze at the Israeli army is perhaps a first step for Avi, the second step is nourished from the alternative knowledge of the queer theories and perhaps, in Haraway's (1988) sense, from a feminist reproduction of knowledge, which seeks to read reality critically while understanding one standpoint; that which she calls *"feminist versions of objectivity"* (ibid).

In this research, Ibtisam and in an earler research, Yardena both reveal the way in which their consciousness trans/formation was shaped by feminist platforms and development of knowledge. While critically gazing at the world consists of understanding forms of domination that might appear to lead to a binary stance that divides the world into those who

are dominated and those who are dominating, it seems that that which Haraway (1988) calls "radical multiplicity of local knowledge" (ibid., p.579) allows a more complex field in which one can develop.

> *TD: Suddenly there was a basis to what you thought.*
>
> *Yes, that I can say, "if you have complaints, go to Butler, it's not me (laugh) speak to her, she is a professor at Columbia University, speak to her, me? What do I know?" (laugh) I don't know, it enables, I don't know, it has a lot of force in it. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Avi seems to relate to hegemonic processes, to which he is confronted, that create a hierarchal perception of knowledge. The encounter with the queer theory allows him to feel accompanied rather than feeling alone. His thoughts are supported by important figures that are professors in central academic institutions. The queer theory seems to be an important tool to first develop his thoughts and acquire new and alternative knowledge, but it further enables him to deal with the heterosexual normative hegemony. In cases where he feels that his voice is not taken seriously and that he cannot explain his point of view, having read Judith Butler, for example, helps him confront the world.

In both Freire and Faundez (1989) and in Haraway's (1988) writing one reads the importance of understanding power dynamics in relation to knowledge. They claim that a hierarchal construct of knowledge reproduces that which hegemonically is considered as scientific, and therefore objective (Haraway, ibid.). In reality, according to Haraway's (ibid.) demonstration, that which is considered scientific knowledge is the reproduction of hegemonic ideology that is positioned at the top of the commonsense pyramid.

Part Three: Acting from the Margin

"To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body […] This sense of wholeness, impressed upon our consciousness by the structure of our daily lives, provided us with an oppositional world-view - a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors, that sustained us, aided us in our struggle to transcend poverty and despair, strengthened our sense of self and our solidarity." (hooks, 1984 pp.xvi). In the following account, Fadi exposes

the challenge of a Druze[110] citizen of Israel to refuse state violence. When demanded to go to the army at the age of eighteen, Fadi *encounters* Israel.

> *Yes, yes, it was again my first confrontational encounter. A violent encounter, it was a violent encounter with Israel. Why do I say that is was violent? It is simple. It was like war for my liberty. A war! It is not [...] we might call it conscience, and it is indeed a conscience, but is a war for my liberty. Because, the price was just to take a young citizen, a young person and to deny him the most basic thing, his liberty. And the picture was very sharp. Because I did not commit a crime and I got a heavy punishment. Not only that I didn't commit a crime, I refused to commit crimes (rises his voice), I refused to commit crimes and I was punished. This is why I say it was a violent encounter. (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)*

Fadi explains the process through which he went when at the age of eighteen he refuses to serve within the Israeli army. In Fadi's words, being called for service and having to go through the administrative channels to refuse, is an encounter with state violence. Later we will read that his refusal to participate within state violence is an act for which he pays a high price of imprisonment.

While Fadi does not relate to his action within the framework of feminist epistemology, I albeit suggest to read this account within performance defined by Ahmed (2010) as the feminist killjoy. According to Ahmed (ibid.), the feminist killjoy performance is a way of relating to the world and making sense within it. In her words, feminist consciousness is: "*a consciousness made possible by the refusal to turn away*" (ibid.[111]) from oppressive social orders. Fadi's refusal to participate within Israeli state violence is an act that furthermore, I argue, refuses to turn away from injustice. He furthermore unveils the way in which the confrontation with oppressing forces enables him to become an actor within a situation, rather than an observer and collaborator of oppression.

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110 In the early years of the creation of the state of Israel the leaders of the Druz communities, and some leaders of the Bedouin different communities, made a form of a loyalty pact with the leaders of the Zionist movement, which included Druz and Bedouin men within the obligatory military service. This accord continues to this day (Weksler, 2015).

111 Ahmed, Sara (2010). Feminist Killjoy (and other willful subjects).

The scholar and Feminist Online, Issue 8.3. Accessed, on Decembre 2, 2016, www.barnard.edu/sfonline.

Performing that which Ahmed (2010) calls the feminist killjoy appears to be, in bell hooks' (1990a) terms, a place of agency that empowers. It is a stance from which a body can act to resist domination and coloniality.

Fadi defines what violence means. In a repetitive manner he insists that violence is when his liberty is confiscated. He explains in his account, that refusing the army might be considered an act of conscience within the commonsense language yet for him it also is a participation in war: a war to fight for his liberty. He tries to make sense within the story. Refusing to *turn away* and to participate in the execution of crimes, Fadi does not understand why he was sentenced to punishment. Within his analytical way of thinking, one should be punished when participating in executing crimes rather when refusing. At this point, Fadi's only way to stay loyal to his ethics and beliefs is to refuse.

In an interview entitled *"Between Patriarchy and Occupation: Rauda Morcos and Palestinian Lesbian Activism for Bodily Rights*[112]*",* Raouda Morcos urges the readers to think from the margin: "Being a minority makes you a majority of the ones who are able to see the Other" (ibid. p.64). According to her when one is a minority, one is actually in the centre of considering the other. Morcos' sentence is a fascinating way to think of exclusion and relations of power. On the one hand, she calls others who analyze reality like her to join the margin, and on the other hand, she invites us to understand one's responsibility towards the other.

Fadi's account reveals the struggle of an individual who insists to stay within the margin and refuses to seek for acceptance within Israeli center. Fadi carries a double minority position. First, he is a Druze citizen of the State of Israel and second he refuses to participate within the obligation of the state, which forces men from the Druze[113] population to enroll in to the Israeli army.

Fadi's act to refuse enrollment and Morcos' call to act from the margin in order to vision the other are, in my view, tasks of responsibility. In Butler's sense tasks of responsibility are

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112 Morcos, Rauda (2012-2013). Between Patriarchy and Occupation: Rauda Morcos and Palestinian Lesbian Activism for Bodily Rights. Interview by Samar Habib and Nayla Moujaes. Al-Raida Journal: Non-thematic Issue, no. 138/139/140, Summer/Fall/Winter, 58-64.

113 Halabi, (2006) elaborates the complex position of the Druze community within the Jewish state. Furthermore, it is important to highlight, that the obligation of Druze men to enroll in the Israeli army does not apply on the Druze of the Golan Heights occupied in 1967 by Israel. Their relation to the State of Israel is yet another issue that merits discussion.

bound up within the relation, and perhaps, dialogue with the other:

"I can't think the question of responsibility alone, in isolation from the Other; if I do, I have taken myself out of the relational bind that frames the problem of responsibility from the start." (Butler, 2004, p.46)

For Morcos, seeing the *Other,* is necessarily done when acting from that margin, as it is a position that struggles against a hegemonic matrix of domination (hooks, 1990), yet it is the central stance one must thrive towards. Furthermore, Morcos specifies in her interview that to be positioned as a Palestinian within the Israeli State is consequently to be positioned within the margin: "I think the Palestinian identity and the Queer identity converge in being both marginalized and they are both about resisting oppression." (Morcos, 2012-2013, p.59)

Morcos leads us to the analogy between performing queerness and Palestinian identity as both marginal conditions. Her interview echoes with several accounts in which national and sexual identities are gazed at, as part of a liberated consciousness, in a complex understanding of the entanglement of oppressions.

The question of the margin follows the feminist epistemological call led by Ahmed (2010) to continuously question who is made to feel at home and thus to belong to the hegemonic space and considered to be *a friend*. While on the other hand, those who are drawn to the margin are framed as *strangers*. It seems to me that when Morcos calls to act from the margin, she refuses to embody the coloniality of the Israeli social formation. Morcos is engaged in what Ahmed (ibid.) calls willful feminist work as she reads and engages in the world in order to change it.

"I am Palestinian and I am [...] lesbian[114]"

Ibtisam starts her account by introducing her profound feeling of queerness through the numerous occasions she describes her feeling of being *Out of Context*. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Ibtisam is on the one hand, deeply connected to her Palestinian culture and tradition but at the same time she experiences profound feelings of alienation. We observe that her feelings of queerness within numerous surroundings drives her engagement in processes of construction of new knowledge (Lord, 1984; Ziv, 2008,2013).

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114 Ibtisam

Walla ya Tal, I have no idea where I came from and what I am made of. Sometimes I feel that I don't belong to this place. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

Ibtisam account of herself as *out of context,* as we have earlier seen in Chapter Two, questions her sense of belonging to numerous spaces. Her repetitive self-definition *out of context* seems to be a queer position she attributes to herself. While being *out of context* seems to be a difficult position placing her, in Ahmed's (2000) sense, as a constant stranger, and in hooks' (1990a) terms, within a marginal position, it seems to be a place of resistance (ibid.). Ibtisam chooses to liberate herself from objectivist views of reality. She is, on the one hand, positioned within the margin by hegemonic structure, yet it seems that insisting to stay within the margin is her performance to object to the oppression of hegemonic knowledge, and her choice to act towards becoming a cognitive subject with a free mind.

Throughout the following extracts of the interview, we observe that for Ibtisam being Palestinian and lesbian is not recounted as a given stance, or a natural fact, it is rather recounted as a choice, and further a political choice. Following Butler's (1993) thought, Ibtisam does not abruptly choose to perform her sexual and/or national identities; she rather understands the power dynamic in which she performs these positions and acknowledges the matrix of dominations. She is therefore aware of her position within society and chooses to act from her standpoint. In her account we see that she tackles, in Butler's sense (ibid.) the question of the relations of power between the performative categories in which she acts.

To follow Ziv (2013) Ibtisam's choice to perform an act of queerness is a stance of liberation. Throughout the following accounts Ibtisam gives sense to her liberation process through counter-hegemonic performances to the Israeli patriarchal heterosexual dominations, controlled by gendered, sexual, racial and national constructions of domination (Shohat, 1998, 2002).

Ibtisam continues her account when she details what *out of context* means in her trajectory. In order to reconnect to her lesbian performance, Ibtisam needs to distance herself from the village, however, this distance creates yet again strangeness as she realizes she is alone:

> *Also for someone who had sexual orientation, or I don't know how to call it, I understood that I was somehow lesbian, but the distance from the village enabled me to also explore my identity, but within the exploration of identity I understood the extent of strangeness, because there was not even one Palestinian man or woman with*

a similar sexual connotation. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

Reading Ibtisam through the work of Guénif-Souilamas (2000) we understand that when she defines herself as *out of context* she actually refuses to position herself within, what Guénif-Souilamas (ibid.) calls the 'paradoxical injunctions'. Hence, Ibtisam considers herself in the margin rather than seeking to find a place within the centre that would oblige her to obey the two normative injunctions: on the one hand, Palestinian culture and tradition, yet on the other hand to perform hegemonic sexual emancipation through the negation of her national identity and thus assimilation into Israeli society. Her refusal positions her in contradiction to what Ahmed (2000) calls the good citizen who accepts the injunction.

Moreover, Guénif-Souilamas' (2000) contends, that performing *out of context* is the act that resists the paradoxical position attributed by society. Positioning herself in the margin, Ibtisam demands a complex understanding of reality. In Butler's (1993) sense, Ibtisam's marginal or queer performativity is an action that enables existence and force. In hooks' (1994) terms it is the praxis of change and the trajectory towards enlightened consciousness. Ibtisam demands the recognitions of the societies in which she performs as queer. She thus positions herself as a subject, as an 'I' within the space (Butler, 1993).

Ibtisam's account reveals that she is not only assigned to a conflicting task as a Palestinian woman[115], yet to further contradiction as lesbian Palestinian. Along the same line of thought developed by Guénif-Souimamas (2000) within the Palestinian context, Shaloufeh Khazan (1993) refers to similar injections to which the Palestinian woman is subjugated. Within the Israeli matrix of domination, the Palestinian woman (ibid., Shulamith Kreitler, 1978) represents a central positive image as the one who holds the cultural and religious representations and traditions. While at the same time, she is bound up within a complex matrix of domination that gazes at her as inferior.

Earlier in the dissertation Ibtisam defines colonial consciousness as an action of judgment towards other people and their choices. Here, she reclaims a queer stance in her quest for liberation and freedom. Ziv and Gross (2010), argue that Kosofsky-Sedgwick's work

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115 "Even before she first sees the light of day, the female Palestinian infant is enveloped in dense network of webs, whose purpose is to reproduce the patriarchal social system. This network will be woven and expanded into a tangle of bonds and chains, which will condition and shape her spirit, supervise her education and rearing, and transform her into one of the mainstays of the patriarchy" (Hassan, 1993, p.66).

(Sedgwick and Frank, 1995) allows us to think of queer performance as spaces of liberation from moral authority. Authority that evaluates feelings and further creates feelings of shame on a binary continuum of good vs. bad, or even healthy vs. pathological. We thus see that for Ibtisam her queer performance liberates her from the internalization of authority.

Ibtisam demands place within the space as *out of context,* as queer. When she refuses to judge other people, and struggles against being judged, she refuses the shame that is so often attributed to the queer body (Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 1993). She actively liberates herself by revealing the relations of power that lead to this shame and thus she does not perform it. She rather exists in the space!

When Ibtisam comes back from a neighboring Arab country[116] after encountering other Arab lesbians and feminists, she realizes that she is in the need for a community:

> *But, I came back here and I said to myself "I want a group of Palestinians". That was my goal: To locate them and do something social grassroots. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

From her marginal sexual position within the Palestinian society and her new lesbian and feminist environment in Tel Aviv Ibtisam decides that she wants to create a frame for other Palestinian lesbians. Creating this space would be perhaps her possibility to feel that she is acting from a place of belonging while resisting to participation within Israeli hegemonic center.

> *TD: So you came back and said [...]*
>
> *This is what I want to do. and I am coming out of the closet. I am telling all my friends that I am lesbian, not hiding anymore. I was in such Euphoria, I came back, I had a Minsheli, a group of friends in R', I used to spend time with them all the time; and from J'. At my arrival, I say to them, "listen I want to tell you that I am lesbian" (laugh). A life mistake! Of course it was I sometimes lack conception. I can't tell you, it was a journey to tell. I later understood that one does not tell (laugh). **Then I stopped telling** to anyone. It was a secret. **That it is something one doesn't tell** that one doesn't tell it (laugh), and this didn't suit me, I am not like that, I need to tell*

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116 At Ibtisam's request, I do not mention the name of the country she visited

everything. When I discover something I want to share it with the whole world. And then you discover that one does not tell anything. (Ibtisma, Haifa, 2013)

Ibtisam comes back home and decides to first locate other Palestinian lesbians and create a safe space for her and others, and further to tell her Palestinian friends that she is lesbian. Ibtisam decides to, in her words, *come out of the closet*. In the Epistemology of the Closet, Kosofsky-Sedgwick (2008) argues that the closet is a secrecy condition one is in. The coming out process is a constant task one has to perform in front of the heterosexual hegemonic world and is an ongoing confrontation with the heterosexual or heterogeneous urbanized society. One can come out as gay, however, one can also *come out* of other marginal positions. Furthermore Kosofsky-Sedgwick (ibid.) argues that the '*coming out*' is a constant stance with which one is confronted. Being "*deliberately in the closet*" (ibis, p.67) is part of homosexual interaction with the heterosexual hegemony. Even the most openly gay choose to stay in the closet at times for personal, economical or institutional reasons. There is a constant need to be 'in' or 'out' in front of the hegemonic common sense (ibid.).

Coming out involves questioning every single thing one has ever thought, loved or believed in. Ibtisam comes back home, excited to tell her friends that she is lesbian. It did not occur to her that *telling*, would be *a big mistake*. As Avi earlier in the chapter, Ibtisam understands that she is still a stranger and has to fight for her belonging outside hegemonic spaces. Through the reading of Kosofsky-Sedgwick (1993) we could say that Ibtisam is never completely *out* or completely *in* the closet. She is actually not in these heterosexual binary understandings of reality. Ibtisam's account of her sexual identity does not only refer to her personal and biographical processes, but it is further preoccupied with epistemological questions of identities that cross gender and sexual boundaries (Butler, 2015). Ibtisam's queer[117] identity is in a constant movement of crossing boundaries and borders: Palestinian society, feminist, feminist Palestinians, heterosexual, Zionist, this is according to Kosofsky-Sedgwick (1993) the potential of the queer identity. Queer is therefore an active category through which one can constantly self define and self position anew.

In Ibtisam's following account she critically gazes at feminist discourses. The encounter

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117 "If the term "queer" is to be a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes, and perhaps also yielded on favor of terms that do that political work more a turn against this constitutive historicity" (Butler, 1993, p.19).

with Arab lesbians and feminists in an Arab neighboring country enlightens Ibtisam to a larger critical understanding:

> *And suddenly you know that feminism is not only here. There is a feminist discourse over there, but also it is those who have the resources and privileges like here. Who are the activists today if not those who hold the privileges?! It is only today that I manage to do lots of parallels. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

When Ibtisam says, *"feminism is not only here"* she refers to the feminist groups and discourse she encountered during her years in Tel Aviv. Before crossing the Israeli boarders and discovering the Lesbian feminists of the Arab world around her, it seems that the commonsense understanding was that feminism is an Israeli performance rather than an Arab one. That being said, Ibtisam also holds a critical gaze towards the Arab feminist circles. According to her account, in both places those who have, in her words, the privilege to act are those who have the resources. It seems that her critical reading of reality accrues within a process that takes time. She recounts that it is only *today* that she understands that there are patterns of relations of power she can make.

> *TD: Then you didn't do them?*

> *Of course I did, but with a minimal analysis language capacity, I have never written about it. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

From Ibtisam's account I understand that there is a process through which she acquires a language. What she experienced during her visit to the Arab neighboring country and what she understands today seems to require a long process of analysis.

Ibtisam's account and the accounts of the participants in the research as a whole reveal that the possibility to understand reality in a complex manner is an important part of their liberated consciousness. Ibtisam's trajectory, her dynamic movement towards a constant trans/formation that allows critical thought to take place, empowers her to better gaze at her surrounding reality and thus position herself within it. The following accounts further reveal that for the participants to understand their position and identity within the same frame of complex reading is important in their process of change.

The enlightened consciousness to which hooks refers (2003) is present within the accounts

of the participants and is often recounted as the possibility to start seeing the truth. The truth is on the one hand, seen as the possibility to read reality in a complex way and therefore to perform accordingly. Yet it further relates to the understanding of their complex identity and position within the large matrix of domination. In Haraway's (1988) sense, by positioning themselves, the participants make place for the possibility to develop a vision that avoids binary oppositions. They understand that their gaze does not appear from nowhere and has a position in the world.

Ibtisam's following account gives us an insight to her complex understanding of her position. I understand this complex gaze reclaimed by Ibtisam within the development of knowledge that follows the line of thought that requires the queer epistemology to engage within a complex reading of the entanglement of race, ethnicity, and nation categories (Yousef, 2004).

> *The idea was to be a place for Palestinian lesbians, an open space for Palestinian lesbians, to find them you know like, "we exist", basic! That we exist. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam is reclaiming what Butler (2015) calls the right to appear. Ibtisam is eager to create a space for Palestinian lesbians in order to, in her words, exist. Butler (ibid.) contents that regulatory schemes create a situation through which some bodies hegemonically receive what she calls, the right to appear, when others are considered ineligible. Ibtisam's quest to create a collective space for Palestinian lesbians is what Butler (ibid.) calls the formation of alliances as a plural and performative position that demands eligibility.

As I have mentioned earlier, within my interview with Esther she argues that to liberate oneself from colonial consciousness is to confront one's sense of entitlement. She went further and said that being Jewish in Israel creates a performance of a *master of the land*. According to her, deconstructing this performance is an important part of her liberation process to radical consciousness. Esther relates her own sense of entitlement to her position within Israeli society. According to her, being part of the Ashkenazi hegemonic group in Israel is what constructs her own sense of entitlement.

Ibtisam from her Palestinian, lesbian position within Israel's social formation was not formed to Esther's sense of entitlement. The regulatory schemes rather position her within a precarious position that denies from her, in Butler's (2015) terms the right to exist. Ibtisam's

development of consciousness leads her to action that would create a marginal space of action for Palestinian lesbians; thus a marginal space of agency.

Ibtisam continues her account when she reclaims to exist within spaces that structurally refuse her the *right to exist*:

> *And we don't give up any of our identities, (I) don't have to be in Tel Aviv to be lesbian, and (I) don't have to be European to be lesbian, I am Palestinian and I am from K[118]' and lesbian and it is a thing that exists. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam reclaims a complex and critical understanding of being a Palestinian lesbian. In her account she refuses to *give up any of her identities.* It seems that it is the *hidden transcript* (Scott, 1990) to which she is subjugated, that obliges her to choose. Rather than choosing, she insists to understand the entanglements between the numerous categories of identities she is positioned to perform. She is resisting the commonsense construction of knowledge that presumes that one must be European to be a lesbian. Interesting that once again the continuum European vs. Palestinian is brought in to the conversation. Earlier in the dissertation, Imad makes a similar distinction when he reclaims his humanity as a Palestinian. From her account, we understand that to demand a complex understanding of identities and position is a struggle and a task for which she has to work.

Ibtisam demands to exist within the complexity of her numerous identities. This demand requires the understanding of the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) of the numerous oppressions to which she is subject. In other words, she refuses what Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Ihmoud (2014) call *Otherization* processes that make Palestinians visible in the space only through the white supremacist colonial gaze (ibid.). Ibtisam says: *I am Palestinian and I am from K' and lesbian and it is a thing that exists.* Her affirmation leads us to understand that the supremacist colonial gaze does not leave space for her complex existence. Having said that, is seems that her confrontation is not only with the dominant colonial gaze towards her, but also with the gaze of her own Palestinian community.

In Ibtisam's account when she says, *(I) don't have to be European to be lesbian* we understand that she is struggling against the commonsense conception that all lesbians are European as "All the women are white, all the Blacks are men" (Hull et *al*, 1982).

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118 This in order to keep the name of the village confidential

Smith (1983), Lorde, (1983), Colins, (2000), Davis (1983) and hooks, (1984) have all worked towards an understanding of liberation from a dynamic that obliges the oppressed to hierarchize the numerous oppression to which, in particular but not exclusively, the Black woman is subject. Within the French context, Kergoat (2012) urges us to understand this entanglement through the religious term Consubstantialité (Consubstantiality). According to her, it permits a manner which views the social relations of dominations within a contextual framework and understands the social construction of sex with other social constructions.

Ibtisam recounts her need to leave the village in order to freely perform her sexuality. When getting to Tel Aviv, she is faced with racism, and within her own community she is faced with sexism and exclusion. Ibtisam refuses to prioritize her oppressions, rather she claims to critically gaze at all the structures that oppress her within a large Consubstantial frame. This echoes within The Combahee River Collective, which within their statement issues in April 1977[119] called for a Black feminism to oppose all forms of oppressions including sexuality, gender identity, class, disability, and age.

Ibtisam continues her account when she critically gazes at the feminist circles in which she and her Palestinian lesbian group sought to belong:

> *There were many struggles to try and fit within the feminist organizations or the Palestinian feminist movement, there and here, and we found Kayan the only embracing one, and we started, slowly slowly, to build connections with organizations. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam's quest to create a space for Palestinian lesbians is achieved. She manages, together with another Palestinian lesbian woman, to build an organization[120], which is entirely focused on the needs of Palestinian lesbians within the state of Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. For Ibtisam their work is fully inscribed within feminist activism and work. Yet it seems that she, and her group, have to struggle in order to *fit within* other feminist organizations. According to her, the only organization that embraced them and included them

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119 The Combahee River Collective (1977, April). The Combahee River Collective Statement. In Barbara Smith (Ed.) (1983), Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology (pp. 264-274). New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.

120 Within the Interview Ibtisam names an organization she established. In order to maintain my policy of confidentiality, I will not name the organization, as I did not, to her request name the country to which she traveled and in which she encountered other Arab lesbian feminists.

in their work was the Arab-Palestinian feminist group, Kayan[121].

In the following account Ibtisam recounts a moment that seems to have had a trans/formative effect on her consciousness and that of the group:

> *In 2005 we had, let's say, a constituent experience, that if you want to be part of your society, you just have to be, without asking for an invitation or an approval.*
>
> *TD: because before you felt that because you are lesbians you have to ask in order to be accepted?*
>
> *Yes! It's like, let's say, that a conference is taking place, how will you fit in? You will be present, but be silent, will not say the word lesbian.*
>
> *TD: Do you mean conference related to Palestinians?*
>
> *Yes, and if you don't tell no one will tell.*
>
> *TD: You (in plural) wanted to find the connection between the two discourses?*
>
> *Yes (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

While Ibtisam and the group are in the search to find a critical feminist discourse that could contain their complexity, she recounts that the most formative moment for her and the group was when she understood that she has, in Butler's (2015) words the right to exist. Earlier in the chapter Ibtisam reclaims a complex discourse that allows her to exist. Here she elaborates on the difficulty to be part of the Palestinian struggle and discourse as a Lesbian woman. Ibtisam's account shows that her position as a Palestinian woman is further challenged with her lesbian position.

With Israeli society that is, according to Sachs and Safran (2007), divided by race, class,

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121 Kayan was established in 1996 and became part of the Haifa women's coalition (Sachs and Safran, 2007): "We are a group of feminists who aim to advance the status of Palestinian women in Israel. The women of Kayan-Feminist Organization envision a secure and just society, in which Arab women in Israel enjoy full and equitable opportunities for self-expression and self-actualization. We invest in the development of grassroots leadership to catalyze social change grounded in the elimination of gender disparity. Kayan values pragmatism in the democratization of the public sphere, fosters genuine agency among Arab women and brings their influence directly to bear upon the realization of their rights." Accessed on October, 13 http://www.kayan.org.il/en/

nationality, religion, ethnicity and different life-styles, the Palestinian women, Kazi (1987) and Shaloufeh Khaza (1993) argue, are faced with a triangle of oppressions. In addition to their confrontation with the nationalist struggle and the struggle against social oppression, the Palestinian women face what they call, the lack of "home base". This instability as a result of the 1948 Nakba is further based on the destruction of the family structure the weight of which the Palestinian women used to bare. Within this context Ibtisam demands to enlarge the dialectic relation of oppressions to yet a fourth front.

Earlier in the text, Ibtisam recounts her constant experience, which she defines as *out of context.* In Lorde's (1980) writings, we find similar experiences of marginality. In her words she says: *"I am defined as other in every group I'm part of"* (ibid., pp.12-13). This marginal position, as Ibtisam has shown, is both related to by Lords as a place of strength and weakness. Furthermore, Lorde (ibid.) contends that from this marginal and precarious condition, the liberating possibility is derived from the possibility to build a community (ibid.). A community Ibtisam managed to construct together with the Palestinian lesbian organization.

The Palestinian women in Israel are part of the Arabic Muslim culture and thus constructed with the patriarchal social norms, among other structures (Hassan, 1993; Kazi, 1987; Shaloufeh Khazan, 1993). Hassan (1993) argues that: "from the moment of her birth, the patriarchal society, through the agent of the nuclear and extended family, operates a system of conditioning designed to transform the child into the epitome of possible female development-a wife-that is, a handmaid and receptacle for male lust and desire and a mother" (ibid., p.66). Personal achievement for the Palestinian girl, Hassan (ibid.) contends, is determined by her ability to perform the social norms and expectations.

Ibtisam refuses to stay silent within Palestinian conferences that tackle the national struggle and the condition of the Palestinian citizens of the state of Israel. Amit (2012) has shown that very little academic research has been conducted on Palestinian lesbians in Israel. Further she claims that researches that do deal with the lesbian experience in Israel mostly give place to Jewish lesbian experience. Within the Palestinian conferences, as Ibtisam calls them, she demands to have her voice heard as a lesbian woman. Ibtisam demands a complex understanding of her position as a Palestinian Lesbian. She refuses to separate the two.

The complex understanding is the understanding that at the same time, and in an

overlapping manner, she is oppressed within the Palestinian society patriarchal structures and those of the Israeli state. What Sachs and Safran (2007) call "'hyphenated' identities" Shohat (1994) referred to as a feminist multicultural reading of oppression. Shohat (ibid.) argues that a Mizrahi woman is not oppressed separately as a woman and as a Mizrahi, but as a Mizrahi-Woman. Sachs and Safran (2007) show that the *appearance* of this complex reading of oppression had a substantial impact on feminist thought within the State of Israel. Here they further argue, that this complex discourse challenged the quarter's policy that was thus no longer sufficient.

When Ibtisam recounts that she and her group developed the understanding that they had to take their place rather than wait to be *invited*, she is making her complex identity appear.

Within a graduate research entitled: "Free Radicals: Choosing A Non-Birthing Lifestyle Among Palestinian Lesbians in Israel", Amit (2012) argues that the consciouness of Palestinian lesbian women should be understood as a liberated awareness from the dominant, heterosexual, patriarchal chains of oppression of the Palestinian society. Furthermore, she claims that the liberated position entails feelings of marginality within noumerous environments; the Palestinian heterosexual, the Jewish heterosexual and lesbian environment. Within their everyday struggle, they fight inorder to maintain their connection to their Palestinian culture and create spaces where they can freely perform their sexuality.

Ibtisam's acount throughout the manuscript highlights, that which hooks (1990a, 1990b) calls, the marginal poisiton of action. A space from which Ibtisam seeks her creative and alternative actions: "A space of radical openness" is the way hooks (1990b) describes the margin.

> *And then in 2005, we were in Jerusalem, there was a feminist conference that was done in collaboration between 'here and there[122]', and we had a stand, we sold T-shirts. Who spoilt it? In my opinion, the non-Palestinians lesbians, suddenly, it doesn't matter who, decided to produce a T-shirt saying "We are Palestinian lesbians" not us [...]*

> *TD: An Israeli lesbian produced a T-shirts "we are Palestinian lesbians?"*

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122 "Here and There", refers to the State of Israel vs. The Occupied Palestinian Territories.

(Yes) "Against the occupation", out of context. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

It seems that the moment to create their own stand within a feminist conference was an important act of bravery for Ibtisam's organization. To the extent that Ibtisam uses the word *"spoilt"*. The ones who had seemed to ruin the moment for Ibtisam and her group are an Israeli lesbian group whom she is refusing to name. Ibtisam is using her expression again "*out of context*". This time it seems that she refers to another meaning. When referring to herself we understand out of context as a marginal position from which she acts and performs. In this context, I understand her expression as a critique towards the Israeli lesbian group. It seems that writing on their T-shirts "*we are Palestinian lesbians against the occupation*" is rather an act of appropriating her and their own voice. Or rather deciding for the Palestinian lesbian group their agenda. She continues when she explains that their own T-shirts had other writing on them, as they still had to deal with many other internal exclusions:

> *Of course the fact that the European women brought? It directly, it is very beautiful, cool. And we are still with T-shirts saying "A[123]' Palestinian lesbian women", that we exist. Of course the Palestinian women did not accept our stand. There were even many confrontations. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam recounts that they were still in the position to reclaim the right to exist, the right to be present within the feminist conference, and in front of the other Palestinian feminists who did not accept their stand. That seems to be the moment they realized that internal Palestinian lesbian work is necessary:

> *We understood, this was the moment for A' to understand that our work is in fact only internal Palestinian. Net! It has no connection to either the international or the Israeli lesbians. Because it only spoils.*

> *TD: It is a painful insight, isn't it?*

> *Of course. Because it is to understand the saying [...] "if you want my support [...]", how does it go? I have it somewhere (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)*

Ibtisam refers to the Lilla Watson's, an Australian feminist saying: "If you have come here

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123 Their organization

to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.[124]"

In Abu-Lughod's (2002) sense, Ibtisam does not feel that she needs Israeli lesbians to save her, nor does she seek their help. The painful understanding seems to be when she realizes that the Israeli lesbians are not her partners in the struggle; while they seek for their own liberation, they seems to objectivize her Palestinian lesbian existence. At that point the whole group A' takes a political agenda to direct all their energy towards their internal work.

The way in which Ibtisam accounts the *T-shirt* event, is profoundly related to domination and perhaps even colonial relations of power. In this sense she joins hooks (1981, 1984) and Lorde (1984) when they demand their voices to be heard and call for solidarity with white feminists rather than reproduction of patriarchal patterns of oppression.

