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POETRY OF RESISTANCE AND THE ROOTS OF BLACK AND
PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY**

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“BLACK INTIFADA’: BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT, PALESTINIAN POETRY OF
RESISTANCE AND THE ROOTS OF BLACK AND PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY”

A Dissertation Presented

by

NADIA ALAHMED

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2019

W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies

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DEDICATION

To my grandmother, Faina Ivanova, who taught me to always speak against injustice.

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I would like to extend sincere gratitude to my mentors and advisers: John Bracey and James Smethurst, who guided and supported my research for over a decade. I am also grateful for the unwavering support on behalf of Keith Feldman, his input and invaluable expertise. I would also like to thank Mazen Naous, who joined the team of these outstanding scholars at the latter stage of my dissertation, but made a tremendous impact on some of the most complex aspects of this project.

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I am grateful for my father's support and faith in me, and for my mother's prayers.

Finally, I am thankful for Black and Palestinian artists, activists and politicians of the 1960s and 1970s, their endless talent, tireless struggle and courage to dream and fight for a better world.

ABSTRACT

‘BLACK INTIFADA’: BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT, PALESTINIAN POETRY OF RESISTANCE AND THE ROOTS OF BLACK AND PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY

MAY 2019

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This dissertation is an interdisciplinary contrapuntal study of Black Arts, Black Power Movements, Palestinian Poetry of Resistance and Palestinian Nationalist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It begins with an examination of shared historical, political, cultural, ideological and aesthetic forces that propelled the emergence of these movements, parallels between their strategies and goals. It moves on to analyze Black discourse on the Palestine/Israeli conflict from 1948, until the 1967 War, using W.E.B. Du Bois and James Baldwin as models. It reveals how its key characteristics premeditated the transformation of this discourse with the emergence of the Black Arts and Black Power Movement in mid-1960s. The dissertation shows that the resonance between Black and Palestinian radical movements of the decade triggered the emergence of Black solidarity Movement with Palestinians post 1967 War. It examines major manifestations of this movement and how it affected articulations of Black and Palestinian identity, internationalist ideology and discourse and vision of liberation.

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CHAPTER I
COMMON IDEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BLACK ARTS
MOVEMENT AND PALESTINIAN POETRY OF RESISTANCE

Introduction

There is a country in your heart where story
lives
And poem comes from
No one can occupy it
Suheir Hammad

In many ways, the poetry and artistic philosophy of both, Black Arts Movement and Palestinian Poetry of Resistance (PPR), was a direct response to powerful ideological forces of anti-colonialism formulated by Frantz Fanon, Non-Aligned Movement, various types of Marxism, Black and Arab nationalisms as articulated by Edward Blyden, Marcus Garvey and Jamal Abdunnasser. Both were also under influence of different forms of Islam and Islamic ideology and culture. Successful revolutions that swept across African and Asian countries as well as Cuba along with the aforementioned revolutionary ideologies molded the political counterparts of BAM and PPR: Black Power and the Palestinian Liberation movements. This kind of intimacy between the artistic and the political movements effectively shaped the philosophy, strategies and goals of BAM and PPR. The string of victories over the Western hegemony, in its different forms, breathed life in the poetic craft of Palestinian and Black artists, who chose art as their key tool in re-creating these victories at home. With poetry as a revolutionary weapon, they were seeking to transform their communities and educate those communities about the potential of liberation and the nature of the struggle for it. They were seeking to find the

kind of language and the kind of groundbreaking aesthetic to not only nurture emotional needs of their people, but educate and endow them with tools and skills to make liberation and ultimately, sovereignty possible. The following chapter explores the defining ideological forces behind BAM and PPR that in turn defined their artistic philosophy and goals. The similarities between these forces are not only responsible for their shared aesthetic characteristics, but also reveal the reasons behind the collaborations and acts of solidarity between these movements.

The following chapter is going to highlight major ideological forces that shaped the contours of BAM and PPR. Based on this shared ideological background, it will reveal why studying the two movements contrapuntally will broaden and deepen understanding of each. Moreover, it will highlight the fact that BAM and PPR are two powerful, intertwined manifestations of a similar artistic and political phenomena that swept the globe during the turbulent decade between 1965 and 1975.

The ideological comparison of BAM and PPR and their political counterparts, the Black Power Movement and Palestinian Liberation Movement will be made on the basis of the following ideologies, trends and cultural and aesthetic traditions:

1. Various forms of Marxism and Socialism (Democratic Socialism, Third World Marxism, Trotskyism, Leninism).
2. Anti-colonial discourse and major theories about the relationship between art and resistance as articulated by Frantz Fanon and Edward Said.
3. Third World and Non-Aligned Movement and the ideologies produced in the aftermath of Bandung conference of 1955.

4. Various forms of Islam, specifically as articulated by Black Nationalist institutions like Nation of Islam, and, specifically, Malcolm X.

5. The particular forms of nationalism BAM and PPR poets and critics articulated as their political agenda between 1965 and 1975.

These powerful and complex ideologies did not only fuel the rise of BAM and PPR, they made a profound impact on their political strategies, artistic philosophy and aesthetics, and defined their political goals. Various forms of Marxism, Islam, nationalism, anti-colonialism were intertwined themselves and effectively influenced each other.

Marxist and Communist Influences

A full spectrum of discussion on parallels between BAM and Palestinian Poetry of Resistance and their counterparts has to begin with Marxist and Socialist ideologies. Palestinian nationalist liberation movement at its genesis did not carry the radical Islamic ideology through which it is now often viewed. At its roots, Palestinian liberation movement was always saturated with what came to be known as a Third World Marxism. Palestinian activists, politicians, artists were taken by the Bolshevik revolution, different strains of Trotskyism and Leninism and later, as revolutions swept Cuba and China, adopted the ideas and ideals of Che Guevara and Mao Zedong. The 1960s and 1970s became a catalyst for the rise of multiple Palestinian Marxist, Socialist and Communist organizations. Communist organizations were in fact some of the earliest examples of political institutions in the 20th century Palestine. The Jewish/Palestinian Communist Party was founded in 1919.¹ The Palestine Arab Workers Society was founded in 1925,

¹ See The Palestine Communist Party: 1919-1948 by Musa Budeiri.

and labor organizing dominated Palestinian political scene. “Al Jadid”, “Al Itihad”, “Al-Ad” and “Marshraf” were all newspapers published by the Communist Party. “Al-Itihad” served an important platform for Palestinian poets of resistance and activists into the 21st century (Kimmerling, Migdal, 25). The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine was established in 1967, a crucial time for PPR and Palestinian liberation movement, or as it came to be known in the Middle East, the Palestinian Revolution. The Democratic Front for Liberation of Palestine was established a year later, when a fraction of PFLP decided to separate and create their own party.

Rakah, a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Israel was established in 1965 due to a split within the older Communist Party (Maki) over the question of the legitimacy of Zionism, with Rakah representing the anti-Zionist portion of the Party. And even though it cannot be described as a part of Palestinian liberation movement per se, it did directly concern itself with the rights and interests with Palestinians living in Israel. Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al-Qasem, and Tawfiq Zayyad were all members of either Rakah or the Popular Front of Liberation of Palestine. Ghassan Kanafani, who coined the very concept “Literature of Resistance” was actually one of leaders of PFLP.

In a similar fashion, the impact of Marxism and related ideologies and institutions on BAM and BP is hard to overestimate. In Black Arts Movement James Smethurst unveils how crucial the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) was for Black nationalism. As the scholar points out, CPUSA was the first organizations to support a right for Black sovereignty (25). More importantly, the networks and connections established through the party became models for the future BAM organizations. ‘The Old Left’, provided spaces for black radicals to meet, interact and

exchange ideas. Moreover, the level of awareness of radical texts and theory, and tendency to organize study and reading groups that proto-Black Arts figures demonstrated, stemmed from direct influence of CPUSA and Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In fact, BARTS, the first BAM organization emerged from this radical tradition (146-147).

It is important to note that Angela Davis, an iconic Black Power figure, who is usually associated with the Black Panther Party, did not actually belong to the organization. She was in fact a member of the CPUSA, and that speaks volumes about the significance of Marxist, Socialist and Communist ideologies; even more importantly, these kinds of institutions for the movement.

Politics of the Black Arts Movement and Palestinian Poetry of Resistance

It is not difficult to see how various ideological strands of Marxism and Socialism (Leninism, Trotskyism, Democratic Socialism, etc.) reflected in the ideologies of both movements. The idea of ‘art as the right arm of the revolution’, using literature as a political tool, is inherent in the ideological matrix both BAM and PPR. The idea of creating the kind of art that is accessible to the masses, art ‘the people’ can understand and relate to is deeply ingrained in the philosophy of both movements by the figures like Baraka, Karenga, and Darwish, to name a few (even though Karenga wouldn’t necessarily identify as a Marxist at the time when he coined his Kawaida philosophy).

Palestinian poet Yaaqub Hijazi is a great example of how this ideology played out in the poetry of PPR:

Because I write poems for the human being,
Peasant, oppressed, worker
My letters I shall always make known,
Cross the bridge of my tragedy to the more beautiful

Write its story...
So that my people may rise to the better
To the better (Quoted in Ashrawi,88).

The poet is straightforward and unapologetic about his dedication to his people. He openly speaks of and even celebrates the ability to dedicate his poetic craft solely to the people and their freedom and well-being. 'Peasant', 'worker' are both the language where not only cultural nationalist but also Leninist influences are recognized.

Reflecting Darwish's and Hijazi's sentiment is Etheridge Knight in "For Black Poets Who Think of Suicide":

For Black Poets belong to Black people. Are
the flutes of Black Lovers. Are
Organs of Black Sorrows. Are
The Trumpets of Black Warriors (52).

Knight also believes that poets are communal figures and leaders who penetrate deep within the fabric of communal consciousness- 'organs of black sorrows', and who also lead the people 'to victory', as Baraka believed. The refrain of 'are' at the end of the line creates the feel of spiritual evocation witnessed in the poetry quoted before. As if Knight strives to remind black poets of their noble responsibility. Both poems are characterized with emphatic short lines accentuating the main concepts and creating a sharp assertive rhythm with a stress on "are" at the end of lines in enjambments following full stops.

James Smethurst connects the Left and black nationalism in their demand for self-determination as well, while highlighting the unprecedented character of BAM in that it 'made an emphasis on the need to develop, or expand upon, a distinctly African American or African culture that stood in opposition to white culture or cultures (15).

In “Black Cultural Nationalism” Maulana Karenga states “Black art, like anything else in the black community, must respond positively to the reality of revolution...All art must reflect and support the Black revolution, and any art that does not discuss and contribute to the revolution is invalid” (51). He refers to the Socialist Senegalese poet and politician Leopold Senghor in order to pose a list of demands towards Black art: “In brief, it must be functional, collective and committing. It must be functional, that is useful, as we cannot accept the false doctrine of ‘art for art’s sake’.... Black art must expose the enemy, praise the people and support the revolution...” (54).

The similarity between Karenga’s language and Mahmoud Darwish's language in “On Poetry” is striking:

A poet said:
If my poems gratify my friends
And anger my enemies
Then I am a poet
And I shall speak (1998:51).

This strong resonance between Karenga’s and Darwish’s words attests to how deeply intertwined the ideologies of both movements were. Darwish defined the role and nature of poetry of the time in a 2002 interview that holds even stronger resonance with Karenga’s stance:

"...We Arabs believed poetry could be a weapon; that a poem had to be clear, direct. Poetry must care about the social, but it also has to care about itself, about aesthetics... I thought the best thing in life was to be a poet. Now I know it's torture. Each time I finish a book, I feel it's the first and the last." ²

² <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jun/08/featuresreviews.guardianreview19>

No less important, Ghassan Kanafani also believed in the necessity of cultural resistance. Barbara Harlow points to the connection between the armed and cultural resistance through the words of the Palestinian writer and politician: “extreme importance of the cultural form of resistance is no less valuable than armed resistance” (“Opening the Borders”,10).

Baraka, who in early stages of his BAM activity was heavily influenced by Maulana Karenga, also echoes the stance on art displayed by the aforementioned thinkers. He demands art that “would reach the people that would take them higher, ready them for war and victory...” (Quoted in McAlister,102). It is not a coincidence that his language reflects the language of Darwish’s poem: the idea of art that will inspire the people and victory. Revolutionary dedication of art was only one of many manifestations of similarities between BAM and PPR. Art as tool of direct political action and revolutionary change and, ultimately, nationalism, was an idea borrowed from Marxist ideology by both movements, despite their variations, as expressed by Karenga and Kanafani.

Fanon, Said, and Anti-Colonial Discourse

Cultural nationalism is also strongly connected with the anti-colonial struggles of the time and theories of Frantz Fanon. Much like Edward Said, the Martiniquan psychologist drew strong parallels between the anti-colonial, nationalist liberation struggles and cultural processes that take place when they begin. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that was founded in 1964, at the dawn of BP and PPR, defined Zionism as a form of settler colonialism in its charter (Feldman, 2015:36). A little later, in 1968, Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther Party Minister of Information proclaimed: “The

first thing that has to be realized is that it is a reality when people say that there's a 'black colony' and a 'white mother country'" (Quoted in Feldman, 2015:68). This kind of close chronological proximity between the rise of cultural nationalism and the anti-colonial movement shed some light on the connections between them. Both PPR, BAM and their political counterparts drew extensively upon the ideologies of Fanon.