Ibtisam's account highlights her feeling of being, in Lorde's (1984) words, unrecognized by other feminists and by Israeli lesbian feminists in particular. According to Lorde (ibid.), this is a form of internal racism that should be dismantled within feminist circles as it is a reproduction of patriarchal structures. Ibtisam refuses the denial of what Lorde (ibid.) calls differences in the category of women. Ibtisam demands that race and nation be taken in consideration when thinking of her oppression as a lesbian woman.

In her book *Ain't I a Woman*, hooks (1981) calls to look at the Black woman's oppression through a dialectic analysis. She claims that both White feminist and Antiracist Black men end up leaving Black women out of the analysis of oppression. In this sense she claims that the Black woman was not considered a woman and not completely human. Thus she is subjugated to both sexist and racist oppressions. Therefore her call for struggle is to liberate herself from male and race supremacy. She goes further and urges an analysis that does not only criticizes heterosexual dominative attitudes but understands their imbrications with racism.

Ibtisam's long account that we have been reading throughout the numerous pages reflects her resistance and liberated performance as she politically grows throughout the years. Her numerous confrontations with various oppressions, lead her to develop a consciousness that

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124 "Aboriginal lives: Lilla Watson and Tiga Bayles" Thursday 17 May 2007 8:00pm. Accessed on January 1, http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/aboriginal-lives-lilla-watson--tiga-bayles/3243166

deconstructs binary identities of oppression and creates feminist alternative knowledge that is drawn from a complex reading of the matrix of domination.

Her complex analysis of reality leads her, and her Palestinian lesbian group, to focus on themselves as subjects:

That is exactly the understanding and the queer understanding in general, or the discourse of lesbian, the black women and Chicanas. It is that which is very close to you, and not the discourse of the Arab lesbians from Arab neighboring countries of Israel, you have no connection to it even. Because you live in many circles of occupation of different sorts, not even occupation, minorities. (Ibtisam, lawyer, Haifa, 2013)

Her account echoes with the struggle of Black lesbian feminists, who in the 1970's, fought against numerous oppressions to which white, middle-class, heterosexual men and feminists subjugated them. In 1979 Barbara Smith, a Black lesbian feminist who was part of the women who founded the Boston-based Combahee River Collective[125], declared:

"The reason racism is a feminist issue is easily explained by the inherent definition of feminism. Feminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women, as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women. Anything less than this is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement" (Smith in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983 p. 61)[126].

Following Shohat's (2002) call to translate multicultural/transnational feminism theories and actions from one context to another, Ibtisam feels that her life experience and the oppression she confronts daily are closer to the Chicana feminist struggles than other Arab lesbians within the State of Israel and in the Arab neighboring countries. In their text *"Reciprocal Solidarity: where the Black and Palestinian Queer Struggles Meet"* Atshan and Moore (2014) call for a Black-Palestinian queer reciprocal solidarity: "we recognize how our

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125 The Combahee River Collective (1977, April). The Combahee River Collective Statement. In Barbara Smith (Ed.) (1983), Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology (pp. 264-274). New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.

126 Barabra Smith talk given at the closing session at the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) conference, May 1979; appeared in Frontiers, vol. V, n° 1 1980

bodies and life stories are marked for subjugation and even erasure, while also considering the toll of intersectional and structural forms of violence on our bodies and spirits (ibid., p.682).

From their personal experiences and epistemological development of knowledge, they show that queer and trans Blacks and Palestinians share the internal knowledge of living under the entanglement of racism, homophobia, and colonial violence. When they call for a commitment to a *queer, anti-racist, and anti-colonial reciprocal solidarity,* they cross the geographical boundaries in order to create what Shohat (2002) calls a transnational feminism that refuses to *"tan" nationalism.* The way in which Shohat (ibid.) understands the multicultural/transnational feminist project is the possibility to create dialogue through the experience and knowledge of individuals and communities situated in historical and geographical space. She claims that in many cases gender, women, queer and feminist studies are what she calls: *"nationalism with a tan, a nationalism in drag, and a rainbow nationalism"* (ibid., p.69).

Here Shohat (2002) argues that anti-colonial production of knowledge (such as Fanon's, 1961 work) shares concern with feminist scholarship and actions, both are concerned with the transformation of the "other" from object to subject of history. Ibtisam positions herself in what Spivak's (Spivak et *al* 2011) would call a planetary subject: "if we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us" (ibid., P.62). This understanding of self as a planetary subject, as agents, allows a complex discourse that avoids a narrow binary thinking. Furthermore, rather than leading conversations engaged in identity politics, it promotes that possibility to understand the power dynamics, and more precisely, the colonial power dynamics, involved in one's position.

On the same line, Butler (1993) urges us to enter into processes of inquiry. This critical inquiry, in her sense, should be understood when questioning the historical context and the power dynamic it involves. This leads us to understand who and how. Ibtisam enables, through her account, a conversation that understands the concept of Queer in a large scope. The large scope allows a critical inquiry into the relations of power to which Ibtisam, and the other participants, are confronted.

"Crisis of identity"

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To this point within this part entitled, *Acting from the margin* I have presented first Fadi's account and with length Ibtisam's account as both individuals from the Palestinian dominated group within the Israeli social formation. Here I am concerned with the possible performance of members of the dominating group to act from the margin. In the following account Hila expresses her great difficulty to find herself with her new position in the margin, due to her consciousness trans/formation:

> *I've had an identity crisis for the last two years and its mentally draining me. It feels good to be patriotic and it's nice to be a person who loves his country. When I was patriotic life was much easier.*
>
> *TD: What's nice about it?*
>
> *You love something and you are also terribly proud that you love it, and also the public terribly loves you for you loving it. (Hila, teacher, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Hila brings us back to the question of love. It seems that during recent years, she has gone through a consciousness trans/formation, where she has also lost her position within her society. She is no longer a patriot. According to her, there is something agreeable in being a patriot, in loving one's country. While Fadi and Ibtisam consider their marginal position as a place of power, Hila recounts the pain it involves. Perhaps the difference between the two accounts and that of Hila is that Fadi and Ibtisam develop their liberated consciousness from their structural marginal position. In hooks' (1984) sense, their marginal position in society, creates a sense of wholeness; a sense of wholeness that formed their consciousness to develop the oppositional gaze at oppression. In contrast, Hila's life experience was not marginal until she developed her oppositional gaze at Zionism. From her account we read that the movement from patriotism to non-patriotism is a difficult transition that positions her within the margin.

Within Israeli commonsense, going through the process of criticizing Zionism, is tantamount to acting against almost every single thing one has ever known, believed in, loved or given sense to. Consequently, giving up or going against Zionism would immediately mean harming and betraying one's 'own people' and abandoning one's Jewish identity. Furthermore, within the Israeli militaristic commonsense, security depends upon Zionism and the existence of the Jewish State (Rose, 2005; Raz-Krakotzkin, 2007; Chetrit, 1999; Said1978, 1979; Shohat, 2006; Laor, 2007).

Hila recounts that she can no longer love that which she *"terribly"* loved before. Her former patriotism could be perhaps understood though the way Freire (1970) relates to sadistic love, or in other words that love of the oppressor that is according to him perverted love. In Chapter Two, Shira recounts her love for the place as a liberated stance to disembodying Zionism. Her liberation entails reframing her possibility to love from the margin and outside the frame of Zionism. Her new love is driven from her refusal to take part in a nation love centered within the hegemonic frame, but rather would like to speak of love for people.

Hila's account reveals her wish to find love from within the margin. Her account strengthens Freire's (1970) and hook's (2003) argument that love has an important role in one's consciousness trans/formation. Perhaps as Shira, Hila's quest for love is driven from her desire to stay connected to home, to her family and familiar surroundings.

Hila continues when she explains that her quest is to feel a sense of belonging:

TD: Is it a sense of belonging?

It is a sense of belonging, a feeling that I am part of yes, yes belonging, I don't need

TD: And now?

I'm detached […] I don't belong anywhere. (Hila, teacher, Jerusalem, 2013)

Hila's account reveals a great sense of loneliness. She sounds lost. Having said that, Hila does not express the wish to go back to her old political positions, she rather is searching to belong from her new marginal space. To continue Hila's account, Avi in the following account elaborates the reasons for which some like him and Hila, make the choice to perform form the margin:

TD: So why are they some who do see? Like you? That suddenly see?

Because of presencing, that is what I am saying, the minute that one does presencing, what Foucault […] I am sorry I keep going back to him but he is definitely a constitutive figure for me, what he speaks about power relation, one can't nullify relations of power, but the more we speak about them, we manage to minimize them. What do I mean by minimize them? We don't change relations of power, what we do

*actually is that we **make present**, and presencing enables seeing, and the fact that we see, enables dealing at least to try to deal with [...].*

TD: I am always asked; "how come there are some who manage to make present and other who don't?"

There are very few people who are willing to go for political actions, not in the sense of doing to promote themselves, but doing to create change, and to renounce, perhaps, some of their power, it is usually ones who have come, if we have spoken about intersection, those who have come from hallucinatory places, I don't know, I am an ex-Ultra-Orthodox, ahhh Mizrahi, or half Tunisian, half Persian. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)

In Avi's opinion it is only a small minority who is devoted, according to him, to political work. Political work, accordingly, is about collective change, rather than the will to promote oneself. Political work also, in some cases, seems to entail a price of renouncing one's powers or perhaps privileges. Avi directly connects the possibility to act with one's position and standpoint and perhaps discovering oneself in the margin. In his words, these are the *hallucinatory places.*

The Christian religious term consubstantiality, which describes divine relations, Kergoat's (2012) argues, helps us understand to depth the relations of power among social categories. In Ahmed's (2010) sense the discussion must shift from a classical discourse of identity politics to a discourse of critical reading of relations of power and positionality. Avi now gazes at social relations of dominations within a contextual framework of understanding the social construction of sex, gender, race, ethnicity and class (to name a few). He positions himself as one of those who choose to take a political action and work for change through *presencing* power dynamics. His account of self leads him to reason that he is engaged in the task of change due to his marginal positions and trajectories within the Israeli matrix of domination.

According to him the consubstantial relation of power between his various positions within society: *"an ex-Ultra-Orthodox, ahhh Mizrahi, or half Tunisian, half Persian"* is what permits action. The hallucinating, perhaps marginal position, creates according to him the political capacity to trans/form.

Earlier in the chapter Avi recounts that the encounter with the queer theories and gender

studies trans/formed his life and brought him to modes of critical thought. In his present account, when explaining from where he believes actions are driven, we clearly see his feminist formation. While not naming it, I argue that his account reveals the understanding that knowledge is socially situated. I understand the use of the term *hallucinating places* in the same way Ibtisam relates to her *out of context* position. Both Avi and Ibtisam seem to think that their marginal position allows the development of critical consciousness and perhaps liberated thought.

Throughout this chapter, Avi finds help in theories that have trans/formed his life. He starts by relating to Michel Foucault, continues to Ann Stolar and now he draws his strength from Sara Ahmed:

> *There is Sara Ahmad also. There are elements of immigration, many times double immigration, for Sara Ahmad it is a double immigration. Elements of strangeness in the white and black space, together, that is a double lack of belongingness or triple or quadruple; all who have found themselves in very hegemonic structures. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Basing his work on Abdelmalek Sayad, within the French context Boubeker (2010a) contends that the immigrants themselves are the first inheritances of colonialism. On the same line of thought, when Avi speaks about immigration experiences, he refers to feelings of strangeness and quests of belonging. When drawing on Ahmed's (2000) work, he claims that those who go through immigration end up experiencing a double immigration, in his word within the white and the black spaces. I understand white spaces as when he says hegemonic structures and black spaces referring to marginal spaces of the oppressed and dominated. Boubeker (2010a) argues that the immigrants' way of resisting colonial heritage is through rebellion. According to him immigrants find themselves confronted with what he calls the lies of the state. Lies that in some cases they are the first to embody and therefore, refusal of and resistance to the lies starts by an internal struggle against oneself. It seems that performing what he calls the secret keepers, is the automatic behavior from within such a precarious position.

Along the same line of thought, within the first part of this research the participants are preoccupied with the question of revealing the truth. The act of developing an oppositional gaze and unveiling (Guénif-Soulimas, 2006) the lies of state Zionism is for the participants a

liberation process. Having said that, the accounts furthermore reveal that the relations with the lies of the state, and the power of the confrontation with theses lies, which lead to various actions of emancipation, are strongly related to one's position and standpoint within the Israeli social formation.

In Chapter Two Fadi recounts his struggle to resist the *diktat*, of Israeli state. Within Guénif-Soulimas' (2006) categories, his refusal to assimilate to colonialism is his liberation processes from the assigned position of that which Boubeker (2010b) calls the secret keeper. To refuse colonialism appears to be what positions Avi and Hila in the margin of what he calls white spaces, or in other words hegemonic structures. Perhaps *a double lack of belongingness or triple or quadruple* to which Avi refers is an explanation for one's possibility to act from the margin, or in Guénif-Souilamas (2006) sense, *to perform the Other from the inside.* Hila's account and that of Avi, illustrate the marginal position from the inside as a difficult position, yet in hooks' (1990a) sense, a place of resistance.

> *TD: Are you Queer?*

> *I refuse [...] I always refused being part of society, accepting the rules, I always annoyed the rules and the rules annoyed me, I don't know, there must be other things, a position of being in more than one oppression, or more than several, it enables all kinds of processes that you go through in your life, to be under oppression, and feel it, ahh it enables, I think it has this place of: "to pull the rug from under one's feet", that is to say, every time that an oppression is in action, the rug under your feet is pulled out, and you stay standing in the air for a moment, and this moment, is in fact, a watershed that changes everything you saw till then, the color and its shades, the meaning changes, and the moment that happens, then everything changes, also the past, also the interpretation. (Avi, doctoral student, Jerusalem, 2013)*

Avi positions himself in the margin. According to him this is a position in which he is constantly found: Her recounts that he has always refused social norms. In Avi's account we read that since a young age he sought for a community or society in which he can feel a sense of belonging. Leaving the Ultra-Orthodox society brought him to take part within the larger hegemonic Israeli society, which at first he thought would lead him to feeling of wholeness, yet the more he discovered the reality the less he felt part of the center.

As we have seen in Sara's account, earlier in Chapter Two, the reality is no longer the

same to the extent that his gaze at the past has transformed as his interpretations of the past have changed the way he views the present, and the choices he will make in the future.

Avi develops his knowledge from the margin that is according to Hill Colins (1986) of important sociological epistemology. Marginality she argues *"has been an excitement to creativity"* (ibid., p.15)

Conclusion

The chapter, which allows Avi and Ibtisam to perform as a heuristic device, demonstrates, I hope, the importance question asking and the will to act from the margin have on the possibility to put forth relations of power. *Presencing* of power dynamics of domination and oppressing, appears to be crucial first, for understanding reality, and second for understanding one's self position within it. In hooks' (2010) terms it is first the possibility to ask the questions and thrive for knowledge about reality and then the act of learning to perform with the new knowledge.

The accounts reveal, and will continue to develop this same point in Chapter Four, that the role of feminist epistemologies in general and, that which is defined by the participants, as radical feminist epistemology in particular, is essential within their consciousness trans/formation. To follow Dorlin (2008) feminist epistemologies, enable a discourse that empowers and trans/forms the consciousness of those who act and perform within its dynamic fields of knowledge, as it undermines and challenges hegemonic knowledge and commonsense.

The following and final chapter develops an analysis based on radical-queer feminist discourse and scholarship recounted as central tools in the self-reflexive processes of the participants. A process that seems to have a vital place in their possibility to step into a trans/formation process that is a liberating one and allows to shed what I call here, in conversation with the participants, colonial consciousness.

Radical Encounters

> "I have often wished I could spread the word that a movement committed to fighting sexual, racial, economic and heterosexist oppression, not to mention one which opposes imperialism, anti-Semitism, the oppressions visited upon the physically disabled, the old and the young, at the same time that it challenges militarism and imminent nuclear destruction is the very opposite of narrow" Smith, 1983, pp.257-258.

Overview: Self-Reflexivity

Developing self-reflexive critical analysis, the participants recount their processes through which they re(de)fined their own identity. The process of consciousness trans/formation has led the participants to acknowledge that their identity is in effect a positioned performance rather than a natural definition of the self.

I understand reflexivity within the reading of Haraway (1988) when she urges us to think of scientific knowledge as situated and from a *standpoint*. Throughout this part of the research I contend with the idea that feminist epistemology, scholarship and knowledge are crucial within the liberation process of the participants from colonial consciousness. In this sense I argue, and hope that the research proves this point, that feminist tools and analytical frames of knowledge, have proven useful and important not only for the subalterns subjects, but also for members of the dominant group within the Israeli colonial context. I seek to demonstrate the way in which the standpoint theory, which urges a profound gaze into one's position and a reflexive understanding of one's stand within the social space (Hill Collins, 2004; hooks, 2007; Minh-ha, 1997; Walker, 1995; Smith, 1989), is an important tool for the participants' process of trans/formation.

Minh-ha (1989) urges us to think about what reflexivity means. From her anthropological

position she argues that one must question the interiority and exteriority of a given frame. The following accounts illustrate the important place self-reflexivity has on the participants trans/formation process(es). Furthermore their own questioning of their own identity, within a large categorical understanding, is an important task of liberation. I understand Minh-ha's (ibid.) definition of reflexivity within the deconstruction of the frames from which one speaks. If the power dynamics of the frame is not changed, it will not help to constantly speak about identities and speak about feminism, as it is within the colonial frames of reference. However, if one is in a sincere process to better understand one's own position, and through that understanding, to be aware of one's responsibility to change, this is when I understand Minh-ha when she speaks about full content (ibid.).

Self-reflexivity seems to be an important component for the building of what Shohat (1994) has called, a multi-cultural feminist consciousness. According to her, Multi-cultural feminism is drawn from the understanding that the conflicting relations of power are not merely between men and women but further within women as their race, ethnicity and class positions, to name a few, classify them within the hegemonic hierarchy of power dynamics (ibid.). Therefore, an Ashkenazi, heterosexual woman is indeed oppressed and subaltern in front of Ashkenzi, heterosexual men, Shohat (ibid.) continues, yet she is within an advantage position in confrontation with a Mizrahi woman.

Both Shohat (1994) and hooks (1994, 2003, 2010) insist that while being *born* into subaltern position(s), such as being born a Mizrahi woman in the Israeli State or a Black woman in the United States, is a definite prescription for oppression, it does not by any means indicate a direct process for political awareness and the participation within liberation struggles. On the same line, Shohat (1994) claims that being born white, or Ashkenazi, is neither an essential position nor can it allow transformation to a liberated consciousness from Eurocentric approaches and attitudes thus authorizing genuine participation within liberation struggle and movements.

Along the same line of thought, this last part of the dissertation leads the readers to look at the possibility of radical forms of encounters and critical dialogue as important tools of liberation and for the building of genuine tasks of living together (Butler, 2012, 2015). In this sense the research develops the idea that radical encounters enable critical thought, and it is the *presencing* of power dynamics rather than hegemonic encounters that reproduce domination and oppression. For such encounters to take place the participants illustrate that

their identity must be understood within an interlock gaze at their positions and therefore they have to resist essentialist visions of reality and of their position within it.

In this sense, maleness and whiteness dominations as Sa'ar (2005) suggests are read by the participants, when in a processes of liberation, through historical and political constructions rather than as essential questions. Furthermore, a Palestinian feminist reading of the Israeli matrix of domination illustrates that a non-essentialist gaze enables an interlock understanding of the complex national and ethnic identity (Kanaaneh, 2002).

"I am not a fan of nationalism. If circumstances were not what they are I would never use terms such as "Palestinian" or "Queer" to describe myself, but rather "human". However, we live in a society which necessitates the use of these terms, because without them, it might be even harder to resist, and then you are silenced." (Morcos, 2012-2013, p.64).

Part One: Building a Complex Identity

"To a profound and visceral schizophrenia, since for the first time in our history Arabness and Jewishness have been imposed as antonyms" (Shohat, 1992, p.8).

"I am a Mizrahi woman[127]"

In the following account Adi questions her identity from a political perspective and is now able to take it to praxis. The possibility to be at the same time, Arab and Jewish seemed obscure to her. Her account expresses the Zionist hegemonic commonsense that, according to Shohat (1992) brought Mizrahi Jews to a feeling of schizophrenia. This profound mental disorder to which Shohat (ibid.) refers is a result of what she calls the imposed antonym relation between being Arab and Jewish at the same time. Throughout history, the hyphenation Arab-Jews was not experienced as a contradiction, on the contrary.

> *My political consciousness germination actually happened in combination with*
> *feminist theories leaving home, education, a wide education, and then in a certain*

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127 Adi

way, du to my parents divorce, discovering my mother again, in some way growth of a very strong political-feminist consciousness that was accompanied by the growth of a very strong and clear Mizrahi consciousness; in fact it only happened when I started understanding that I am a Mizrahi woman.

TD: How did it happen?

Through encounters with Mizrahi feminist women and Mizrahi feminism.

TD: In Haifa ?

Yes, in Isha-l'Isha, I will tell you a few words about this, Mizrahi Feminism and then political feminism, and political activities.

TD: What do you mean by political activities?

What do I mean? Ahh I mean, a lot of things, it means, also 'Women in Black', demonstrations, the Wall, what else? To write in the newspapers, to go to lectures, encounters with women. Anything you can think of. Going overseas to speak, encountering Palestinians, everything, ok? The whole package. What ever you can thing of. Everything! Really! So this deal that you become Mizrahi, feminist politically aware, you have no choice. (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)

Drawing from Black feminist epistemology and feminist political actors of the Third World, Mizrahi feminists and scholars have shown that gender and sexuality interlock with class, ethnicity and nation categories within the Israeli-colonial hegemony (Shohat, 1998; Dahan-Kalev, 2001; Shiran, 2007). Dahan-Kalev (2001), argues that Mizrahi women find themselves struggling on different fronts: gendered, in front of hegemonic-patriarchal and Mizrahi patriarchal oppressions; ethnic oppression in front of Ashkenazi men, women and institutions; and in most cases economical oppressions.

Adi recounts that the actual growth of her political consciousness happened when she understood that she is a Mizrahi woman. The entanglement of a strong Mizrahi consciousness and a political feminist consciousness is the component of the understanding of herself as a Mizrahi woman: an understanding that appears to be the basis of her political consciousness.

In order to further develop a radical feminist performance of self, Adi acknowledges that

she has to understand her own position within the imbrications of identities and oppressions within the Israeli matrix of domination. In her account she highlights that the first step of consciousness trans/formation is related to her ethnic and gendered positions. Later in the chapter we shall read that while Adi passes as a Mizrahi in most of the hegemonic circles, the understanding of her position as a Mizrahi woman was an action she had to take and the standpoint of her radical consciousness as well as the possibility to perform praxis of free mind (Hill Collins, 2000).

The role of Mizrahi Feminist thought takes an important part in the understanding and analysis of Adi's liberation processes but goes beyond that of many other participants in this research. Reclaiming a Mizrahi Feminist identity is, according to Motzafi-Haller (2001), in itself an act of bravery within the Zionist Israeli colonial formation, and I would add it is a praxis of transgression to the Ashkenazi, heterosexual patriarchal Zionist hegemony (Dor, 2015).

Mizrahi feminism represents critical thought that was crystallized through praxis and experience of struggles of Mizrahi women within the Israeli colonial matrix of domination. Shiran (2007) demonstrates the way in which Black feminist epistemology and feminist political players in the Third World influenced the development of this knowledge. Mizrahi feminist thought highlights the complex entanglement of gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality and nation in the struggle for the liberation of the Mizrahi woman. In her daily life, Shiran (ibid.) argues that the Mizrahi woman confronts imbrications of several oppressions.

Dahan-Kalev (2001), insists that the development of Mizrahi feminist thought and scholarship is bound up within the gap and rift between Mizrahi scholarship and feminism and that of Ashkenazi scholarship and feminism. Furthermore, she argues that the tension between the Zionist ideology movement and Arab-Jewish values must be at the core of the discussion. The Mizrahi feminist position, Motzafi-Haller (2001) argues is to situate the struggle, development of knowledge and theory within the complex colonial context of Israeli State.

With the arrival of immigrants from European and Anglo-Saxon countries, during the 1970s, came the liberal occidental feminist discourse and activism to the new State of Israel. At the center of this feminist discourse, to this day, stands the Ashkenazi middle class secular woman (Motzafi-Haller, 2001; Lavie, 2011). Liberal feminism, to which Yardena refers in

Chapter Three, and finally hegemonic feminist discourse did not challenge the Macho-Orientalist commonsense. Their struggle concentrated on the harsh fight for room in the militaristic patriarchal Israeli society, and they looked at Mizrahi women as traditional and incapable of functioning in the "modern country" (Swirski in Motzafi-Haller, 2001).

In her book "Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics", hooks (1990b) urges us to think of the links between the perpetuation of racism and that of sexism. Within the Israeli colonial context, Shohat (1996) argues that the creation of anti-racist feminism is essential within radical feminist thought. According to her, the politics of Mizrahi feminism should be directed towards the importance of creating solidarity and alliances between oppressions and between the oppressed from a large scope.

Along the same line of thought, Black feminist epistemology, Hill Collins (2000) argues, strives towards an active stance in the goal to construct what she calls liberated, radical consciousness of free mind. The first important step is to decode and deconstruct reality, hence coming to understand the power dynamic within a radical reading of the matrix of domination. Within Adi's account she recounts the way in which her skin color and her Arab father were signs of otherness. As a child when trying to explain that she was also American and a native English speaker, she was often not taken seriously. Adi does not pass as an Ashkenazi within the Israeli hegemonic environment. In these situations her skin color made her very visible on the landscape, yet at the same time extremely invisible and voiceless (Motzafi-Haller, 2001; hooks, 1990; Shohat, 2002).

Not passing as Ashkenazi and therefore referred to by her surrounding as Mizrahi, Adi recounts that her Mizrahi radical consciousness was formed through radical encounters and praxis which transformed her experienced wisdom into critical analysis. The emancipated knowledge developed through Adi's account shows that developing Mizrahi feminist consciousness is not natural, neither for Mizrahi nor for Ashkenazi woman. It is rather an active liberation process and thus a radical praxis: reflections and actions in order to change oppressive institutions. It is thus the construction of opposing alternative knowledge (hooks, 2000)

Throughout her whole account, Adi demonstrates that her radical feminist consciousness is constructed through the interconnection between her subaltern wisdom and critical analysis of power dynamics and her understanding of power and position

Through a Mizrahi feminist community of learning (hooks, 2003) Adi is able to develop her political consciousness. The Mizrahi feminist platform created a space where it was safe for Adi to confront the entanglement of her oppressions without having to carry binary positions (Dor, 2015). Furthermore the theory and development of knowledge and scholarship by Mizrahi women, was a learning dialogue for her. In this sense and through the reading of Shohat (2002), it seems that Mizrahi feminism could be read within a theoretical framework that is dynamic and in constant dialogue. This dialogue, we shall see in the following accounts, enables Adi to construct her own identity within a complex analysis of reality. It seems to me that her position as an agent, thus a subject of her own history and reality, rather than an object of oppression, is a result of the work towards that construction of liberation from colonial consciousness.

Hill Collins (2000) and Lorde (1984) urge us to think through Black feminist epistemology when understanding processes of consciousness liberation. They argue that such constructions occur on two levels. Firstly, safe spaces of dialogue are important for individual self-definition and the formation to radical praxis. Secondly, such spaces are a political stance to construct group consciousness that is crucial to the struggle for transforming the reality of oppression.

Adi's liberation from colonial consciousness is bound up within her self-reflexive thought through which she positions herself as a Mizrahi woman within the Israeli matrix of domination. During the interview Adi also defines herself as an academic. The following account shows that from within academia, Adi reveals that her ethnic and gendered positions are still categories of domination:

> All these things you read in books and articles about "why Mizrahi women don't advance in Academia, because they make food that needs to be stuffed!" Ninat Toren[128] writes, you know I read Ninat Toren's article and was in shock. She says that Mizrahi women recount "it is important for me to cook, it is important for me that my children will have food [...]" stuffed food is a code name for women oppression. That is why I am telling you (laugh) in this sense I was ambivalent, and my father left me with this ambivalence, he raised me within this ambivalence, the double frame, to be Arab-Jew, to be Mizrahi-Ashkenazi, the gender story, all these things, I got as a

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package from him, oh my God, and then within this whole story, my mother comes in.
Now why do I start with my father? Because my mother starts as a secondary figure in
my life and becomes more and more significant. (Adi, university professor, Haifa,
2013)

Basing her analysis on Mizrahi feminist scholarship, Adi unfolds the stereotypization processes to which she is constantly subjugated within her academic life. Adi explains that her reading of hegemonic feminist thought led her to an article in which she found an essentialist reasoning for the lack of Mizrahi woman, like her, in Israeli Academia. Adi is outraged by the hegemonic feminist categorization of Mizrahi women, she repeatedly comes across in her readings. This essentialist thought presumes that Mizrahi women are too busy making oriental food to be and develop in academia.

From Adi's account, I understand that she refuses the essentialist explanation. Having said that she is concerned with the lack of publications of Mizrahi feminist scholars yet she reclaims it to be treated from a critical perspective. As in hooks' (1990) writings concerning the lack of Black women scholars' publications, Motzafi-Haller (2001) claims that Mizrahi women end-up publishing in radical left journals, which have a relatively small circle of readers. Motzafi-Haller (ibid.) argues that this is due to the closed circles of the hegemonic feminist movement, which reproduces oppressing patterns similar to those against which the movement struggled in the 1970s.

Mizrahi feminist scholarship has shown throughout the years that the hegemonic feminist movement is unable to see the needs and complexity of Mizrahi women and further looks down at the Arabic-Oriental culture from which these women are descendants. The liberal feminists groups, as the Zionist movement in general, consider the Ashkenazi Jews as Western and superior. Rather than deconstructing the orientalist gaze of Israeli institutions, Ashkenazi feminists based their approach on Zionist commonsense (Dahan-Kalev, 2001). Consequently, Mizrahi women are looked at as traditional and suppressed by their 'inferior' culture. In return Ashkenazi feminism expected Mizrahi women to integrate into modern liberal Israel by disassociating themselves from their ethnic belonging.

Dahan-Kalev (2001) argues that despite the fact that Ashkenazi feminists were convinced that they were speaking on behalf of all women; they perpetuated hegemonic stereotypes and related feminism to white Ashkenazi, middle class women. Adi's anger represents her refusal

of the Universalist Ashkenazi feminism approach. She is determined to construct an alternative story within the academia.

From her position within the academia, Adi reveals, in Scott's (1990) terms, the hidden transcripts of hegemonic knowledge. Her life experience and theoretical development of knowledge trans/form into radical praxis that gazes at reality with critical eyes. Her own situated knowledge about the so called scientific scholarship developed in academia reveals not only that Mizrahi women are obliged to submit to the large social hidden transcripts, they are further expected to develop a language and a discourse that would be acceptable to the hegemon.

Safran's (2006) research, which sheds light on the development of the feminist movement within the State of Israel, illustrates that while the Ashkenazi feminism brought important feminist and feminine issues to the social and political agenda in the 1970s, it ignored the oppression to which Mizrahi women were subjugated as a social group. Ashkenazi feminists, during those years, fought for women equality, namely Jewish, and managed to change social commonsense concerning violence (whether domestic or not) against women like rape and other forms of oppression to which women are subjected. In the 1980s the Ashkenazi-hegemonic image of the feminist movement was inevitable. Nevertheless, during these years they were challenged by lesbian feminists with an anti-homophobic discourse and by Mizrahi and Palestinian feminists, with an antiracist discourse (ibid.).

Adi's processes towards liberation from colonial consciousness direct her, in hooks' terms, "from silence into speech" (hooks, 1990, p.340). Her critical reading of the hegemonic definition of Mizrahi women is a position of agency. Adi is in a state of praxis of back talk to authority (ibid.). In hooks' (ibid.) work, the act of talking back is a resistance to hegemonic structures that builds a "liberation voice" of the oppressed who has transformed into an agent (ibid., p.340). In this sense, Black feminist thought and scholarship help us understand the way in which the construction of radical consciousness could be grasped as a place of resistance (ibid.).

Adi insists on having her own voice for self-definition. Adi's account shows, I argue, that this is an important step within her consciousness trans/formation processes. In hooks' (1990) terms, Adi is engaged within the liberation processes which is understood within the dynamic movement as going from being an object of a situation to becoming a subject of an action

(ibid.).

While Adi is confronted with the struggle facing Ashkenazi domination, and feminist Ashkenazi subordination, in the following account, Adi illustrates the way in which 'talking back' is further an internal struggle. Similarly, Lorde (1984) argues that for the Black woman speaking back and challenging patriarchal power dynamics are also the internal struggle. A struggle, which creates self-revelation, yet is accompanied by fear and danger.

Adi's account is similar to the experience of the Black woman in the United States when leaving home and becoming a Black woman in the white patriarchal society (hooks, 1990). In this sense the struggle was not only to talk back to white patriarchal authority, which required bravery and force, but also the need to create a voice that does not go into thin air.

> *My father was, and still is, a very dominant person in my life. And then there is this thing of growing up with a Mizrahi father. In this sense Mizrahiness is not only an issue of ethnic or national identity but rather also gendered. I mean the Mizrahi father is a kind of a burden. It's a burden! I think having an Arab father was very hard for me. (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)*

Having an Arab father and an American mother, Adi describes her identity as hybrid. Throughout her account, her hybrid identity is present in her self-definition. However, as we have seen, part of her liberating process to radical consciousness was to reclaim and perform a critical feminist Mizrahi stance. While growing up within the Ashkenazi middle class of Haifa and having English as a mother tongue, her skin color and her Arab father were, according to her, marks of otherness.

As an intellectual and a feminist she gives an account of self, examining her consciousness trans/formation. Adi demands a complex reading of her hybrid identity. She chooses to begin with the complexity of growing up with an Arab father. Today from the standpoint of her radical consciousness she is capable of analyzing her position within the imbrication of gender and ethnicity. Therefore, she refuses to understand her identities in, what Lorde (1984) defines as binary identities of oppression and insists on a complex reading of the matrix of domination.

Understanding patriarchy within a context is essential in understanding the overlapping of oppressions. The Ashkenazi hegemonic image of the Mizrahi father as oppressive and violent

to his daughter is often not seen within a larger context of oppression (Shoahat, 1994).

While understanding the oppressing commonsense construction of the Arab man, Adi recognizes the Mizrahi patriarchal oppression within her own biography. Within the hegemonic Ashkenazi common sense, the Arab father represents the inferior traditional oppressor[129]. The Orientalized gaze towards the Arab traditional culture constructed an imaginary of the Arab man. These images, drawing from Guénif-Souilamas (2004), were constructed within colonial commonsense.

Adi is not the only participant in the research to highlight the categories of gender, nation and ethnicity to which Zionist commonsense subjugates the Arab man. Earlier in the research, Esther recounts the way in which she had to liberate herself from the colonial image of the Arab rapist man. Her colonial formation that constructed her consciousness, gazed at the Arab man as sexually deviant and violent. From her gendered middle class Ashkenazi position, Esther's account reveals that sexual violence is directed at her.

The sexually deviant gaze at the Arab man brought out in Esther's account is further highlighted in Davis' (1983) work in her book Women, Race, and Class. Davis (ibid.) demonstrated the way in which certain white feminist discourses end up reproducing the historically constructed myth of the Black rapist. In this sense her analysis joins Shohat's (1996, 1998) argument that insists on a feminism that refuses the recapitulation of racism and understands every given situation within its circumstances and historical context.

Following the same line of thought, within Imad's process of liberation, we have seen that he finds himself obliged to unshed the hegemonic image of himself as an Arab Palestinian. Adi's account reveals the difficulty she has in finding a complex reading of reality that would construct a positive image of her Arab father. While Adi is aware of her subaltern gendered position at home, she refuses to accept the violent negative image in which her father is framed.

In the following account, Adi elucidates that her confrontation with the image of an Arab father is far more complex. In addition to the struggle of constructing a positive image of her Arab father, she furthermore has to deal with the binary division that refuses an Arab-Jewish

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129 For more reading on Israeli state patriarchal strucutres and formation, go to Shalabi (2008) and Shohat (1994). Sa'ar (2007) argues that Israeli patriarchy is strongly characterized by ethno-national and class domination structures.

identity:

> *(As a child) I was complexed thinking that my father was a Syrian spy. How can it be that he is so, Arab? Right? Because if he is Jewish and if he is Israeli, and if we are Jewish and Israeli, so how can it be? It is of course not an idea I planted in myself. This is an example of the absurdity, the sense of alienation and the incapacity of containing my complex identity. (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)*

Adi illustrates the impossibility, created by hegemonic commonsense, to perceive her father at the same time as a Jew and an Arab. These two identities were for her too contradicting. In order to settle the contradictions she constructs her imaginary story that transforms her father into a Syrian spy. A role often delegated throughout political Zionist history to Mizrahi Jews by the Israeli State.

As a child, Adi finds it difficult to handle her father's strangeness. Her account reveals the contradictions she confronted at a very young age. On the one hand, her father is an important person in her life and plays an important role in her upbringing, whilst on the other hand, she has to deal with his Arab and Mizrahi position that is gazed at as inferior by her own environment.

In the following account Adi identifies the oppressions to which she was subjugated as a young girl, growing up within the Mizrahi patriarchal home. Furthermore, from her complex reading of oppressions, she critically gazes at her own mother's position.

> *My mother, a young woman who went through immigration herself, got married into a Mizrahi family where women didn't have higher education. To survive this situation she had, only in retrospective I can say, to do all kinds of things to survive, such as for example blurring her education. When they lived together I was actually a witness, in some way or another, to my mother going through a very very harsh oppression. (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)*

Adi has to deal with the contradictions of her mother's oppression. While her mother is part of the dominant Ashkenazi collective which oppresses her father and her father's extended family, at home her mother also experienced gendered oppression and, according to Adi, had to erase herself in front of her husband.

Understanding her mother's oppression at home, Adi still opposes the Universalist Ashkenazi feminist discourse that according to her, does not leave room for a dialectical understanding of oppressions. In this sense, Adi follows the line of thought brought by Shohat (2002) when she argues for a multicultural feminist project.

Based on her own personal experience, Adi is able to politicize her reality and her mother's when entering into a critical dialogue between concepts. She analyses her own family story, Shohat (2002) would argue, within the historical context and space (Butler, 2012; Freire, 1970). Adi's complex critical gaze articulates a feminist discourse, Shohat (2002) contends, that contests gender and cultural essentialism. Therefore, she does not accept neither her own nor her mother's oppression within the home, in the name of cultural acceptance. In this sense she is, in Shohat's (ibid.) terms, critically gazing at the different ethnic and gendered positions in relation to the historical context of the State of Israel.

Adi's 'sisterhood' in Lorde's (1984) sense, towards her mother rejects the way in which hegemonic feminists employed the term. For Adi the gendered experience is not symmetric between all women. She refuses to ignore race and ethnicity within her gendered reading of reality. Part of Adi's liberation process was to understand these processes to which she was subjugated. She realizes that being a Mizrahi feminist, in the Zionist political matrix of domination, necessarily implies facing the hegemonic stereotypes:

> *[…] our biggest problem, Mizrahi women, is that we have to deal with a very very stagnate set of expectations, a stagnate repertoire from which it is very difficult to break. And they are always related to our family and motherly roles. (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)*

Adi leads at least a double struggle. On the one hand, she has to face Ashkenazi feminists and confront their framing discourses, while at the same time she wishes to liberate herself from her own internalization of these same orientalist stereotypes. Drawing from Freire (1970) and Lorde (1984) I suggest understanding radical liberation processes not merely in terms of deconstruction of frames of oppression but furthermore, true liberation is confronting, as Lorde argues, the possibility to identify "[...] that piece of oppressor which is planted deep with each of us [...]" (Lorde, 1984, p.123).

Like the confrontation with the Arab father Adi insists to hold a complex analysis of her position. This complexity necessarily involves examining the power relations of the multiple

oppressions to which she is subjugated. Her challenge seems to be an active resistance to the hegemonic stereotype constructed about the Mizrahi woman as victim to the oppressive inferior Arab father and to society. Adi does not seek, in Spivak's (1988) sense, saving neither by Ashkenazi women nor by Israeli liberal structures, therefore, she resists being patronized and framed as a victim.

Motherhood

Adi recounts the way in which Mizrahi women are subjugated to motherly and family frames of reference. When liberating herself from the internalization of hegemonic frames, Adi actually realizes that for her, motherhood played an important role in her polarization process and therefore trans/formation of consciousness:

> *Motherhood brought me to a place of no return, I think, as if there were no other choice. (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)*

Earlier in the research Adi refers to two main events in her life, which took place during the same period. The first was when she transformed into a mother and discovered motherhood, not only as a personal event, but also as a political stance. The second was the Second Palestinian Intifada, which was, according to her, a historical event that greatly influenced her and others.

This historical event was a condition created by the oppressed. Through this struggle Adi confronts the objective reality and critically analyzes the oppressing, occupying matrix of Israeli domination. As mentioned earlier in the research, through her engagement in the resistance against the occupation, that started during the Second Intifada, Adi's account of herself as an oppressor is a difficult and painful moment of truth.

Adi chooses to bring into the conversation two events that have changed her life and that brought her to a place of no return. Interestingly, one event seems to have confronted her with the unpleasant position of the oppressor, while the other is a place where she finds her position as a mother. Earlier Adi recounts the work in which she is engaged to deconstruct the stagnant social expectations of Mizrahi women that are, according to her, always related to family life and motherhood. When Adi speaks about her own trans/formative process and the

large influence of becoming a mother, it seems that she has found motherhood as an empowering stance that leads her towards movement and dynamic political thought.

When referring to her political stance and positions, motherhood, Adi's newly gendered experience, is a place of no return. Her personal experience is political and the collective historical moment is part of her personal being. Hooks (1984) has shown that motherhood, within early white feminist thought, was considered as oppressing and as an alienating dynamic for women from the large feminist movement. She insists: *"had black women voiced their voice on motherhood it would not have been named a serious obstacle to our freedom"* (ibid., p.135). In Adi's account, not only that motherhood does not alienate her from the movement, it is one out of two most transforming events towards critical thought and activism.

In the following account Raya also gives sense to her new position as a mother within her feminist trans/formative process. Furthermore, Raya recounts that her dialogue with Aida Touma-Suleiman[130] is part of her self-formation and feminist self-formation. Raya does not think she needs to mention Aida's surname, as she takes it for granted that I know her:

Within 'Women against Violence'[131] I had a very interesting dynamic with Aida I learnt a lot from her but I also always had something to say to her, and I managed to say it.

> *TD: There was place for critique*
>
> *Not always, but yes. The fact is that I managed to say things to her. So probably there was a little place for critique. So it was, all together, it is the whole thing together. I remember I gave birth to S', a month later I went to a sexuality course which I had registered myself to a few years earlier. I got to the course and then: "each say your name and with what she comes today". So I said something like, "I feel my motherhood", and there were two Palestinian women, veterans, who gave birth 10 or 20 years earlier, they said "you have just said", I can remember their reaction, "you have just said a whole theory concerning oppression of women from motherhood".*

130 Aida Touma-Suleiman is one of the founding members of the organization Women againsts Violence, and was at the time of the interview with Raya the general director of the organization.

131 "The organization 'Women Against Violence' was established in 1993. It is a feminist organization for social change that works for the advancement of the status of the Arab women in Israel, the organization operates a support centre for victims of physical and sexual violence in Natherath." Accessed on December 12, 2016, http://nazareth.thebeehive.org/he/content/716/1732 (Hebrew)

It's like they said it with a lot of admiration. (Raya, general director of a Jewish-Palestinian educational organization, Haifa, 2013)

Raya is active within the Palestinian feminist circles. Her daughter was born in the midst of her participation in one of the central Palestinian feminist organizations. It seems "natural" to Raya to bring her motherhood within a feminist environment working on sexuality. It is only in the encounter and dialogue with those she calls *veterans* that she realizes that there is something at stake. Raya did not elaborate what she meant by veterans, but during the interview there was a non-spoken understanding that she is referring to women who have been involved within Palestinian feminist activism for many years and have a long experience.

The veteran women of the group admire Raya's capacity to propose a complex reading of her position. It would be interesting to analyze Raya's account through reading hooks (1994, 2000), on radical feminism on one hand, and Zahra Ali (2013) on Islamic feminism, on the other hand.

Both hooks (1994, 2000) and Ali (2013) suggest that oppressed women develop their feminist tasks from within the struggle. Furthermore, both authors call to separate the feminist debate from contemporary orientalist and racist discourses that are so often inherited within hegemonic feminist structures. In a conference on decolonizing feminism, Ali (2012) argues, that contemporary racism and (post)colonial orientalism have made it seem impossible to put together the two terms: "Islamic" and feminist". Furthermore, she argues that Islamic feminists are found dealing with the imbrication of feminism and Islam. They are critical of Eurocentric standpoints and call against occidental models of feminism. These models are presented as universal models of feminism, but in reality they are relevant and speak mostly to white, middle class, occidental women who consider themselves laic, or secular.

As we have seen earlier concerning Arabness and Mizrahiness, Occidental feminists gaze at Islam as backwards and non-modern and therefore Islamic women are looked down at by these same feminists. As part of the same struggle Islamic feminists criticize the masculine sexist point of view of Islamic jurisprudence that conceals the role women have been taking in emancipatory struggles and development of knowledge from within the Islamic world. As in Black and Mizrahi Feminist epistemology, Islamic feminism, does not read the oppressions to which Muslim women are subjugated in the (post)colonial present as in terms of choice.

The reading of reality lies within the imbrication, the entanglements of racist oppression as Muslim women, and sexist oppression as women within patriarchal societies and cultures (Ali, 2012).

Along the same line of thought, hooks (1984, 1994) challenges the institutionalized definitions of "woman" and/or "feminist". She argues that so often these terms are defined by academics and intellectuals who are mostly white, middle class women, consequently the experience of black women, women of color, racially-sexualized women are not part of these definitions. Furthermore, hooks (ibid.) calls for the definitions of these terms to emerge from the experience of the oppressed women, attempting to name their world and their antisexist struggle, which is, in her mind, the real definition of feminism.

Let us then go back to Raya, it seems that Raya's emancipation project is connected to her motherhood experience and performance. Her veteran counterparts are impressed by her capacity to give place to her everyday struggle as a mother within her struggle in a feminist, political space. Their astonishment leads us to wonder whether their experience of feminism was different. Perhaps as Palestinian feminists struggling from within the state of Israel, their ability to name their womanhood and feminism was overshadowed by the Israeli Ashkenazi hegemonic feminist discourse.

In the following account Raya reveals the tensions she experiences:

> *I have a hard time with injustice. It is hard for me to see someone suffering and that I can't, I don't choose to help him. I can't choose. I don't have this option. It is a burden and it can come on the expense of the girls. I guess I run to all the other things because it is hardest for me in motherhood. (Raya, general director of a Jewish-Palestinian educational organization, Haifa, 2013)*

Her strong sense of injustice comes *at the expense of the girls,* she recounts. Raya seems to feel that her activism and her feminist will that refuses to turn away, in Ahmed's (2010) words, is a price her daughters have to pay. Raya challenges an essentialist gaze at motherhood (Scott, 2011) when she reveals her incertitude in her motherhood performance. Motherhood does not come natural to Raya. Her account of herself as a mother leads her to ask questions and wonder whether she is performing her role in the best way possible for her.

Her self-reflexivity leads her to recount that performing motherhood is harder for her than

struggling against injustice in the public sphere. Through the reading of Hill Collins (1991) I suggest to look at the way Raya relates to her motherhood as dynamic and dialectical. There are no "easy answers" for Raya, as she is ambivalent and reflexive toward her position. On the one hand, motherhood plays an important role in her feminist and political development of knowledge and on the other, she seems to think that political life, when fighting injustice, makes her drift away from her motherly role to the extent that she feels that her daughters pay the price.

Raya's account illustrates that when one is engaged in the process of liberation, whether from an oppressed or an oppressor position, one can no longer hold a passive stance towards violence and injustice and necessarily steps into a stance of responsibility (Freire, 1970; Butler, 2012). In the following account Shira would like to take responsibility and criticizes the non-dialectical gaze at reality. Furthermore, she is determined to take responsibility through praxis:

> *I want to find here a better reality, and today it is even stronger, I want to create a better reality for my daughter. I feel it is our responsibility to create this reality, this is one of the reasons I am going back to Tarabut[132]. It is coming from there; it is coming from the place of feeling the importance during this last period. I am not just a mother I am a single mother. (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013)*

Shira's process towards responsibility is led by her life experience. It seems that, similar to Adi, motherhood, and her position as a single mother in particular, is a stance that drives her to act in order to change the world in which she lives and in which she would like her child to grow. The epistemological standpoint of critical pedagogy does not separate the learning process from the experience of the subject. The possibility for a critical education emerges out of life experience, frames and historical context and is directed to create change from within.

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132 Tarabut in Arabic and Hithabrut in Hebrew both mean connecting and/or connection. Tarabut-Hithabrut is a joint Arab-Jewish social movement that promotes encounters, through grassroots actions, between precarious subjects, namely Palestinians and Mizrahi-Jews: "From a colonial to an equal and democratic society. Israel is a colonial society. It was designed as a result of a complex historical process, of which one of its principle powers, however not the only, was the colonial project led by the Zionist movement, under the patronage of the western empires. All aspects of life are affected by the colonial character of Israeli society. This colonial character: crumbles the migrant communities and condemns them to constant conflict with the Palestinians, the indigenous dispossessed of the land; it offers Jews temporary fragile privileges instead of equal acknowledged rights for all [...]" Accessed on December 7, 2016:

Tarabut-Hithabrut 'Document of Principles' http://www.tarabut.info/en/articles/article/about/

In *The Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire (1994) asks to bind praxis a political action directed towards changing reality, and educational processes, which intertwine educational liberation with socio-economic political liberation. In this sense Shira is aware that her experience as a mother and in particular a single mother positions her in a specific socio-political space and temporality. It is from this space that she seeks to act. In hooks' (1990a) terms Shira's marginal position as a single mother, trans/forms to a site of resistance. From her critical analysis of reality and her radical consciousness, she chooses radical praxis. Shira frames her action within a political context.

Shira engages into, in Freire's (1970) terms, a true educational process, which is a liberating one, as she becomes an active subject that has developed a critical consciousness in reference to the reality surrounding her (Shor and Freire, 1987; Hasbrook, 2002; Freire, 1989; hooks, 1994, 2003).

Education, Freire argues: "[…] as the practice of freedom - as opposed to education as the practice of domination - denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people" (Freire, 1970, [2000, p.81]).

Shira's new position as a mother, and her precarious position as a single mother, strengthens her feminist will which is driven from motherhood.

Shira clearly chooses to mention that her activism is directed towards her participation within the movement Tarabut. Shira chooses to participate in a movement that is a joint Jewish Palestinian movement. Her wish to make the world a better place for her daughter is interconnected with the need to create a genuine cohabitation between Israelis Jews and Palestinians. Shira, as Raya refers to her motherhood as a site of action rather than as an essentialist gendered position (Scott, 2011).

Building Identity through a Radical Encounter

The first step of liberation from colonial consciousness is recounted by Adi as the process of understanding her position as a Mizrahi woman who is subjugated to multiple oppressions within the Israeli formation and within her own home and family. Her acts of liberation

position her to perform as an active agent within this reality. Nevertheless, within the Israeli colonial formation, Adi is furthermore confronted with her position as an oppressor. This transnational stance appears to be yet another step within the construction of a radical reading of reality. By confronting the Israeli Zionist hegemony and her position as an oppressor towards her Palestinian counterparts in the feminist groups and platforms, she is able to see the way in which the categories of nation and race play a role in the matrix of domination.

First Mizrahi feminism and then political consciousness, Adi argues when elaborating her process of liberation from colonial consciousness. While developing a feminist radical identity is political, as it confronts power dynamics and understands the connection between personal experiences and political agenda, Adi differentiates the so called political consciousness from the Mizrahi feminist one. Within the Israeli discourse, when referring to the political struggle, one often refers to the Israeli occupation, settler colonialism, and thus the confrontation with Zionist hegemony (Dor and Weksler, 2012).

For Adi liberating herself from colonial consciousness is necessarily first constructing a radical Mizrahi and Mizrahi feminist consciousness and only later she can engage in the struggle against Zionism and in her case direct activism against the Israeli occupation. Along the same line, Shira, when reconnecting herself to Arabness and thus liberating herself from colonial consciousness, recounts: As a Mizrahi woman, let's say as a Jewish woman when confronting Palestinians, in this discourse I end up to blame. (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013)

To blame, is likely to refer to her position as an oppressor. As she mentions, she is part of the dominant collective oppressing Palestinians. This is a new position for Shira, as until that day, within Israeli hegemony she often found herself in the position of the oppressed. Here Shira is determined to develop a complex understanding that could lead her in Butler's (2005) terms to acts of responsibility.

Speaking from the standpoint of a Mizrahi woman, Shira realizes that within a radical encounter with Palestinians, her position transforms her from an oppressed to an oppressor. Shiran (2007) argues that for a Mizrahi woman to develop a critical consciousness it is bound up with the understanding of one's own oppressor position in front of the Arab-Palestinian minority within the Israeli state and furthermore, in relation to the Palestinians who live under military occupation in the West-Bank and Gaza (ibid.).

When in radical encounters with Palestinians, Shira is eager to go further in her own understanding of self and is confronted with the difficulty of her position as the oppressor. Paradoxically this complex position of oppressed-oppressor could be seen in parallel to white feminist consciousness. The white woman's challenge, drawing from Hill Collins (2000), is to develop an awareness which acknowledges the privileges of her skin color while struggling against gendered oppressions.

In this sense, it seems that radical encounters with Palestinians, encounters that include a critical dialogue and profound self-reflection allow Jewish-Israeli woman and Mizrahi women in particular to construct a radical reading that includes the imbrication of nation and race within the matrix of gender, sexuality, class and ethnicity. Both Shira and Adi are aware of the imbrication of their oppressions as Mizrahi women. It appears that the feminist platforms that encourage feminist radical encounters enable the building of an important feminist discourse between Palestinian and Mizrahi women, and we shall see later, Ashkenazi women as well.

Adi and Shira take their activism steps further when insisting on a complex analysis of reality. Encountering Palestinians came as a second step in their self-reflective process. When confronting Zionism and Israeli-colonial formation, they were already empowered and clear about their Mizrahiness and Mizrahi feminist account of self.

Like Adi and Shira, Esther is also placing herself in an anti-racist (Shohat, 1994; hooks, 1981, 1984; Lorde, 1997; Guénif-Souilamas and Macé, 2004) and transnational context (Hill Collins, 2000; Yuvan-Davis, 1997) when she recounts: It was no longer possible during the second Intifada to stand behind this contradiction. (Esther, feminist, political activist)

The Feminist circles, in which Esther was active, were filled with the Zionist ethos that was often identified with the so-called Israeli Left. The Israeli feminist agenda was developed within a liberal-capitalist context, holding a Western-European or North American secular perspective (Dahan-Kalev, 2001). According to Esther the feminist groups, in which she was involved, did not have to deal with a radical stance until the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada. The Palestinian uprising forced her and the organization to go further in their liberation process from colonial consciousness to a radical stance. Her radical stance will lead Esther and the group to a new praxis of action to change.

It seems that the second Palestinian Intifada was a moment of truth for Esther, as it was, according to Shiran (2007), for feminism in Israel in general. It was clear that it was no longer

possible to ignore the oppression of Palestinians within the Israeli State and the occupied territories. The thought and actions towards building a new world while occupying others is doomed to failure, she insists.

Earlier in the chapter, I sought to show the way in which Mizrahi Feminism and Mizrahi Feminist thought has been influencing the consciousness trans/formation of several participants in this research. In a process of liberation from colonial consciousness within the Israeli matrix of domination, the participants of this research show that the complex and critical gaze developed by Mizrahi Feminism is essential within their learning process of change. This process was also brought out strongly in an earlier research. In the following account, Yardena recounts the way in which her own understanding of self, and of her position within the matrix of domination plays an important role within her transformation processes to a liberated consciousness of free mind.

> *TD: You mentioned before that you developed a more critical way of thinking, more precisely that more a critical thought about questions of exclusion was developed. Could you elaborate?*

> *Critical of what? First of all of myself, the understanding, that my blind spots… my own understanding as hegemonic. I told you it started with the issue of Mizrahiyot (Oriental women), continued to Arab and later Palestinian women. That is the criticism. And also self-criticism and also [ahhhhhh] of Zionism. That is to say, I accepted Zionism as commonsense, the love of the land was Zionism, and then suddenly I looked at the term Zionism and criticized it, I understood that there is oppression here. I understood that there is an occupier-occupied relation here, I understood that there is no regard for the other. (Yardena, feminist political actor, interviewed in Carmiel, 2009)*

Yardena details her trans/formation process. In her own words she elaborates on what it means to become critical and the way in which she takes action. Her account holds an evaluative character. It seems that Yardena had to first understand her own position within the matrix of domination. Understanding herself as hegemonic is recounted at a crucial moment of change yet a difficult one. Earlier in the research Yardena recounts the hardship to encounter her own image as an oppressor. This radical encounter with self leads her to question everything she grew up on, even Zionism, which was for her the basis of 'all-good'.

Yardena understands her hegemonic position, first through radical encounters with Mizrahiyot (oriental women), and then Palestinian women. Understanding their position within the matrix of domination enables a critical analysis of reality. Yardena takes us to the importance of understanding identity within a critical analysis of relations of power. However, identity is seen from a radical feminist perspective and as a position and standpoint rather than as an essential characteristic.

When Yardena says that becoming critical or developing a critical gaze entails understanding her blind spots, I understand that before her trans/formation she could not envision either her own identity or those of the Mizrahi and Palestinian women as relevant to the understanding of reality as a whole. Becoming critical entails developing an oppositional gaze, as referred to in Chapter One, to Zionism. As Hila and Shira, Yardena also associated Zionism with love, and love for the land. Developing a gaze that would liberate her from her blindness necessitates not only criticizing herself, but also and mostly Zionism and deconstructing the commonsense that follows.

In the following account, Esther develops the importance of the constructed feminist platforms with which she sought to tackle questions of identity:

> *This process of raising awareness is very slow and hard because you are separating from your alleged community. Alleged because are all Jews a community? Of course not! The process within feminism also helped me understand that. During the 1990s we were very busy with identity, the issue of identity politics, ok? Suddenly you separate from your community in any case. The Mizrahi women blame the Ashkenazi that they are oppressors, so you have to separate from your Ashkenazi imaginary community, because it is an oppressing one, you don't want to be part of it [...] and then you understand that the society is a thousand times more complex. (Esther, feminist, political activist)*

Esther's account illustrates that feminism tout court is not enough for a radical stance and that furthermore feminist circles could be platforms of oppression. In her process of liberation towards free mind Esther builds her definition of self. Within the matrix of domination she is confronted with her belonging to different imaginary communities: Jewish, Ashkenazi, feminist.

At this point in Esther's process, identity is no longer seen as a non-political stance of

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binary categories, but rather as a dialectic relation within a hegemonic and historical context. Esther recounts that during the 1990s, she and her feminist counterparts were influenced by the politics of identity. My understanding is that at the time it was an important, perhaps revolutionary analytical tool to analyze the world around her, yet that critical dialogue and development of consciousness led her to think that the discourse has to go further. Esther wishes to go beyond, what Sa'ar (2005) calls a liberal hegemonic feminism discourse that reproduces colonial structures.

The reproduction of the discourse, defines in a simplistic and perhaps essentialist way what it meant to be Ashkenazi, or in other words, white. Esther seeks for the possibility to politically read herself, or in other words, read and gaze at her body and performance within the Israeli context (Rich, 1986).

Esther would like to think outside the fixed cultural categories of the politics of identity (Sa'ar, 2005). Her discourse is clearly influenced by her direct encounter with the radical Mizrahi epistemology (Shohat, 1988, 1992, 1997, 2003). The radical Mizrahi epistemology, and the feminist Mizrahi epistemology to be more precise, had a large influence on the consciousness of many political actors within the state of Israel.

Whilst the 'separation' seems to be a difficult task, Esther is obliged to deconstruct her Ashkenazi performance in order to free herself. The encounters within feminist circles challenged by the radical Mizrahi discourse were safe platforms of dialogue (hooks, 2003) in which Esther could learn about herself and position herself within the struggle. From this stance towards radical consciousness liberation and free mind she wishes to answer the call of Mizrahi feminists which offers the possibility for Ashkenazi women to abandon liberal hegemonic feminism and join the struggle. This is the construction of a radical Mizrahi consciousness of an Ashkenazi woman who has chosen to "stand and struggle side by side" (hooks, 1990, p.340) and has consequently chosen to move "from silence into speech" (ibid.).

Along the same line, Lorde (1984) calls for coalition building between radical subjects who define the struggle together and share the same goals. This is an important step in creating new knowledge and acting radical praxis. The differences, Lorde (ibid.) argues, are not to be erased but the possibility to stand side by side and struggle together, is an important praxis of change. This is what Freire (1970) refers to as solidarity building between the oppressed and the oppressor who are able to equally name the world in order to change it.

Esther's feminist political discourse transformed throughout her process. Within the liberal feminist discourse the goal was clearly to be accepted and become part of the center. Within her new radical discourse she is reclaiming acceptance from the margin as a place of resistance (hooks, 1990). Furthermore, rather than talking about the Other, rather than asking the Other to speak her pain (ibid.), Esther wants to speak to and work with partners. Esther would like to answer the call of Mizrahi feminists and be, in hooks' words, invited to the margin as a place of resistance and be a partner in the struggle in order to break the colonizer/colonized categories (ibid.).

Esther refuses to perform oppression. The feminist discourse, to which she was familiar, was able to deconstruct, according to Shohat (2002) gender-based essentialism. However, Esther realized that within these same feminist discourses, the questions of ethnicity, race and culture were analyzed through the same essentialist gaze the hegemonic feminist discourse sought to challenge (ibid.). Shohat (ibid.) argues that the essentialist gaze at Mizrahi women, within the Israeli context, is drawn from Eurocentric hierarchical discourses. Esther would like to create feminist circles that challenge both gender and ethnic essentialist discourse.

Earlier in Chapter One, we saw that her doubting and questioning of the colonial ideologies of Zionism lead Esther's liberation process away from colonial consciousness. She realizes that being part of the Ashkenazi group, as a social performance, is performing Western superiority. In her account, Esther further highlights the impact of the representation policy, - or "the four quarters" as she says - has had on her consciousness. Esther was active during these formative years of the feminist movement. With a critical gaze and a self-reflexive analysis she recounts:

> *(Today we know that) it is not only four quarters as we tried to say then. From the first moment we knew it was imaginary, there are old women and women with disabilities, and Ethiopians, there is no end to it. What can we put all Ashkenazis together in one box? Are they all the same? Was there no oppression of Ashkenazis? Are Irakis like Moroccans? Are lesbians the same as bi-sexuals? Or trans? Well at that time we didn't even know about their (Trans) existence. So all these things also transformed my consciousness because suddenly you see the reality is much more complex. Hearing stories from Mizrahi women, feelings of shame of having Arabic music at home. (Esther, feminist, political activist)*

In Esther's account we observe the importance of the 'equal representation' system, or in her words, the *four quarters* principle[133] in her own process. Furthermore, we understand that it was a formative praxis for the feminist discourse as a whole. In this sense, it was an oppositional knowledge that constructed self-definition and shaped the radical Mizrahi feminist struggle. Esther highlights the dynamic character of the development of her consciousness. Therefore, she recognizes that without the identity politics developed by Mizrahi feminists, she would not have reached the radical consciousness and praxis, in which she is today. However, Esther's account illustrates that even the four quarters principle risks framing, and thus simplifying, a complex analysis of oppressions. In her words the oppressions are often more than nation, ethnicity, gender, and sexual preferences. From her experience, the imbrication of oppression is further, class, sexuality, age and more. Furthermore, she highlights that within each category one must hold a complex understanding of oppression.

Within Mizrahi feminist literature (Motzafi-Haller, 2001; Shiran, 1993, 2007) we understand that at first, the initial idea was to create a system that provides space for the representing identities: Jewish Ashkenazi, Jewish Mizrahi and Palestinian. When this proposition was made, the lesbian feminist groups demanded to transform this practice into what they called four quarters principle rather than a triangular one. Motzafi-Haller (2001) and Shiran (2007) have shown that Mizrahi and Palestinian women were then faced with a dilemma, as very often the lesbian participant was Ashkenazi. The western terminology and practice task of coming-out as lesbian is alien to Mizrahi families and life structure. Therefore, many Mizrahi lesbians lead a double life. Those who do choose to confront their families do not come-out with abstract declarations but rather live their life and let the facts talk for themselves. Palestinian and Mizrahi lesbians often had to find their own 'spaces of freedom' but yet again did not find their representation within the large feminist movement (Mishali, 2009).