In "Reflections on Twenty Years of Palestinian History" Edward Said ruminates on the nature of ideological matrix of the Palestinian Revolution:

With the rise of the PLO in the late 1960s came such things as a daring frankness and unusual new cosmopolitanism in which figures such as Fanon, Mao, and Guevara entered the Arab political idiom, and the audacity (perhaps even brashness) attendant upon a political movement proposing itself as capable of doing better than many of its benefactors and patrons (6).

In The Palestinian People, Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal also identify Mao and Che Guevara and their writings translated to Arabic and widely read in the refugee camps as key ideological inspirations for what they call the rise of the 'Feday' (Palestinian freedom fighter) and the rebirth of the Palestinian resistance movement. Moreover, they add Jomo Kenyatta's triumph over colonialism in Kenya (and his *Facing Mount Kenya*) as an important source of inspiration. African influence is important to keep in mind here due to the prolific influence successful anti-colonial African struggles had on BP and BAM (250-251).

Additionally, Migdal and Kimmerling emphasize the role of FLN and the Algerian liberation army who successfully fought the French, and especially the efforts of Fanon in that struggle. These scholars believe that The Wretched of the Earth and its emphasis on violent resistance as a major form of anti-colonial struggle made a profound

impact on the fledgling Palestinian movement.³

Two of the figures mentioned, Guevara and Mao, are also Marxist and Third World Communist icons and the fact that they are highlighted as some of the most prolific influences on the Palestinian political stage is crucial. The full spectrum of influences they unveil resonates very strongly with the ideological compounds of BAM and BP.

In “Representing Permanent War: Black Power’s Palestine and the End(s) of Civil Rights,” Keith Feldman writes that Fanon enters of the movements with Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton’s publication of Black Power: Politics of Liberation in America. He reveals that the authors borrowed Fanon’s argument from The Wretched of the Earth and began framing their struggle as an anti-colonial in nature (87). Though Fanon was influential for proto-BAM organizations and frequently appeared on the reading lists of the movement’s key figures. The editors of SOS: Calling All Black People indeed point to Fanon as one of the major influences of the Black Arts Movement.

In a key essay on the ideology of the movement, “The Black Arts Movement,” Larry Neal quotes Don. L. Lee (now Haki Madhubuti) to describe the nature of their artistic pursuit: “We must destroy Faulkner, Dick, Jane, and other perpetrators of evil. It’s time for Du Bois, Nat Turner, and Kwame Nkrumah. As Frantz Fanon points out: destroy the culture and you destroy the people” (55-56). Indeed, Fanon’s political vision expressed in The Wretched of the Earth impacted BAM and BP on multiple levels. The cultural transformation and search for authenticity and an art ‘for the people’, the great potential and necessity of violence and anti-colonial vision are only the most prominent

³ Ibid

aspects of Fanon's impact on the movement.

Said's idea also resonates strongly with Frantz Fanon as expressed in Culture and Imperialism. Here Said outlines the parallels between cultural and political colonization, and highlights the significance of cultural resistance for anti-colonial movements worldwide. One of the most insightful quotes of the book echoes BAM and PPR cultural nationalism very directly: "Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings" (7). The Palestinian-American theorist who was more than aware of PPR, realizes the extent of the cultural impact of colonial violence and the fact that colonial and cultural liberation are inseparable. He discusses the role of culture and cultural production for anti-colonial struggle in terms of narratives:

The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Most important, the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment mobilized people in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection (xiii).

Like Fanon, Said sees cultural processes that take place with the rise of anti-colonial resistance movements in terms of stages. A strong relationship between the nation and culture are one of the inevitable stages of this development:

In time, culture becomes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates 'us' from 'them', almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that, as we see in recent "returns" to culture and tradition... Culture is a sort of theater where various political and ideological causes engage one another...culture can even be a battleground on which causes expose themselves to the light of day and contend with one another (xii).

One of the key intellectual projects of the book is to explore the nature of the relationship between cultural, artistic production and colonialism. He puts them to the forefront of colonial struggle and highlights how crucial they are for the production of the colonial and imperial ideology. Because of the extent of intimacy between them, political liberation struggle, the struggle for the land, cannot be separated from the cultural and artistic struggle. This theory is embodied in BAM and PPR's cultural nationalism, who both centered their resistance work and ideology of liberation around culture and art.

One of the final stages of the cultural development in the process of anti-colonial struggle is going back the past, which means going back to cultural past and folklore, myth and old cultural traditions, or 'rediscovery and reparation of what had been suppressed in the natives' past by the process of imperialism' (210). Said expands on what he means by this process further:

Insistence on the right to see the community's history whole, coherently, integrally. Restore the imprisoned nation in itself....The concept of the national language is central, but without the practice of a national culture—from slogans to pamphlets and newspapers, from folk tales and heroes to epic poetry, novels and drama—the language is inert; national culture organizes and sustains communal memory...it inhabits the landscape using restored ways of life, heroes, heroines, and exploits; it formulates expressions and emotions of pride as well as defiance, which in turn form the backbone of the principal national independence parties (215).

This kind of return to 'national language,' folklore and old epics is also a process described by Fanon as one of the stages of cultural processes under anti-colonial resistance. It manifested itself for BAM in the frequent call for the return to African aesthetics and cultural traditions, embracing African languages like Swahili and African myths by cultural nationalists, particularly Karenga. For Palestinians this process also

meant embracing ancient Arab history and mythology as sources of pride and revolutionary mobilization.

SOS: Calling All Black People, arguably the most important BAM anthology since the publication of Black Fire in 1968, has an entire poetry section dedicated solely to Africa. The continent, its myths, legends, icons, artistic traditions became not only source of inspiration, but a source of artistic and political direction for BAM artists. They turned to the continent and its legendary history for inspiration, pride, but also for lessons how to create a more authentic art, art that would effectively defy Western standards.

Palestinian poets also turned to ancient myths of Palestine and the Middle East in general with similar ideological and artistic goals. Isis and Osiris, for example were some of the main references for many PPR poets of the era (Ashrawi, 86). Significantly, these gods stemming from the Egyptian mythology were also an important source for the Afrocentric BAM poets.

Darwish, the leading poet of PPR also often incorporated Middle Eastern myths into his poetry:

I have seen Byzantium's horses
Even though the battle be different.
Beware, oh beware
The lightning struck by my song in the
granite.
I am the flower of youth and the knight of
knights!
I am the smasher of Idols.
I plant the Levantine borders
With poems that set eagles free (“A Lover From Palestine,” Journal of
Arabic Literature, 9).

This is only one of a few examples of PPR poetry that celebrates the legendary history of Palestine. After all, before galvanizing people for a victory, which was one of Darwish’s

key goals, he also had to nurture their spirit. Reminding his readers about the epic past, in Said's language, was the way many PPR and BAM poets strived to achieve that with their craft.

Another chapter of The Wretched of The Earth that anticipates Said's theory and will help understand the politics of the BAM and PPR alike is "On National Culture." In this chapter Fanon describes the nature of the cultural process that takes place during the anti-colonial struggle. The intellectual believes this process begins with a search for the national culture, a search with which BAM cultural nationalists and Palestinian Poets were more than familiar:

"...This passionate quest for a national culture prior to the colonial era can be justified by the colonized intellectuals' shared interest in stepping back and taking a hard look at the Western culture in which they risk becoming ensnared. Fully aware they are in the process of losing themselves, and consequently of being lost to their people, these men work away with raging heart and furious mind to renew contact with their people's oldest, inner essence, the farthest removed from colonial times" (148).

This statement translates to the politics of the Black Arts Movement and the Palestinian poetry of Resistance in several ways. As far as the BAM is concerned, this statement is reflected in Maulana Karenga's cultural nationalism that was later adopted by Baraka, the chief engineer of the movement, as well as Haki Madhubuti, Kalamu ya Salaam, and others. The central aesthetic pursuit of the movement, the search for the Black Aesthetic, was a search for a non-Western form of art that is meant to serve 'the people', to serve the Black community. Larry Neal refers to Etheridge Knight, a prolific BAM poet to define the Black Aesthetic:

Unless the Black Artist establishes a "Black Aesthetic" he will have no future at all. To accept the white aesthetic is to accept and validate a society that will not allow him to live. The Black artist must create new forms and new values, sing new songs (or purify old ones by fire). And the Black artist, in creating his own aesthetic, must be accountable for it only

to the Black people. Further, he must hasten his own dissolution as an individual (in the Western sense-painful though the process may be, having been breast-fed the poison of “individual experience” (56).

Like Said and Fanon, Knight senses a strong parallel between racist violence inflicted by the American society upon the Black community and calls for a cultural and artistic liberation as an integral part of political liberation. Echoing Karenga and Darwish, Knight also advocates for public, communal art.

Fanon traces three major stages of development of the anti-colonial, national culture. The first stage is where the colonized intellectual is completely assimilated in the colonized culture:

“His works correspond point by point with those of his metropolitan counterparts. The inspiration is European and his works can be easily linked to a well-defined trend in metropolitan literature. This is the phase of full assimilation where we find Parnassians, Symbolists, and Surrealists among the colonized writers” (159).

One significant detail Fanon overlooks here is that Surrealists actually were strongly impacted by the African art and the Negritude movement. Nevertheless, his stance is clear, colonial domination at this stage means cultural and artistic dictatorship. The colonized artist/writer internalized the racist ideas of the Western culture and believes it to be superior. He is overtaken with foreign standards and ideas of art and seeks to prove himself by implementing these foreign standards into his artistic craft. This stage of development can be mapped on Arab and specifically Palestinian writing in the following way.

The Syrian-born Lebanese poet and literary critic Adonis discusses the impact of the violent colonial and cultural encounter with the West Arab people and poets endured through the Western colonization of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. Muhsin Musawi also examines the nature of this process in Arabic Poetry: Trajectories of

Modernity and Tradition. Both scholars see the penetration of the Western poetic standards into Arab poetic realm. They specifically point to the introduction of the free-verse poem into Arab poetry in beginning-mid 20th century. This is a clear example of the kind of assimilation Fanon discusses in his book. This kind of trend can be traced in African-American poetry before BAM as well. For example, 20th century Black poets like Claude McKay adapted arguably the strictest form of Western poetry, the sonnet, as the main medium for his most politically pointed poetry. Prominent Black poets of earlier times, like Phillis Wheatley, for example, also followed strict European poetic forms of writing embracing. It is not fair to say that poetic assimilation into European writing standards was the most prominent feature of either Palestinian or Black poetry. Despite the Western influence, a distinct Black and Palestinian poetic cultural tradition did exist. Nevertheless, poets who viewed Western standards as the epitome of poetic art were also present on both sides. They prove Fanon's hypothesis about the early stages of developing national culture to be accurate.

The second stage of this process according to Fanon is the following:

In a second stage, the colonized writer has his convictions shaken and decides to cast his mind back...But since the colonized writer is not integrated with his people, since he maintains an outsider's relationship to them, he is content to remember. Old childhood memories will surface, old legends be reinterpreted on the basis of a borrowed aesthetic...Sometimes this pre-combat literature is steeped in humor and allegory, at other times in anguish, malaise, death, and even nausea. Yet underneath the self-loathing, the sound of laughter can be heard (159).

This stage has strong resonance with the kind of politics outlined by BAM and PPR poets and critics above. The cultural and political gap between the intellectual and the people is the central factor preventing him from producing an authentic national culture. The necessity to be one with 'the people' is the key demand Darwish, Kanafani,

Karenga, Baraka, Knight, Lee (Madhubuti) and many other BAM and PPR poets pose in front of themselves and others, as the quotes reveal above.

The final stage of this cultural process as described by Fanon also reflects the cultural process BAM and PPR poets had to overcome:

Finally, a third stage, a combat stage where the colonized writer, after having tried to lose himself among the people, with the people, will rouse the people. Instead of letting the people's lethargy prevail, he turns into galvanizer of the people. Combat literature, revolutionary literature, national literature emerges. During this phase a great many men and women who previously would never have thought of writing, now that they find themselves in exceptional circumstances, in prison, in the resistance or on the eve of their execution, feel the need to proclaim their nation, to portray their people and become the spokesperson a new reality in action (159).

This description is also reflected in the development of BAM and PPR politics. Both movements were dedicated to producing politically conscious, revolutionary nationalist art. Galvanizing the masses for revolution way the central artistic goal of the volumes of poetry produced between 1965 and 1975 by both peoples. Baraka, for example, took the project of getting closer to the people very literally when he abandoned the bohemian scene of Lower Manhattan and moved to Harlem after the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965. This move to be closer to the people and answer Malcolm X's earlier call for a black cultural center and school in Harlem resulted in his establishment of the original organization of BAM: The Black Arts Repertory Theater/School (BARTS). This event ushered Black Arts era and turned ideology into a movement.

The Palestinian poets also always took the goal of having an intimate relationship with 'the people' closely. All major PPR poets actively participated in the political life of

the Palestinian resistance movement. The stories about Darwish, for example, always praise his accessibility and eagerness to talk to Palestinians despite class and education.

It is also important to highlight the ‘exceptional circumstances’, specifically imprisonment that urge the intellectuals to create revolutionary conscious art. Prison poetry is indeed an extremely important sub-genre of Palestinian resistance poetry. Poets of both movements, like Knight, Darwish, Zayyad, to name a few, experienced imprisonment.

The influence of Frantz Fanon and his philosophy on BAM and PPR and their political counterparts cannot be overestimated. BAM and BP borrowed and popularized anti-colonial discourse through the impact of The Wretched of the Earth. This is important to highlight particularly because there is a strong parallel between the popularization of this discourse and the rise of the Black solidarity movement for Palestine.

Said, Fanon and their theories on the relationship between culture and decolonization are important for this dissertation not only from a purely theoretical perspective. On one hand, the resonance between their descriptions of the cultural processes that take place as a result of anti-colonial struggle are reflected in the artistic philosophy of BAM and PPR. They both put culture to the forefront of the revolutionary struggle, which demonstrated itself in the cultural nationalism and heavy politicization of Palestinian and Black poetry. Moreover, both Fanon and Said are examples of how Palestinian and African diasporic experience and involvement in intellectual and cultural resistance intertwine and reveal themselves in their scholarship.

Bandung and Third World Direction of BAM and PPR

Another major ideological force to define the contours of BAM and PPR was the Bandung Afro-Asiatic Conference of 1955. The conference was held in Bandung Indonesia and was comprised of representatives from twenty-nine countries, many newly independent states that successfully defeated Western colonial powers. The members in attendance represented almost 2 billion people. The main issues on the floor were economic and cultural cooperation, the collective defeat of all forms of colonialism and neocolonialism, and the affirmation of international human rights (much like Malcolm X would advocate later). Importantly, Palestine/Israel conflict was in the spotlight of the conference.

In “Representing Permanent War” Keith Feldman highlights the significance the conference had for compelling Black intellectuals to think about Palestine/Israel as a question of colonialism. He quotes Richard Wright and his view of the conflict at that stage:

It was strange how, the moment I left the dry, impersonal, abstract world of the West, I encountered at once: religion feeding on itself, sufficient unto itself. And the Jews had been spurred by religious dreams to build a state in Palestine...Irrationalism meeting irrationalism... Though the conversation about the alleged aggression of the Jews in Palestine raged up and down the aisles of the plane, I could hear but little of it (202).

Feldman discusses the fact that the writer was approached by many North African representatives even before he got to the conference, on the plane. He criticizes Wright’s response as Orientalist and through Du Bois and “Suez” shows the trajectory of Black thought and its transformation on the conflict. As can be seen in the Wright’s remarks, at that very stage the pro-Palestinian view is not prominent. But the discourse formed at the

conference and later on propagated by the non-aligned movement solidified itself in BAM and BP when they took central stage in Black political and artistic stage. Third World orientation manifested itself in both poetry and politics of BAM and BP and was a major ideological trend that made this alliance possible.

The editors of SOS -Calling All Black People cite the conference as one of the major inspirations of BAM (3). The most apparent way in which Bandung influenced Palestinian radical thinking becomes apparent in the Third World direction that PPR took as a result of the historical landmark. Barbara Harlow illuminates the implications of the rise of “resistance” literature and culture in Palestine and Arab Israel:

Ghassan Kanafani, referring to Palestinian literature as resistance literature, is writing within a historical context, a context which may immediately be situated in the contemporary liberation struggles against Western imperialist domination of Africa, South America, the Middle and the Far East (2008:10).

Similarly, Larry Neal one of the ‘founding fathers’ of the Black Arts Movement writes:

The Black Arts movement...reasons that this linking must take place along lines that are rooted in an Afro-American and Third World historical and cultural sensibility. By ‘Third World,’ we mean that we see our struggle in the context of the global confrontations occurring in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We identify with all of the righteous forces in those places which are struggling for human dignity (1972:149).

The poetry of both movements reflects Third World orientation vividly. Poems dedicated to the revolution in Cuba, anti-colonial struggles in Africa, the plight of Native Americans, South African apartheid, to name a few, all find their way into the lines of poetry of BAM and PPR. As far as BAM is concerned, a poem by K. William Kgositsile (a South African exile in the United States who later became the Poet Laureate of post-

apartheid South Africa) is a bright example, and it also provides a great spectrum of the ideological components of BAM:

I flirted with Marx
Kept my ear open to Tshaka,
Moshoeshoe, Dingane, Garvey, DuBois.
Then came Nkrumah's voice,
Heraldic of bearings flowery as spring.
Lumumba, Kenyatta, Mandela, Sobukwe,
Kaunda, Babu, Castro, Tour, Mao-
Twentieth century recipe
For a grass roots favorite dish.

...

Amidst sit-ins, kneel-ins, sleep-ins and mass mis-education
Brother Malcolm's voice penetrated alienated bloodcells
Teaching Black manhood in Harlem USA
Endorsing "Bandung" (1968:226).

The poem strongly resonates with major events and ideological forces discussed in this chapter: Marxism, African anti-colonial leaders like Nkrumah, Lumumba, Kenyatta, Mandela, Sobukwe, the impact of Castro and Mao. The poem resonates very strongly with Edward Said's portrayal of this time in Palestinian politics.

One of the poem's counterparts on the Palestinian side is "In Enemy Lines" by Salim Jubran, discussed in-depth in the chapter on Enemy of the Sun. Like Kgositsile the speaker is also enchanted with Africa and the revolutions that are sweeping the continent:

Tell me of the land of black fire
Have you heard of a hunted lion?
Of the forests becoming ashes in the night
Of a field planted with martyrs
Of a people grown in a land
Watered with blood of the murdered
Of a sun born pregnant with bread, dreams and freedom?
Have you heard of Africa? (109).

Like the BAM poets, Jubran envisions Africa as a symbol of revolution and liberation. The images of fire, lions, martyrs, ‘a sun born pregnant with bread, dreams and freedom’, all present the African continent as a source of heroism, pride, liberation and profess the hope of victory.

Also, like many BAM poets, Jubran also turns to Cuba as a mythical land of revolution:

Speak to me of Cuba.
What do you know of a people that are
no longer a crucified Christ (109).

First, the speaker creates a sense of connection, by writing Cuba into the Palestinian mythology by using the metaphor of Christ. Cuba’s successful revolution of 1959, like Palestinian movement and BP, and their artistic counterparts was fueled by Marxist and Socialist ideology and became a kind of a model for these movements. For example, Amiri Baraka, the chief engineer of BAM and a prolific BP leader, was in fact transformed by his visit to Cuba.⁴ Baraka himself extensively discusses the impact of his visit in his autobiography.

The country and its history excited the imaginations not only of Jubran. Mahmoud Darwish, and Tawfiq Zayyad also dedicated volumes of their poetry to Cuba’s revolutionary history. Samih Al Qassem writes an ode to Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolutionary leader in “Castro” presenting him as antithesis to the United States:

Here you come, here you come with this hit
Oh liberator of chained peoples
Here it comes, the first spark
In the darkness of occupied America,
It coming, what remains in the house
...
In the name of freedom for humanity
They’re coming, they’re coming, oh people of Cuba,
The Christ shan’t be crucified no more (In Kanafani, 1968:160, translation mine).

⁴ Komozi Woodard discusses the impact of Baraka’s visit to Cuba in [A Nation Within a Nation](#).

Cuba and Castro here emerge as an antithesis to America and its oppression. The Cuban leader is the harbinger of hope and liberation not only for his people, he promises freedom for all, a clear reflection of Third World philosophy.

The ideology of Bandung resonates with the poetry of BAM and PPR in many ways. For one, it creates a deep sense of awareness of the global nature of decolonization and world struggles for justice. It created a sentiment within Black and Palestinian poets that views their own liberation and liberation of global oppressed population inseparable. It was precisely this kind of philosophy that made Palestinian poets aware of the plight of Black Americans and compelled them to dedicate their poems to the issue. It was also this kind of thinking that compelled BAM artists and figures to perform the poetic and political acts of solidarity with Palestinians that will be discussed in the chapter of history of the movements.

Malcolm X

It is impossible to provide a complete spectrum of BAM influences without the exploration of the role of Malcolm X. He is a crucial figure for the creation of important cultural and political bridges between Black people and the Middle East, and specifically Palestine.

Before Malcolm X was Malcolm X, Nation of Islam became one of the first institution in the US to develop a positive connection with the Middle East. Indeed, the origins of a vision unifying black and Palestinian culture, geography and cause can be attributed to Elijah Muhammad and his concept of the Afro-Asiatic man. He was the leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI) from 1934 until his death in 1975 and influenced a number of black radicals, including Malcolm X and Amiri Baraka. Melanie McAlister

elaborates on the emergence and significance of Muhammad's ideology of the Afro-Asiatic Man in Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and US Interests in the Middle East:

...Elijah Muhammad had, since the 1930s, consistently affirmed the significance of its connection to other Muslim communities around the globe, particularly those in the Middle East. The Nation challenged the assumption that African Americans were simply or primarily a subset of all Americans; its political imaginary never posited Black Nationalism as a self-contained sub-nationalism, even when Elijah Muhammad or Malcolm X made claims for the right to control specific tracts of land within the United States. Instead, the NOI built on the fact that Islam was a major world religion with a strong transnational orientation. Muslim governments and Muslim communities often forged ties across borders, politically and culturally, as well as religiously. Drawing on this global vision, the Nation developed a model of community that linked African Americans to both Africa and to "Asia" (by "Asia" Elijah Muhammad seemed to primarily what is usually called the Middle East (94).

It is important to highlight that McAlister draws an immediate connection between the genesis of Black internationalist ideology and identification with the Middle East.

Situating the region at the heart of Black internationalist ideology of the 20th century provides an opportunity to form some initial understanding of the impact Palestine and Palestine/Israeli conflict had on black internationalist thought and literature. NOI was the first major black organization to voice solidarity with Palestinians through the pages of *Muhammad Speaks*, which came into print in the 1960s. The organization saw a parallel between their struggle and the struggle of Palestinians based on the idea that both are engaged in a conflict based on land ownership (McAlister, 98). This was one of many parallels the organization drew between the nature of their liberation and the Middle East. Importantly, Ethel Minor, the woman behind the famous SNCC pro-Palestinian newsletter, was involved in NOI as well (Feldman, 2009:89).

NOI was also the institution that shaped Malcolm's initial political ideology and gave him a platform to become one of the leaders of the Black community. And even

though he eventually abandoned the organization and rejected a lot of its tenets, it is fair to argue that his pro-Palestinian stance originated while a part of NOI. Malcolm also embraced and propagated black internationalism and Third World rhetoric, so influential for BAM and PPR. X articulated his nascent visions of black internationalism in his iconic 1963 speech “Message to the Grassroots”:

In Bandung back in, I think, 1954, was the first unity meeting in centuries of black people. And once you study what happened at the Bandung conference, and the results of the Bandung conference, it actually serves as a model for the same procedure you and I can use to get our problems solved. At Bandung all the nations came together. There were dark nations from Africa and Asia. Some of them were Buddhists. Some of them were Muslim. Some of them were Christians. Some of them were Confucianists; some were atheists. Despite their religious differences, they came together. Some were communists; some were socialists; some were capitalists. Despite their economic and political differences, they came together. All of them were black, brown, red, or yellow.⁵

The fact that Malcolm emphasizes the Bandung conference discussed above is important for both BAM and PPR. His internationalist vision where ‘black, brown, red, or yellow’ peoples of the world come together to resist colonial violence were embodied in poems and ideologies of both movements.

More importantly, Malcolm created long-lasting political and cultural affiliations between Middle East and Black leaders and organizations. In his 1960 speech Malcolm first called for a unity and political collaboration between Arabs and Black people: “The Arabs, as a colored people, should and must make more effort to reach the millions of colored people in America who are related to the Arabs by blood. These millions of colored people would be completely in sympathy with the Arab cause!” (Quoted in McAlister,99).

⁵ <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/message-to-grassroots>

His call got answered by Gamal Abdunnasser, under whose vision Cairo turned into one of the capitals of Black internationalism. It was also answered to a great extent by multiple Palestinian politicians and poets who came to collaborate with the Black Panther Party during the zenith of their influence. Malcolm X's travels to the region in 1964 made a significant impact on his view of Palestine/Israeli conflict as well as significance of the issue for black liberation. Malcolm met Gamal Abdunnasser, who is credited with the initiation of the Palestine Liberation Organization that same year at the Arab Summit League in Cairo, and is also known as an iconic Pan-African and Pan-Arab figure. With the Egyptian's president's likely prompt, Malcolm visited the Gaza Strip as a part of his trip. His visit to the Palestinian Territory prompted a publication of his article in the Egyptian Gazette in September of 1964 titled "Zionist Logic". The article displays a firm anti-Israeli stance, positioning it as a neo-colonial project enacted by colonial powers:

If the Israeli Zionists believe their present occupation of Arab Palestine is the fulfillment of predictions made by their Jewish prophets, then they also religiously believe that Israel must fulfill its "divine" mission to rule all other nations with a rod of irons, which only means a different form of iron-like rule, more firmly entrenched even, than that of the former European Colonial Powers. These Israeli Zionists religiously believe their Jewish God has chosen them to replace the outdated European colonialism with a new form of colonialism, so well disguised that it will enable them to deceive the African masses into submitting willingly to their "divine" authority and guidance, without the African masses being aware that they are still colonized.⁶

In Geographies of Liberation Alex Lubin writes about the significance of what he calls Afro-Arab politics for Malcolm X. He recalls X's address at the meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Cairo on behalf of OAAU that signaled his separation

⁶ http://www.malcolm-x.org/docs/gen_zion.htm

with NOI and embracing Pan-Arab and Pan-African ideas (7). This was in fact one of many demonstrations of his struggle to create a long-lasting political alliance between Middle East and the Black community.