In Shohat's (2006) sense, the "quarter" representation model addressed issues of male oppression from within each represented community. What the model thus lacked was a place where women could dialogue the tensions and relations of domination present between all the

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133 Viki Shiran (1993, 2007) was the one to initiate the 'equal representation' system. Her initial idea was to create a system that provides space for the representing identities: Jewish Ashkenazi, Jewish Mizrahi and Palestinian. When this proposition was made, the lesbian feminist groups demanded to transform this practice into what they called four quarters principle rather than a triangular one.

women at the conference. In this sense, Shoaht's call, I argue, seeks for a feminist self-reflexive agenda, which promotes an account of one's own performance within the relations of power.

Drawing from Esther's account, while marking an important radical feminist praxis the four quarters principle did not answer the needs of many Queer, Mizrahi and Palestinian woman. However, one can clearly observe that these feminist political actions and conferences, which changed the institutional feminist platforms, were spaces for radical encounters and the development of further complex and radical Mizrahi scholarship and praxis. It is interesting to notice that while insisting on a complex reading of feminist conditions, Esther goes back to the importance of encountering Mizrahi women. In her last sentence, she highlights that the understanding of the condition of her Mizrahi counterparts within the radical feminist circles, is an important moment of truth in her own understanding of her Ashkenazi position within the Israeli colonial matrix of domination.

In an earlier reseach, Sara highlighted the impact of the feminist conferences on consciousness trans/formation, in a previous research. She mentions a particular person who was central in her process of learning, Tikva Levi[134], who seems to have had an important influence on Sara's trans/formation of consciousness.

> *Without her even knowing, Tikva Levi was like a lighting candle in my life, she lit a lot, a lot, a lot of things with her questions, with the pearls she put in front of me, with the road signs she created in my life, she lit up my thought, she gave me material to think about, I remember her sentences, it is not from profound talks she threw out to the air, they provoked my thought, not with the intention to direct me. (Sara, Jerusalem, 2009)*

The way in which Sara speaks about Tikva Levi positions her as a person who was central within Sara's own process of sense making. When Sara says *not from profound talks but from sentences* we can infer that her praxis through a daily critical dialogue changed Sara's life.

When Tikva suggests to Sara to be part of the feminist conference, it seems to have a

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134 Tikva Levi, was a central Mizrahi feminist activist who was engaged in the struggle, for equal and just education particularly during the years that she directed the organization 'Hila'. Tikva Levi's political agenda promoted a discourse that worked towards the understanding of the interlock of oppression of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and nation.

significant impact:

And then we decide to initiate a conference just for us; Mizrahiyot (Mizrahi women), Palestinian and critically conscious Ashkenazi women. And then my awareness got developed. (Sara, Jerusalem, 2009)

Sara lays the development of her consciousness on the feminist conference. It seems that she experienced, at this venue, a dialogue that was critical and empowering. A dialogue that gave room to her own knowledge as an oppressed woman, yet allowed the possibility to listen to other oppressions and understand reality through what Kergoat (2009) calls a consubstantial gaze.

Within a historiographic view of the development of feminism and the feminist movement in Israel Sachs and Safran (2007) claim that while the feminist conferences were taking place during the 1990's, Palestinian women and feminists started their own organizations and projects. The feminist conference, according to them, was the only genuine feminist space where individuals and organizations could gather and discuss a feminist agenda. The conference filled the lack of a powerful and important feminist movement within the State of Israel (ibid.).

The Feminist conference is where the 'equal representation' concept was evoked according to Sachs and Safran (2007). It was first implemented during the 1992 feminist conference in which 300 women participated (ibid.). The 'equal representation' or the *four quarters* was an important new knowledge and praxis driven by some Mizrahi feminist scholars. Viki Shiran (2007), in her groundbreaking text, "Deciphering the Power, Creating a New World", particularly advocated for the 'equal representation' model. She argued that the four quarters equal representation is an appropriate political agenda, which calls for the presence of a Palestinian-Israeli, a Mizrahi-Jew, an Ashkenazi-Jew and a Lesbian woman in every feminist action or conference.

The Ashkenazi women and the Anglo-Saxon, in particular, led the traditional Israeli feminist groups and organizations. The yearly feminist conference of 1991 was a turning point within the feminist discourse in Israel. It was a moment where Ashkenazi feminists could no longer ignore the existence of other feminist voices. In 1991 Mizrahi women refused to perform as tokens and demanded a relative representation for each one of the three major groups within the Israeli state: Palestinian, Mizrahi and Ashkenazi women. During the same

time, the feminist conference and its organizers were furthermore obliged to look at the Zionist colonial question, within the intersection of the matrix of domination. In 1994 the Mizrahi feminists demanded that their lesbian sisters be included in this representation. To this day actions within feminist circles outside Academia are led by the concept of Four Quarters: Mizrahi, Palestinian, Lesbian and Ashkenazi women (Lavie, 2011).

With a fifteen-year perspective, Sachs and Safran (2007) claim that the 'quarters' policy' was important for the development of the feminist agenda, which resulted (had developed) in Israel. In 1993, the quarter policy was introduced for the second time. An important debate took place during this conference where Mizrahi and Palestinian women got to profoundly discuss their multiple experiences of oppressions. For the Palestinian women, the encounter generated a complex understanding that within the majority group, the Jewish women, ethnic oppression was already divisive as there were two groups. Furthermore, the Palestinian women insisted on bringing out the question of language and refused that Hebrew be an automatic choice. Their discourse brought to the forefront their Arabic mother tongue. Later in 1996, Mizrahi feminists decided to create their own feminist space in which they could safely address issues relevant to their own life experience (ibid.).

Along the same line, which critiques the feminist conferences, Shohat (1996) critically gazes at the tenth women's conference that took place in 1994. Her argument is centered on the importance of creating a multicultural Mizrahi agenda that is bound up with an international left political vision. Such an agenda is concerned with a feminist thought that is bound up, in Shohat's (2006) sense, with an interlaced connection, the one that identifies the Mizrahi and Palestinian broad critique of Euro-Zionist hegemony.

The radical encounter with Tikva Levi seems to include the possibility for Sara to question her own construction of identity and positionality within the Israeli Zionist social formation. Sara goes back to speak about the feminist conference. In her account we can notice that she still feels lonely:

> *There was a conference in which I participated, it was organized, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, and I did not even know what the quarter was […] Lesbians, Ashkenazi women, Mizrahyot (Mizrahi women) and Palestinian women, we were supposed to attack Zionism each one from her angle. I had to talk from the welfare point of view, they were all Ashkenazi and I was the only Mizrahi and I asked them;*

what is Zionism? I was embarrassed but I did not know what Zionism was and they did not know how to define it for me exactly and they are trying to talk to me on eye level and I live in Pisgat Ze'ev[135] in a settlement and they come to visit me there and I'm astounded to discover that I live in a settlement, I was 23 years old, they came to my house and I started to apologize [...] (Sara, Jerusalem, 2009)

Sara is lonely, she dares to ask: *What is Zionism?* her courage makes present the relations of power within the group and the conference. While she is the only one to ask, no one else knows how to answer. Sara challenges her community of learning through her own trans/formation process. To be precise she challenges the hegemonic discourse and commonsense, which is not questioned and thus taken for granted.

In 1996, Shohat published a text that critically gazes at the feminist conferences and at the one of 1993, in particular. She shows that Tikva Levi, who led the organization "Hila", at the time, was the one to open the doors of the conference to Mizrahi women from excluded and disempowered neighborhoods.

"Mizrahi women, who rarely even attended the women's conferences came in major numbers to the 9th and 10th conferences, thanks, largely to the organization of 'Hila'. The critique of Zionism cannot be separated from the critique of Eurocentrism, whereby world cultures are expected to erase their history, language, and identity in favor of a presumably superior history, language, and identity. The definition of Israel has meant the dispossession, in very different ways, of Palestinians and Mizrahim" (Shohat, 1996, p.22).

Sara recounts that she was 23 years old and living in the settlement *Pisgat Ze'ev.* Until the day Sara encounters her feminist partners in the struggle, she does not realize that she is living in a settlement[136]. More specifically, her experience of living in *Pisgat Ze'ev*, clearly structured by Israeli commonsense, is that of a neighborhood of Jerusalem. Sara learns that her home space is not what she thought it was. However, living in *Pisgat Ze'ev* is moreover an economic position. The Adva[137] analysis center has shown that throughout the years, the

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135 A Jewish-Israeli settlement built on Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 yet considered a neighborhood of Jerusalem.

136 A settlement refers to the Jewish villages, outposts and cities that are situated beyond the green line, and thus in the West Bank, or Gaza (until 2005).

137 The Adva is a "policy analysis institute whose mandate is to examine Israeli society from the perspective of equality and social justice. Adva's studies of Israeli society present critical analyses of public policy in the areas of budgets, taxation and social services – education, health, housing, social security and welfare and

settlements are considered by the Israeli state as a national priority zone. This consideration allows individuals from poor and disempowered communities to have a higher standard of living. Housing, education and all aspects of life were improved when leaving marginal communities and moving to big settlement such as Pisgat Ze'ev.

The 'equal representation' concept, initiated by Shiran (2007) and first implemented in the feminist conference of 1992, had an important impact on Sara's consciousness. Within this division, Sara recounts that her 'place' was to talk about welfare, thus the entanglement of economical questions within the feminist question of relations of power. Within this same structure, Sara also gets to meet Palestinian women; it seems for the first time.

"The question whether I was a Jew or a Palestinian"

TD: You are not totally the Kibbutznik and not totally the lesbian

Yes! [Ahh] and Mizrahiness, that is where I had a consciousness awakening on this subject, before that the issue didn't occupy me at all.

TD: What happened?

An internal Kvisati critical discourse about the Ashkenazi elite within the group, the attempts to connect it to a broader social agenda. (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012)

Moshe recounts that an internal self-reflexive praxis within Kvisa Shchora[138] was what trans/formed his consciousness and what allowed him to understand his own Mizrahi story. As for Adi and Shira, positioning himself as a Mizrahi, is an awakening stance. The understanding of the construction of the Ashkenazi elite and the possibility to tie it to a larger social agenda is what he recounts as crucial in his process. He continues:

(My) connection to a lot of Mizrahi girl-friends in Kvisa. […] ahh […] playing with

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transportation – including their implications for Israeli society as a whole and for each of its major social groups." http://adva.org/en/about/

138 In 2001 the queer political activist group Kvisa Shchora, which literally means Black Laundry in Hebrew, was established. At the time they defined themselves, as "lesbians, gays, and transgenders against that occupation and for social justice" (Ziv, 2008)

identities, with my names, in fact pooling all the limits of identity of which I could think. (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012)

Moshe's encounters with Mizrahi women, within the political queer group Kvisa Shchora, are what connects him to the possibility to question identities. His own identities, seem to be something with which he can now play. The activism in Kvisa opens possibilities of taking identities to other directions, it is something dynamic and fluid that Moshe is now allowing himself to challenge.

The question whether I was a Jew or a Palestinian, I remember those sort of conversations (laugh). I remember Hanna Safran, Dalit Baom, Smadar Lavi, in this internal feminist discussion, internal lesbian in fact, of Women in Black, it was very exciting, "can we talk about Queerness without talking about the occupation?!" (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012)

Challenging essentialist politics of identities, he leads the group to open discussions that allow Moshe to question whether he is a Jew or a Palestinian. The possibility to deconstruct what seems to be the most obvious within the Israeli context means that it is now no longer taken for granted. The mere praxis of deconstructing, that which was taken for granted, is life changing for Moshe. Moshe does not reveal the "answers", as it seems that the life changing and trans/formative effect was more about the possibility to ask these kinds of questions than to disclose the answers he might have given at the time.

Moshe names three feminist activists who are known within the queer feminist activist scene. The critical encounter with Hannah Safran, Dalit Baom, Smadar Lavi has left an important impression on Moshe.

Moshe finds himself within internal feminist and even lesbian political groups that are willful to understand queerness within the context of the struggle against occupation. Moshe is accepted within these margins, he is not a lesbian, according to him, yet he is welcomed and included in the discussion and in a critical dialogue that seems to have transformed his consciousness.

In the following account Eitan recounts his own confrontation with his identities:

I see differently the Jewish and Arab relations

TD: How do you see them now?

It brought me into the Arab culture thing. It can be a huge thing, really huge.

TD: Arab-Jew?

Yes, the first Arab-Jew. Something hybrid. It is not a sub-culture, it is not a culture like, Jewish-Ashkenazi, "What kind of a Jew are you?" You are Jewish Ashkenazi, [ahh] ok. It is not Palestinian-Israeli, It is something hybrid, it is both, both a man and a woman, Queer!

These days I am a political educator, I deal with Jewish Arab dialogue groups and with other forms of dialogue of a joint society, the creation of a joint culture, I have an organiszation for Arabic langue studies. What we do mainly, is that we have Arab students who get scholarships to teach Arabic within Jewish schoold, we thought it was 'Mahapchani' (revolutionary). We suddenly realized that we are not only an organization of Arabic teaching but we are also an organization of young people, that barely exist in this country, who want to make a difference. Youngsters who also get a scholarship, also involved within the Jewish society, they have pertinent ideas, they are 18, or 19 years old. It is quite surprising. You understand that the Jewish society interests them.

TD: So the organization is Jewish but the students that come to teach are Palestinian?

Yes! Not Jewish, it's like the managers are Jewish, there are two managers, ahh we just brought in a teacher that teaches them how to teach. We taught them how to teach Arabic, without knowing really, it was amazing, it worked, in a certain way.

TD: Without you knowing Arabic?

We didn't know Arabic, but we knew how to teach, but we didn't know how to teach Arabic. The whole of last year we had a veteran teacher who taught them how to teach Arabic, it made a switch, suddenly we understood what is our place, it made some order.

TD: Do you know Arabic?

I learnt. I didn't know (before) I decided that it is important (Eitan, political educator, Tel Aviv, 2013)

Eitan's pedagogical work leads him to think of his own identity as hybrid. Earlier in the interview Eitan situates himself as an Ashkenazi man. He is aware that his gendered and ethnic positions place him within the hegemonic dominant group of the Israeli matrix of domination. Through his trans/formation process, he sees differently the binary identity categories of Jewish and Arab. More precisely, he would like to change the relations of power between the two.

Eitan wishes to perform queerness where he would like to deconstruct the binary categories of man-woman, Arab-Jewish and Israeli-Palestinian. He reclaims an Arab-Jewish identity. Interestingly enough, Eitan does not relate to the large scholarship and development of knowledge that already exists within this field. He speaks about the hybrid identity of Arab-Jew as something new, something that he has to invent, while in effect, we have seen throughout the whole dissertation that it is a large field of knowledge that has been developed from the standpoint of Mizrahi political actors and scholars.

Eitan goes further in his quest for a queer identity when he understands that he is a man:

I participated in Ariela Fridman's course on relations between men and women. It was a powerful course, it was a powerful course, it was a powerful experience, it was really a powerful experience, I don't remember much of it, I can remember that it was a powerful experience. (Eitan, political educator, Tel Aviv, 2013)

At Tel Aviv University Eitan participates in a course on gender issues led by Ariela Fridman. He remembers this course as a powerful experience. However, he does not remember the details, he remembers that it trans/formed his consciousness. When I try to better understand what exactly happened within this course and its powerful effect he continues:

TD: What happened?

This story of identities, this story of [ahh] that you understand that you are composed of identities, something powerful, that suddenly you are a man! Well there is a sort of a manipulation, but suddenly you are a man, it is not […] it is hard! For me it is hard,

on the other hand, it encompasses a lot. (Eitan, political educator, Tel-Aviv, 2013)

Eitan recounts that he suddenly understood that he is a man. Working on questions of gender identities, and realizing that he is positioned as a man, rather than taking his manly identity as essential, is what shakes his whole awareness and consciousness.

In Butler's (1990, 1993) sense, when Eitan says he realizes he is a man, he does not suddenly choose to perform masculinity, it is more that he understands the power dynamics in which he performs his masculinity while he in fact acknowledges that his subjectification is through the matrix of gender. He thus understands the standpoint that is his in society. The question to ask is, appears to be, what are the relations of power between such categories? Rather than about the choice, assuming there is one.

Eitan continues to explain that to this day he is devoted to the work:

I still work on it, till today.

TD: On the fact that you are a man?

On the fact that it is hard, and that is contains a lot, and namely to try and make something out of it, it is hard work.

TD: Why is it hard?

[ahh] many things. It is the story of lust, [ahh] a kind of aggressivity, all kinds of these things that are amazing. So there is a lot of difficulty

TD. It seems this course really influenced your consciousness

Very much so, really influenced my consciousness. (Eitan, political educator, Tel Aviv, 2013)

Understanding himself to be a man takes Eitan to difficult questions. His account shows that he has to think while he speaks. The thoughts are still fresh and he is reflexive. Becoming a man for Eitan seems to be related to questions of lust and aggressivity: hard and disturbing acknowledgments. Eitan starts his account by speaking about transgressing Zionist binaries of ethnic and perhaps national identities. His account shows that transgressing Zionism is interconnected with questions of gender and sexual positionality.

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Eitan, as Moshe earlier in the research, enters processes that allow the possibility to transgress, in Yosef's (2004) sense, the new Jewish masculinity notion, which became the model for the Ashkenazi militarized masculine Israeli in an important anti-hegemonic performative act. Eitan shows that this is bound up with the reclaiming of a queer performance and in order to do so, one has to first alienate himself from what Yosef calls "Zionist phallic masculinity" (ibid., p.294). In his work Yosef (ibid.) argues that "Zionist phallic masculinity" is necessarily established through negating and alienating *the queer*.

It appears to me that Eitan now critically gazes at the construction of manhood by Zionist hegemony. Ziv (2013) contends, as I mentioned earlier, that Zionism had as a goal to restore the image of the Jewish man from the antiheroic scholar to the warrior. As we have shown earlier, the creation of the new Jew (man) is based on the gentile model of the warrior that is as distant as possible from any femininity and homosexuality images.

Earlier in the research, Hila recounts the need to wean herself from colonialism, which is in effect Zionism. In the following account Moshe refers to alienation as an active step in his process of trans/formation of consciousness. The alienation to which he refers is the distancing from the Israeli warrior image. The mechanism of war and militarization in Israeli society creates socialization processes in which young men and women develop masculine visions, which are expressed in terms of military concepts of superiority and power (Gor-Ziv, 2005). It is one of the main mechanisms employed to maintain existing hierarchies in which others rule certain groups.

On an everyday level, one walks by military bases situated in the heart of the big cities without a second thought. Furthermore, military phenomena in Israeli society are characterized by a large military presence. For example, there is a high military presence on the streets, former military occupying high political positions and political decisions leaning on military consultants. Consequently, cultural products are filled with military representations and subjects.

Weksler (2014) and Gor Ziv (2005) have shown that militarization processes hold an important role within the history of the Israeli educational system. This history is fundamentally related to hegemonic colonial patterns of the state (Weksler, 2014). Through the creation of the elite warrior solider, the army holds an important role within the Israeli socialization processes which include the construction of ethnic, gendered and class

categories (Shoshan Levi and Levi, 2005). The warrior soldier, vs. the non-combatant solider, holds a sacred image as he, in the commonsense representation, sacrifices his life for the nation (ibid.).

These representations have a clear gender division, which glorifies the 'warrior man' while expecting of women to perform as the symbol of home for which men fight (Minitz, 1990; Gor-Ziv, 2005). Furthermore, the warrior image of the Jewish-Israeli man, constructs the identity of those who do not take part within the military frame of the state (Shoshan Levi and Levi, 1990; Weksler, 2015). In this case, the first concerned are the Palestinians who are citizens of the State, yet we can also speak about Jewish-Israeli men who refuse to enlist, such as Moshe.

In the following account Moshe rejects manhood within these frameworks of military masculinity:

> *My identity got more and more constructed, I alienated myself from the place I come from, which means them (my parents).*
>
> *TD: Not the kibbutz?*
>
> *Yes (laughs) also the kibbutz, and by the way, I felt more and more that I am no longer part of this community, I understood more and more the connection of what Zionism is, (and) that I am not! The alienation from the image of the warrior soldier of the elite of Israeli society and suddenly in my position I represent something else. I feel great rejection from the men in the kibbutzim and shame and embarrassment for who and what I am. (Moshe, psychologist, Paris, 2012)*

Moshe describes a process of identity construction, which has brought him to alienate himself from what he considers to be home; first his parents and then the kibbutz. The kibbutz, which he considered his community, could no longer have that role in his life. Indeed even the frame of masculinity offered by the kibbutz became an alienating category to a point of rejection. The rejection referred to the image of the warrior, the masculine image of the kibbutz and of himself. Moshe describes harsh feelings of self-alienation.

It seems that to that point in his life, he was in coherence with his elite position within the kibbutz. Yet when he understands what Zionism is, he realizes that it no longer represents

him, in his words: "*I am not*". When he says: "*I represent something else*" I understand that he can no longer perform these masculine categories and feels rejection to the other men who represent this same military masculinity. We can understand that Moshe has taken an active choice to perform an alternative form of masculinity, a masculinity that will not lead him to shame and embarrassment, a masculinity with which he will be able to identify.

Consequently, giving up or going against Zionism, would immediately mean harming and betraying one's 'own people' and abandoning one's Jewish identity. Furthermore, within the Israeli militaristic commonsense, security depends upon Zionism and so does the existence of the Jewish State (Rose, 2005; Raz-Krakotzkin, 2007; Chetrit, 1999; Said, 1978, 1979; Shohat, 2006; Laor, 2007). In Moshe's account he transgresses the Zionist new Jewish masculinity notion, Moshe, through his transformative process, "queers" Zionism (Dor, 2010).

Yosef (2004) argues that performing the normative Israeli national subject requires identification with the Zionist *fantasm* of sexuality, an identification that takes place through rejecting the threatening spectacle of feminine maleness (ibid.). Being part of the kibbutz is being part of the Ashkenazi elite. Political Zionist discourse often describes the men warriors of the kibbutz as "The Salt of the Earth"[139]. Sasson-Levy (2005) shows that the different roles within the Israeli army not only hold a gendered difference but also an ethnic one. Most of the warrior soldier roles, highly respected within the Israeli society, are occupied by Ashkenazi men, while in most cases it is the Mizrahi men who occupy the non-warrior positions that are considered inferior. Furthermore, Mizrahi men occupy combat units that are mostly in daily confrontation with the Palestinian population, units that are considered within Israeli commonsense as *violent* rather than *heroic*.

Perhaps Moshe reclaims a queer performance and in order to do so, he has to first alienate himself from the Zionist phallic masculinity (Yosef, 2004, p.42). In his work Yosef argues

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139 "The salt of the earth has been through combat service, possibly the paratroopers, preferably a commando unit and, of course, an aviation squadron. The salt of the earth has never been discharged from the Israel Defense Forces. The salt of the earth lives in a rural community, a suburb or moshav, somewhere in the central region. Usually he is married to a woman who is also salt of the earth. Usually he's Ashkenazi. The salt of the earth is convinced he is a man of values. He votes for the center-left, with a preference for Yair Lapid, and he's for two states (but not now). The salt of the earth doesn't rant and rave. He speaks softly and pleasantly, as befitting his status. He is neither a racist nor an ultranationalist. He is the embodiment of Zionism. The salt of the earth has a short Hebrew name, his head is shaven, he engages in some extreme sport, likes hiking in the countryside and oozes complacency. He is always a volunteer in some organization." Gideon Levy July 11, 2015. Accessed March 23, 2016

http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.665500?date=1458731745069

that Zionist phallic masculinity is necessarily established through negating and alienating *the queer*. The warrior solider, to whom Moshe refers, is what Yosef describes as the national subject. This national subject *(homo)eroticizes* Mizrahi and Palestinian male others (ibid., p.1).

In Boyarin's work on Jewish masculinity we understand the construction of political Zionist masculinity as a form of assimilation "*in which Jews become like all nations, that is, like Aryans (Oedipus)*" (Boyarin, 1997, pp.274-276). This performance of what Boyarin calls Aryans, and what is defined within Israeli current sociology as Ashkenazi, is what Moshe rejects. Perhaps Moshe is reclaiming *effeminate* performance of the queer Jew yet rejects "*the "impotent"- queer - Jew who picked up the hat that the gentile threw down, thus signifying his passivity in the face of the virile Aryan.*" (ibid.)

Moshe and Eitan's accounts reveal their liberation process within that which Amit (2015) refers to as queer performances. In her research she argues that queer subjects are those who live outside the normative frames of time and space. In this sense, she claims that queerness should be thought of in a larger scope than the sexual one, but rather to describe all of those that perform precarious positions. Moshe's account about understanding himself as queer, is actually a performance of liberation. Queerness becomes a stance of creativity and a hope for creating a new world, perhaps. Along the same line, Eitan and earlier in Chapter Three Avi, seek their own queer performance that which greets alternative livelihood within the Israeli matrix of domination.

"National identity does get meaning[140]"

Earlier in the dissertation Imad recounts his liberation process from colonial consciousness as a process through which he deconstructs the hegemonic image of the Arab man. As for Moshe and Eitan, it seems that the gendered question of manhood is interconnected with questions of ethnicity, nation and race. In the following account, Imad reconstructs his Palestinian national identity:

When I was young, let's say I was 7 or 8, then also there were no television channels

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140 Ibtisam

for example, as cables today, so what we watched on the television, that was on the whole day, were Israeli programs, "Parpar Nehmad", "Rehov Sumsum", "Hopa Hey"[141] what do you call it? I can't remember. And most, most of my friends and people in my environment in which I lived, like lived with this, as if this was natural and like "we are Arab Israelis". We defined ourselves. This was the definition that the state gave us the state of Israel defined us as Arab Israelis. So you don't ask yourself, "are you Palestinians?" it's like when you define yourself as Arab Israeli, you are different from the Palestinian. It's like you don't have the Palestinian identity. (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)

Imad explains the construction of his Arab Israeli identity. It is important for him to explain to me that is was something that the State of Israel constructed in him rather than an identity that he created on his own. Funnily enough, earlier in the research when Adi recounts that as a young girl she thought her father was a Syrian spy, she also makes sure I understand that this is not her own invention but rather a hegemonic construction of thought.

Through numerous explanations Imad elucidates the way in which his whole surrounding had a similar identity construction. Imad insists that the frame was so rigid that there was no possibility to even question whether he was Palestinian:

TD: Did you compare yourself to Palestinians? Is it something you said "I am not Palestinian, I am [...]

No, it did not come to mind when I was young.

TD: The question didn't even [...]

Yes. No it didn't come to mind that I am Palestinian. For me, because my parents, and my environment, and school I went to, didn't speak about Palestine, there were no Palestinian festivals. But the word Palestine was there, here and there, in the Arab newspapers perhaps

TD: You heard about it but [...]

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141 "Parpar Nehmad", "Rehov Sumsum", "Hopa Hey" are classical television programs shown on the first Israeli channel.

Yes or on the Israeli news At 20:00 and always the word Palestinian was related to something in conflict, was related to something scary, something that is the enemy, something weird, something "somber"[142], how do we say somber (in Hebrew)?

TD: Hashuh (dark)?

Yes, dark. That you can't identify with it, and me, as a naïve child also accepted that which the authority transmitted to me, and I accept the commonsense, the authority in my case when I was young, was school. (Imad, film director, Paris, 2014)

Imad was not part of the Arab-Palestinian circles in which a Palestinian discourse was present. Unlike Ibtisam, who speaks about a strong Palestinian discourse at home, Imad is only exposed to an Israeli discourse about Palestinians, that which frames Palestinians as, in his words, dark and scary: an image from which he, as a young boy, preferred to distance himself. Imad's process of trans/formation is bound up with his reconnection to his Palestinian identity. As Raouda Morcos says, in an interview on her Palestinian lesbian activism, it seems that reclaiming Palestinian identity is a stance of liberation:

"My primary activism is that I want to say the word "Palestine" without being afraid of anyone […] when we were children we weren't even allowed to say the word 'Palestine' at school. At school we were forced to celebrate Israeli Independence Day."(Morcos, 2012-2013, p.59)

Imad recounts the way in which he, as a young child, interiorized the hegemonic commonsense which defined his identity. In his case, he says, the authority was school. In school he learnt about his identity, and he internalized that he was an Arab-Israeli. On the other hand, on Israeli television, the only available visual media to him, he learnt that he had to distance himself from the image of the *dark* Palestinian.

Hooks (1992) argues that her Black experience was not only constructed by the dominating group as being different, but it was furthermore formed by her own internalization of otherness within her own consciousness. Imad's experience could be looked at through the way in which Hall (1990) understands the trauma of the colonized subject. According to him, this experience conditioned by the understanding of domination and representation. The

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142 Sombre means dark in French

representation within Israeli commonsense of the Palestinian constructed an image to which Imad does not want to adhere.

In Hall's (1990) sense, Imad's account of his own construction of identity, through critically gazing at the way, in which his identity was formed, is a "becoming" process. Therefore, he recognizes that his Palestinian identity has a history and a political trajectory within a context of relations of power. Becoming Palestinian is for him a position within the historical context of colonial Israeliness rather than a construction of an essentialist identity.

Positioning themselves as two Palestinian women, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Sarah Ihmoud (2014) articulate the way in which their critical thought is drawn from their complex understating of their home deprivation. On the one hand, the creation of the State of Israel that led to the Palestinian Nakba in 1948, physically deprived, and continues to deprive them from a home. However, along the same line, they both acknowledge that their deprivation from home is further experienced on a human level. Their critical thought leads them to question the Eurocentric frames of ethics and of what is considered rational.

Developing a stance of critical thought, according to Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Ihmoud (2014) starts with understanding the way in which this deprivation constructed their identity as Palestinian women. Imad recounts a similar story. His own development of critical thinking is interconnected with the construction of a position image of self as a Palestinian, but furthermore, as I mentioned earlier in the research, it is also the construction of a positive representation of self as a Palestinian man.

Kholod recounts a similar life experience to that of Imad's. In her own family and in her own home, there was no talk about her Palestinian identity:

> *I did not come from a political family that directed and wanted it to happen. I think that my political, social and activist consciousness was developed by my own hard work. It's not as if I was born in Gaza or Ramallah now where you supposedly know who you are. It's to grow up, in a reality where you have Israeli citizenship, a blue ID card. When you look at the blue ID card, and look at yourself, you say, but how can that be? I am a Palestinian, and on the other hand I accept this document and I enjoy privileges. I don't reject those privileges. I take them and I use them. I live in this reality, but I also define myself as a Palestinian, then what am I? (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)*

Kholod recounts the work entailed to build her Palestinian identity. The work she has done was part of her activist life that constructed her political consciousness. She compares herself to Palestinians born in Gaza and Ramallah and, while she acknowledges that holding an Israeli Identity Card is a privilege, she argues that their Palestinian identity is far clearer to them. According to her, she has to work and invest a lot of effort in something that seems to be taken for granted for Palestinians from Gaza and Ramallah.

Kholod speaks about the color of her Identity Card. The fact that she holds a blue ID card is repeated several times. Her account illustrates the different documentations of Palestinians within Israeli colonial bureaucracy: "Hani, a Palestinian from East Jerusalem, is shoving the corners of his blue ID card between his teeth like an oversize toothpick; and I imagine his ID, too, is eyed with some jealousy or suspicion by those around us. Sana, who is from Jenin and lives in Ramallah, is thumbing her green ID card nervously. In her case, suspicious gazes would be radiating from the soldiers. Our friend Mazen, born in Gaza and living in the West Bank since the early 1990s, doesn't dare come with us—he avoids all check-points, whether those to enter Israel or the hundreds that separate one Palestinian area from another—for fear of being evicted to Gaza with his orange ID card in hand" (Tawil-Souri, 2011, pp.67-68)[143].

The author of this text elucidates in a vivid and clear way the experiences of three Palestinians who have to cross an Israeli military checkpoint. Their experience, through their possible, or non-possible, mobility, is defined by the color of their ID card. As in Kholod's account the color of the card holds an important role. The colors to which they all relate indicate the color of the plastic cover in which a white printed sheet of paper, issued by Israeli authorities, is placed. The various colors define the bureaucratic division to which Palestinians are subjugated (ibid.). Arab citizens of the State of Israel, as defined by the state, hold a blue Identity Card. Following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 residents of the West Bank, hold a green card, and residents of Gaza, hold orange cards (Tawil-Souri, 2011).

Kholod recounts her feelings of dissonance when looking at the color of her ID card. She continues:

> *So what do you get? There is a huge, emotional, psychological dissonance. It*

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143 In Annex One, Map III of Ocha (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) demonstrates the division of East Jerusalem. http://www.ochaopt.org/maps

continues a bit today. As if it is not easy just to say, I'm not Israeli, but what am I? If the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Palestinians in Gaza do not think I'm a Palestinian; if the Arab world think I'm a traitor? So what about the Palestinianess " of the Palestinians in Israel in relation to the other Palestinianess? Is it different? Should it be changed? And is it different? What is the connection to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza? And those who got out? First, second, third generation refugees, very difficult questions. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod is confronted with numerous questions. When trying to understand her Palestinian identity, she wonders about her relation to other Palestinians who, it seems, have more legitimacy to reclaim their *Palestinianess* than her.