Malcolm X's contributions to this alliance had not only political, but also significant cultural impact. Manning Marable exposed one of the less known sides of X-Malcolm the artist in Malcolm X, a Life of Reinvention. Marable points out that Malcolm used to play drums in a Jazz club and occasionally dance (63). More interestingly, he reveals X as was a poet. He illuminates that while in prison X wrote poetry extensively (92). Marable highlights that Malcolm's original rebellion was a cultural rebellion-a jazz and a Zoot suit rebellion. Malcolm was also very popular among the Jazz musicians, he converted a great amount of his friends in the 1950ies (110). Even though Malcolm's poems were not accessible to black public at the time and it would be difficult to argue that his poetry influenced BAM aesthetics, this image of Malcolm X as an artist completes the kind of figure the artists of the movement saw in his persona.

Overall, Malcolm X was a key figure in putting Middle East on the map of Black internationalism as a crucial region of political and cultural inspiration and direction. He was one of the first Black leaders to voice support to Palestinians and was also instrumental in introducing colonial discourse to Black liberation struggle. The discussion on colonialism and colonial rhetoric earlier in this study explores its significance. And even though it was solidified with Stokely Carmichael's Black Power, its integration was intensified by its presence in Malcolm's teachings.

It is difficult to overestimate Malcolm's role for the Black Arts Movement. SOS: Calling All Black People has a whole section of poetry dedicated to Malcolm. Broadside

Press, one of the most prolific presses of BAM established by Dudley Randall, published an anthology called For Malcolm in 1967. Many BAM scholars believe it was a significant first step not only to solidify significance of Malcolm's figure, but also the significance and cultural direction of BAM itself.⁷

Malcolm's ideology is deeply ingrained within the fabric of BP and BAM. It also made a profound impact on the progressive artists and activist from Palestinian diaspora. DAM, the first and most famous Palestinian hip hop group living in Israel cites Malcolm as one of the biggest influences of their music. X, as well as hip hop legends like Notorious BIG, KRS-One, Nas and Tupac Shakur are some of the influences the musicians cite as their biggest influences on their website and often in their interviews. Interestingly, all these names appear next to the prolific figures of PPR like Tawfiq Zayyad and Darwish. Moreover, they always add Frantz Fanon to their list of inspirations as well. Clearly, Palestinian Hip Hop is deeply imprinted with the dominant cultural and ideological traditions forged by BAM and PPR. Shared legacy of both movements shaped the contours of their artistic direction despite the fact that they may not have been aware of the actual historical connections between both movements.

Malcolm X is indeed a strong thread that unites BAM, PPR and the contemporary Palestinian diasporic progressive culture and politics. His name is well known and well respected by Palestinians and revered by most Black people. Black Lives Matter activists cite him as influence as well as Palestinian and Palestinian-American activists. His vision will unite Black and Palestinian progressive politics and art for generations to come.

⁷ For further discussion of the anthology see Wrestling with The Muse: Dudley Randall and The Broadside Press

Islam

Malcolm X is a specific example of a larger ideological trend that impacted political and cultural imagination of BAM and BP. His influence and his vision explain the ease with which Black activists and artists came to sympathize with Palestinians and their struggle. Various forms of Black Islam made a deep impact on BAM and BP. This happened to a great extent, though not exclusively, through NOI and Malcolm X. Other possible routes through which Islam, its culture, ideology and language became so prominent in the BAM era, were notably Gamal Abdunnasser and Pan-African and Pan-Arab ideologies he came to represent.

Notably, as Marable and Aidi highlight in Black Routes to Islam (2009), a great number of enslaved Africans who were brought to the New World professed the Muslim faith so, in a sense, for many BP and BAM figures and especially musicians of the time, converting to Islam was not about embracing new trends but rather going back to their roots.

In addition to Black Routes to Islam, a great number of books came out recently exploring the nature and impact of Islam on Black culture and politics: Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America by Sohail Daulatzai (2012), and Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary by Alex Lubin (2014).

In the introductory essay to their book, Aidi and Marable identify the significance of Arab culture and Islam for Black life:

By the early twentieth century, there would be a clear association in the African-American community between Arabic and erudition, and between Islam, liberation, and Black empowerment. The experiences and narratives of Muslim slaves-combined with the writings of Edward Blyden, who, while in Liberia, was deeply impressed by the

civilization and political autonomy of Islamic states in West Africa-laid the intellectual groundwork for the Black Muslim movements of the early and mid-twentieth century (11).

It is important to highlight that the scholars refer to Blyden to make their point, since Blyden is also considered to be one of the founding fathers of Black nationalism. A tenet, that according to James Smethurst, Komozi Woodard and other Black Arts and Black Power scholars was the unifying characteristic of these nonhomogeneous movements. Blyden's influence in creating a strong connection between Islam and Middle Eastern culture cannot be overestimated. Aidi points out that he propagated importance of Islam as a source of knowledge and empowerment, as well as knowledge of the Arabic language. He even wrote a book titled Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race in 1888 that advocated for the spread of Islam and its culture as a part of Pan-Africanism ("Jihadis in the Hood",285).

It is widely agreed upon that music and musicians were one of the most profound influence in shaping. Edward E.Curtis discusses aesthetic impact of Islam in "Islamism and Its African-American Muslim Critics":

Increasing African-American Muslim identification with the rest of the Muslim world also became manifest in African-American Muslim visual art and poetry. Many African-American Muslims literally drew and rhymed themselves closer to the imagined worldwide community of Muslim believers" (50).

He goes on to trace Islam as a major political force and highlights Abdelnasser and 'symbolic ties' Elijah Mohammad forged with the Egyptian president through visits, telegrams and other gestures. He states that NOI in general managed to develop tangible political ties with the country and its leader (50-51).

In "East of the Sun (West of the Moon)" Moustafa Bayyumi discusses the influence of Islam Black musicians. According to Smethurst, Bracey and Sanchez, the

editors of SOS: Calling All Black People, it was musicians, and specifically Coltrane who made a tremendous aesthetic impact on BAM. Bayumi points out that Yusef Lateef, Sahib Shihab, Ahmed Jamal converted and Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and Coltrane himself were in fact ‘significantly influenced by its (Islamic) spirit’ (75). A number of BAM poets like Baraka, Askia Toure, Marvin X, Kalamu ya Salaam, Yusuf Iman, Ahmad Legraham Alhamisi, Yusef Rahman to name a few, followed suit and also converted to Islam. Black Power figures like Rap Brown, now Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin chairman of SNCC and then minister of Justice of the Black Panther Party, Max Stamford, now Muhammad Ahmad, the founder of Revolutionary Action Movement, are only two most famous examples who converted to Islam.

The impact of Islam on BP and BAM is deep, complex and multifaceted. The discourse on Afro-Asiatic man created and propagated by Elijah Mohammad and NOI, the political philosophy of Malcolm X as a NOI member and as a convert to Sunni Islam, Ahmaddiyah Islam, Arabic language and Middle Eastern culture in general made a tangible impact on politics but also aesthetics of BAM.

In Epic Encounters Melani McAlister states:

With the rise of the Black Arts movement and black cultural nationalism, Islam became a cultural symbol for people who were not converts. By the early 1960s... many African-Americans began to do something that almost no one else in the United States, besides Arab Americans had ever done: they claimed a positive sense of alliance to both Arab culture and the forces of Arab nationalism (86).

It’s important to highlight that McAlister traces this unprecedented phenomenon specifically through the emergence of the Black Arts Movement. Indeed, this cultural and political imaginary crystallized during and because of BAM. More importantly, she connects the rise of Black interest in Arab-Israeli conflict through this kind of identification (87). The scope of Islamic and Middle Influence is apparent through the

examples of Arabic and Islamic influences in BAM poetry and drama. As Mcalister points out in the same book, Baraka's first play as a part of BARTS, the first BAM institution, was "Black Mass". The play revolved around the NOI myth of Yaacub, a Black scientist who created the first white man. She points out that Baraka changed his name and studied Islam under Hajj Heesham Jaber, who was affiliated with Malcolm X (92).

The scholar quotes Baraka's introductory poem to his collection of plays published in 1968 that reflects his ideology of the time and Islamic influence:

We are building publishing houses, and newspapers, and
Armies and factories
We will change the world before your eyes.
Izm-el-lazam
Yes, say it,
Say it
Sweet nigger
I believe in Black Allah
Governor of creation
Lord of the worlds
As Salaam Alikum (109).

The poem speaks to the ideologies of BAM and displays Islamic and Middle Eastern influence in several ways. Above all, it is written as a prayer, or an evocation. The poet urges to extract a sense of faith, a belief in 'Black Allah' from his people. His words seem to attempt to hypnotize the reader into the mysticism he adheres to. His choice of short lines creates an emphasis on each word. His celebration of building of independent institutions, 'publishing houses', 'libraries', 'factories', 'armies' reflects the NOI as well as Orthodox Islamic ideology that does not separate religion from institution building. Infrastructure is indeed a significant aspect of the Muslim religious philosophy. In turn it reflects the politics and philosophy of BAM and BP: emphasis on institution

and nation building, sobriety, discipline and a deep sense of pride.

The use of Arabic language in ‘izm-el-lazam’ and Islamic greeting ‘As Salaam Alikum’ demonstrate a sense of cultural saturation of Islamic philosophy and writing and a new articulation of cultural and spiritual belonging. Islamic influence, possibly even greater than the Bandung conference, formed a new vision of black struggle, black identity, black cosmology and black freedom. Palestine, and its prolific place within Muslim spiritual tradition and geography, made it an important site of black liberation.

“Al Asl Suddi” by Marvin X demonstrates the scope of Middle Eastern, Islamic and Arabic influence of BAM that intertwined the culture of the region with Africa and imprinted on BAM aesthetics:

Al Asl Suddi
The Origin of Blackness
SUDAN La al lawn
Black is not color
Lon kuli min Sudan
ALL colors come from Black
Sudan al harakat
Black is the rhythm.
Al marna tambura
Anata
Ancient
Assi
Primitive
Al awwal sudan kalam
The first word was Black.
Al awwal rajuli sudan
The first man was Black.
Allah sudan
God is Black.
Sudan ilmi akhi
Black knows its brother
Anta mufail mashay min sudan
You can't run from Black.
Anta mufail ghaybay min sudan
You can't hide from Black.
Ka umma sudan Your mother is Black.

Ka abu sudan
Your father is Black
Ka burka sudan
Your shadow is Black.
Al atun ra'a wa sami sudan
The things you see and hear are Black.
Al atun mufail ra'a wa sami sudan
The things you can't see and hear are Black.
Sudan al asil Black is reality.
Wahabi, hurriya, adil, masawati
Unity, freedom, justice, equality (1967:33).

The interplay between Arabic and English language in the poem speak to the poet's mastery of Arabic and his view on the significance of the language for Black origins, black pride and Black freedom. Like Baraka, the poet envisions Allah as a 'Black' god. This god connects Middle East and Africa (in Sudan), and, for X is a source of authentic Blackness. He also sees it a source for Black freedom, balancing between Arabic and Swahili word 'uhuru'. In fact, Islamic invasion made the African language a written language, and until this day the language is transcribed using Arabic characters. This religious, linguistic, cultural and historical imagination come together to profess Black triumph. The kind of triumph Baraka professes in his poem cited above as well. Indeed, the connection between Arabic language, Islam and the Middle East started by Blyden in the 19th century demonstrated themselves very actively in the Black Arts Poetry.

Gaston Neal's "Personal Jihad" is another example of Islamic influence on the Black Arts Movement:

I REGARD THIS DAY, AS EVERY
LOSER WOULD
AND I NEED A GOD,
A BLACK GOD, TO GIVE ME
THE INSIDIOUS STRENGTH, THE CALM
SOFTNESS, TO WAYLAY FEAR

...
SAY IT NOW-
DOWN IN THE SOUL-----DISCIPLINE
SAY IT SOUL BROTHERS
SAY IT SOUL BROTHERS
DISCIPLINE... (2015:292-293).

Several aspects of the poem deserve attention. In terms of aesthetics, the poet's choice to write the piece in all caps also reflects the aesthetics of Arabic language, which unlike English, does not have capital letters. The poem itself reads like a prayer, especially the lines asking 'black god' for strength and freedom from fear. The usage of 'black god' itself exposes why Islam became such an important tool for Black liberation during BAM and BP. Traditional, American god, often portrayed as a white and blue eyed man, symbolize oppression and powerlessness. This new, Muslim god, a 'black god' was as a part of iconoclast tradition of BAM. The emphasis of discipline is a direct reference to NOI and its focus on order and sobriety. Arguably, this was the most important legacy of the organization that rehabilitated and continues to rehabilitate a great number of its members.

The significance of Islamic influence for bringing BAM and PPR together is self-evident. Through the religion, in its numerous manifestations and variations, Black people developed a sense of cultural connection to the Middle East, its language, its infrastructure, politics and culture.

Islam gave BAM and BP figures a common language, a common spirituality and common political goals with Palestinian activists, poets and artists. In multiple ways, Islam made Black/Palestinian alliance not only natural, but rather unavoidable.

Nationalism

Arguably, the most important unifying characteristic feature in the ideology of

BAM and PPR was their own, unique form of nationalism. In the Black Arts Movement James Smethurst writes about the significance of nationalism:

While noting the relative decentralization, and occasionally the disunity, of the Black Power and Black Arts movements, the common thread between nearly all the groups was a belief that African Americans were a people, a nation, entitled to (needing really) self-determination of its own destiny (15).

Black nationalism was not born in the BP/ BAM era. Fathers of Black nationalist thought like Edward Blyden and Martin Delaney wrote groundbreaking works on the matter and gained some popularity in the 19th century. It is possible to argue that even earlier manifestations of Black nationalist ideology propelled the slave uprisings in the centuries prior. This political tradition was prolonged by Marcus Garvey and CPUSA in the 20th century. However, BAM brought this ideology to the forefront of Black liberation like never before.

Similarly, Palestinian nationalism can be traced to the uprisings and Pan-Arab movements of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the idea of an independent Palestinian state did not crystallize or become widely accepted until 1967, and became a resolution until 1974. Prior to that date, Palestinian nationalism was consumed by and considered a part of Pan-Arabism. Independent Palestinian state as a part of unified Pan-Arab nation became a shattered dream in the wake of the Israeli victory of 1967 (Kimmerling, Migdal, 256-257).

BAM and Palestinian poets were extremely important for formulating and popularizing the nationalist goals of both movements. Both Smethurst and Komozi Woodard, the author of A Nation Within a Nation, identify cultural nationalism as a prolific manifestation of the ideology for both movements. Baraka and Darwish were probably the most prominent poet/activists that dedicated extensive efforts and volumes

of work to achieving the dreams of a sovereign homeland. They mobilized their poetic craft in order to create powerful anthems for their respective nations. Anthems that would become not only an inspiration, but a raw material for these dream-countries.

Mahmoud Darwish reflects the way poetry responds to the rise of Palestinian nationalism by situating it at the heart of his poetic production in the famous lines: “I have learned and dismantled all the words to construct a single one: homeland” (Quoted in Angelica Neuwirth, 167). This relationship indeed positions poetry at the epicentre of the national struggle.

Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian politician and a scholar, drew a strict line dividing poets committed to the nationalist cause and all others:

Consequently, and because poetry is viewed as an expression and a tool of national solidarity and political consciousness, two poles of poets are discernible: the nationalist, committed, and politically aware poets, who view poetry primarily as a vehicle and a means of moving the masses; and the individualistic, personal poets who are totally detached from their people and setting, having reached a point of abstraction and intellectualization that becomes entirely incomprehensible (84).

Ashrawi appears to be critical of the poets who are writing outside of the nationalist tradition. In her essay, she recognizes the aesthetic burdens of politicization of poetry, but she is also cognizant of the fact how defining and unavoidable the influence of political struggle really was.

Similar phenomenon occurs in African America when Baraka concludes the founding convention of the Congress of Afrikan People (CAP), in 1970 with his poem “It’s Nation Time”:

Time to
get
together
time to be one strong fast energy space
...

black genius rise in spirit muscle
...
the black man is the future of the world
...
come out niggers
all niggers negroes must change up
come together in unity unify
for nation time
it's nation time (Baraka,1970:101).

Like Darwish, Baraka's poetry becomes an anthem of Black nationalism. Baraka believes that physical and intellectual strength 'energy space' and 'spirit muscle' must be directed at Black unity, under nation. "It's Nation Time" became a true anthem of African American nationalism, a chanted at great numbers of conventions and conferences of BAM and BP.

Peniel Joseph writes: "For Baraka 'Nation Time' was more than just a poetic phrase: it encapsulated the evolution of Black Power from spontaneous urban rebellions to the creation of political institutions that promoted vibrant black communities" (260).

To Baraka and Darwish, like many other BAM and PPR poets, statehood was not only a political goal but also an artistic one. They were seeking to make their language and poetic production a ground for the nascent Black and Palestinian state. This vision was so powerful that Baraka and Darwish, along with their comrades and colleagues, saw sovereignty as a form of cultural reality. For example, in his autobiography Baraka writes that coming to Harlem to establish BARTS in 1965 and seeing white police officers was like seeing 'an occupation army' (296). He describes his mission in nationalistic terms: "When we came up out of the subway, March 1965, cold and clear, Harlem all around us staring us down, we felt like pioneers of the new order. Back in the homeland to help raise the race" (202).

Similarly, scholars of PPR like Hanan Ashrawi and Salma Khadra Jayyusi often write about the fact that for Palestinian poets of the PPR era Palestinian state was indeed a cultural reality that defied maps and political documents. It is important to dedicate some time to the discussion of the nature of Black and Palestinian nationalist ideology of the 1960s and 1970s.

This discussion has to begin by drawing a distinguishing line between this particular kind of nationalism and the traditional understanding of the concept, the kind of nationalism Benedict Anderson discusses in Imagined Communities (1983). In this seminal work the scholar traces the genealogy of Western nationalism through two major phenomena: the invention of the printing press and the rise of the novel. Novel, he argues, allowed the unprecedented opportunity to imagine millions of people of different socioeconomic backgrounds as a single community. BAM and PPR nationalisms certainly have some parallels with this theory: both movements to one extent or the other relied on printing press and the sense of community produced by the dissemination of poetry.

At the same time, it is important to highlight that postcolonial scholars like Edward Said and Edouard Glissant, for example, were critical of nationalism as a short-lasting, least interesting and almost an unnecessary phenomenon. However, Glissant also emphasizes the fact that Palestinian nationalism, unlike Western nationalism has to be distinguished. Similar to Huey Newton, Glissant believes that for people like Palestinians nationalism is a revolutionary act of resistance. In order to differentiate between Black Panther and western nationalism, Newton used the concept 'revolutionary nationalism'. After separating themselves from the Pan-Arab nationalism, arguably the form of

nationalism peculiar to the Middle East, and affirming the struggle of a separate nation state for Palestinians, PPR poets and freedom fighters also adhered to a unique and new form of nationalism, that distinguished them from Western nationalism and Pan-Arab nationalism.

Conclusion

Ideology itself is an extremely important force for BAM and PPR alike. Arguably, in an unprecedented way it made multi-dimensional impact on not only a general artistic philosophy and direction of BAM and PPR. It effectively shaped aesthetic direction and created new unique cultural traditions for Black and Palestinian poetry. A poetry that effectively divorced itself from American poetic tradition for BAM and from the general Arab tradition for Palestinian poets. While Black poets were striving to find and implement what they called 'The Black Aesthetic', Palestinian poets were arguably seeking to create and implement a kind of 'Palestinian aesthetic', a poetry that was defined by their distinguished experience and new political goals.

The ideological influences behind the movements created a need for a new consciousness and a new forms of art dictated by the harsh political realities of Black and Palestinian communities that compelled BAM and PPR poets to seek innovative ways of poetic and political expression. The intimate relationship between political ideology and poetry established in the 1960s and 1970s was not only groundbreaking and unique. It created new relationships between the figures of poets and politicians and erased many borders between armed struggle and literary production. The effects of these transformations are complex and multifaceted and will be discussed in the chapters on aesthetics and legacies of BAM and PPR.

CHAPTER II

W.E.B. DU BOIS, JAMES BALDWIN AND THE EARLY ARTICULATIONS OF BLACK THOUGHT ON PALESTINE/ISRAEL

W.E.B. Du Bois and James Baldwin are important for this dissertation for several reasons. No substantial scholarship has been produced on Du Bois' imagination and articulation of his view on Palestine/Israel conflict. Baldwin's visit to Israel in 1962 is discussed in Keith Feldman's groundbreaking *A Shadow Over Palestine*. Both of these intellectuals have a long history of profound impact on Black thought, politics and community but can also be used as their mirrors. Du Bois' role in the articulation of modern Black internationalism is important to understanding the larger context for nationalist and internationalist articulations of Black Arts and Black Power thinkers. And even though he passed in 1963, two years before BAM and BP were born, Du Bois' thought and politics anticipated it in many ways: his Pan-African ideas and ideals, Marxist and Socialist politics, and global, Third World movement articulations of justice resonated with them in a powerful way. I dedicate some space to the discussion of Ralph Bunche and his role in the creation of the state of Israel as a way of showing how prolific Black involvement is in the issue. He is also important for Du Bois' early articulations of his stance on Zionism.

Baldwin has often been sometimes misrepresented as an apolitical figure. This study seeks to understand and show how powerful and important his politics were for his thought, his intellectual development and his life. Of course, his visit to Israel and his cosmopolitan life and first hand experiences of Middle East in Turkey, as well as Middle

Eastern people in France are just as significant as Du Bois'. I discuss his understanding of Palestine/Israel and his intellectual philosophy through a metaphor of parallels, a metaphor crucial for this study.

Both Baldwin and Du Bois are intellectuals who were prone and open to transformation. They both have complicated relationships with American Jewish community, Zionism, and Palestine/Israel. To one extent of the other they grew to be critical of the Jewish Republic and its neo-colonial practices and affiliations and came to use the kind of rhetoric expressed by BAM and BP figures.

Ralph Bunche and the Origins of Black Involvement in Palestine/Israel

The history of African-American involvement in Palestine/Israel conflict begins with the very birth of this complex, almost century-long conflict. It has been forgotten that Ralph Bunche, a prominent African-American intellectual and activist was a part of special committee on Palestine deployed by the United Nations in 1947 to solve the escalating crisis in the Middle East. The final resolution adopted by this committee was devastating for the Palestinians, giving away half of the territory of what is now called 'Historical Palestine' to the "Jewish State", and making Palestinians one of the largest, and now oldest refugee populations in the world.

Ralph Bunche, a prolific figure in the Civil Rights Movement, honorable member of NAACP, influential member of Black Cabinet under Roosevelt, and the chair of Department of Trusteeship of the United Nations. In June of 1947 Bunche was appointed as an assistant to the UN Special Committee on Palestine, then a principal secretary of the UN Palestine Commission responsible for designing and executing the Partition Plan, the

United Nations' resolution of creation of the Jewish State on 56 % of Palestine.

Interestingly, Bunche was also the first African American leader to publicly voice his criticism of the "solution" adopted by the UN. In 1951, Bunche gave a speech at the National War College in Washington, expressing his sympathy with the high cost Palestinians paid in the process of creation of the State of Israel: "The real victims of this whole conflict-and they have been successfully at each stage more victimized -have been the Arabs of Palestine" (Bunche,177). At this point in history, the world, along with all major African American intellectuals like Paul Robeson, Du Bois and majority of Black Nationalists and radicals celebrate Israel as a victim of oppressed Jewish people, who have been rewarded for their perseverance and struggle with a Homeland of their own. Arabs or Palestinians at this point are not only not worthy of sympathy, they are simply non-existent in the Western African American rhetoric. That is to say, Bunche's remark was not only surprising, it was revolutionary. Especially, taking into account the setting he chose for his confession.

The fact that an African American man was involved in the very creation of the state of Israel, signals an interesting discussion of African-American political and cultural significance of Palestine and Palestinians. More importantly, the fact that the same man took the risk of criticizing the UN decision he was a part of shows that there was always a level at which African American experience resounded with the Palestinian one. Forced exile from Holy/Motherland, economic and cultural exploitation, and extensive history of violence constitute African American and Palestinian experience.

From Great Barrington to Ghana: W.E.B Du Bois, Pan Africanism and Discourse on the Middle East conflict

In 1900 W.E.B. Du Bois delivered the penultimate speech at the first Pan African Convention titled “To the Nations of the World”. This address, its main ideas on the nature and meaning of black peoples of the world strongly echoes the ideas of what became to be known as black internationalism: “ The modern world must remember that in this age when the ends of the world are being brought so near together the millions of black men in Africa, America and the Islands of the Sea, not to speak of the brown and yellow myriads elsewhere, are bound to have a great influence upon the world in the future, by reason of sheer numbers and physical contact” (906). Du Bois speaks of black people separated by oceans and continents as a whole community, no longer an oppressed minority, black diaspora emerges here as a global majority and a powerful political, economic and cultural force to counter with. This approach, that came to be considered radical and is traditionally associated with figures like Elijah Mohammad, as it becomes apparent, was introduced by Du Bois. One of the most significant influences of the Nation of Islam and Black Power is the introduction of black internationalism and the reformulation of black oppressed minority as a powerful global majority and the rising crisis in the relationship with the Jewish minority in the US. And even though Du Bois is traditionally considered a great supporter of the Zionist project and sympathizer and admirer of the Jewish community, it’s history and accomplishments, his intellectual stance on the question of Israel and its role in the global struggle for justice is quite complex.