Kholod's work seems to involve liberating herself from what she calls a *huge psychological, emotional dissonance.* Her account shows that her Palestinian identity is defined differently on many fronts. In front of the Israeli society, she is considered an Arab-Israeli and has to resist this affiliation and reclaim her Palestinian identity. However, Kholod recounts that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza do not relate to her as Palestinian either. Her emotional condition is further affected when she recounts that the Arabs, from the Arab countries, gaze at her as a traitor.

TD: Did you always have those questions or did they come later?

They came later [...] ahh [...] but the question of who I am, with respect to the blue ID card, has always been. It has simply always been. In 12th grade class, once I got it, I had to carry it everywhere. It was always there. But [...] like contact with other Palestinians and see my "Palestinianess" as a different legitimate pattern of Palestinianess, which does not contradict and reject any other Palestinian identity. It's really really very hard! Especially given the discourse, which continuously accuses us of treason and treachery. Oh, of course, as soon as I became acquainted with the Palestinian narrative I became a victim What makes the Palestinian narrative foreign voice passive? Now it is clear that it is crucial. It was of paramount importance that I know what happened in 1948. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod always questioned her connection to the blue Israeli ID card. However, that which was new to her was to understand her Palestinian identity in relation to other Palestinians. We will read later, that this process was part of many radical encounters with Palestinians with

different "palestinianesses", in her words. Within Kholod's trans/formation process, she starts off recounting that she holds many privileges due to her ID card. At the end of the last account, Kholod ends by saying that after a hard process, she found herself to be a victim.

Kholod is searching for legitimacy in her Palestinian identify. Understanding herself as a victim seems to be a step within her liberation process. Kholod is aware that her blue ID card does not make her a 'true' Israeli as her Jewish Israeli counterparts who hold the same card. She does not try, in Fanon's (1952) sense, to resemble the oppressors and look for the *master's* approval. Quite on the contrary, Kholod searches for the approval of the other oppressed of the Israeli regime by searching for her own victimhood story.

At this point, Kholod analyses reality with a critical gaze at the structures of control that led to the creation of her identity crisis. She is in a phase where she does not blame herself for her confusion, but lays the responsibility on the hegemonic forces. Having said that, she is still left dealing with her own psychological condition and her quest for her Palestinianess.

In the following account, Kholod describes the development of her process, from a place of victimhood, to a place of responsibility:

> *[...] a political process of "okay, let's understand, what's going on (here) from an institutional perspective. What mechanisms continue to suppress and what works here; it is called occupation but in Israel compared to the other occupation that exists there. The more I dwelled on it, at some point I realized that it is competing for the victims. Rather than saying: "Wait a minute, what identity is here? Which identities are here?" If the Palestinian identity is bound to expand its lines and circles to contain, because the Nakba did not happen from the inside to the outside, but, also occurred from within. Refugees have a cycle. Are you aware of this phenomenon? As if this search for legitimacy within, inside Palestine is very hard. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)*

Kholod would like to free herself from a dynamic that competes on victimhood. In her account, Palestinian identity is related to the occupation and the structured oppressions created by the State of Israel. Palestinian identity, in her sense, should be defined by the different kinds of experiences Palestinians live through rather than by a hierarchal scale of victimhood. This according to her is a political stance.

TD: Who was it (the work) done with? Do you remember?

It was mostly done with people, let's say, during the two years I spent in England. I never dared to say that I had a blue identity card.

TD: So it was the encounter in England with other Palestinians?

(Yes) other

TD: Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza?

Palestinians from Saudi-Arabia, from Jordan, who are second, third generation of parents who left Nablus, Gaza, Haifa, Yaffa [...]

To some I dared to say that I am a Palestinian with a Blue ID card, because no one wants to understand that. It is easy for them to relate to us as Israelis. Arabs of Israel. They assosiate us with the state. It does not interest them to research and understand. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod went to England to study for a Masters degree. In England, at University she encountered for the first time, Palestinian refugees. In some cases, second and even third generation descendants of refugees who were born in Palestine. This encounter confronts her with hard work. Work she feels she has to do in order to go further in her trans/formation process.

Kholod does not trust that her counterparts at University can understand her complex identity. She thus hides the fact that she holds a blue ID card and tells only very few of them. Kholod is yet again confronted with the representations of her surrounding about her own Palestinian identity. Having said that, the encounters that took place during this year in England seem to have formed her connection to her Palestinianity and her critical analysis of reality.

In the following account, Kholod details earlier processes of oppression she experienced as a young girl growing up in an Arab, Muslim family:

I was born in K', to a family that defined itself as Arab, Muslim. The word Palestinian was never said at home. What was very present was the religious Muslim identity as

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opposed to any other identity. And very quickly, perhaps the only identity that at the time, during childhood, was also very present in me was that I was a girl. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod gives an account of herself in relation to the development of her identities. Her national Palestinian identity and her gendered identity are understood within the frame of her consciousness trans/formation. In order to speak about her gendered identity she feels that she has first to explain that the word Palestinian was not present at home and that she grew up in a household that nourished an Arab Muslim livelihood rather than a Palestinian one.

Kholod situates her childhood within a context. Her discourse is not, however, an essentialist discourse that frames Islam as the carrier of sexism (Ali, 2013). Kholod chooses a critical approach towards her own culture, yet she is aware of the hegemonic racist dynamics which, according to Ali (2013), lead to an essentialist gaze towards Islam. Her discourse stays within the frame of her political critical gaze towards the colonial structure in which she grew up.

Kholod recounts that as a young child, the identity that was most present to her was the fact that she was a girl:

From this female identity came my responsibility, or my specific roles that I am expected to do, within the norms of my family, very quickly I discovered, at a certain age, that I am not allowed to play with children because I was a girl, I am not allowed to invite boys from class because I was a girl. I am not allowed to ride the bicycle, certainly not to swim, because I am a girl, I looked around me and saw that boys, not only my brother, were privileged compared to me. Today I say privileged, I mean I use this word. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod understands her gendered position within her family and larger environment through the attributed roles and the prohibitions she must accordingly follow. She realizes today that at the time she was deprived, while her brothers and other boys around her were privileged. Having said that, it seems that when she was young, she did not speak in terms of privilege vs. deprivation.

TD: (At the time) you saw that they are allowed and you are not?

Yes, Yes! Perhaps this was my very first encounter with an oppressing experience, not only my family but also in wider circles, and suddenly, also at school, it is like amazing. We went to art classes and the boys to sport, let's say. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod defines her childhood experience as an encounter with oppression. Her situated position as a young girl within her family and that of the village, in which she grew up, is gazed at today as a confrontation with oppression. When Kholod continues to recount her daily struggle, she gives us insights into her complex analysis of reality that necessarily views the imbrication of her identity:

I want to be a different generation (than my parents). I insist on being a different generation. Also as a woman, not only as a Palestinian.

TD: What does it mean to be different as a Palestinian woman?

It is also to point out the internal Palestinian oppression. To say that to this day there are women murdered for honor killing. And those who murder them are their brothers. And this is another level in the liberated identity. The success is not to (only) point out at the Jew who did [...] but to also succeed to be critical and say "sababa (ok) the Jew did that" we all know what he did, the occupier, the institution, but within us, there is khara (shit) and one also has to see it and point it out, and treat it, and say it is happens and go against it, and refuse it. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

Kholod's definition of liberation, or more precisely of a liberated consciousness, is the possibility to critique Israeli colonial social formation, but furthermore to critically look at her own Palestinian society with scrutinizing eyes that refuse violence and oppression against woman. She specifically speaks about honor killing.

Hassan (1993) contends that within the Arab Palestinian society within the State of Israel women and young girls are assigned to specific roles that position them within an inferior status. Girls who attempt to perform boys' roles are punished (ibid.). In hooks' (1990a) writing she elaborates on similar experiences in her own childhood. Hassan (1993) argues that in the specific condition of the Palestinian society, with the Green line, patriarchal tradition and structure become the alternative to the Israeli colonial structure to which Palestinians are subjugated. Kholod's account illustrates the way in which the control over her own body and

gendered performance, becomes in Hassan's sense *"the last property of the dispossessed Palestinian man"* (Hassan, 1993, p.70).

Kholod seems to be aware of the hegemonic gaze of Israeli society towards the issue of honor killing within the Palestinian society living within the State of Israel (Hassan, 1993). The way in which she formulates her sentences shows that she is aware, but refuses to stay silent and insists that it is an internal issue with which she is determined to deal. Developing an oppositional gaze towards Israeli racism does not for Kholod negate the development of an oppositional gaze towards internal gendered violence within her Palestinian society.

As Kholod has been demonstrating throughout her account, as a Palestinian woman she is faced with multiple oppressions. Numerous researches have shown the domestic, sexual, national/ethnic, economical forms of dominations to which the Palestinian woman is subjugated (Espnioly, 1997; Glazer and Abu-Ras, 1994; Haj-Yahia, 1995; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999). In addition to national struggle, the struggle against social oppression, internal struggle against patriarchal structures of oppression, the Palestinian woman is further subjugated to what Shaloufeh Khazan (1993) and Kazi (1987) define as the lack of 'home base' with the aftermath of the 1948 Nakba. The lack of 'home base' results in profound feelings of insecurity and instability. Within the gendered roles of Palestinian society, the Palestinian woman thus carries the burden of the annihilation of the traditional family structures that were furthermore destroyed with the settler colonial Zionism (ibid.).

Within the State of Israel, Herzog (2004) has shown that while confronting exclusion, hostility and racism, Palestinian women seldom employ the word racism to describe their subjugated experience. Herzog's conclusion from her sociological research lays importance on the feeling of what I have earlier called sense of entitlement. Hertzog (2004) argues that commonsense within public spaces and within hegemonic feminist circles delegitimizes the possibility to speak about racism. Other researches have also shown the way in which Palestinian women are structurally discriminated against and are, for example, overrepresented in poverty (Sa'ar, 2005).

Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Ihmoud (2014) argue that a Palestinian feminist approach necessarily positions the 1948 Nakba in the center of the discussion. And therefore they argue that one cannot ignore the subjugation to which the Palestinian society as a whole is submitted as a result of settler colonial Zionism.

In the following account, Fadi elucidates the meaning of developing a strong identity while avoiding processes of essentialization:

I know what it means national identity, and I know what is consciousness of I don't know what, all kinds of forms of collective belonging. [Ahh] but to come and take it and transform it to essence, in my opinion is stupid, it is a stupid thing. Because, because, to give belonging and identity, from any stance, a stance of essence, just a stance even not essential, like just to give it importance, is absurd, why is it absurd? Because it is in fact to come and [ahh] willingly imprison yourself.

TD: Is it about fixation?

Yes, yes, of course. Because if this thing is so essential so there is no way to conduct the conversation we are now having, with this openness, this sincerity. (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)

Fadi sounds passionate about this subject. It seems he refers to processes, which take place in reality, yet he does not name them. According to him, if national identities were to be taken as fixed identities, or as essential, I could not have had the sincere conversation we were having. Without naming it, Fadi is reflecting to me my own Jewish-Israeli national identity. Fadi urges us to think of his national identity within a context. From his account, I understand that within his own process of trans/formation, understanding that entering–processes that essentialize identity and belonging, imprisons rather than liberates.

Having said that, Fadi does not negate the fact that within a context, identity does play an important role:

And now national identity does get meaning. Within a certain political situation, within a certain political context, within a certain political process, what happens in Israel, the Palestinian identity is here, one can't say that I can't come and say "ok I am an Internationalist", I am Marxist and I am a human being and that's it, No! (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)

Fadi, as a Palestinian within Israel does not have the possibility to define himself as Marxist or as Internationalist. According to him, the political context in which Israel was formed and the political processes, which the state leads, oblige him to fight for the

recognition of his national identity.

> *I am all these things but I am in front of a racist system. This racism attributes definitions and meaning to belonging and here unfortunately I have to take it very seriously. But with myself, let's do a virtual exercise; if we take ourselves out of this political context, me with my own self, my belonging, having a certain identity, does it give me an added value? What stupidity, definitely not! There is no added value in being non Palestinian and non Jewish, and non American and non Japanese, there is no added value!" (Fadi, journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)*

Fadi explains that Israeli racism and the racist representations of him obliged him to position himself using a discourse that lays importance on his national identity. In this, as he did earlier in Chapter Two when referring to his acts to refuse the *diktats* as a citizen, Fadi positions his struggle as a citizen in the margin. Fadi refuses the commonsense assumption that Israel is a Liberal Democracy and seems to lay analysis on critical sociological analysis, which seeks more accurate definitions of the State of Israel. Smooha (2002) for example argues that a more accurate term to define the State of Israel would be an ethnic democracy which Ghanem (1998) calls an ethnic state and Yiftachel (1999) Ethnocracy[144].

At the end of Fadi's account, he goes back and employs the same word he used earlier to define processes which essentialize identity. He calls it stupid. When positioning himself, he argues that a non-essentialist view of identities is one that does not enter into a discussion of values, of judgment perhaps. It seems to me that Fadi is proposing a consciousness that avoids reproducing the colonial arrogance that classifies and hierarchizes subjects.

Part Two: Dialogue: a Praxis of Liberation

"Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and recreation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. It is thus necessarily the task of responsible Subjects and cannot exist in a relation of

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144 All definitions tempt to deal with the exclusion and racist structures of Israeli state namely to its Palestinian citizens but further to ethnic discriminatory structure within the Jewish population as well.

domination." (Freire, 1970 [2000, p.89]).

"It was not an organized talk[145]"

> *I think in Mahapach, it's funny I always say that A' the Ashkenazi man developed my Mizrahi consciousness, (laugh) […] suddenly things I already felt got language, got a shape, it felt so right, there was no need for supreme effort to connect me to this thing, but very quickly it felt right. It is Mahapach, and the University, I had some more critical professors and a critical discourse added to all this and suddenly I became a leftist with awareness (laugh). You know suddenly not to be Zionist, I remember the moment I understood that I was not Zionist, it was at K's house (laugh) I think. At K's house there was a seminary […] and I remember there was a discussion about the flag, or something of the sort, it was a corridor conversation, it was not an organized talk, but it was like to understand why not to be Zionist, why not Zionism, and I remember that I understood that I was not Zionist, and it is not easy to understand that, I mean it is not easy not to be Zionist in Israel and today this dilemma accompanies me also as a mother. (Shira, political activist, Be'er Sheva, 2013)*

Shira recounts that her liberation from colonial consciousness is related to the development of her Mizrahi consciousness. A task she recounts started before her work in Mahapach but got strengthened through the encounters with A' and the knowledge she acquired in Mahapach and at University. Shira's account, echoes with the accounts of the other Jewish-Israeli participants when she reveals the hard and difficult task of undoing Zionism. Moreover, Shira's account illustrates, as the other accounts of the participants, that liberation from colonial consciousness within Israeli coloniality is bound up with a strong rapture and departure from Zionist formation.

Within the first part of this chapter the participants have shown that their opportunity to understand their identity within a complex gaze and liberate themselves from essentialism often takes place through critical dialogue and perhaps praxis of radical encounters.

In the critical education current, dialogue is an important praxis for a liberating pedagogy

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145 Shira

(Freire, 1973; Shor and Freire, 1987). Furthermore questioning relations of power, as the context of the subjects in dialogue, is essential for going through a critical awareness process. Following this line of thought, dialogue can occur, only in situations where both sides want to name the world, and critically look at the reality while refusing to deny the others their right to speak their word (Freire, 1970). In this sense dialogue refers not only to adult-child relations, but also to complex relations of power in general and to the oppressed-oppressor dynamic in particular.

Shira's account reveals, to follow Freire (1970), that the dialogue with her counterparts in Mahapach, encouraged a dynamic human inquiry into the world. Such an inquiry cannot occur in relations of domination and requires love: *"Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself"* (Freire, 1970 [2000, p.89]).

Hooks (1994, 2004) enables a thought towards understanding dialogue outside the classical boundaries of the classroom. Shira seems to lay great importance on the setting of the dialogue, she remembers, where she was, whom she spoke to and the subjects that were discussed. Weksler (2015) argues that the way in which critical pedagogy relates to the concept of dialogue is a truly political principle as, on the one hand, it enables genuine personal relations and on the other, it is a *revealer* of relations of power. Following this understanding and the way in which Rancière (1987) relates it to equality, it seems that an encounter that permits a genuine dialogue is an empowering one.

According to Freire (1970) dialogue itself is a liberating tool, through which both the oppressed and the oppressor can develop what he calls a radical consciousness. Drawing from his understanding of radical consciousness, that is a consciousness that resists hegemonic violence and strives to equality through dialogue, I would like to propose thinking of such encounters, as radical encounters vs. other encounters that are in fact hegemonic hence oppressive.

It seems that Shira's internal wisdom, in Collin's (2000) word, drawn from her experience as a Mizrahi woman, permits knowledge. She recounts that the dialogue allowed naming what she already knew. Yet the process to which she refers, and that enabled her with tools to express her own life experience comes from the possibility to politicize it within a process of learning. Having said that, as I have shown earlier in the dissertation, Shira reveals that *being born* a Mizrahi woman does not automatically create a liberated consciousness.

In the following account, Esther reveals the way in which the dialogue with her brother, that took place far from home, in England, was a trans/formative encounter that strongly influenced her radical consciousness:

My brother, a very intellectual person and very sharp and with a strong sense of critique, understood, at the age of 22, in Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir, he was also in Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir, in kibbutz Biram, he got to kibbutz Biram and started asking about Biram, and he understood what happened in 1948, already when he was in the kibbutz.

TD: Interesting that he started asking

*Exactly. What existed there before? Why? How? Etc. and then he understood, what they actually did there, that is one of the most blunt horrifying stories because people were here (raising her voice) and they came and said "it is ours, they told us that within two weeks we would come back" and these kibuttzniks continued eating and drinking from their dishes so it was very blunt, and then also within Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir he started saying all kinds of stuff, and then they actually threw him out, he was in the general leadership of Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir. So when we came to England we already had a kind of a dialogue with someone that Zionism really... he left it completely, and was very critical, and that was my brother. I was in England for eleven years; I got there in 75' and stayed for eleven years. And you know in other circumstances I might have staid there, but I came back, but definitely the distance from Zionism happened in England. When we got there we started going to a group of all kinds of leftists who left before (us), they used to meet on Friday evenings. They used to talk, and also it was a process of raising awareness, for example, they didn't only speak ideology and politics but also asked questions of awareness raising, what do I call raising awareness? For example, **"When is the first time someone here met an Arab?" this is a raising awareness question, because you look back.***

TD: This is a conversation you used to hold between you? A kind of a reflection […]

Yes! It was a conversation we had one evening, right?! When we talk about "when did you mean an Arab? When did you see an Arab man, or Arab woman? For the sake of the discussion, in my opinion, this is one of the processes that bring change more than an argument whether I am a Trotskyists or Moist.

TD: Of course

It raises awareness because, you say to yourself, "wow, it's like, only at University I met for the first time Arabs". It is true I met a young Arab boy who used to bring the shopping. There was a young boy, that if women would ask him, he would bring their shopping bags home, he was probably my age, you know he was 'the Arab boy'.

TD: So he was the Arab you met?

I met him at childhood, and you know we lived ten minutes from where in 48' there was an entire world, an entire world! Arabs, Wadi Salib, and not so far from Wadi Nisnas, you know […] ahhh […] so also that and also to be in Hashomer Ha-Tza'ir and not to meet Arabs, until I went to University I did not meet Arabs. When I got to the University I met Arabs, more Arab men than Arab women, but ok. Arabs. This discovery was very very amazing.

TD: What happened at University? What sorts of encounters did you have there?

I went to "Yesh", it was a leftist group, there were Arabs and Jews. I remember it very well, because this was a landmark concerning Zionism, it was very important for them to say "we are left but Zionists", you know this discourse, the one that wants to stay part of the consensus. And what about the Arabs? So they used to say: "ok the Jews are Zionists, and the Arabs are not". And I said, no! I remember myself getting up in the general hall and saying, "what is going on here? Are we in a left movement in which we should all be equal? So this Jewish/Arab thing is completely planted in us and we have to think accordingly. I felt that there was something very wrong about it that had no sense, to the extent that I aid it out loudly. So there is a sense of dissonance here, right? Something here is wrong. (Esther, feminist, political activist)

In Esther's long account, she reveals the way the encounter with her own brother, who already went through a trans/formation of consciousness that led him to rapture from Zionism, changed the way she perceived reality. It seems to have helped to have a dialogue with someone that already gazed at reality with critical perspective. In hooks' (1994) sense it seems that Esther, through her encounter with her brother, and the encounter with the Israeli political group in England, developed an "oppositional political dialogue" (ibid., p. 68) that enabled deconstructing Zionism. Perhaps this is what Esther refers to when she differentiated

between, talking and entering processes of awareness. In Esther's account, she clearly mentions that a dialogue that permits reflexivity, critical questioning and doubt, influenced her trans/formation of consciousness much more than any theoretical discourse.

Interestingly enough, the question that left the most important influence on Esther, was whether she has ever met an Arab. Esther's account leads us to distinguish between the two forms of encounters I have mentioned earlier. In her story, she remembers that until she got to University, the only Arab she had met was a young Arab boy, who used to carry her mother's shopping. Esther understands, that when she is asked, if she had ever met Arabs before, does not refer to her hegemonic encounter with the young Arab boy. Hence, an encounter that maintains power relation of domination. It is only in University that she for the first time is confronted with radical encounters with Arabs, that permit oppositional political dialogue (hooks, 1994) to take place.

If there is theory, it must be connected to the lives of people.

TD: Praxis

Completely! You know that trafficking of women is a terrible thing, but if there were no women you had to help, to be with them, to feel their partner, then you can't do it, because it is not only theory.

TD: The encounter?

Exactly.

TD: seems like a different encounter than that of the young boy that brings home the shopping.

Yes, because I have no connection in the encounter with the boy who brings the shopping, I don' t know what to do with him. You don' t see! You see, but you don't understand what you see, so of course we saw the destroyed villages during our trips with the Shomer HaTzair, f course we saw them, but we didn't know what we were seeing, because there is an ideology that does not explains to you. If I would do the same trip with Zochrot, I will see them, right? On a trip with the Shomer HaTzir I didn't see them. (Esther, feminist, political activist)

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Telling the Untold Story

> *I wanted to tell my story, which is untold*
>
> *TD: You wanted Jews to hear it?*
>
> *Yes! (Raises her voice) I wanted it to be heard! (Claps hands) it's like « come, it's about me! I want to tell you something, to remind you what you did, to avoid a situation that you forget. » This is the victimization identity. It is angry, and very passive, and blaming. But where is my responsibility in all this? Once these questions rise, it is like something within the passiveness is challenged. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)*

Kholod reclaims the need to tell her story to Jews, to the other side, to the dominant side that does not know her story. Helms (1990) proposes two models for developing a positive white and black ethnic identity in the United States. She argues:

"[...] Only an encounter between confident identities can lead to a genuine meeting of equals and permit the option of building a more human and just society*"(Helms in Halabi, 2004, p.8).*

In these encounters, both the dominant group, i.e., the Jewish-Israeli participants, and the dominated group, the Palestinian participants, construct their identity through the encounter with the other and are open to a critical consciousness transformation. Both hooks (2003) and Helms (1990) highlight the importance of encountering the oppressed other, in order to build critical consciousness within the supremacy group. Helms (1990) argues that contact with the other could potentially cause the dominant group to reflect on their privileged position; something which they rarely acknowledge. Being white in the USA means being part of the ruling-dominating group. As such, white people enjoy the privilege of the majority group, even if they don't wish to do so. Furthermore, white people don't acknowledge their identity as white. Only in contact with others (blacks) does the subject potentially come onto the agenda (ibid.).

Individuals from the white supremacy group, according to hooks (1984, 2003), see their condition as an accident of circumstances rather than a choice. The question of encounters and critical dialogue, germinated within an earlier research where the participants have shown

the importance they lay in encountering Palestinians (Dor, 2010). In the following accounts, Sara and Anat, from their Mizrahi feminist standpoint, reveal the importance they lay on the encounter with Palestinians. The results of this earlier research reveal that encountering Palestinians is a task that transformed the consciousness of all the Jewish Israeli participants. These results lead me to the question at the heart of this research, what forms of encounters are necessary for a radical dialogue within Israeli matrix of domination?

> *TD: What did you acquire from the encounters with Palestinians?*

> *I got that people resemble me; (they) speak the same language as I, the behavior I know, the mentality I can relate to more, with its pros and cons. They (Palestinians) have a lot of problems (social) but it is not for me to judge them. People who resemble me more than the Ashkenazi, their warmth, same mentality that I know, I relate to that. (Sara, Jerusalem, 2009)*

Sara feels the Palestinian women resemble her more than the Jewish, Ashkenazi women. She identifies the Arab culture as a common ground between her and the other Palestinian women. As Ibtisam urges us to critically gaze at judgment, Sara realizes that while Palestinians have, in her words "*a lot of problems*", she recounts that it is not for her to judge them. Sara's account and that of Ibtisam, enlighten us with the knowledge that a non-judgmental position is perhaps a critical and a radical stand when confronting the other. What I have earlier called colonial arrogance, that which is reproduced from colonial relations of power towards the other is deconstructed by Sara when she refuses to position herself as judgmental towards Palestinian women.

Sara has finally found an order she was seeking. The terminology, the identity and the power dynamics are clear. In chapter I Shira recounts that her connection to her Arabness is part of her liberation process from colonial consciousness. It seems that the encounter with Palestinians has a similar effect on Sara. In an interview with Tikva Levi published in the Lesbian journal *Klaf Hazak*[146], she elaborates on the way in which encounters with Palestinians were mostly organized by the Ashkenazi elite in order to divide Mizrahi and

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146 The Struggle of Mizrahi Women. Interview with Tikva Levi by Yael Ben-Tzvi Klaf Hazak: Feminist Lesbian Community 12 (1994)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0ByGgMa0GzbjiflBHUGFoSTNiZGIyNEU0b2JxZUl1aFpFZ01zLUxTO TU2a1ZSYkRicm5vcWs (14 Oct. 2016)

Palestinians and deny any possible partnership. It seems fair to assess that the feminist conferences with the influence of Mizrahi feminist scholars, created platforms that resisted this segregation and division and challenged the hegemonic power dynamics.

Tikva Levi's claims are strengthened with the reading of Shohat (1988) when she shows that in the early 1970s, the Israeli Black Panthers already called for all the oppressed of the Ashkenazi regime, in which they included Mizrahi-Jews and Arab-Palestinians, to join forces to bring down the regime and fight for equal rights for all the inhabitants of the land. The Black (Israeli) Panthers, a political group established by young Mizrahi Jews, called for 'real dialogue' with Palestinians and the PLO[147] as their political leadership. They understood the need to link their struggle with other anti-colonial struggles and analyze their oppression within this colonial context.

In the following account, Anat brings to the forefront, as Sara, the importance of her encounters with Palestinians:

> *TD: What did you discover?*
>
> *It was not a boom, it was encounters.*
>
> *TD: With whom?*
>
> *With Palestinians, it was no longer the "Abu Lafiya"[148] encounter, encounters and discussions and, talks, and slowly slowly, you know it is not that, today I know it all but, every time something is added. (Anat, Tel-Aviv, 2009)*

Within her process of trans/formation of consciousness, Anat lays an important role on the encounter with Palestinians. However, she distinguishes between the possible forms of encounters. In her account she is clear that she is not interested in what she calls: the *"Abu Lafiya"* encounters. It seems that the encounters that had an impact opened up the possibility for a critical dialogue and perhaps for what I suggest to name: radical encounters.

Coexistence, within the Israeli-Palestinian context, has become a practice and a term,

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147 The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

148Abu Lafiya is an Arab restaurant in Jaffa, it is often used in order to describe the non-critical coexistence meeting (mostly led by Jewish-Israelis) which started taking place in the 80s. It is referred to in this way to show the common liking for Palestinian food while avoiding the political context.

which carries numerous interpretations and understandings (Dor, 2016). As a consequence, employing this term often evokes resistance to institutionalized and hegemonic forms of encounters. Critiques of these encounters are often drawn on the work of Fanon (1952) who critically gazes at relations that tend to reproduce colonial dynamics between what he calls, *masters and their slaves*.

Anat's account reveals the challenge of considering the question of the evolution of dialogue within a critical frame in an ongoing colonial context of occupation and settler colonialism. It seems that radical encounters and critical dialogue create alliances with Palestinians. Anat's account reveals her profound understandings of the *coexistence* practice. It seems interesting to look at hegemonic forms of encounters within Ahmed's (2000) work on imaginary prohibition.

The Israeli state, in its constant state of emergency and occupation, creates a sense of temporality designed to separate rather than promote alliances and coalitions, in particular between vulnerable minorities subjected to endless and limitless state violence. For many years, activists and academics have been trying to promote Israeli-Palestinian encounters. Many of which are the reproduction of hegemonic powers and are therefore associated with practices of coexistence. Coexistence, named by Halabi (2004) "naïve encounters", refers to the institutional model of encounters, which reproduces the oppressing power dynamic within the setting of a group. From Anat's account it seems that a minority of these encounters are a genuine alternative to state violence since they allow for the development of critical consciousness.

Abu-Nimer (2004) divides the development encounter practice between Israelis and Palestinians into three periods of time. He claims that the first period, which he calls the *coexistence* era, can be marked from 1950 to 1970. Within this era, the Israeli establishment dictated the form and content of the *coexistence* practice. The second period, according to him, starts in the early 1970s, shortly after the end of the martial law, to which the Palestinian citizens of Israel were subjected[149], and ends in 1990. This period was led by a movement of Jewish and Palestinian citizens of the state of Israel who worked towards the idea of encounters (ibid.; Halabi and Zak, 2014). The model applied during the second period was imported from the United States (ibid.). However, after numerous encounters and years of

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149 From 1949 to 1966, the Palestinian citizens of Israel were under martial law. In June 1967 the Israeli state occupied the West Bank, Gaza strip, Golan heights and Sinai peninsula.

experience, critical voices opposing this form of naïve encounter started rising, especially from the Palestinian side (Abu-Nimer, 2004; Halabi, 2004; Maoz, 2004, 2011). The third period, which Maoz (2004) has called the *confrontational* approach, describes the emergence of a new model of work that began in the early 1990s at the School for Peace[150]. This model placed the conflict directly at the center of the dialogue. The critique of American based approaches, which were used throughout the second period, claimed that stereotypes were being looked at as the problem, rather than as a symptom of deeper structural inequalities. These encounters were motivated by the assumption that merely creating an encounter between Jews and Arabs — mostly, between Ashkenazi-Jews and Palestinians – would bring peace. That belief came from a North American approach to conflict resolution, according to which conflict is a consequence of lack of knowledge about the other (Halabi and Zak, 2014). Ashkenazi-Jewish Israelis mainly led these forms of encounters. Often the Jewish-Israeli participants ended up *feeling good* for having met the Arabs, concluding that they had much in common. However, the Palestinian participants came out of these encounters feeling yet again betrayed, as the encounter did not in any way deconstruct existing power dynamics. Furthermore, these meetings looked at the Israeli-Jewish society as one homogenous body and thus never tackled internal racism and segregation.

What Maoz (2004) and Abu Nimer (2004) call the new model, refers to the third period that focuses on the conflict and that was mostly developed at the School for Peace. The School for Peace conflictual approach addresses the encounter between two national identities (Jewish-Israeli majority vs. Arab Palestinian minority) rather than individuals, and is thus directly political. The work done within these encounter groups, tackled the question of relations of power within the groups that in effect could be seen as microcosms of the relations of power in reality. The goals of these encounters were to allow the participants to be more aware of their own position and role within the conflict through the understanding of their identity (Halabi, 2004; Halabi and Sonnenschein, 2004b).

Halabi and Zak (2014) through a research conducted on Jewish and Palestinian participants

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150 "The School for Peace (SFP) at Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam (NSWAS) was established in 1979 as the first educational institution in Israel promoting broad scale change towards peace and more humane, egalitarian and just relations between Palestinians and Jews. The School for Peace works with Jewish and Palestinian professional groups, women and youth, creating a genuine egalitarian dialogue between the two people. Through workshops, training programs and special projects, the SFP develops participants' awareness of the conflict and their role in it, enabling them to take responsibility to change the present relations between Jews and Palestinians." http://sfpeace.org/

at the School for Peace program show that to a certain degree the encounters reinforce and empower the Palestinian participants. Furthermore, they show that the possibility for Palestinians to, for the first time, directly recount their own life experience and the possibility to assertively confront the Jewish Israelis gives the Palestinians, in Halabi and Zak's terms "*a good feeling*" (ibid.):

Halabi and Sonnenschein (2004a) had already observed the phenomenon of the empowerment of the Palestinian participants within an earlier research. However, Halabi and Zak's (2014) research and those of previous years (Halabi and Sonnenschein 2004a) denotes that the accounts of the Palestinians within the conflict model of encounters, enables the Jewish-Israeli participants to critically gaze at reality:

"The Jewish participants grew up in a world in which people spoke about the Arabs and in the name of the Arabs. Actual Arabs were rarely part of their experience. When an Arab finally stands before them and tells his or her story, their world is turned upside down and, for some, this precipitates moral dilemmas. Some of the Jewish participants reported that the direct encounter with the Palestinians evoked in them feelings of guilt." (Halabi and Zak, 2014, p.69)

Along the same line of thought, Halabi and Sonnenschein's (2004b) research furthermore shows that after the brief encounter, the Palestinian group returns to a life in which nothing has changed and in which colonial and oppressive structures are still the ones controlling its life. It is highly doubtful that their newfound awareness helps them to cope better when the existing power structure and economic factors play such a central role. This may account for the disappointment and frustration expressed by some of the participants after having experienced an encounter under such safe conditions (ibid.; Halabi and Zak, 2014).

Halabi and Zak (2014) observed changes in the way in which the Israeli-Jewish participants perceived themselves: "*Their identity expanded somewhat and the Arabs were incorporated into it*" (ibid., p.70). Contrariwise in parallel to the change, the Jewish-Israeli participants could hardly deconstruct the Zionist Eurocentric vision of Palestinians and Arab culture and enter processes, which rationalized the injustice and relations of power (ibid.).

The possibility to create platforms of radical encounters that challenge what Halabi (2004) in earlier studies called *naïve encounters* seems to be conditioned by the will of the participants to deconstruct and tackle hegemonic structures and thought. The hegemonic

structures, when leading encounters, maintain and reproduce Zionist-Ashkenazi commonsense and in effect that takes place in everyday life; they preserve the status quo, maintain the state of temporality, and reproduce state violence (Dor, 2016). Hegemonic forms of encounters install an artificial sense of equality and thus fail to address the structural inequalities drawn from settler colonialism power dynamics (Butler, 2012).

I propose to look at the hegemonic forms of encounters through the reading of Ahmed (2008 February 19) in which she criticizes the dynamics within encounters with what she calls a *non-racist* fantasy. According to her the 'officially prohibited' racism is an artifice and a fantasy of one's consciousness. The prohibition frames the way in which one speaks about racism and specifies what one is allowed and not allowed to say within such a context, yet is does not by any means, deconstruct profound and rooted racism: "By saying racism is over there −'look, there it is! In the located body of the racist' other forms of racism remain unnamed" (ibid.).[151]

While critically reading reality seems to be an important task of change, Freire (1994) urges us to understand the importance of furthermore creating one's own history. For the oppressed, writing history is an alternative means of gaining subjectivity and agency (ibid.). It is the empowering task towards a genuine consciousness.

Kholod from her Palestinian standpoint defines in a very clear way what forms of encounters are acceptable for her:

> *That you are a partner in the struggle. Look it is a very difficult issue. "Now let's meet forKhumus and speak about the future." For me partnership works only through reparation of historical injustice.*
>
> *TD: How to repair ?*
>
> *Hard question, first to recognize them (the injustice), first of all in the discussion in front of the Jews, I want to hear that he recognizes what happend and that it is really a historical injustice.*

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151 Ahmed, Sara (2008, February 19). Liberal Multiculturalism is the Hegemony – an Empirical Fact – A response to Slavoj Žižek. Darkmatter: in the ruins of imperial culture. Accessed on October 16, 2016, http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/tag/zizek/

Something in his language, something in the encounter, something in the speech, with identify, with empathy, will recognize and then I can see in him a partner. Because then we can talk about how to repair. Not on your expense, not in a way the [...] you can't repair past injustice with doing injustice in the future. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)

What Anat refers to as "*Abu Lafiya*" encounters, Kholod calls Khumus encounters. Both namings highlight what is understood as being the superficial nature of the encounters. *Abu Lafiya* is an Arab-Palestinian restaurant at the entrance to Jaffa. As I mentioned earlier these forms of *orientalist* encounters that revolve around love for oriental food frame Palestinians as exotic. They ignore the urgent political context and concentrate on the 'universal' - love for oriental food, for example (Dor, 2016). Naming these encounters "*Abu Lafiya*" underlines the fact that they focus on what is shared, such as the taste for oriental food, while failing to address deep-seated structural inequalities. Likewise the use of the term 'Khumous' understood as a mispronunciation of the word 'Houmous', is sarcastic; a critical highlighting of Ashkenazi pronunciation of the letter ח' Heit which differs from Arabic-Mizrahi pronunciation. In order to fully understand the implication of the use of this term one must be aware of the fact that, as a part of processes denying Palestinian identity, Khumous is hegemonically considered to be Eastern-Israeli or at best Arab food (Dor, 2016).

Kholod joins the much-criticized naïve model (Halabi, 2004), and calls for a radical model of encounters. She refuses the hegemonic patterns, often reproduced in small group encounters. Kholod bases her demand, on the conflictual model, as mentioned above, namely led by The School for Peace, and argues for the recognition of the asymmetrical relations of power in conflict. As mentioned earlier, she also understands the encounter as a critical dialogue between national identities and thus understands her political position as an individual within the colonial reality: situating the conflict within a historical political field of domination and oppression.

Kholod expects the encounters to allow a dialogue that is critical and that would trans/form the consciousness of the Jewish Israeli participants. Both hooks (2003) and Helms (1990) highlight the importance of encountering the oppressed other, in order to build critical consciousness within the supremacy group. Helms (1990) argues that contact with the other could potentially cause the dominant group to reflect on their privileged position; something which they rarely acknowledge.

The radical encounter, to which Kholod refers, could be considered as actions aimed at challenging state temporality and violence. They present implicit processes in which the power dynamics of domination are challenged (Dor, 2016). Radical encounters could become a tool for what Butler (2004) would regard as taking responsibility for the present through reading history within a critical and complex framework. They involve three main elements: first, a critical dialogue striving for equality; second a clear understanding of external power dynamics and oppression; and finally, recognition of one's own gendered, ethnic/racial and/or national position (Dor, 2012).

I suggest that radical encounters, as opposed to hegemonic forms of encounters, mark a consciousness turning point within consciousness transformative processes both in hegemonic groups and in vulnerable minorities. These encounters enable one, in Butler's (2012) words, to hear beyond what is heard. Furthermore, they allow processes of recognition of the Other's narration to take place while deconstructing one's supremacy performance from a position of responsibility. In the light of Freire (1970) radical encounters, between socially unequal members, require from participants of the supremacy to embrace solidarity, rather than generosity, with the oppressed.

The critical pedagogy current argues that the solidarity of the oppressor with the oppressed can only be genuine when the oppressor stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as individual people who have been unjustly dealt with; who have been deprived of their voice and cheated in the sale of their labor. In contrast, generosity of the oppressor towards the oppressed, Freire (1970) argues, is a means of maintaining power and domination. Individuals belonging to the supremacy group have to develop the ability to listen and especially to embark on detailed self-reflection on their own role and position in society.

"Solidarity with the oppressed is a radical posture and "requires that one enters into the situation of those with whom one is solidary [...] fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these « beings for another »" (Freire, 1970 [2000, p.49]).

Kholod's account requires from Jewish Israelis to perform praxis of solidarity: *in the discoussion in front of the Jews, I want to hear that he recognizes what happend and that it is really a historical injustice.* In Butler's (2012) terms Kholod demands from the Jewish Israeli

acts of recognition in order to build a joint, equal and just future in an extremely unjust reality.

Furthermore, Kholod demands a critical dialogue in which the Jewish Israelis commit to name the world with her in order to change it. Kholod's demands oblige the Jewish Israelis in front of her, to face their own privileged position and comprehend their dominant position. This praxis of self-reflection, could allow individuals from the dominant groups to understand, according to hooks (1994), that their position is a performed choice rather than an accident of circumstances.

Kholod describes the ground rules from which she is willing to carry a dialogue when she says:

> *Because then we can talk about how to repair. Not on your expense, not in a way that [...] you can't repair past injustice with doing injustice in the future. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)*

From this point, Kholod is ready to think of the possibility of a joint future. However, she further understands her own challenges within the encounter. As a member of the oppressed group, Freire (1970) argues, she is also required to develop critical consciousness and enter into a mode of thought and develop a kind of knowledge that is complex and critical. The journey towards critical thinking undergone by the oppressed necessarily involves a critical gaze at their own oppression and an understanding of hegemonic powers. Kholod is aware that in order to create a genuine cohabitation and the possibility for a joint future, the challenge to the oppressed is to strive towards a world that does not seek further injustice.

Earlier in the interview, Kholod speaks about the various stations she feels she has gone through in her own process of consciousness trans/formation. Fanon's (1961) work further highlights a three-staged progressive process through which the dominated subject crosses into his/her emancipation process from colonial awareness.

It seems to me that Kholod calls for what Atshan and Moore (2014) name, genuine ally-ship. Considering Black and Palestinian solidarity within queer struggles they argue for multidirectional relationships that according to them require self-reflexive work to genuine ally-ship. They urge us to think of who and how one engages in a joint struggle. The forms of participation to which they refer are framed in what they call Queerness. According to them

Queerness allows reciprocal solidarities that "are delineating, and that are premised on love, friendship, storytelling, and queer kinship" (ibid., p.700).

In the following account Kholod elaborates her own self-reflexive processes within an encounter with Jewish Israelis:

> *TD: You said that the first station is to understand the victimizing (process) and the next station is actually to understand or listen to the fear, what are the next stations?*
>
> *To get exposed to this pain.*
>
> *TD: of the Jews?*
>
> *Yes. Because it also enables, once I listened, not heard, but listened, I manage to hear. Once I heard I managed to listen. It is like, really, to stop feeling, and also within this thing to admit, not to admit, I think this is another station, to understand, that you have a connection to this place just like me. The love for this place. So it is to listen to this pain, and also accept that you have a connection, once I accept that you have a connection, I accept your presence, then I can converse with you about this presence. (Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013)*

Earlier in the dissertation Kholod asks Jewish Israelis to recognize history and acknowledge the unjust order to which Palestinian citizens of the state are subjugated. According to her she has gone further in her trans/formation processes which brings her to a position in which she must develop the possibility to listen to her Jewish-Israeli partners' connection to the land.

Kholod's analysis of her own reality and her quest for genuine cohabitation with Jewish Israelis appears to agree with the development of what hooks (1984) calls political solidarity. Kholod's critical gaze at the Israeli matrix of domination and her radical call for cohabitation allow her to understand that true solidarity fails within all power relations of domination (ibid.).

When Kholod says *you have a connection* she directs her speech to me, as I am part of the Jewish Israeli collective. Kholod is perhaps telling me that her participation in my research is part of her quest to liberation of consciousness. In other words our own academic setting in the form of an interview is an encounter, and perhaps Kholod seeks for it to be a performance

of a radical encounter, which strives to deconstruct relations of power.

Kholod recognizes the love Israeli Jews hold for *this place,* in her words. As we have seen earlier, through Shira and Hila's account, the question of rebuilding the possibility to love the place and the people surrounding them while liberating themselves from Zionism and colonialism is a crucial task.

> *I was in Belgium and we went to eat in a Lebanese restaurant it was during the war in Lebanon (2006). I was sitting with a Palestinian guy from Ramallah the owner of the place asked us where we were from. I told her Israel, and she said to me "I am from Isdud[152]". I learned a lot from this woman, the whole back yard was full of stuff she brought from Israel, it was all Palestinian stuff, the spices, everything. She told us (stories), we sat for hours. She turned her whole restaurant to a political place, she was Palestinian but born in Norway, it fascinated me how she made everything political, the conversation, the Hummus. She is an example of an encounter with individuals who had lived here and moved there. (Anat, Tel Aviv, 2009)*

Anat recounts meeting a Palestinian woman in Belgium. It seems that this encounter and the critical dialogue that she holds with her, form an important learning process for Anat. Rather than reproducing hegemonic dynamics within the encounter, the critical dialogue opens the possibility for new narratives. Before even starting the conversation with Anat, the Palestinian restaurant owner positions herself through the naming of the land. For Anat, the city of *Ashdod* became the destroyed village of *Isdud*, Israel became Palestine and finally, we shall see that her parents' house became a Palestinian house that was unjustly taken from a Palestinian family.

Anat is amazed by the possibility to make *everything political*. Earlier Anat recounts that she no longer wishes to participate in, what she calls, *Abu Lafiya* encounters. Here Anat is fascinated by the internal wisdom the Palestinian woman holds and her ability to turn even Hummus to political. Anat's account reveals the importance of undermining hegemonic knowledge within a radical encounter. As mentioned earlier, within the researches led on encounter groups at the School for Peace (Halabi, 2004; Halabi and Zak 2014) Anat's encounter is shaped by the consciousness of the Palestinian woman she encounters. Her

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152 Isdud (Arabic: اسدود) was a Palestinian Arab town that was depopulated on 28 October 1948, after an assault carried out by Israeli forces. http://www.nakbainhebrew.org/index.php?lang=english

narrative and political analysis of reality face Anat with a new vision. Anat is in a position to listen and to go further in her own deconstruction process.

It seems that the fact that her own story is at the expense of the other creates extreme feelings of stress and discomfort for Anat. Her encounter with the Palestinian woman, who is a refugee, confronts her with different terminologies and with a narrative that contradicted her own.

> *TD: How did you feel?*
>
> *It connected me to the challenge, for me it was a challenge. I would like to contain both stories, to know them both it is not my or his story. Can I know the Palestinian story of the house my parents lived in when they moved from the Ma'abarot [153] and their refugee story, and their Zionism to come to Israel and the Palestinian story both stories, that I don't have to curse my parents and give in. (Anat, Tel Aviv, 2009)*

Anat would like to find place for both refugee stories. That of the Palestinian woman, who was born in Norway following the Palestinian Nakba and the creation of the State of Israel, and that of her own parents. Bringing into the conversation the *Ma'abarot* is further politicizing the conversation, through her Mizrahi position within the Israeli social formation. Anat does not ignore her family's Zionism, yet clearly her talking about the *Ma'abarot* brings out that she situates the painful trajectory of her own parents. Anat demands a complex gaze at reality. She seems to want to create alliances that transgress state violence and temporality and that strive to challenge segregation and colonial relations of power in the Israeli society.

Both Anat and Kholod's accounts highlight the way in which radical encounters have the ability to challenge the reproduction of hegemonic dynamics within daily life. Radical encounters seem to be a condition to a sustainable authentic coalition, perhaps a prerequisite for genuine cohabitation (Dor, 2016). From Anat's account we could understand that her parents, as Shohat (1992) contends, were stripped of history by the Zionist hegemonic discourse. Anat gives place to her Arab-Jewish or Mizrahi story within the encounter and within a public space. An action that opposes the hegemonic structures that, according to Shohat forced the Mizrahi Jews within the Israeli state to erase and repress their story,

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153 Ma'abarot (Plural for Ma'abara) were camps built in the 50s by the Israeli government, mainly inhabited by Mizrahi emigrants. While promised as temporary housing, the Ma'abrot were often later turned into towns and were then called 'development towns'.

heritage and even nostalgia (ibid.).

The way in which Anat insists to leave place for her parents' story, resists the false Zionist notion of "one people". Within a recent doctoral research Weksler (2015) has shown that what Swirski (1990) earlier defined as the Israeli *melting pot,* is in effect the intentional erasure of cultures and hi/stories that do not align with the Zionist goal to create the New Israelianess. This process was also named by Gur Zeev "the creative violence of the Zionist education" (Gur Zeev, 2004, p.180).

Earlier Sara mentions the importance she places on the encounter with Palestinian women. Sara feels closer to the Palestinian story and life experience than to those of the Ashkenazi women she encounters through the feminists conferences. Anat does not relate to her encounter with the Palestinian in the same way, yet she clearly mentions the need to hold a complex understanding of domination and oppression. Anat refuses to *curse* her parents. While insisting on a critical gaze at Zionism and recognizing her parents' politics, she also understands the power dynamics that led to their position.

"The idea of a joint life […] this is the idea right?"[154]*"*

In the following account, Johayna goes back to her school year book after reading a trajectory of a Mizrahi guy, to discover that she only remembers very little from high-school:

> *I recently thought a lot about it, a religious Mizrahi guy wrote an article, he speaks about the process of erasing culture, his identity, of the person he was, casting off other content. After reading this guy, I went back to my school year book. There were 70 kids, 9 Palestinians, who I remembered. I didn't even remember who was my Mehaneh (homeroom teacher) I had the same Mehaneh for 3 years. And then I realized who I do remember and who were the people I hung-out with, there was a Mizrahi girl, Tripolitanian girl, an Ethiopian girl, and one more, Mizrahit. They were a little less my friends. All the Palestinians were my friends. (Johayna, political activist, Jaffa, 2013)*

154 Adi

Johayna had the same homeroom teacher for three years, yet she had no recollection of him until the day she goes and opens her school year book. An article written by a *Mizrahi guy*, in her words, is what urges her to go and understand her own social relationships in high school. The article she read speaks about the erasing of identity and the casting of hegemonic identity. Johayna seems to be touched and affected by this story.

When Johayna went back to her school book, she realized that out of all the students with whom she went to school, she can only remember the nine Palestinians, and four other Jewish friends who were, according to her, Mizrahi, Tripolitanian and Ethiopian. Johayna realizes that her only friends are those who come from the margin. When highlighting their identity, Johayna related to a political discourse that calls for radical encounters between Palestinians and Mizrahi-Jews in the goal to challenge segregation and the colonial dynamics of Israeli society (Dor, 2016). Johayna seems to recognize that cohabitation can be defined as a condition in which the subjects recognize their own vulnerability and are thus able to recognize the Other's vulnerability and to build alliances.

In a recent publication Butler (2015) suggests to rethink the question of identity through understanding the meaning, from a political understanding of reality, of "to live together":

*"[...] one political point probably has remained pretty much the same even as my own focus has shifted, and that is that identity politics fails to furnish a broader conception of what it means, **politically, to live together,** across differences, sometimes in modes of unchosen proximity, especially when living together, however difficult it may be, remains an ethical and political imperative" (Butler, 2015, p.27).*

Butler (2015) argues that the choice of living together is bound up in ethical and political tasks. The proximity between Johayna and her Jewish friends, as Butler (ibid.) argues, is an unchosen condition. When Johayna looks back at her school year book, she realizes that by choosing to live together with her Jewish friends who were like her from the margin and experience precarious livelihood, she in effect resists state temporality.

Today Johayna is aware that cohabitation is a condition through which Mizrahi and Palestinians can transgress hegemonic social commonsense and create complex political alliances (Dor, 2016). Johayna, as a Palestinian woman, understands cohabitation when gazing at her Mizrahi partners through their complex position within the dominant group. The complex framework makes her understand her Mizrahi childhood friends within vulnerability

and precariousness. Earlier through several of the accounts of the research, we see that for the Mizrahi Jews, cohabitation opens up the possibility of understanding the dehumanizing processes to which Palestinians are subjected by the dominant group, to which they belong. Furthermore, the Mizrahis are led to confront their own non-hegemonic performance as dominators.

Johayna's account focuses on what Sa'ar (2005) calls politics of identification rather than on politics of identity. When Johayna mentions her Jewish friends' ethnic identity, rather than developing a discourse that essentializes their identity, she positions them within the matrix of Israeli domination. Sa'ar (ibid.) urges us to think of politics of identification rather than politics of identity.

Johayna, who experiences racialization processes within the Jewish school, develops her radical consciousness through the encounter with her Mizrahi and Ethiopian friends. Lorde (1983), as does Rancière (1987) when referring to the emancipation project, argues that creativity is at stake in order to craft a dialectic thought.

Johayna's account illustrates that her experience at school, initiates her trans/formation of consciousness, in Sa'ar's sense: *"(critical) social consciousness occurs also outside the obvious circles of political activities"* (Sa'ar, 2005, p.659). The direct encounter Johayna experiences in high-school is not recounted in a frame of self-reflexive analysis, yet as an intuition and an encounter that build her life experience at which she can later gaze with critical eyes. Johayna acknowledges that she shares common interests, in Mohanty's (2003) sense, with her Mizrahi and Ethiopian friends from school. Without specific epistemological tools, her life experience and wisdom, in Hill Collins (1991, 2000) terms, positions them within the same social location as her.

At the very end of the interview with Adi, she realizes that she had not spoken about a subject that is central in her present life and is the joint life she struggles to build with Palestinians in general and with Palestinian women in particular:

> *We didn't speak at all about my relation to Palestinian women […] I will just say that for me […] the possibility to close a circle […] I have a lot of Palestinian (women) friends […] I have a lot of 'joint life', I know […] I mean I am busy with inventing my life, also because there is no possibility to live this way here.*

TD: There is nothing organic?

Right! I am busy with inventing all kinds of special constellations, very very busy with it. How does one do it? Good question, it is complicated [...] part of it is with my children, at home [...] my eldest son grew up as an Arab boy [...] he grew up in Haifa with Arab children he goes to Wadi Nisnas[155] and drinks 'Tamar Hindi'[156] for him this is his live, he knows about the Nakba. I feel that in a certain sense he really symbolizes another world, really another world.

TD: It gives hope

Plenty! A lot a lot of hope. The idea of a joint life, life that is ahh this is the idea right? At the end of the day how to create joint life, so today I take it to the practicalities of my life, in some senses. (Adi, university professor, Haifa, 2013)

At the time of the interview, Adi was in her mid-forties living and working in her hometown Haifa. Being from Haifa myself at times, the scenery (Goffman, 1959) of her account was extremely familiar to me. After a long and rich interview Adi realizes that she had not spoken about the quest to build a joint life with Palestinian women. From her account, I understand that her liberation processes from colonial consciousness is bound up in her determination to invent alternative ways of living together. She recounts that within the Israeli matrix of domination, this task requires great creativity and courage as the hegemonic space works against it and leaves no place for joint Jewish-Palestinian livelihood. It appears that for Adi, *The idea,* the core and the goal of trans/formation, is the work towards creating a joint life. For Adi, we have seen that the possibility to work for a joint life is bound up in her *presencing* of her Mizrahi position. Adi refuses to erase Mizrahiness in the eyes of her hegemonic surrounding.

In the account above, Adi recounts that within the Israeli matrix of domination, in order to built joint life, in order to create platforms that enable, *"politically to live together" (Butler, 2015, p.25)* she must be in a constant praxis of transgression (hooks, 1994). The way Adi found her counter-hegemonic performance towards genuine cohabitation, is through the education and the lives of her children.

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155 Arab Palestinian neighbourhood in downtown Haifa.
156 Tamarind

Conclusion: Liberating Oneself from Essentialism

In this chapter, the participants have illustrated the importance they place on the understanding of their identity, as a first step in their positioning processes within the matrix of domination. Having said that, all the accounts show that a radical gaze must be developed in order to avoid essentialist discourses that, according to them, end up maintaining power dynamics of domination. Radical thought that resists essentialist discourses and forms of analysis, allows the development of radical thought and critical gazes at reality and at one's position within it. Such consciousness transformation which engages in liberation processes from colonial consciousness leads the participants to search for new modes of cohabitation.

With a radical encounter, the Palestinian's voice has shown the importance of the possibility to develop a complex gaze at possibly precarious positions within the Jewish Israeli group. Furthermore, when the creation of common language is the basis of the dialogue concerning historical injustice and relations of domination and subordination to political Zionism, the Palestinian participants have shown the importance to better understand the Jewish Israeli connection to the land and their devotion for the creation of the upcoming livelihood.

The account illustrates, in agreement with Shohat (2002) that their devotion to anti-colonial and anti-racist reading of reality leads them to an activism which seeks for a feminist way of life that stays marginal within the current structures of Israeli politics. The example shows that the understanding of the experience of precariousness allows vulnerable groups to create alliances and transgress state temporality. We have seen that the radical feminist discourse led by Mizrahi and Palestinian women has changed the way in which both men and women perceive critical thought. The politics of Mizrahi feminism is directed towards the importance of creating solidarity and alliances between oppressions and between the oppressed from a large scope (Shohat, 1996).

Conclusion

> "…[T]he critical and dynamic view of the world, strives to unveil reality, unmask its mythicization, and achieve a full realization of the human task : the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of people."
> (Freire, 1970 [2000, p.102])

At the center of this dissertation stands the ongoing quest for a liberated consciousness of radical and critical thought. I shall be content if the readers find what this research contains, and that which is brought by the participants on the one hand, and on the other hand, by the structures and analysis I have proposed, is in agreement with radical, feminist thought that engages in a constant quest for liberation. Inspired by hooks' (1999, 1994, 2004) dialogical praxis of academic writing, I persevered, despite the fact that at moments I doubted I was on the right track and doubted my entailment as a researcher. I constantly sought to enhance dialogue with the participants through their accounts, and share conversations with the different epistemologies, especially when considering the writing of this dissertation as part of my own process of transgression and liberation. To my knowledge, it is the first time a research on the political trans/formation and the liberation from colonial consciousness of both Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian political actors has been done in such a phenomenological approach.

In this empirical research I sought to voice what the trans/formation of political consciousness means to thirteen Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian political actors within the geographical boundaries of the State of Israel. My choice to interview Palestinian, Ashkenazi-Jew and Mizrahi-Jew political actors was drawn from the demographical reality of the State of Israel where these groups form the three major ethnic/national groups.

It is perhaps important to carry a further research that would expand on the complexity of positions existing within the State of Israel (e.g., orthodox Jews, immigrants and their descendants from the former Soviet Union, from Ethiopia, non-Jewish labor migration,

refugees, etc.). The achievement of this research, furthermore incites me to think that research is needed which would question consciousness trans/formation of Palestinian political actors living in the West-Bank and Gaza strip in order to understand the way in which critical encounters, that seek to promote genuine forms of living together in the ongoing state of war, Israeli military occupation and settler colonialism in Palestine, can influence processes of liberation from colonial consciousness. Such a research could be led only in partnership with a Palestinian researcher, a dialogical approach in which I would extremely willfully be part.

Liberation, "it is something you do everyday[157]"

> *TD: Do you think you are completely liberated from colonial consciousness?*
>
> *No. I don't know, I don't know, it is something you do everyday, and as I am continuously doing it, I suppose not [...] Look some times [...] ahh [...] I tell myself, 'hopa' there is an issue here I didn't think of before, I didn't give enough thought to, or didn't think of enough or here I need to like think anew… "and now that I think of it [...]" It is probably again it is a result, a result of certain ignorance, but perhaps it is a result of [...] ahh [...] the big colonial dissonance that got me. Perhaps it worked on me, here and there, ok in certain things, not big issues but here and there, I say to myself "I was trapped"! And as I said it is an ongoing process, it is a process that will probably continue for a few more good years. (laugh)*
>
> *(Fadi, a journalist and writer, Haifa, 2013)*

The enquiry that led to this doctoral research and is at the heart of this dissertation questions the counter-hegemonic processes undergone by Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian political actors within the State of Israel. I was eager to understand the way in which both members of the dominated collective and those of the dominating one, within the Israeli coloniality, experience processes of liberation from colonial consciousness.

In Fadi's account above, we understand that tasks of liberation are acts that one performs daily. His account reveals that critical thinking that is central within processes of

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157 Fadi

trans/formation from colonial consciousness, is a praxis that he is now devoted to as part of his daily life. Fadi's account echoes with other participants' accounts in which they recount their live engagement in liberation from colonial structures of thought.

The accounts show that a radical reading of Israeli formation entails understanding the Israeli State as part of a complex colonial project in Palestine. The participants, as political actors within Israeli social construction, in their everyday performance of life, struggle against an automatic adherence to authority. My dialogue with the participants elucidates the way in which their radical-political stance is a constant confrontation with the power dynamics of domination.

The participants define colonial consciousness as a complex hegemonic stance from which they seek liberation as a long process of trans/formation. For members of the dominating groups, holding colonial consciousness means that one lacks a critical gaze towards one's own privileges within a structured dynamics of power. Moreover, colonial consciousness(es) are the reproduction of colonial arrogance itself driven by racism and violence towards the Other. On the other hand, for members of the dominated group colonial consciousness was recounted as the internalization of racism to which they are subjugated. Furthermore, the accounts explain that colonial consciousness is filled with a binary and essentialist *grille d'analyse* of the world and of their positions within it.

Colonial consciousness relates to questions of knowledge and power and is interconnected, according to the participants, to a hegemonic position of power, violence and arrogance. The research has shown that while Zionism is defined as the oppressing regime and the institutionalized system of domination it does not determine the fate of the Ashkenazi Jewish-Israelis, the Mizrahi Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian participants in the same way.

Engaging within liberation trans/formation processes was recounted as an entrance into an unknown site of transgression from which one acquires knowledge and tools throughout the journey. Vision appears to be a crucial sense, through which the participants recount the perpetuation of colonial consciousness, yet furthermore, the possibility to develop a counter-hegemonic gaze which liberates.

"So, with other feminists, I want to argue for a doctrine and practice of objectivity that privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections, and hope for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing" (Haraway, 1988

Fadi's account and those of all the participants throughout the dissertation as a whole, show that processes of trans/formation towards liberation from colonial consciousness is not a continuum, not a linear process, it is rather an endless dialectic quest that is never sure to be achieved. It seems to me that liberation performances are bound up in dubious and unlikely a path(s) that entails moments of strength as well as loss.

The results of this research led me to the argument that the deconstruction processes of the colonial gaze are grasped as liberation processes towards 'objective truth'. In other words, the way in which the participants recount their liberation trajectories of trans/formation from colonial consciousness is related to processes of deconstruction of hegemonic knowledge and constant construction of new knowledge as part of learning processes.

While going through individual processes and in different contexts, the participants all seem to agree that liberation processes from colonial consciousness(es) mean the possibility to develop an oppositional gaze at Zionism as a colonial ideology and structure. The participants' accounts of liberation entail ongoing critical thought that constantly examine reality and unveils the truth about the world. Likewise, it seems that all participants, while in different stages within their processes of liberation, understand the trans/formation of their political consciousness and thus their quest for liberation from colonial structures of thought as a quest for genuine feminist objective knowledge (Haraway, 1988). Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the participants relate to their liberated consciousness as crucial for building new forms of living together (Butler, 2015).

The Jewish-Israeli participants analyzed their colonial consciousness as a violent colonial gaze at the world, and at Arabs and Palestinians in particular. Therefore, the Jewish Israeli participants were mostly preoccupied with the critical questioning of their own vision. The Palestinian participants did not express their understanding of what *Zionism really is* as an epiphany. The education they got at home, their life experience as dominated was primary in situating their knowledge and wisdom. Having said that, understanding racism and critically gazing at the socio-political construction of racism, was for them a task of liberation from the internalization of colonial consciousness.

The accounts have shown that stepping out of binary positions, which enable a complex understanding of reality and of one's own standpoint within it, are crucial within liberation

processes(es). My feminist and postcolonial formation situated the research within a critical and radical reading of the different perceptions of reality. While seeking to challenge colonial binaries, I was wondering whether I should divide the analysis to two parts, which would separately analyze the Jewish-Israeli and the Palestinian accounts. I decided that the two first chapters, which first describe what colonial consciousness means to the participants and then outline the process of liberation, would present the asymmetric reality from a national standpoint. With the development of a complex reading of Israeli coloniality, the dissertation also follows a more multifaceted structure and deconstructs, I hope, colonial binaries, while seriously and critically gazing at power relations.

The Gaze

The accounts presented in this research reveal that a gaze is positioned within a field of power relations. When starting this research my hypothesis was led by the thought that the question of *seeing the truth* would be at the heart of the account of the Jewish-Israeli participants. Furthermore, I presumed that while the question of the vision would be central, the question that I would find at the heart of the investigation would concern the interpretation of the vision, therefore critically understanding the system that veers the language in order to conceal reality. The accounts show that merely *looking* does not lead to a gaze that critically decodes that which enters the vision. Gazing would include seeing while processing and interpreting the gaze. The development of critical thought and of an *oppositional gaze* happens through the participants' own understanding of their gaze.