A seminal work that introduced the Jewish subject into Du Bois' writing was The Souls of Black Folk. The remarks made by the intellectual are often criticized for their anti-Semitic attitudes, the Jew here is "the heir of the slave baron", land appropriator, evil exploitative, thriving on the slave labor of African Americans. Interestingly though, in the 1953, revised edition of the book, Du Bois made series of corrections, replacing "Jew" and or "The Russian Jew" with "foreigner" or "immigrant" or omitted whatsoever (Aptheker, 284-285). This change is signaled by Du Bois' first- hand experience of European anti-Semitism, his deep admiration for the organizational talents of the Jewish community in the United States, and, most importantly, his profound sense of admiration towards the Zionist project. Du Bois' initial intimate exposure to anti-Semitism occurred during his study in Berlin and his travels to Poland even before Hitler's takeover. With the rise of the Nazi party to power, Du Bois sees more and more intimate connections between the experience of the Southern Negro and the European Jews (Weisbord, Stein,417).

In 1940, in his autobiography he wrote: "We may be expelled from the United States as the Jew is being expelled from Germany" (Quoted in Weisbord, Stein 417). In 1952 Du Bois delivered a speech titled "the Negro and the Warsaw Ghetto" drawing more and more elaborate parallel, and even changing his notorious notion on the color line and affirms that race problem "cut across the lines of color", based on his experience of Polish anti-Semitism (Weisbord, Stein 418). Further on, Du Bois fervently spoke out against the racist Nazi ideas, though his fascination with the Zionist project can be traced to the beginning of the 20th century: "The African movement means to us what the

Zionist movement must mean to Jews, the centralization of race effort and the recognition of the racial fount “-he exclaimed at the first Pan African Conference (169).

After the devastating years of Holocaust, Du Bois’ stance became even more passionate: “The theoretical demand for a Zion now became a necessity for more than a million of displaced and homeless Jews” (1948:6). At this point, Du Bois’ attitude very clearly reflects the sympathies of many other African American intellectuals and future radicals-including James Baldwin, Martin Luther King and even Stokely Carmichael.

In the wake of creation of the Jewish Republic in 1948, Du Bois is arduously writing and speaking in support of the state. On May 8th of that year he publishes an article in Chicago Star titled “The Ethics of the Problem of Palestine”. In this piece he revisits the history of the Jewish people starting from 1,000 BC until present. He draws some parallels between “Negro” and Jewish history. His discourse on Palestine and Palestinians is highly Orientalist and resonates with the writings of Black thinkers like Edward Blyden and Martin Delany.

His narrative resonates with the colonial narratives of Western writers and engineers of Zionist ideologies. He does not use word Palestinians throughout the article, instead he uses “The Arabs”. And even though he does not subscribe to the dehumanizing erasure of “Give people without a land a land without a people”, the Zionist slogan popularized in late 19th, early 20th century, his narrative on the land and its people is highly problematic:

Palestine is a land largely of plateaus, mountains, and deserts sparsely inhabited, and could easily maintain millions more people than the two millions it has today...among the Arabs there is a widespread ignorance, poverty, and disease and a fanatic belief in the Mohammedan religion, which makes these people suspicious of other

peoples and other religions. Their rulership is a family and clan despotism which makes effective use of democratic methods difficult (1-2).

The way he describes Palestine is very common for colonial travel narratives, painting a picture of abundance and opportunity. “Sparsely inhabited” does not erase Palestinians per-se, however, it dehumanizes them. “Ignorance, poverty, and disease” are also highly resonant with the rhetoric of manifest destiny, where colonization is seen as a benevolent, ‘civilizing’ force. While his analysis of Palestinian society and its tribal structure is accurate, the Western concept of democracy, should not even be applicable in a Middle Eastern society. There are a few points about the realities and history of Palestine Du Bois is missing, however. The “fanatic belief in the Mohammedan religion, which makes these people suspicious of other peoples and other religions” is not an accurate representation of Palestinian sociological makeup and is also Islamophobic. For one, Jews and Christians have been a substantial part of Palestinian society since, as Du Bois points out, Hebrew’s arrival in the region. And even after the ‘war with Islam’, as he describes the Muslim conquest, Jews, Muslims and Christians lived together peacefully, though in all fairness, not with entirely equal rights.

Secondly, Islam as a religious philosophy does not stand for religious persecution. What was actually enforced by Ottoman rule differs. The kind of narrow view of Islamic religion Du Bois displays here is in strong contradiction with his poem titled “A Hymn for the People” he published in 1911, calling for unity and tolerance and equality among all religions: “The Buddha walks with Christ, /And Al-Koran and Bible both be holy” (1920: 275-276). A possible interpretation of this dramatic shift is the wide Zionist propaganda at the time. Another is the political calculus involved in gaining a new

powerful ally in the Middle East and Jewish diaspora in the US by the means of unconditional support of the Jewish Republic.

Du Bois proceeds to express support for Israel, while mindful of the opposition on behalf some of the members of Jewish diaspora:

Finally, after a bitter fight, there arose with increasing voice, a demand on the part of the Jews themselves that they should go back to Zion and re-found the state which they had lost. This Zionism met opposition from many thoughtful Jews. They said this would increase anti-Jewish attitudes rather than decrease them. But the situation ceased to be academic. There began to be a growing feeling that certain of the Jews could only escape persecution by migration to a homeland (23).

It is quite significant that Du Bois points out the fact that a large amount of the members of Jewish diaspora opposed the Zionist dream. Ironically for an intellectual, he dismisses these people as academics, out of touch with the reality of their people.

Another important emittance here is that there were millions of Jews living in the Middle East and Africa. The Jewish people he is discussing here are white Western Jews. Who, since the foundation of Israel in 1948 until present are only group in the country to enjoy equality.

Du Bois goes on to discuss the early 20th century Zionist history and to discuss the 'promise' the British empire gave to the Jewish people, most likely referring to the Balfour declaration. Then he uses the most prominent manifest destiny rhetorical strategy and presents Zionism as an opportunity for 'civilizing' "The Arabs":

...It was no longer a mere question of religion and culture. It was a question of young and forward thinking Jews bringing a new civilization into an old land and building up that land out of the ignorance, disease, and poverty into which it had fallen; and by new democratic methods to build a new and peculiarly fateful modern state (26).

This trope is indeed the most common narrative in the colonial narratives. The idea of a ‘young, forward thinking’ people bringing a ‘new civilization’ is hard to miss as the most common narrative in colonial journals and colonial ideology in the recent history used by the Western powers to colonize 75 % of the world⁸.

Du Bois concludes the article with expressing disappointment in British not keeping their promise of the Jewish homeland:

In the meantime, a million displaced Jews are begging to be allowed to migrate to Palestine, where there is room for them, where there is work for them to do, where what Jews have already done is for the advantage, not simply of the Jews, but of the Arabs. The British Navy is keeping the Jews out and when the British Navy ceases to act, the British trained Arabian Army will walk in and begin war. this may be the Third World War. If it is, the guilt of this final disaster of modern civilization lies upon the heads of Ernest Bevin and Harry Truman (53).

It is quite unclear where his analysis of the current political situation comes from, but it is clear that he has been reading a lot of Zionist propaganda. He urges the US to get on the right side of history, so to speak. It is clear that the experience of harsh and rampant Anti-Semitism in Europe affected Du Bois very strongly. He was a humanist and was concerned with the devastating aftermath of the Holocaust, that is clear. However, his partisanship is also fueled by the lack of understanding of the Middle East history.

Du Bois keeps very close tabs on the conflict in 1948, as his correspondence with American Jewish Cultural society and Christian Committee on Palestine show. He gives an address at the Jewish Cultural center CHECK same year repeating the rhetoric of the aforementioned article and apologizing for Ralph Bunche:

⁸ Edward Said’s Culture and Imperialism provides a thorough analysis of the role of ideology and literature in colonial projects

His chance to take a just stand and play a great role for freedom might easily have cost him his career...perhaps, then, it was a counsel of perfection to have hoped that Ralph Bunche would have stood fast for justice, freedom, and the good faith of his nation and his race-perhaps. I wish he had stood firm against the vacillation, compromise, and betrayal of our Department of State. Since he did not, whatever the pressure and motives were, I ask forgiveness from you for him, in the name of fifteen million American Negroes (68).

It is not exactly clear what 'vacillation' he is referring to. Bunche's role was to negotiate ceasefire and he accomplished that successfully. The state of Israel was also created by then as well. It seems like Du Bois uses Bunche to affirm his own position among the American Jewish diaspora and wants to stand out as an unequivocal supporter of the Zionist cause.

He addressed the role of Ralph Bunche in the Middle East process in 1947

His tone and attitude toward the politician are different here. He paints of a picture of a man who is knowledgeable and perfect for the job:

I doubt if any man was better fitted to arbitrate between Arab and Jew. First of all, personally he resembles the comeliest Semitic type-dark, well-built, soft-voiced- a composite personality stemming from that mulato mixture which has arisen in America, and which is destined to do much for culture in this world. Add to that a broad education: born in the Middle East, trained in California and at Harvard, traveled in Africa and Europe and long teacher of Negro youth at Howard university. He is not a ready speaker nor a productive scholar, but he has deep knowledge of human nature and above all an engaging presence. He is unobtrusive, with no Nordic arrogance nor American 'smartness', and no repelling self-assertion: rather he is genial, easily inspiring confidence...when he sits down with a person, that person feels not only that he has a sympathetic listener, but one who really understands his problem (75).

His discourse here is quite interesting in terms of racial characteristics and behavior. His lack of 'American 'smartness' due to being a 'Negro' is quite a problematic statement, even though he seems to imply a lack of 'nordic arrogance'. He is painting a picture of an intelligent, sensitive and yet, somehow weak man. Aligning power and confidence with whiteness Du Bois is doing may be a result of the actual powerlessness in the face of

racism and Jim Crow on behalf of Black man, but it points to a problematic vision of Black masculinity on behalf of Du Bois. The fact that he sees this kind of man as a perfect fit to solve the problem between ‘Arabs’ and ‘Jews’ also hints to a level of further orientalism of Palestinians. He continues to paint the picture of a savage, uncivilized peoples who have finally encountered the civilized Western man in the fact of Jewish immigrants.

As the state of Israel is created in 1948, many African American intellectuals and Black nationalists such as W.E.B Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Edward Wilmot Blyden celebrate the creation of the state (McAlister,88). Black Nationalists and intellectuals have been identifying with the Zionist project since the 19th century. Blyden and a few other Black intellectuals traveled to Palestine in late 1700 and described it in the most negative Orientalist terms. Just like Hertzels, a French journalist who later suggested Palestine as the location for the Jewish homeland, African American nationalists describe Jerusalem and its multi-ethnic population ‘underdeveloped’. The remarks made by the black travelers and revealed in their diaries echo latent Zionist rhetoric of ‘Give people without a land, a land without a people’ on multiple accounts. Be it the descriptions of the landscape or the people and their cultural traditions, Palestinian Jews, Muslims and Christians of the Holy Land would not make Western standards of a ‘civilized’ people applicable by any accounts.

Nevertheless, 1956 Suez crisis causes a dramatic shift in sympathies and political directions of Black intellectuals. W.E.B. Du Bois depicts the shift in Black attitude using Biblical imagery in his 1956 poem titled “Suez” dedicated to the Suez war when Israel collaborated with France and Great Britain to occupy the Egyptian territory:

“Young Israel raised a mighty cry
‘Shall Pharaoh ride anew?’
But Nasser grimly pointed West
They mixed the witches’ brew!’
...Israel as the West betrays
It’s murdered, mocked, and damned
Becomes the shock troops of two knaves
Who steal the Negro’s land.
Beware, white world, the great black hand
Which Nasser’s power waves
Grasps hard the concentrated hate
Of myriad million slaves” (Quoted in McAlister, 85).

Du Bois relies on Judeo-Christian imagery, crucial for African American identity and imagination of the Middle East, to portray the change of power dynamics in the region and change in African America’s attitude towards it. Du Bois also evokes the images of the slave past of Hebrew tribes that African Americans have identified with for centuries. The language Du Bois uses to describe Israel is still characterized with admiration he felt for the Zionist project or his entire intellectual career. Israel emerges as a strong “young” warrior who “raises a mighty cry”. Du Bois assumes that Israel views the conflict as the come back to Pharaoh’s and Egypt’s rule and subjugation of Hebrews: “Shall Pharaoh ride anew? ” however the intellectual understands that the dynamics of power have been dramatically shifted. Nasser here as a wise ‘Negro’ leader, who is aware of Western colonial interests. He “grimly pointed West” in a righteous anger. Instead of the image of oppressed people struggling for statehood, earlier the most common portrayal of Israel by even the most radical of Black intellectuals, Israel here is an agent of Western colonial settler project.