The results of the research have shown that the development of an oppositional gaze at reality enables the Jewish-Israeli participants to deconstruct their Zionist formation. In many cases the deconstruction was a hard and at times a painful process, led by strong feelings of anger in a quest to unveil the lies to which they had been subjugated. For the Palestinian participants, the development of an oppositional gaze involved critically analyzing the racial segregation to which they are subjugated within Israeli colonial formation.

Presencing

The practice of critique, which puts forth power relations of domination, is a task that enables the participants to continuously develop their oppositional gaze at coloniality and their own consciousness construction. Their quest for emancipated positions is a trajectory

that they carry on as part of an ongoing process. The act of *presencing* is drawn from the curiosity to know and the will to change.

Presencing enables stepping towards radical forms of knowledge that demand dialectical dynamics as a way of thought. The exposure of domination, through the praxis of question asking and insisting to act from the margin, allows a movement forward that refuses external constraints and is derived from within one's will for liberation from subjection. The results of the research led me to understand that critical forms of "knowing", recreated through acts of *presencing,* reveal relations of power that become and transform into cognitive acts.

Presencing, drawn from critical thought, is an act that on the one hand, allows one to understand the plurality of relations of power and on the other to strive to discover the mechanisms of their creation. In this sense, critical thinking is praxis, as it is a way of life and a way of approaching the world, rather than a singular action. The participants recount that *Presencing* necessitates to critically gaze at their own position and stand point within reality, therefore, acts of positioning, self-reflexivity and understanding oneself within the matrix of domination is crucial within such processes.

Radical Encounters

The praxis of radical encounters is at the closure of this research and of the writing of this dissertation. The participants' accounts illustrate the importance they lay in examining possibilities of radical forms of encounters and critical dialogue as important tools of liberation that could build genuine cohabitation within a state apparatus of coloniality and domination. In this sense, radical encounters are encounters that enable critical thought, and the *presencing* of power dynamics rather than repetition of hegemonic encounters that reproduce domination and oppression. For such encounters to take place the participants feel that their identity must be understood within an interlocking gaze at their positions and therefore, that it resists essentialist visions of reality and of their position within it.

While the participants position themselves within the entanglement of categories of domination of gender, race, ethnicity, sex, nation and class, the accounts illustrate that to enter processes of political solidarity and to share conversations, a radical gaze must be developed in order to avoid essentialist discourses that, according to them, end up maintaining the power dynamics of domination.

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Developing self-reflexive critical analysis, the participants recount the processes through which they re(de)fined their own identity. The process of consciousness trans/formation has led the participants to acknowledge that their identity is in effect a positioned performance rather than a natural definition of the self. Feminist tools and analytical frames of knowledge have proven useful and important, not only for the subdued subjects, but also for members of the dominant group within the Israeli colonial context. Developing a radical gaze at their standpoint trans/forms their consciousness and liberates them from Eurocentric approaches and attitudes, which open possibilities for a genuine participation in a joint struggle and for genuine cohabitation.

The Palestinians' accounts illustrated the importance to develop a complex gaze at the possible precariousness of the Jewish Israeli group. Furthermore, when the creation of common language is the basis of the dialogue concerning historical injustice and relations of domination and subordination in political Zionism, the Palestinian participants did acknowledge the importance of a better understanding of the Jewish-Israeli connection to the land and their devotion for the creation of a better future livelihood.

The Jewish-Israeli participants recount that their motivation to be part of radical encounters is drawn from their devotion to an anti-colonial and anti-racist reading of reality. Radical encounters and critical thought that are at the heart of the liberation processes of the participants lead them to activism which seeks for a radical feminist way of life that intends to stay marginal to hegemonic Israeli politics.

We have seen that the radical feminist discourse developed by Mizrahi and Palestinian women in particular, has changed the way in which both men and women, Jewish-Israelis and Palestinians perceive critical thought. The participants recount how the politics of Mizrahi feminism and the knowledge it has developed throughout the years, enabled the existence of a platform that has allowed creating solidarity and enhancing conversation.

Taking it Further

In 2012 I was invited, together with my co-facilitator, to facilitate an encounter group of mixed ethnicities on the island of New Caledonia. We were asked to train social workers and community organizers with the model of Israeli-Palestinian encounter groups we had been

practicing for the last fifteen years. During the twenty-seven hour flight we crossed almost 20,000 kilometers. At the little airport of Nouméa, our Israeli and Palestinian passports attracted curiosity and interest in our visit. On stepping out of the plane, we noticed that the border police were wearing the same uniforms that were familiar to us from our life in France hexagon. Crossing to the other side of the world yet finding myself "still in France" was a peculiar feeling.

Our encounter with the population inhabiting the little island revealed to us a (post)colonial French reality where a discourse on ethnic and racial identities and socio-political positions was possible. Our experience from the French hexagonian context taught us that the possibility to develop critical conversations, in the way the participants of this research unfold, concerning hegemonic racial and ethnic domination is limited (Diouf 2010; Mbembe, 2010; NDiaye, 2008). The accomplishment of this dissertation leads me to question the possible resonance this research could have on further empirical researches within different (post)colonial contexts and other matrix of domination. In particular, I am eager to go further in an enquiry that would enlarge the scope of this research into the French hexagonian social formation, on the one hand, and that of New Caledonia on the other.

I am eager to understand whether political actors, who are engaged in anti-racist activism from within the geographical boundaries of the French hexagon and those inhabiting the island of New Caledonia, could relate to questions of liberation from colonial consciousness when recounting their processes of political trans/formation. Furthermore, and most importantly, I am eager to enquire whether radical encounters that permit a critical dialogue from a feminist standpoint and take into account the entanglement of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class, have a trans/formative effect on the political consciousness of the concerned actors.

Such a research would tie up and be relevant to the work in which I am already engaged and would expand the scope of an empirical and epistemological development of knowledge. Since 2015, in addition to the facilitation work in New Caledonian, I have had the occasion to be part of a research project, led by Nacira Guénif-Souilamas. This is a project that seeks to better understand the resonance and the crossing of knowledge "in the « queer » commodity" (Ahmed, 2006, p.43) within the three sites of formation: State of Israel, France-hexagon and New Caledonia. With the goal to encourage a critical dialogue that crosses the binaries of field/academia, we are currently working on the publication of a book, which would represent

a site of conversation between the development of knowledge on Palestinian/Israeli encounter groups (Halabi, 2004a; Halabi and Zak, 2014) and epistemological knowledge developed by bell hooks on consciousness transformation through her trilogy on education (hooks, 1994, 2003, 2010).

Such a research would seek to join (post)colonial literature and epistemological knowledge that sketches and analyses French formation through a critical gaze that understands the existing colonial matrix of domination (Mamadou 2010; Mbembe Achille et Vergès François 2010; Boubeker Ahmed 2010b; Abdellali, 2007; Abdellali 2008). Along the same line, in order to conduct an empirical research that would seek to understand the way political actors perceive their consciousness trans/formation, it should be necessary to converse with researches and development of knowledge programs concerning questions of identity and positionality within French coloniality in New Caledonia (Salaün, 2010, 2013; Chappell David 2013; Mokaddem, 2002; Wdrawane, 2008, 2009).

Mbembe (2010) argues that during the French colonial empire, the colony was a distant, overseas place only present through the imaginaries, narratives and cultural displays repatriated to the metropolis. It was a foreign, sometimes abstracts body. Today, the colony is installed within French territories, he contends (ibid). During the colonial period the Other were the subaltern within the distant colonies which could never reach French superiority. However, in these (post)colonial times, postcolonial immigrants and their descendants cannot be considered as foreign to the republic (Boubeker & Hajjat 2008; Boubeker, 2010b; Guénif-Souilamas, 2010). Othering processes highlight the new Frenchness (Guénif-Souilamas, 2006) by revealing race, sexualization and ethnicity based discourses within French common sense. Questioning the construction of the *Other* in France-hexagon and in New Caledonia problematizes the segregation and violence within social formation. Individuals performing the new Frenchness in postcolonial France today, drawing from Guénif-Souilamas's work (ibid), are exposed to violence and precariousness (Boubeker, 2011).

Just before leaving for New Caledonia, I met a group of activists in Toulouse. P' who defined himself as a white middle class man, and H' who critically gazed at her position as a white woman, recounted to us the work they did in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Toulouse. For the first time, since I moved to France in 2007, did I meet activists who reminded me of the work and dialogue we had struggled so hard to promote in Mahapach. After my return from New Caledonia, and as part of the work we conducted on the

publication of the booklet[158] I was eager to enter into conversation with both H' and P'. In the spring of 2013, I went to Toulouse to meet with P' and H' who agreed to converse with me. My interviews with P' and H' were followed by interviews with six other political actors in Paris, Lilles and Nouméa.

P' who defined himself to me as an anticolonial and anti-racist activist, was in his late thirties. I realized that this question of consciousness transformation and the development of radical thought are bound up for him, with the understanding of his standpoint as a white middle class man:

> [159]*Well up until then, I was a communist, an anti-imperialist, a revolutionary [...] but it's all very much an abstraction. I was taking part in struggles against government laws, within great popular movements. But I had never done any activist work beside someone who was discriminated against, who was fighting for their own rights. And that is what I discovered with the collective, how important it is, for a white person in my case, if one wants to be a coherent antiracist, to stand beside oppressed people and to face their actual problems, not just remain within the boundaries of an abstract antiracist discourse. This is what I discover, a lot, with H', she trained me in this, a*

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158 "IN/OUT Colonialisme*S Israéliens" is a booklet I coedited as part of my activist work with the organization Les AmiEs de Tarabut. The goal of the booklet was to initiate and encourage a complex discourse about the political reality in Palestine and that of the State of Israel. Therefore to challenge and transgress binary discourses, which lacks self-reflexivity, often present when discussing Israeli coloniality. The booklet voices Palestinian and Israeli grassroots activists about their praxis in the field and allows them to analyze their own work. Furthermore, the booklet also questions, through an interview with my doctoral advisor Nacira Guénif-Souilamas, the present colonial question in France today. http://www.ujfp.org/spip.php?article3498

159 P: Ben jusque là j'étais communiste, anti-impérialiste, révolutionnaire […] mais c'est très abstrait. Je faisais des combats contre les lois du gouvernement, des grands mouvements de masse. Mais j'avais jamais milité aux côtés d'une personne discriminée pour ses droits à elle. Et c'est ce que j'ai découvert avec le collectif l'importance, notamment en tant que blanc pour être dans un antiracisme conséquent, d'être aux côtés des dominés et face à leurs problématiques réelles et pas juste dans un discours antiraciste abstrait. Ça je le découvre beaucoup avec H', c'est H' qui m'a formé à ça, beaucoup.

TD: Comment elle a fait ?

P: Elle est très disponible, H'. Il lui a fallu du temps pour me faire un peu confiance. Parce que j'étais un homme, blanc. Plein de choses qui font qu'a priori elle me fait pas confiance. Quand elle a commencé à me faire confiance parce qu'elle a vu que je pouvais être investi, sérieux, aller au bout de mes engagements. Et bien elle, elle et L', Y', ont accepté que j'ai une place dans ce collectif qui était un collectif de femmes et de femmes musulmanes pour la plupart. Et du coup, H', c'était énormément de discussions, des discussions par téléphone […] Elle partageait tous ses doutes, ses colères. Elle s'est énervé contre moi, plein de fois j'ai cru qu'elle allait me détester […]

TD: Le dialogue avec elle était important pour toi.

P: Ça c'est sûr. Bousculant. Beaucoup. Très questionnant. Ça a toujours été difficile, conflictuel parce que ça me poussait à réfléchir concrètement à mon identité de blanc dominant, à qu'est ce que ça veut dire être révolutionnaire […]

lot.

TD: How did she do it?

She's very available, H' is. She needed some time until she somehow trusted me. Because I was a white man. Many things would have led to her to not trust me a priori. When she started trusting me, because she saw that I could be invested, serious, fully committed, well, she and L' and Y' accepted me into the collective, which was a group of women, mainly Muslim women. And then, with H', there were a lot of discussions, discussions on the phone [...] She would share all her doubts, her angers. She got mad at me, a lot of times I thought she would hate me [...]

TD: For you, dialogue was important.

For sure! It was shaking. Very. Very questioning. It was always difficult, conflicting, because it made me think in concrete ways about my identity as a white dominating male, and about what it means to be a revolutionary.

P' recounts that the radical encounter with H', L' and Y', allowed him to take part within radical feminist platforms that insist on the entanglement of gender, race ethnicity and class, when analyzing French republican dominations. As in Esther's account, P' recounts that working together with people who are subject to domination and oppression took his political activism steps further. I understand the way he recounts the dialogue with H' as an encounter that allowed him to enter a space of critique that puts fourth relations of power, yet most importantly puts fourth his position and standpoint within this context.

Being a white man, P' recounts that he had to gain H's trust. As in Ahmed's (2007) work on whiteness, P' seems to understand his performs within a space are drawn from his privileged position, to use Tevanian's (2008) terms. While it seems that the understanding of his own position as a white man, privileged by his position was a difficult process, P' recounts that it was essential in his trans/formative process. His accounts join the epistemological work concerning the understanding of the phenomenology of whiteness (Ahmed, 2007) in the French (post)colonial matrix of domination. Drawing his arguments on Ezekiel's (2002) translation of the word whiteness, Cervulle (2012, 2013) employs the term 'blanchité' to describe the hegemonic sphere in which both the dominant and the dominated political actors would confront the question of race in the French republican context. In

conversation with contemporary development of knowledge concerning the questions of race in France from a racialized standpoint (NDiaye, 2008; Guénif-Souilamas, 2000, 2004, 2010; Bouamama, 2006, 2010) on the one hand and from the standpoint of the dominant (Cervulle, 2012, 2013, Delphy, 2006) on the other, I suggest to question, what role race and ethnicity as positionalities play within the trans/formative processes of French antiracist and anticolonial political actors.

The current research has shown that radical encounters enable critical thought through tasks such as the *presencing* of relations of power. For such encounters to take place the participants need to be aware that their identity must be understood within an interlocking gaze at their positions while resisting essentialist visions of reality and of their position within it. Drawing on the work of Guénif-Souilamas (2010), within the French case, would political actors lay importance on the interlock of their gendered, sexual, racial and ethnic positions when recounting their consciousness transformation? What forms of radical encounters are possibile those, which resist exclusion, and that which Guénif-Souilamas (2016) defines as reactionary coalision? In such a research, I would seek to investigate political actors performing from the interlock of gendered, racial, ethnic and sexual positionalities. I would furthermore seek to enter conversation with the existing epistemological knowledge that discusses the interlock of positions within the French matrix of dominations (Gay, 2015; Belkacem, 2010; Belkacem & Le Renard, 2016; Falquet & Kian, 2015; Dorlin, 2008; Ben Lmadani & Moujoud, 2012; Larzillière, 2013).

The observation of movements of individuals and small political groups who are acting to change both their own consciousness and that of the societies in which they live, involves understanding the genealogy and social construction of the commonsense in which the individuals act. I propose to look at the radical encounter with the Other, as a consciousness turning point within the trans/formative process. I presume that the radical encounter presents implicit processes in which power dynamics of domination are challenged, and that this will appear as a turning point within the trans/formation of political consciousness of the subjects in this research.

"We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always 'in context', positioned." (Hall, 1990, p.222).

Through the writing of this dissertation I have encountered myself anew. In other words,

and in Foucault's (1980 [2000]) sense, the writing of this dissertation has changed the way I think and has perhaps trans/formed my perception, my vision of what I called *home* and of my own position and attachment to that *home*. In Butler's (2012) sense, while she converses with Said on "[…] the importance of sustaining a diasporic condition for a new polity, one in which identity never fully returns to itself, where identity remains cast out in a web of relation that cannot eradicate difference or return to simple identity […]" (Saïd in Butler, 2012, pp.50-51), my very attachment to *home* is bound up in an ethical modality of dispersion (Butler, 2012, p.6). Writing from beyond and from a distance to the territories which in a great deal formed me (Dufoix, 2011, p. 31) is shaping anew "the very capacity for attachment and indeed for love" (ibid., p.51) that is bound up in my desire (Mufti and Shohat, 1997, p.2) to live together, both within and away from the space I can now anew call home.

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Annex One – Maps

Maps I, II, III and IV are the most recent maps of Ocha (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) Jerusalem. http://www.ochaopt.org/maps
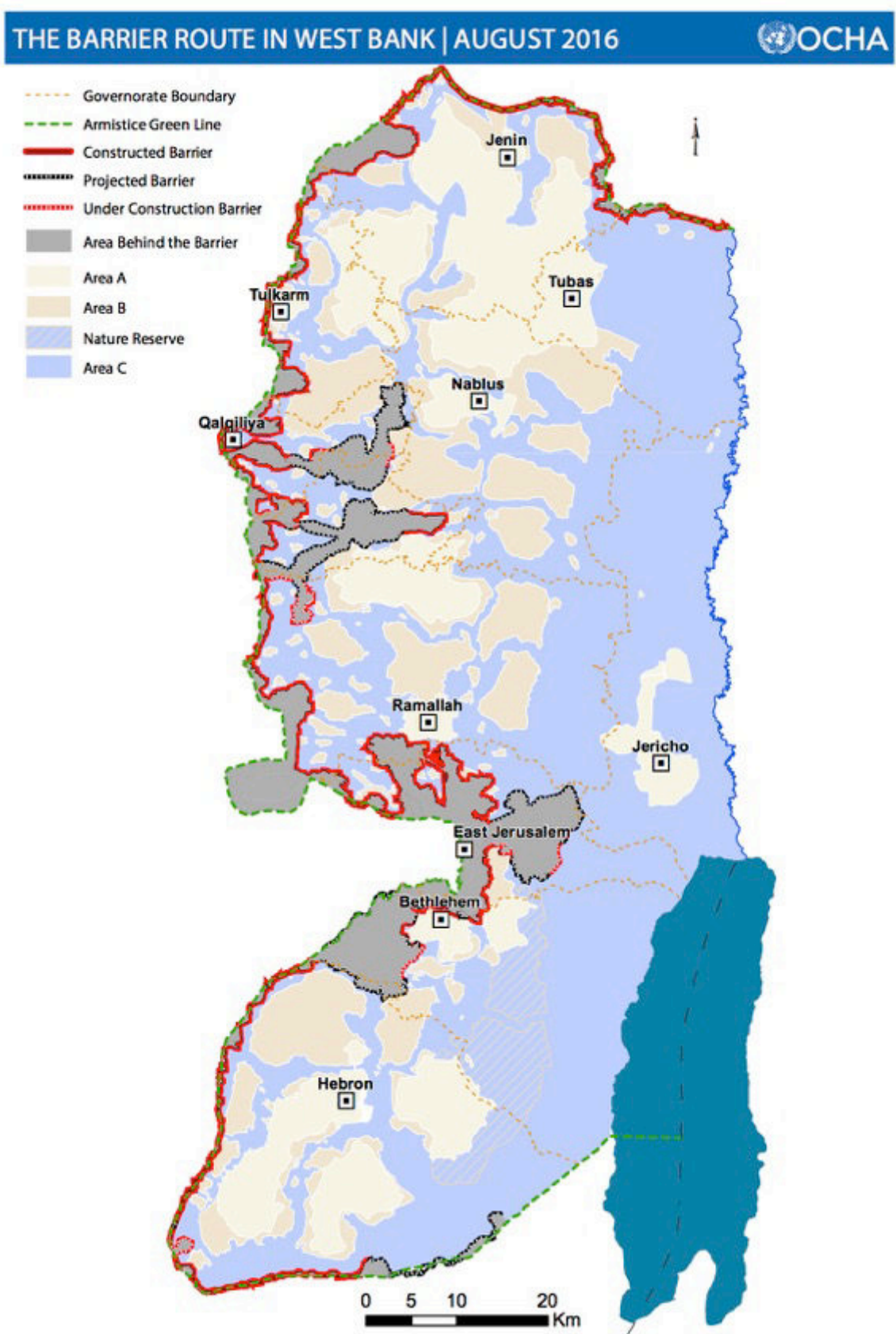
Map I

Map II

Map III – East Jerusalem Ocha Map
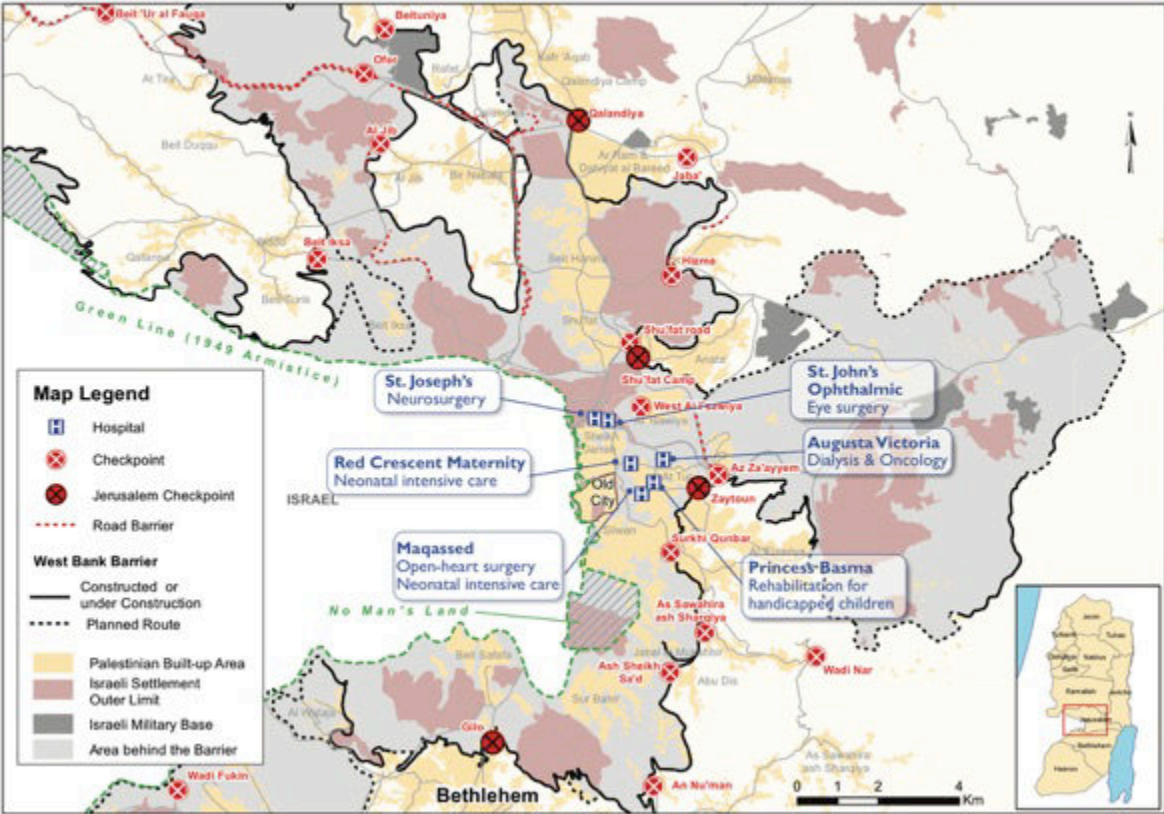
Map IV

The map was made by the Research and Art laboratory - 'De-Colonizer': "Visually, the map uses three colors to represent three major destruction waves: In blue: destruction waves prior to 1948 and the establishment of the State of Israel. In red: destructions during the Nakba (1948). In green: destructions since 1967 that also continues into the future (since are also mapped Palestinian localities under threat of destruction). This is illustrative of the continuity of destruction from the early days of Zionism, bound to continue if there is not power to stop it." Accessed on January 3, http://www.de-colonizer.org For the full version of the map go to: http://media.wix.com/ugd/ee48f0_4a696ef9756a47b88d2df13df168d6d7.pdf

Annex Two – Task of Translation

Kholod, political educator, Jaffa, 2013

וכשאני מגיעה לתל אביב כדי ללמוד, אבא שלי אומר בפירוש, הכל מותר לך לעשות הכל, "פוליטי, אני לא רוצה", "פוליטי זה לא שלנו, זה ווג'ארס, כאב ראש" תלכי תלמדי תצליחי, תחזרי! זה הצפייה. ברור שזה יושב על פחד ועל חשש, ועל על ועל...דברים שהוא רצה כביכול לחסוך מהילדים שלו ממקום ש..ולכן הוא גם לא סיפר. לכן הוא גם לא שיתף. אהה לכם פלסטיני זאת חוויה מאוד קשה. קודם כל המחסום השפתי שבו אתה מכיר את השפה אבל אהה גם כשאתה מדבר אותה אתה מדבר במבטא הערבי שלה, יש מילים שאת לא מבינה, הומור בשפה הזאת את לא מבינה אותו. זאת גם תרבות שאני לא מכירה ואף פעם לא הכרתי.

And when I get to Tel Aviv to study, my father tells me that, "you're allowed to do everything, (but) politics, that I do not want, politics is not ours, it is a Wodga'ars, headache. Go, study and succeed, then come back! That is the expectation. Obviously it's as a result of fear and trepidation, and on, on [...] things he supposedly wanted to save his children from. So he didn't tell, that is way he didn't share that either. [...] Ohh [...] you Palestinians, it's a very difficult experience. First of all there's the language barrier when you know the language but [...] ahh [...] well when you speak it you have an Arab accent, there are words you do not understand, there is of humor that you do not understand. It is also a culture I did not know and had never come across.

טל: ושיח

ושיח וקודים, פעם ראשונה שאני רחוקה מהבית, שפתאום אני יוצאת. פתאום אני אדם עצמאי שמקבל החלטות ופועל שהוא בתוך המרחב שהוא לא ק'. אני זוכרת בשנה א' שלי הייתה האינטיפאדה השנייה ואז אחת הבנות באחת ההרצאות, וזו הייתה הפעם הראשונה שמשהו מהצד השני, וגם אני כמובן, כאילו מגיעה למקום שמנסה להגיד משהו פוליטי. בשנה א' באוניברסיטה. בתוך מערכת החינוך אף אחד לא מדבר איתך על שום דבר.

TD: And discourse [...]

And a discourse and codes, it was the first time I was far from home; all of a sudden I leave (home). Suddenly, I'm an independent person who takes decisions and actions within the space which is not K'. I remember my first year (at university) was during the second intifada. And then one of the girls, in one of the lectures, and it was the first time that

someone from the other side, and I, of course too, like tries to say something political. In the first year at university. Within the education system no one talks to you about anything.

אנחנו לומדים על החגים שלכם, אנחנו עושים בגרות בתנ"ך!! כאילו, אני הייתי אומרת שאנחנו מכירים אתכם יותר מאשר אתם מכירים אותנו, לומדים את השפה שלכם, חגים, תנ"ך ... וגם ההיסטוריה נגמרת במנדט הבריטי. אנחנו לא יודעים, שום דבר אחרי זה ואחנו לומדים אזרחות! להיות אזרחים טובים במדינה הזאת שממשיכה לנהל את עצמה בצורה הזאת שהיא מפלה ומדכאת ומאוד גזענית. כאילו, בתי הספר בעיניי, גם היום ואז הם סוכני חברות לממסד הציוני המדכא. אני גם לימדתי ותכף נגיע לזה, אני גם לימדתי במערכת החינוך וגם עזבתי מהסיבות האידאולוגיות הפוליטיות האלה. אממ ואז אני זוכרת את השם של הבחורה הזאת. אף פעם לא אשכח גם איך היא נראתה קראו לה טל ולמדנו ביחד מבוא לפסיכולוגיה, ואז יום אחד כאילו בלי שום, התראה קודמת, היא שואלת אותי מה אני חושבת על האינטיפאדה על מה שקורה מסביבי. ואני אומרת לה כיבוש זה כיבוש אתם שולטים בעם אחר האם זה מה שאתם רוצים לעשות?להמשיך לעשות?

ואז הבחורה הזאת שמסתכלת עלי ככה ולאורך כל השנה היא מפסיקה לדבר איתי כאילו... גם לא היה לי הרבה מה להגיד חוץ מהמילה כיבוש. איסטיכלאל ששמעתי כל הזמן. מעבר לזה.

We learn about your Hagim (holidays), we take Tanach (Hebrew Bible) for matriculation!! It's like [...] I can say that we know you better than you know us. We learn your language, holidays, Tanach [...] And also history ends with the British mandate, we know nothing after that and we take Citizenship to be good citizens in this country that continues to run itself in this way, discriminates, and oppresses and is very racist. It's like, school in my opinion, then and today are socialization agents for the oppressing Zionist institution. I also taught and I will get to that in a bit, I also taught in the education system and left because of these same ideological, political reasons.

[...] Um [...] and then, I remember the name of this girl. I'll never forget how she looked she was called Tal and we studied together; Introduction to Psychology. Then one day, as if without prior warning, she asks me what I thought of the intifada and what is happening around me. And I tell her that occupation is occupation, you control another people, is that what you want to do? To continue to do?

And then this girl looks at me like that, and then she stopped talking to me like for he whole year [...] I did not have much to say besides the word occupation, Aisticlal that I heard all the time. Beyond that [...]

טל: למה לא היה לך מה להגיד?

כי פוליטית הייתי ממש בתחילת הדרך. כאילו לא...גם לא הייתי אקטיביסטית לא הייתי פעילה פוליטית ליקטתי את הסיפורים על הנרטיב הפלסטיני בלקרוא מתוך ספרים, אנשים אחרים שהם לא מהמשפחה שלי סיפרו,

היו מרצים אחרים שהגיעו, פעילות מחוץ לאוניברסיטה שהלכתי אליה, גם לא הגעתי מבית פוליטי שכיוון ורצה שזה יקרה, אני חושבת, התודעה שלי הפוליטית, החברתית, האקטיסיבטית זה משהו שבעמל בניתי אותו, כאילו זה לא כמו להוולד עכשיו בעזה או רמאללה שאת יודעת מי את כביכול, נגיד. זה לגדול, בתוך מציאות שזה יש לך אזרחות ישראלית, יש לך תעודת זהות כחולה כשאת מסתכלת על תעודת הזהות הכחולה, ואת מסתכלת על עצמך, עצמך, את אומרת, אבל איך יכול להיות? אני פלסטינית ומצד שני אני מקבלת את המסמך הזה ואני נהנת מהפרוויילגיות, אני לא מתנגדת לפריוולוגיות האלה, אני לוקחת אותם ואני משתמשת בהם,אני חייה בתוך המציאות הזאת, אבל אני גם מגדירה את עצמי כפלסטינית, אז מה זה? יש דיסוננס מאוד פסיכולוגי, רגשי, עצום. והוא ממשיך טיפה היום. כאילו זה לא פשוט גם לא פשוט לבוא ולהגיד, אז אני לא ישראלית, אבל מה אני? אם הפלסטינים בגדה המעריבית וגם הפלסטינים בעזה לא חושבים שאני פלסטינית אם בעולם הערבי חושבים שאני בוגדת? אז מה הפלסטיניות של הפלסטינים בתוך ישראל ביחס לפסלטיניות אחרת? האם היא אחרת האם היא שונה? היא צריכה להיות שונה? ואם היא כן שונה אז מה הקשר והזיקה לפלסטינים בתוך הגדה המערבית ובעזה? וגם אלו שיצאו? פליטים דור ראשון, שני, שלישי. שאלות נורא קשות.

TD: Why didn't you have anything to say?

Because politically, I was really at the beginning. It's like, not [...] I was not a political activist, I collected stories about the Palestinian narrative from reading books, and from other people, not my family, who did tell. There were other lecturers who came to the university and I went to activities outside the university. I did not come from a political family that directed and wanted it to happen. I think that my political, social and activist consciousness was developed by my own hard work. It's not as if I was born in Gaza or Ramallah now where you supposedly know who you are. It's to grow up, in a reality where you have Israeli citizenship, a blue ID card. When you look at the blue ID card, and look at yourself, you say, but how can that be? I am a Palestinian, and on the other hand I accept this document and I enjoy privileges. I don't reject those privileges. I take them and I use them. I live in this reality, but I also define myself as a Palestinian, then what am I? There is a huge, emotional, psychological dissonance. It continues a bit today. As if it is not easy just to say, I'm not Israeli, but what am I? If the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Palestinians in Gaza do not think I'm a Palestinian; if the Arab world think I'm a traitor? So what about the Palestinianess " of the Palestinians in Israel in relation to the other Palestinianess? Is it

different? Should it be changed? And is it different? What is the connection to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza? And those who got out? First, second, third generation refugees, very difficult questions.

טל: השאלות האלו תמיד היו לך?או הם באו מאוחר יותר?