Two years later, in 1958, he writes a passionate letter titled “In Battle for Peace” castigating the US government for their involvement in Lebanon:

I accuse the United States Government of using any pretext whatsoever to intervene in the affairs of the Lebanese State, even though it may not mean war. I accuse the United States Government of acting counter to the basic principles of its own Constitution and Bill of Rights when it willfully, and without the real consent of the American People, seeks to perpetuate a dictatorship in the Lebanon, by assisting Chaumoun in his attempt to change the Constitution of the Lebanon thereby perpetuating his presidency (45).

One of the most interesting parts of the speech is when he aligns US imperialism with the racism against African-Americans:” The heads of the United States Government by intervening in the affairs of the Lebanese State have shown a consistency of the purpose in keeping with the indecent treatment which they have shown their negro minority for over 300 years” (47).

This radical thinking that draws a parallel between Black experience in America and its imperial practices will resonate very loudly with the ideology of still crystallizing Black Power and Black Arts Movement.

The intellectual signs the speech in all caps: “ONE OF THE SILENCED GENERATION”. The anger and passion of the speech stand out through the tone and the refrain “I accuse”. This is one of the most anger-filled speeches by Du Bois. The fact that he already reached a stage where he recognized the alliances between neo-colonial forces and Israel and is now advocating vehemently against US imperialism as opposed to appealing to it signals this stage of his intellectual journey as some of the most radical, truly Third World understanding of the world. His words from the end of 50s will echo in the poems of BAM and speeches of PB activists for years to come.

Du Bois has always been an influential voice in the direction of black internationalism. His vast travels and experience of other countries gave him broad and deep perspective on the experience of the oppressed and colonized across the globe and

across the colorline. And even though he is often described as one of the most prominent Black Zionists, it is important to understand that his sympathy towards the Israeli state lies in first-hand experience of anti-Semitism and discrimination of the Jewish community in the US. Du Bois' sensitivity to world issues of justice made him aware of new, colonial implications of the Israeli military practices and, without a doubt, made a profound influence on other prolific African American intellectuals like James Baldwin. And even though it is Black Arts and Black Power era that is considered the birth of Black Nasserism, so to speak, and solidarity with the Palestinian plight, the political and cultural imagery that defines the period, as I attempted to show was introduced by no other than the original Black internationalist and a radical.

‘When the Pagan and the Slave Spit on the Cross and Pick up a Gun’: James Baldwin on Israel, Palestinians and the Parallels of Oppression

James Baldwin is important for this dissertation not only because of the cosmopolitan experience he attained through his extensive travels and his life abroad. And not even due to his first-hand experience of Israel. Baldwin is important for this study that draws parallels between Black and Palestinian radical history, ideology and poetry, because he himself was an intellectual who was seeking to describe Black experience through parallels. His notorious ability to understand and develop a deep sense of sympathy toward a group of people is celebrated by many critics. He was admired and gained a wide readership partially due to his ability to speak and appeal to black and white audiences alike. He was acutely aware of the systematic nature of anti-Semitism and wrote about the parallels between Jewish and Black experiences. His travels to Algeria opened his eyes on the intricacies of racial dynamics on the global

scale. He saw disenfranchised Algerian immigrants living in France as Black people of the country. He understood the intricacies of intersectionality and psychological damage of homophobia as described in his acclaimed novel Giovanni's Room (1956). Finally, Baldwin came to see Palestinians as the Black people of Israel.

As argued in this chapter, Baldwin's 1962 trip to Israel was not a defining moment for the articulation of his view of Palestine/Israeli conflict. Using his writings and collections of essays between 1948, which coincides with the creation of the Jewish republic, and 1972, the second half of BAM, BP and PPR, I argue that Baldwin's criticism of Israel and sympathy with Palestinians to a large extent stems from his relationship with Huey Newton, BPP and understanding and critical identification with Black Power movement.

The original parallels Baldwin witnessed and drew upon in his essays were between the conditions of Black and Jewish communities. Not unlike Du Bois, James Baldwin started out his intellectual journey toward understanding Palestine/Israel conflict with sympathy for the Jewish population home and abroad.

In 1948, as the state of Israel is created, Baldwin displays a deep sense of identification with Jewish identity and history of oppression: "At this point, the Negro identifies himself almost wholly with the Jew. The more devout Negro consider that he *is* a Jew, in bondage to a hard taskmaster and waiting for a Moses to lead him out of Egypt" (Quoted in McAlister 87). There is a deep sense of intimacy between Black and Jewish experience and reality expressed here, where Baldwin says that he, and a 'Negro' *is* a Jew. The images and symbols Baldwin uses here echo the ones used by Du Bois in "Suez"-images of bondage under Pharaoh, a quest for freedom in the figure of Moses.

The kind of iconography of oppression was in fact at the core of many Jewish/Black alliances and relationships, combined with shared levels of disenfranchisement and oppression.

With the rise of Nation of Islam and slow radicalization of the Black community which grew partially disenchanted in non-violent tactics of the Civil Rights movement, he explores the rise and significance of new icons for the black community. In his famous essay “A Letter from a Region in my Mind” Baldwin responds to Elijah Muhammad’s new map of African American identity with political sensitivity and creative genius: “God had come a long way from the desert- but then so had Allah though in a very different direction. God, going north, and rising on the wings of power, had become white, and Allah, out of power, had become-for all practical purposes anyway, black” (quoted in McAlister, 95). Published in *New Yorker* in 1962, as NOI situates itself as one of the most influential Black organizations, Baldwin exposes the challenges organization posed to Judeo-Christian tradition. The God of Old Testament, Black Jewish Jesus, whose suffering African Americans have been identifying with for centuries now walks a different path. Just like the Jewish property owners of Harlem living in well-to-do white neighborhoods evoked in “We’re Anti-Semitic Because We’re Anti-White”, white god walks away from blackness and suffering of the desert and becomes white, assimilates, in Baldwin’s earlier essay language. Allah, however, remains in the desert, in the place of Middle Eastern and African ‘heritage’.

Like many Black radicals of the time, by the 1967 his attitudes shift further. He pens “We Are Anti-Semitic Because We’re Anti-White” in The New York Times

magazine. In the essay Baldwin explores the relationship between racism and ghettoization at what Keith Feldman describes as:

“...Time of heightened tension in Israel-Palestine. If in 1948 Baldwin saw Jews living in the midst of Harlem ghetto, by 1967, Baldwin suggests that anti-Semitism emerged because not only had American Jews become assimilated into a national ideology of exclusion, predicated on race...they had embraced a spatially stratified whiteness” (Quoted in Feldman,2009:85).

Black/Jewish alliances formed during the Civil Rights era begin to collapse. The correlation between Baldwin’s stance on the role of American Jews and Black attitudes toward Israel shift simultaneously.

Keith Feldman presents an extensive study of Baldwin’s approach to Palestine/Israel conflict and its racial aspects in A Shadow Over Palestine: The Imperial Life of Race in America. The author discusses Baldwin’s 1962 trip to Israel upon the invitation of the Israeli government and Baldwin’s disenchantment with the myth of Israel as the long sought after Jewish homeland. And even though his vision was not fully formulated immediately, his visit planted an important seed for a deep understanding and subsequent criticism of Israel.

One of his first impressions of his experience in Israel calls for an examination. He describes being treated as an “extremely well cared for parcel post package” (quoted in Feldman, vii). The language Baldwin chooses to describe his experience is peculiar to say the least. The first striking aspect of his phrasing is that despite the supposed great treatment he received made him feel like an object. This is interesting because it prompts a question about how his race comes into equation here. Does his sense of being treated like an object derive from the fact that he is a celebrity and is envisioned more as a symbol of intellectualism than a human being? Does this sensation stem from the fact that

he is a citizen of a powerful imperial power that supported the state of Israel from the day of its creation? Regardless of the chosen interpretation, the fact the writer felt he was treated like an object cannot be normalized, be it based on his symbolic role as a representative of a force of an allied empire or any other kind of tokenism. And even though Baldwin never brings attention to the role of his race in this interpretation of his experience, his afterthoughts on his journey shed some light on his vision of Israel.

His attitude toward Israel forms gradually, and in a sense, it seems to have solidified more and more once he is removed from the actual experience of the country.

In the aftermath of his trip he writes on the reality of Palestinians in Israel:

I cannot blame them for feeling dispossessed; and in a literal way, they have been. Furthermore, the Jews, who are surrounded by forty million hostile Muslims, are forced to control the very movements of Arabs within the state of Israel. One cannot blame the Jews for this necessity; one cannot blame the Arabs for resenting it. *I would-indeed, in my own situation in America, I do, and it has cost me-costs me-a great and continuing effort not to hate the people who are responsible for the societal effort to limit and diminish me* (quoted in Feldman, xi).

This quote signals the beginning of a particular line of thinking where Baldwin begins to draw a parallel between his experience as a Black man in America and the experience of Palestinians living within and outside of Israeli borders. Moreover, Baldwin appears to see a parallel between the strategies both Israel and the US use in order to maintain their power. At this stage, Baldwin is skeptical yet understanding, and in a way, justifies imperial practices of Israel. However, he is also aware of the Palestinian experience of dispossession.

In Rap on Race (1971), a book that documents a dialog between Baldwin and an anthropologist Margaret Mead, he provides the most complex articulation and the most

critical remarks on the state of Israel. Moving away from his early associations between Black and Jewish experiences in America, he instead aligns himself with Palestinians.

A closer look at Rap On Race offers some perspectives on Baldwin's relationship with Black Power, Black Panthers and the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. It is interesting that at the time of its release the book got an unflattering review in the New York Times, criticizing it for not offering any new insights on the subjects tackled. The focus on the book in this dissertation challenges this view, as I argue that in fact, Rap On Race crystallizes some of the most radical and interesting views expressed by Baldwin. More importantly, it presents the most extensive discussion of Baldwin's understanding and attitude towards the state of Israel. His most striking criticism of the state of Israel is rooted in a parallel between black and Palestinian experience: "however bitter this may sound, no matter how bitter I may sound, that I have been, in America, the Arab at the hands of the Jews" (xi). This kind of articulation of experience is extremely interesting. It goes beyond sympathy or comparison: Baldwin articulates his experience as a Black man in America *through* the Palestinian experience in Israel and under Israeli control. By doing this, he brings the racial element into the discussion of the Palestinian experience and colonial rhetoric into the discussion of the Black experience in America. This kind of understanding of Black and Palestinian history was also an integral part of Black Power rhetoric on Palestine, as discussed in the chapter on ideology of BAM and PPR.

Baldwin's attitude toward Huey Newton, the founder of the Black Panther Party can serve as a model for understanding of his attitude to BP. He talks about the BPP founder as a complex figure. He is someone Baldwin claims he understands but does not necessarily agree with: "I may not agree with everything Huey says. I may not think that

Huey is always right, but I know what he aims and I know that he is learning all the time..." (95). He approaches Newton as a younger brother. He understands the nature of the rage that comes from him and explains that it is a coping mechanism and a reasonable response of a human being who "cannot accept going through the world covered in spit" (95). Critical understanding and sympathy expressed here is a great way to describe Baldwin's attitude to Black Power. He understands the reasons behind the emergence of the movement and the nature of its strategies, but he does not offer blind or unconditional approval. Baldwin kept strong ties with the Panthers and the movement and it's fair to assert that Baldwin and Black Power had an impact on each other. The question of Palestine, as I intend to show, must have been the most influential area in which the movement influenced Baldwin's thinking.

The first time Israel emerges in conversation between the anthropologist Margaret Mead and Baldwin is not incidental. As they discuss the painful histories associated with their ancestors and the question of European superiority and the nature of racism. As Mead brings up the fact that German Jews express superiority to Jews of other ethnic groups, Baldwin brings race into equation. He brings up the fact that this superiority especially targets Egyptians, Algerians and Yemenites. He goes on highlighting that Israel was, in fact created by the Western powers (191-192). He ties this aspect of the origins of the state intimately with its racist structure. Later on he strikes into the heart of the Zionist ideology of a Jewish homeland and dispels the myth that Jews in Israel share a national sense or even practice of unity: "I was in Israel several times and watched it very carefully. They are not together" (193).

The question of Palestine and Israel finds its way into the conversation again, this time in a very personal context for Baldwin. As they discuss the nature of history and experience and how it defined him. Baldwin expresses his connection to the slave past of his ancestors and when is challenged by his conversation partner, he brings about an example from his childhood. He speaks about the trauma of having been assaulted by two police officers for being Black. He speaks about having to negotiate that trauma with his love of America (206). He addresses the question of power and its impact on history and brings about the history of the British mandate. He speaks about the creation of the state of Israel as a dark page of history that was a response but in no way a way to alleviate anti-Semitism, even in the horrific aftermath of the Holocaust:

“From my point of view the creation of the State of Israel was one of the most cynical achievements, really murderous, merciless, ugliest, and cynical achievements, on the part of the western nations. They don’t care about the Jews” (208).

Mead attempts to challenge Baldwin on his ‘cynical’ view, but he speaks against Israel even more passionately: “...it is extraordinary that an entirely irreligious people should reclaim land after three thousand years, because of texts in the Bible, and displace forty million people. Or how many, I don’t even know how many” (209). Here Baldwin attacks another pillar of Zionism. He highlights the fact that supposed Biblical right of Jews to the land of Palestine is not truly a right in the light of the Palestinians that got displaced as a result.