הם באו מאוחר יותר אהההה אבל השאלה מי אני, ביחס לתעודת הזהות הכחולה, זה היה תמיד. זה היה פשוט תמיד, בכיתה יב' ברגע שעשיתי, קיבלתי את תעודת הזהות הזאת והייתי חייבת לשאת אותה לכל מקום, זה נכח. אבל אהה כאילו הקשר עם פלסטינים אחרים ולראות בפלסטיניות שלי דפוס אחר לגיטימי של פלסטיניות, שהיא לא סותרת ולא פוסלת כל זהות פלסטינית אחרת, זה משהו כאילו, ממשיך והוא קשה! הוא קשה. גם במיוחד לאור השיח שכל הזמן מאשים אותנו בבגידה ובוגדנות. אהה כמובן, ברגע שהתוודעתי לנרטיב הפלסטיני אני הפכתי להיות קורבן

כי מה הסיפור הפלסטיני מנכיח חוץ מהקול הפסיבי? עכשיו ברור שזה, חשוב, לי היה מאוד קריטי לדעת מה קרה ב1948.

TD: Did you always have those questions or did they come later?

They came later [...] ahh [...] but the question of who I am, with respect to the blue ID card, has always been. It has simply always been. In 12th grade class, once I got it, I had to carry it everywhere. It was always there. But [...] like contact with other Palestinians and see my "Palestinianess" as a different legitimate pattern of Palestinianess, which does not contradict and reject any other Palestinian identity. It's really really very hard! Especially given the discourse, which continuously accuses us of treason and treachery. Oh, of course, as soon as I became acquainted with the Palestinian narrative I became a victim What makes the Palestinian narrative foreign voice passive? Now it is clear that it is crucial. It was of paramount importance that I know what happened in 1948.

טל:איך התוודעת לזה?

זה יותר קריאה בספרים באינטרנט וגם סיפורים אישיים. את יודעת, המשפחה של דוד שלי הייתה בטולכראם ואז את יודעת, כשרצו להשתתף בחתונות אז הם לא יכלו להגיעֹ נגיד. כשמת מישהו, היו צריכים לאסוף 5 תעודות זהות, ושמישהו יסע ברכב ריק כדי להביא אותם משם, אבל למה? למה הם לא יכולים להגיע לפה? כאילו, למה הם צריכים את התעודות זהות שלנו כדי להגיע אלינו, ומה באינתיפאדה יש מצור שם? ואני זוכרת, אני חושבת שזאת

הייתה האינטיפאדה השלישית, נראה לי. אממ הם הגיעו מטול כרם אלינו והיו אצלינו 3 חודשים. ואז כאילו פתאום הבנתי

TD: How were you exposed to it?

More reading books online and personal stories. You know, my uncle's family was from Tulkarm, and then you know, when he wanted to attend weddings, they could not get there. When someone died, they had to collect five ID cards, and someone would go in an empty vehicle to bring them back, but why? Why couldn't they come here? Like, why do they need our papers to reach us, and what, during the Intifada is there a siege there? And I remember, I think it was the third intifada, it seems to me. [...] Um [...] they came from Tulkarm to us and spent three months with us. Then as suddenly I realized [...]

טל: מתי זה היה?

אינטיפאדה שלישית. זה היה בב כששרון נכנס ל..

טל: שלישית?

כן.

טל: השנייה כאילו, השלישית?

נראה לי...

טל: אהה כששרון נכנס ב2000?

כן. אז הם הגיעו אלינו, וזאת לא הייתה הפעם הראשונה שם הגיעו, ואת יודעת,

טל: ואז הם באו אליכם?

חודשיים כזה. עם כל הבגדים וכל הזה, פשוט חיו איתנו, פשוט לא יכלו להיות שם, תחת מצור. כי אישתו של דודי, פחדה שהבנים, יקחו אותם לבתי כלא ולא יצאו משם בחיים שלהם. אז כאילו, זה נכח,

TD: When was that?

The third intifada. It was when Sharon went into [...]

TD: Third intifada?

Yes.

TD: You mean the second [...]

I think [...]

TD: Ahh, when Sharon went in, in 2000 [...]

Yes. That's when they came to us, and it wasn't the first time they came to us, and you know

TD: And then they came to you?

For two months or so. With all the clothes and all that, just lived with us. They could not simply be there, under siege. My uncle's wife was afraid for the boys, that they would take them to prison and that they would never be let out. So it was like present.

לא עבר תהליך פוליטיזציה זה של אוקיי, בואי נבין, ממסדית מה קורה פה. איזה מנגנונים ממשיכים לדכא ואיזה זה פועל כאן, איך זה נקרא כיבוש אבל אחר בתוך ישראל לעומת הכיבוש שקיים שם. ככול שהעמקתי באיזה שהוא שלב גם הבנתי זה להתחרות על הקורבנות, זה לא לבוא ולהגיד :"רגע, איזה זהות יש פה? איזה זהויות יש פה?" אם הזהות הפלסטינית אמורה להרחיב את הקווים והמעגלים שלה כדי להכיל, כי הנכבה לא קרתה רק מהפנים החוצה, גם קרתה בפנים פנים. יש פליטים פנים. אתם מכירים את התופעה הזאת? כאילו החיפוש אחרי הלגיטימציה הזאת בתוך, בפנים פלסטיני היא נורא קשה.

It was not a political process of "okay, let's understand, what's going on (here) from an institutional perspective. What mechanisms continue to suppress and what works here; it is called occupation but in Israel compared to the other occupation that exists there. The more I dwelled on it, at some point I realized that it is competing for the victims. Rather than saying: "Wait a minute, what identity is here? Which identities are here?" If the Palestinian identity is bound to expand its lines and circles to contain, because the Nakba did not happen from the inside to the outside, but, also occurred from within. Refugees have a cycle. Are you aware of this phenomenon? As if this search for legitimacy within, inside Palestine is very hard.

טל: עם מי זה נעשה? את זוכרת?

זה נעשה לרוב עם אנשים שפגשתי נגיד בשנתים שהייתי באנגליה.

לא העזתי להגיד שיש לי תעודת זהות כחולה.

טל: מתי גרת באנגליה? אחרי האוניברסיטה?

ב2009 הייתי, אחרי התואר הראשון. סליחה שאני קופצת לך.

טל: לא לא לא, זה בסדר גמור. אז במפגש הזה באנגליה עם פלסטינים אחרים..

אחרים

טל: פלסטינים מהגדה או מעזה?

פלסטינים מסעודיה, מירדן, שהם דור שני או שלישי של הורים שיצאו משכם, מעזה, מחיפה מיפו. נגיד ויצאו לירדן, יצאו לסעודיה, ואז כאילו הילדים האלו. הילדים?! הסטודנטים האלה מגיעים את יודעת, לאוניברסיטאות כדי לעשות תארים phd ו MAs ואז את כאילו פוגשת אותם ואז לחלק העזתי להגיד שאני פלסטינים עם תעודת זהות כחולה, כי אף אחד לא רוצה להבין את זה. גם אף אחד לא רוצה להבין את זה, קל להם להתייחס אלינו כישראלים. ערבים של ישראל. הם משייכים אותנו למדינה. לא מעניין אותך לחקור ולהבין. שזה כאילו שלעצמו מקומם. ולחשוב שפלסטיניות זה משהו אחד.   זה עוד יותר מקומם, ולחשוב שלהיות פלסטיני זה אומר שיש לך אח שהיד, ועוד שני אחים בכלא ועוד שלושה אולי אה אהה שיושבים על כיסאות גלגלים. כאילו פשוט, כאילו נמאס מהתרבות אהה שממ מאדירה את המוות ומקדשת אותו, וחושבת שרק מי שמת, ומי שפסיק, מפסיק לנשום, הוא פלסטיני.

TD: Who was it done with? Do you remember?

It was mostly done with people, let's say, during the two years I spent in England. I never dared to say that I had a blue identity card.

TD: When did you live in England? After university?

It was in 2009 after completing my undergraduate degree. Sorry that I am going off the subject.

TD: No, no, no that's fine. So then you met up with other Palestinians in England.

Others.

TD: Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza?

Palestinians from Saudi-Arabia, from Jordan, who are second, third generation of parents who left Nablus, Gaza, Haifa, Yaffa [...] Let's say they went to Jordan, went to Saudi Arabia, then these children. Children? These students come, you know, to universities to do PhD

degrees and MAs then you meet them then to some of them I dared to say that I am a Palestinian with a blue ID card, because no one wants to understand it. Even though no one wants to understand this, it is easy for them to relate to us as Israelis. Israeli Arabs. They pigeonhole us as a country. It does not interest you to explore and understand it. It's annoying as it is. To think that Palestinianess is one thing is even more outrageous. To think that being a Palestinian means that you have a martyr brother, and two brothers in prison and three maybe [...] uh uh [...] sitting in wheelchairs. Actually, actually it's enough of this culture of [...] aah [...] glorifying and sanctifying this death, and only those who stop breathing, are Palestinians.

טל: זה הסומוד?

זה השיח הפלסטיני, זה באמת השיח הפלסטיני, כאילו אתה נחשב, פלסטיני ככל שאתה , כאילו ביחד לאובדן שלך. ככל שאתה, את יודעת..אז סבבה. תקשיבו, אין לי אח שהיד, וגם לא יהיה לי.

טל: יש לזה מילה בערבית, לא? סומוד?

סומוד, סומוד. כן.

טל: זה חלק מזה?

אני אומרת משהו אחר. כאילו,

המילה סומוד היא מילה מאוד יפה. אני מדבר על existance נוכחות אחרת, שחייבת להיות לגיטימית. כאילו אם אני מקבלת הפלסטיני העזתי שמגדיר את עצמו פלסטיני והexistance והנוכחות של הפלסטיני מרמאללה ואף אחד לא שואל אותו למה, לא מתשאלים את הזהות

טל: זה מובן מאליו שהוא פלסטיני.

כן!

אצל רוב הפלסטינים בתוך ישראל אנחנו תמיד תחת סימן שאלה, כי ההנחה שיש לנו קשר עם המדינה, אנחנו מקושרים עם המדינה הזאת. אנחנו מסכימים עם משהו, אנחנו לא מספיק מתנגדים. אנחנו לא זורקים אבנים, מה קרה? כאילו באמת? אהה לא זורקים אבנים, אין לנו שהידים, איזה קבלות יש לנו אל מול העולם הערבי? אין לנו קבלות, אנחנו חלק מהממסד הזה איכשהו. אני יכולה להגיד שגם אין מאבק פנים פלסטיני. היום יש כמה מאבקים פנים פלסטינים וברור שנרקם משהו שאני חושבת שהוא אחר, אבל אז כשאני הייתי באוניברסיטה באמת עד אהה

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עד לאחרונה, כאילו מתי המאבקים התחילו ביפו? וגם בגליל? היו אירועים כמו יום האדמה ב75 וגם ארועי אוקטובר שבה המדינה לימדה את הפלסטינים אזרחי המדינה לקח. שאם תרימו את הראש זה מה שיקרה. נרצחו 9 פלסטינים אזרחי המדינה. זה לא שלא היו נסיונות להתקומם ולהתנגד.

TD: Is it the Sumoud?

That's the Palestinian discourse, that is really the Palestinian discourse, as if you are considered, whatever kind of Palestinian you are, as if together with your loss. As long as you know, it's ok. Listen, I don't have a martyr brother and I won't have one.

TD: It has a name in Arabic, No? Sumoud?

Sumoud, Sumoud. Yes

TD: Is this part of it?

I am saying something different. Actually, Sumoud is a beautiful word. I am talking about existence, a different presence that has to be legitimate. As if I accept the Palestinian, I dared

TD: It's obvious that he's Palestinian.

Yes. For most Palestinians in Israel, we are always a question mark, because the assumption that we have a relationship with the state, we are linked with this country. We agree with something, we do not sufficiently oppose. We do not throw stones, what happened? Like really? Ah do not throw stones, we have no martyrs,

What do we have to show the Arab world? We do not have receipts; we are somehow part of this establishment. I can say that there is no Palestinian interior struggle.

Today there are some struggles Palestinians face clearly worked out something that I think is different, but

So when I was at university […] ahh […] really up until recently, when the struggles began in Jaffa? And the Galilee? There were events like Land Day in '75 and October events in which the state taught the Palestinian citizens of Israel a lesson. If you lift your heads this is what will happen. They killed nine Palestinian citizens of the State. It's not that there were attempts to rise up and resist.

טל: ההתקוממות הזאת, או המחיר שאזרחי ישראל הערבים, באמת איך זה השפיע על השיח הזה שאת מדברת עליו?

אנחנו עדין די פרווה, באמת (צחוק) אבל, הוא סימן משהו פוליטי אחר השיח הפנים פלסטיני בתוך ישראל. פתאום הפלסטינים אזרחי המדינה הבינו שזאת לא המדינה שלהם.

טל: ב2000? עד אז...?

עד אז כאילו הדרוזים התגייסו, הבדואים גם הלכו במאסות, אהה גם הרבה פלסטינים במשולש אהה אהה כאילו משהו בסבטקסט כאילו, זה אבן דרך, היא שברה את היחסים האלה. חשפה את הכפילות ויחס של המדינה לפלסטינים, ובעצם אמרהף אוקיי "אנחנו לא אזרחים" אם היד קלה על ההדק, היא קלה על ההדק. זה לא משנה אם אתה באום אל פחם, או אתה בחיפה, או ביפו או אם אתה ברמאללה זאת אותה יד.

הכובש הוא אותו כובש. אחרי שסיימתי. אז זהו, מה שרציתי להגיד, אני חושבת שעד שסיימתי תואר ראשון די הייתי, את יודעת, בתוך בפלסטיניות הלאומית.

TD: How did this uprising or the price Israeli Arab citizens paid, really affect the dialogue that you're talking about?

We're still pretty far, really (laughter) But, it's is a sign of something different in the internal political Palestinian discourse in Israel. Palestinian citizens of Israel suddenly realized that this is not their country.

TD: In 2000? Till then?

Until then the Druze went to the army, the Beduin went en masse, even some Palestinians from the triangle as if there is something in the subtext as if it's a milestone which broke these relations. It exposed the duplicity and the state ratio of Palestinians and in fact I said, "Okay. We are not civilians" if they are trigger-happy, they are quick on the trigger. It does not matter if you're in [...] umm [...] al-Fahm, Haifa or Jaffa or Ramallah it's the same hand. The occupier is the same occupier. After I finished. So this is what I wanted to say, I think by the time I finished my bachelor's degree, it was enough, you know, in the national Palestinianness.

Hila, teacher, Jerusalem, 2013

הבעיה היא שיש כיבוש והבעיה היא להפך שהוא כל כך נעים כל כך מסודר יחסית כל כך מעט אלימות, יחסית לכיבוש יחסית של שתי דקות של ארצות הברית בתוך עירק שהוא מצליח להמשיך בנחת 60 שנה ללא בעיה בכלל ורוב רוב היהודים הישראלים כולל אני עד לא מזמן חושבים את עצמנו לממש אנשים בסדר, זה הקולוניאליזם שאנחנו לא יוצאים ממנו, "אני במדינה שלי בוודאי שלהרביץ לילד זה דבר רע" אבל עצם זה שאני במדינה של,י שמה המחלה אהה אהה, הלא הלא שלא שחשוכת מרפא, זה אני בעצמי כרגע אני עוברת התנקות גמילה ממקולוניאליזם, בסדר?

The problem is the occupation and the problem is the opposite because it is so pleasant, so organized in comparison and there is almost no violence, compared to an occupation compared to two minutes of the United States inside Iraq that it succeeds to continue quietly for 60 years with no problems at all and most of the Jews in Israel including myself until not long ago consider ourselves to very righteous people, the colonialism that we don't get out of, "I'm inside my country surely hitting a kid is a bad thing" but the fact that I'm in my country.

טל: איך את עושה את זה?

לא יודעת להגיד לך אם אני עוברת גמילה, אני לא יודעת להגיד לך אם אני רוצה בכלל לעבור גמילה כי יש לי רגשות נורא מבולבלים, הרגשות שלי מאוד מאוד מבולבלים, אבל אממ אני יותר ויותר מבינה שציונות זה כמו להגיד אנטישמיות! זה מילה רעה, ציונות הינה מילה רעה! ציונות זה לא אהבת ציון, אני מקווה שאהבת ציון זה עדין בסדר, ציונות

TD: How do you manage to do that?

I don't know if I can tell you I am going through weaning, I don't know if I can tell you that I even want to wean, because I have very mixed feelings. My feelings are very confused. But I understand more and more that Zionism is like saying Anti-Semitism! It is a bad word. Zionism is a bad word! I hope that the love of Zion is still ok.

טל: את זה עוד לא ביררת?

את זה עוד לא ביררתי עם עצמי אבל אהבת ציון, זה בסדר שאדם יהיה לו איזה משאת נפש אדמה קדושה אבל אהה

ואני ואני מאמינה בקדושת האדמה ואני מאמינה באהבת ציון, ו אבל בכל זאת ו וציונות פירושו הכ.. מדינה יהודית זה כמו אהה אהה זה כמו להגיד כושים למכירה, להגיד מדינה יהודית זה זה מגונה כמו להגיד כושים למכירה,

TD: That you haven't checked yet?

No, that I have not yet figured out with myself, but love for Zion, it is ok that a person has a heart desire, a sacred ground (land), but and I, and I believe in sacred ground (land), and I believe in love for Zion, but having said that Zionism means Jewish state and that's like saying negroes for sale, saying Jewish state its offensive like saying negroes for sale.

טל: אז איך הבנת שקולוניאליזה זה ציונות וציונות זאת מילה רעה?

(שקט) האמתי שבזכות טלי, רק בזכות טלי הבנתי את זה. טלי חברה שלי מקידום נוער, אחרי שעזבתי את קידום נוער אהה נפגשתי איתה כמה פעמים, אני לא יודעת לא הכרתי את הדעות שלה אפילו הייתה נראית לי איזה טמבלולה כזאת, לא ידעתי שיש בה איזה אקטיביסטית מחתרתית (צחוק) וווגם כן היא לא ממש סיפרה לי, תשמעי איזה שמאלנית אני, פשוט כל פעם שנפגשתי איתה מצאתי את עצמי מגינה על מדינת ישראל מול עיתונאים זרים עם האנגלית הגרועה שלי כאילו כל מיני (צחוק) כל פעם שיצאתי איתה לבלות, אהה וכל שניה היא שואלת, אני מודה שאני לא בן אדם שמקבל תקשורת בבב, אין לי כוחות נפש לקרוא מאמרים מחקרים ועיתונים, עיתון משמש אצלי אם אני רוצה שאבוקדו יבשיל או משהו כזה, עיתון זה לא דבר יעיל בעיניי

TD: So how did you understand that colonialism is Zionism and that Zionism is a bad word?

(Quiet) the truth is that thanks to Tali I understood that. Tali my friend from 'Kidum Noar' (youth promotion), after I left there I met with her a few times I didn't know her opinions, and she seemed to be a real dummy I didn't know that she has an inner underground activist (laughter) and she didn't really tell me, listen how leftist I am, every time I met with her I found myself protecting the State of Israel with my horrible English in front of foreign journalists. I admit that I'm not a person who accepts the media I don't have emotional strength to read articles, newspapers and researches. The only way I use newspaper is to ripen avocados. I don't think the newspaper is efficient.

טל: אף פעם לא היה

אף פעם לא היה. אני אוהבת להאזין אני צריכה להאזין, אני אוהבת להאזין, אני יותר ויותר מבינה שבאמת הבחירות הטבעיות שלי הן תמיד טובות, באמת בערוץ *10* לבחור את קירשינבאום זה הכי נכון שיש, הבעיה היא שזה מה שטלי מטפטפת לי כבר *100* שנה על הראש, כבר שלוש שנים, איזה שלוש שנים, "ערוץ *10* זה לא

תקשורת!" זה לא תקשורת, אני לא ברמת מתחילה לקרוא חדשות באנגלית, אני לא כזאת חרוצה מה אני אעשה?!

TD: It never was?

Never was. I need preaches, I like to listen, I realize more and more that really, the natural choices of mine are always good, really channel 10 selects Kirshenbaum because it is the best choice, the problem is that this is what Tali has been telling me for a 100 years, for three years, about three years, "channel 10 is not media!" It is not media, I am not at the beginner level to read news in English, I'm not that diligent. What can I do?

טל: למה זה לא תקשורת?

כי כי זה תקשורת אבל זה תקשורת חד צדדית וזה נכון, תקשורת יהודית, ישראלית ציונית שעושה את עצמה כאילו גם יש בו ביקורת על הכיבוש אבל היא לא, היא לא, זה לא, אז אני אז א' היא כל הזמן היא מציפה אותי בידיעות אני כבר 3 שנים אני כבר לא טורחת לפתוח את כל המיילים שלה אני קוראת רק את הכותרת, הרסו בית בנבי.. בלהבלהבלה אני קוראת את הכותרות לפעמים נכנסת אני יותר ויותר מבינה א' שיש מלא אירועים זה לא ישר נפל לי האסימון שהציו..גם עכשיו אני לא בטוחה ש..אני לא בטוחה..תדעי לך שיש לי משבר זהות אמיתי פנימי עם עצמי כולל עם אהה אהה דתיות שלי עם היהודיות שלי כי אני נורא רוצה להיות דתייה באיזה סוג של דת כל שהיא ורצוי שזה יהיה יהודי ונורא קשה להיות יהודי מאמין בלי להיות ימני, צריך ממש לבחור בקפידה את הרבנים שאתה מאזין להם וגם אז הם מקריאים לך את הטקסט ואומרים לא, שאומרים להשמיד את עמלק מתכוונים להשמיד את העמלקיות שבתוככך (מעלה את הקול בציניות) כאילו גם אז צריך כל הזמן לעשות כאילו אתה מתעלם מ90 אחוז מהטקסט, אני במשבר זהות בשנתיים האחרונות זה שובר אותי נפשית, זה קשה לי ריגשית עם עצמי, זה נעים להיות פטריוטית, זה נעים להיות אדם שאוהב את המדינה שלו, זה נעים להיות, בתקופות שאני חשה פטריאוטיזם בתקופות שלי בחיים שלי שחשתי פטריאוטיזם חשתי יותר טוב עם עצמי

TD: Why isn't it media?

Because because it is media, but its only one side of it and its right, Jewish media, Israeli Jewish that acts as if it also has criticism on occupation but it doesn't, it doesn't, it isn't [...] because of A' who sends me lots of information. I haven't opened her mails for at least three years. I just read the titles. She really doesn't understand anything; you should know that I have an identity crisis which includes my religious connection with Judaism. I really want to be religious in some way and would like to be Jewish but it's very difficult. A believing Jew without being right wing, you have to carefully choose the rabbis who you want to listen to

and also it needs to be the right text. However, one needs to ignore at least 90% of the text. I've had an identity crisis for the last two years and its mentally draining me. It feels good to be patriotic and it's nice to be a person who loves his country. When I was patriotic life was much easier.

טל: מה נעים בזה?

(שקט) אתה כאילו, אתה אוהב משהו ואתה גם נורא גאה שאתה אוהב אותו וגם הציבור נורא אוהב אותך על זה שאתה אוהב אותו, הייתי גאה בדנה אינטרנשונל באורווייזיון, כחול לבן לקנות כחול לבן, אהה אהה

טל: זאת תחושת שייכות?

זאת תחושת שייכות תחושה שאני חלק ממממכן כן בדיוק שייכות לא צריך אהה

טל: ועכשיו?

תלושה אני גם לא שייכת לשמאלנים ארוכי השיער, הלא מסתפרים האלה שישימו קצת בוטוקס מה זה? אני גם לא שייכת לאסתר המטופחת הזאת שמתנהגת כמו מלכת אנגליה ולא יוצאת מהבית בלי מונית, אני לא שייכת לכלום גם לאף שמאלני כאילו אני אני, אני לא מוצאת את עצמי אני צריכה להשתכנע שאני בדעה מסויימת אני לא מגובשת, ועדיין כל מה שטלי אומרת , טלי מבחינתי, תמיד תמיד שאני מאזינה לדברים שלה, היא נחשבת בעיניי כאנטישמית כי

TD: What's nice about it?

(silence) You love something and you are also terribly proud that you love it, and also the public terribly loves you for you loving it. I was proud of Dana International at the Eurovision, blue and white buy only blue and white, aha

TD: Is it a sense of belonging?

It is a sense of belonging, a feeling that I am part of yes, yes belonging, I don't need

TD: And now?

I'm detached. I don't belong to the long haired lefties, and I don't belong to the glamorous E' that acts as if she's the queen of England. I don't belong anywhere, not to any leftie I, I, I, I, can't find myself, I need to convince myself of a particular opinion. I'm not sure of myself and still everything Tali says, Tali in my opinion, I always always listen to her but in my opinion

she is an Anti-Semite.

טל: למרות שאת מרגישה שלמדת ממנה הרבה?

המון! המון למדתי ממנה כי קודם כל אני עדיין חושבת את זה, אני עדיין חושבת שהיא חד צדדית, דרך אגב הרבה פעמים מאשימים את השמאלנים שהם .."יופי שאתה מקסים אז תפסיק להיות חד צדדי מה עם הצד של אה בית שלך" כאילו?! וכלפי אהה אהה טלי אני תמיד, אהה אני לא חושבת שהיא עושה את זה מרוע אני חושבת שהיא עושה את זה מטוב לב צרוף, אבל היא קצת חד צדדית, ברור שיותר כיף לאהוב, ברור שיותר כיף, ברור שהלב יותר אהה נחמר על ילד ערבי מאיזה ילד מתנחל, מה לעשות קשה להיות כל כך עצוב על ילד מתנחל שש שש שלא יודעת מה, שנפצע, מאשר ילד ערבי שנפצע, זה ברור שהלב יותר עם הילד הערבי, זה ברור, ברור

TD: Even though you feel that you learned a lot from her?

Loads! I learned a lot from her because firstly, I still think she is one sided, by the way many times they accuse the lefties that they are [...] "Okay great you are wonderful so stop being so one sided, what about your house?" Like about Tali I always think she's I don't think she means to be offensive I think she does it because she's very kind but she is a little one sided, of course its nicer to love of course your heart goes out more to an Arab child than a settler child. What can we do, its so hard to sad about a settler child. Obviously ones heart goes out to a wounded Arab child. Of course of course

טל: למה זה ברור

זה התמימות זה החוסר סימטריה

טל: למה זה ברור?

כי הילד המתנחל, יש יותר כוחות לצידו, כולם איתו, הוא גם מן ברבור מן מלכת יופי ברבורה שנפצעה הוא בכלל לא בצד שהתאמץ

טל: אז מה זה עניין של יחסי כוח?

(שקט ארוך)

כן הלב יותר עם הצד המסכן כאילו והצד הפלסטינאי הוא הצד המסכן בגדול! אהה

אבל בלי קשר למסכן תמיד חשבתי שהצד הפלסטינאים הוא הצד היותר מיסכן וקל יותר לרחם על הצד הפלסטינאי

TD: Why is it clear?

It's the innocence it's the lack of symmetry

TD: Why is it clear?

Because a settler child has more support, everyone's with him, he's also a swan that was injured.

TD: So what is it about the power?

I always thought that the Palestinians were poorly treated and it's easy to feel sorry for them.

So one's heart leans more towards the underdog and the Palestinian is definitely the underdog here, big time! *But anyway, I always thought the Palestinian side is the more pitiful side and it is easier to feel pity for the Palestinian side.*

טל: גם לפני השינויים הזה של לפני שנתיים?

כן כן כן אף פעם לא ראיתי מתנחלת מנענעת עגלה והרגשתי כמיהה ללל לא יודעת מה, שליבי אל תינוקיה הרכים. יותר ליבי אל תינוקיה הרכים של אחת אהה שש שסוחבת ילד ביד בילד ועוד איזה שניים ואין לה עגלה אפילו, אין לה עגלה של שילב, יותר ברור תמיד מאז ומתמיד, לא צריך עיניים הייתי בת 5 וראיתי את זה זה טבעי נולדתי עם זה עם זה זה הבנה הזאתי. אני לא מבינה איך יש אנשים שלא נולדו עם ההבנה הזאת בכלל איך הם לא רואים את זה כאילו, אבל להגיד הוא יותר צודק כי הוא יותר מסכן, אז אני משתדלת כן לחפש את הצדק גם כשאני בפעילות של תעיישות, תעיוש הוא ארגון מאוד נקי מטמטום, ממס שפתיים, קשה לי לא לזהות קצת מס שפתיים, אנחנו כאילו עומדים ועובדים, אנחנו כאילו עומדים ומסתכלים.

TD: Even before the change two years ago?

Yes Yes Yes I have never seen a settler woman pushing a pram and felt yearning. I don't know that my heart goes to newborn babies being carried by their mother without a beautiful pram from Shelav. One doesn't need eyes, when I was 5 I saw it was natural, I was born with the understanding. I do not understand how there are people who are not born with this understanding at all. They do not see it like me, but say it is more than just the poor, so I try to seek justice even when I'm in Ta'ayush, which is a very clean organization. I do not recognize lip service. We stand and work, we stand and watch.

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Résumé

Vers une conscience radicale de libération: Récits palestiniens et israéliens de trans/formation décoloniale

Au cœur de la présente thèse se trouve la quête inachevée d'une/de conscience(s) de libération au moyen d'une pensée radicale et critique. Le savoir épistémologique développé par bell hooks et Paulo Freire quant à la transformation de conscience en vue d'une libération a été le premier guide dans cette recherche. L'étude empirique exprime ce que signifie une trans/formation de conscience politique, pour les participant.e.s – plusieurs acteur.e.s politiques palestinien.ne.s et israélien.ne.s situé.e.s à l'intérieur des frontières géographiques de l'Etat d'Israël. À travers de longs entretiens sous la forme de conversations, cette recherche ambitionne de comprendre les voies biographiques qui conduisent les participant.e.s à opérer des performances contre-hégémoniques dans leur vie quotidienne.

La conscience coloniale est en rapport avec des questions de savoir et de pouvoir et est liée, d'après les participant.e.s, à une position hégémonique de pouvoir, de violence et d'arrogance. Cette recherche montre que si le sionisme est défini par tou.te.s les participant.e.s comme un fondement de l'oppression et de la domination institutionnalisées, il ne détermine pas de la même manière le destin des participant.e.s juif.ve.s israélien.ne.s ashkénazes, juif.ve.s israélien.ne.s mizrahi.e.s et palestinien.ne.s. Les récits de libération des participant.e.s impliquent une pensée critique suivie, qui examine constamment la réalité et dévoile la vérité sur le monde. De même, il semble que tou.te.s les participant.e.s, tout en se trouvant à différentes étapes de leur processus de libération, comprennent la trans/formation de leur conscience politique, et ainsi leur quête de libération des structures coloniales de la pensée, comme une quête de savoir objectif authentiquement féministe.

Les récits montrent que le fait d'abandonner des positions binaires permet une compréhension complexe de la réalité et du propre point de vue du sujet dans cette réalité, et est essentiel pour le(s) processus de libération. ? Comment peut-on se frayer un chemin vers des manières alternatives de vivre ensemble ? Ces questions et d'autres, tout aussi vitales, sont au fondement du présent travail.

Mots-clés : Colonialité, conscience radicale, libération, trans/formation, palestinien.ne.s/ israélien.ne.s, phénoménologie critique, recherche biographique, bell hooks, Paolo Freire

Abstract

At the center of this dissertation stands the unending quest for liberation consciousness(es) through radical and critical thought. The epistemological knowledge developed by bell hooks and Paulo Freire, on consciousness transformation towards liberation has been the primary guide in this research. The empirical study expresses what trans/formation of political consciousness means to these participants - several Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli political actors within the geographical boundaries of the State of Israel. Through long conversational interviews, the research strives to understand the biographical paths which lead the participants to counter-hegemonic performances in their daily life.

Colonial consciousness relates to questions both of knowledge and of power and is connected, according to the participants, to a hegemonic position of power, violence and arrogance. The research has shown that while Zionism is defined by all participants as a basis to oppression and to institutionalized domination, it does not determine the fate of the Ashkenazi Jewish-Israelis, the Mizrahi Jewish-Israelis and Palestinian participants in the same way. The participants' accounts of liberation entail ongoing critical thought that constantly examines reality and unveils the truth about the world. Likewise, it seems that all participants, while in different stages within their processes of liberation, understand the trans/formation of their political consciousness and thus their quest for liberation from colonial structures of thought as a quest for genuine feminist objective knowledge.

The accounts have shown that stepping out of binary positions, enables a complex understanding of reality and of one's own standpoint within it, and are crucial within liberation processes(es). How can colonial consciousness be undone within the Israeli structure of coloniality? How can people work their way towards alternative ways of living together? These questions and some other vital ones, are at the basis of this work.

Key words: Coloniality, radical consciousness, liberation, trans/formation, Palestinian/Israeli, critical phenomenology, biographical research, bell hooks, Paolo Freire