The discussion concludes with the quote highlighted by Feldman in *Shadow Over Palestine* discussed above. A quote that creates a parallel between the Palestinian and Black experience. Even though Baldwin does not use ‘Palestine’ or Palestinians, due to

the fact that that kind of language was not even accessible at the time. This only speaks to the fact that Baldwin's position on the matter was indeed revolutionary and way ahead of its time. As far as the United States context, only the radicals associated with the black power movement openly embraced this stance at the time. This is why it is possible for me to argue that Baldwin's discourse about Palestine and Israel got shaped through his exposure to Black power figures like Huey Newton and others.

Another important platform for understanding the process of formulation of his politics on the Middle East generally and Palestine/Israel specifically is the collection of essays titled "No Name in the Street" that he published in 1972, as Black Arts and Black power movements are still dominating the Black political and cultural stage. The collection is interesting because it also explicates the nature of his criticism of the state of Israel.

In this same collection Baldwin exposes his connections with the Black Panther party, which makes it possible to argue that his original skeptical approach to the Jewish republic has been radicalized through the exposure to the Black Power discourse on Israel. The collection stands out as one that explicitly comments on his decision to actively involve himself in the Civil Rights struggle in the South and subsequently, into Black power. Baldwin emerges as an activist, and displays some of the most radical ideas of his career as an essayist.

Just like "Fire Next Time", "No Name on the Street" consists of two essays saturated in Biblical imagery: "Take Me to the Water" and, more explicitly, the second one titled "For Baptism". As Melanie McAlister writes in Epic Encounters, Black people have a prolonged history of exposure to Palestine/Israel and images and icons related to

the region through Christian mythology (98). As someone who grew up in a deeply religious household, Baldwin is a great example of this phenomenon. Even though his relationship with religion grew to be rather complicated, the influence of Biblical rhetoric is quite apparent in his writing as well as his public addresses.

With this in mind, it is difficult to imagine that his visit to the Holy Land would not make a profound impact on him. First and foremost, Baldwin again displays the aforementioned pattern of drawing parallels between his experience as a Black man in America and oppressed minorities abroad. When he discusses his stay in Paris, he immediately displays a sense of sympathy for the Algerian population: “In Paris les misérables were Algerian” (68). He recognizes the racist rhetoric used in America against Black people in Parisian characterizations of Algerians as ‘lazy’. He and offers an alternative perspective explaining that in fact, just like for Black people in US, Algerians are simply not able to find employment (366). Moreover, Baldwin is aware of the fact that the aggression directed at the Algerian population also stems not just pure irrational racism, but from the realization that these people are resisting the French imperial rule back home (365). This positive sense of identification with an Arab people who are struggling in the heart of a colonizing empire and outside of its borders provides some grounds for his identification with the Palestinians living in Israel later on.

Later on in the essay he talks about the incident when he watches a one-armed Algerian elderly man get beaten “senseless” by the police. This scene of violence has a deep impact on Baldwin, but its true impact does not surface until later on the essay, when Baldwin creates an explicit parallel between the Algerian experience and his own experience as a Black man in America: “The Algerian and I were both alike, victims of

history” (78). It is fair to argue that this sense of identification with an Arab population contributed to his attitude in support of Arabs of Palestine as well.

He takes this sentiment even further and uses the outrage at the racist nature of the way the French treat the Algerians as a fuel to go back to the US and join the Civil Rights Struggle there: “There battle was my battle too” (78). This way of thinking does not only display a continuation of the line of thinking where Baldwin creates parallels between his experience and experiences of the oppressed minorities, it also displays the peculiar Third World philosophy developed by post Bandung world. A philosophy that unified the struggles of oppressed peoples all around the globe, a philosophy that became ingrained deep into the fabric of both Black Power and Palestinian Liberation movements.

As the essay moves forward, Baldwin poses a complex question about his cultural and historical belonging. He looks to the African continent and then to Europe in attempt to find a place he could fairly call home. Even though the inquiry remains unanswered, this line of questioning interestingly leads him to the Middle East. Here, in a place that in historical and political imagination has always been described as a gateway between Africa and Europe, he exposes his view of Israel:

“If I had fled to Israel—a state created to protect Western interests, which side of Jerusalem would I live on” (86). The line between East and West Jerusalem is not just symbolic but expresses a specific political reality: The East side of Jerusalem is populated by Palestinian Arab majority, the West by the Israeli Jews. By questioning whether he belongs with the Palestinians or Israelis he positions Israelis living in West Jerusalem as representative of the West itself. While the Arab Palestinian neighborhood evokes the kind of sense of identification he established with the Algerians living in

Paris. Lastly, the Biblical symbolism of Jerusalem creates an epic feel to complicated question about his belonging posed by Baldwin. A ground where the original judgement about what is wrong and what is right and what is good and what is evil makes his question about belonging even more complex.

Baldwin's famous debate with Malcolm X, his views on religion and racial justice portray him as someone extremely critical of any form of partisanship. His opposition to Malcolm's separatist ideology did not leave much space for doubt toward his attitude towards Black Arts/Power philosophy. However, even though Baldwin did not adhere to the philosophy of NOI or Malcolm, he still always preserved a profound sense of understanding of how black community forms its thought and direction. He did not support NOI but he understood why Black people needed a black god. He was acutely aware of the effects of anti-Semitism and rationalized the behavior of Israeli government. However, he could not get behind the Zionist dream embodied in the state of Israel because of his acute critical mind and understanding of the condition of the oppressed. He proved critical of the over-the-top treatment he received in Israel, especially in the light of his experience of the oppressed 'Arabs' in Israel. He started his thinking with the parallel between Jews and Blacks, then realized that Black people are in France are Algerians. He eventually arrived at the parallel between his people and Palestinians. And even though this kind of comparison usually is usually associated with writers like June Jordan, it was James Baldwin who originally formulated and expressed this stance. 'Bitter' or revolutionary, especially for its time, Baldwin's words resonate loudly and intimately with progressive Black organizations almost half a century later.

CHAPTER III

BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT, PALESTINIAN POETRY OF RESISTANCE AND THE AESTHETICS OF REVOLUTION

Poetry is the most popular and dominant genre in Palestinian literature, and the one closest to the people as a whole. This can be attributed, in part, to the prominence of the oral tradition in Palestinian culture specifically and Arab culture generally. The ease with which catchy expressions and verses are retained and repeated through poetry made it easily transformed into political slogans, and later, blueprints of revolution. Like the rest of the Arab nation, Palestinians are a verbal people, easily captured and moved by language, often swayed more by the external beauty of rhythm, music, and sound of the oral expression than by the internal meaning and coherence (Ashrawi, 84).

An ancient cultural tradition that elevated poetry as the most prominent medium of artistic expression and a direct political necessity produced the phenomenon Ghassan Kanafani named “Palestinian Poetry of Resistance”. Even though critics of Arab poetry like Mustafa Badawi and Adonis agree that poetry as a tool of social and political change is inherent in Arab poetic tradition, Palestinian Poetry of Resistance, due to the unique political circumstances and its artistic legacy, is in fact unprecedented.

Black Arts Movement, an artistic movement Larry Neal once defined as ‘artistic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept’ followed a very similar path. It was an artistic response to political turmoil and outrage of Black America, especially the urban parts of it, ignored and disenchanted in the tactics and integrationist goals of the Civil Rights Movement.

Like Palestinian Poets of Resistance, Black Arts Movements were seeking new ways to create an art that addresses the needs of their people in direct and effective ways, the kind of poetry that would not only reflect intimate aspects of their reality but also have the power to transform this reality.

The level of political engagement had an immediate impact on the aesthetic characteristics of their poetry. Connections between poetry of the Black Arts Movement and Palestinian Poetry of Resistance can be made along the lines of following shared characteristics:

1. Strong communal and public orientation of the poetry. Meaning, poetry produced had to be accessible and relatable to the masses.
2. In order to be easily relatable to the masses it was not enough to write poetry in simple and accessible language. Poets had to find ways to get an immediate and strong reaction from the audience. In order to achieve this, poets of the movements were striving to produce poetry that was provocative and galvanize the masses to action, the kind of poetry that could be easily transformed into a chant or a political slogan.
3. Producing poetry that connects with the audience did not only depend on content. A strong emphasis on performative aspects of poetry was crucial in order to make it a popular art form.
4. Focus on performance translated into an emphasis on sound qualities of the poetry. What a poem sounded like became more important than what it looked like on a page. This brought about the focus on music of the poetry, experimentation with rhyme and rhythm.

5. The poetry of BAM and PPR was striving to go back to their ancestral traditions. Egyptian mythology and ancient history of Africa and the Middle East, their stories, icons and images were an important source poetry of both movements.
6. While BAM and PPR were actively engaged with African and Arab cultural traditions, they also allotted a significant space to poetic experimentation and innovation. Both movements represented Avant garde of American and Arab poetry.
7. Another aspect in which direct political engagement impacted BAM and PPR poetry is that it became a source of historical record. While mass media silenced Black experience so BAM poetry is often dedicated to names, places and events where riots and protests took place, poetry became an alternative source of information. Similarly, Palestinians in Israel and Occupied territories did not have many means to get information about one another, thus poetry became a powerful bridge connecting them to each other and keeping each other informed. More importantly, poetry sometimes connected coded messages that would be censored from regular print and radio media outlets.
8. Ideologies of Black Power and Palestinian Liberation Movement made a deep imprint on poetry of both of the artistic movements: various forms of Marxism, Third World consciousness, revolutionary ideals of the anti-colonial movement, Gamal Abdelnasser, Kwame Nkrumah, Malcolm X and other Pan-Arab and Pan-African leaders.

Along with these major general characteristics, there are more detailed features that are shared by BAM and PPR. One of them is extensive use of ars poetica. Palestinian

and Black poets of the era created a tangible set of poetic demands as to what can be considered poetry and who is worthy of the title of a poet. Poets often dedicated their pieces to outlining these demands and voicing their ideologies and ideas. Amiri Baraka's iconic "Black Art" and Mahmoud Darwish's "On Poetry" are great examples of this phenomenon and will be discussed in detail further in this chapter. Furthermore, BAM and PPR poets became critics of the movement. This offered a sense of cultural and artistic autonomy from white critics in the case of the Black Arts Movement, and some relief from oppressive editorial practices under occupation for Palestinians.

An underlying thread that connects Black and Palestinian poetry of the 1960s and 1970s is nationalist goals of their political counterparts. An idea that in order to have a sovereign nation, a unique culture is just as significant as the land and the people. In fact, culture, specifically poetry, would make people a people. This ideology, most widely known as cultural nationalism, was developed by Maulana Karenga (who came to be influential for Baraka) and Ghassan Kanafani on the Palestinian side. In a sense, an independent Black republic and a free state of Palestine became a cultural and poetic reality then, and, as poets believed, it was only a matter of time until it became a political reality.

Poets and Politicians

It is important to point out that transforming poetic reality into political reality comes from another unique feature possessed by BAM and PPR. Specifically, it can be attributed not only to struggle to erase between poetry and politics but also the figure of a politician and a poet. In the concluding essay to Black Fire, 1968 anthology Larry Neal proclaimed that artist and activist must be one (1968). Ghassan Kanafani also wrote

extensively about poets as guerilla fighters, especially in *Palestinian Poetry of Resistance Under Occupation*. This conviction was more than an ideal, it materialized very directly in the Black Arts Movement in Palestinian Poetry of Resistance. A great amount of the most prolific figures of both movements were also extremely important in shaping the political organizations and institutions of Black Power and Palestinian Liberation Movement: Amiri Baraka, Larry Neale, Askia Toure, Sonia Sanchez, as well as Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Elqassem and Ghassan Kanafani were involved not only as members as various groups and parties, but their creators and leaders.

Mahmoud Darwish edited a great number of important PLO documents and was a prolific figure in the organization. His voice shaped the discourse of the movement not only on political, but a specific linguistic and rhetorical way. Ghassan Kanafani established Popular Front of Liberation of Palestine in 1976 with George Habash. Samih El Qassem was a member of Rakah, Israeli Communist Party.

As far as BAM is concerned, the greatest example of poetry shaping the movement was Amiri Baraka's "It's Nation Time". A poem he chose to end the Congress of Afrikan People in 1968. The poem became the anthem and the major political document to have been produced at the conference. Baraka was also one of the very creators of the organization. Sonia Sanchez was a member of Congress of Racial Unity (CORE), Askia Toure was a part of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). And these are only a few examples of BAM and PPR poets and their direct involvement and their direct involvement in political action.

Poetry as Resistance

In order to demonstrate how the outlined ideological and aesthetic features of the Black Arts Movement and Palestinian Poetry come to life, this section of the chapter offers some close reading and comparison between different pieces from both movements.

As discussed previously, resistance is the undeniable underlying source of connection between BAM and PPR, that comes through in language, images and messages.

Sun-Ra's "Saga of Resistance" is an evocation and prayer for strength and revolution:

Resist me-----
Make me strong
Resist me-----
Make me strong.
Since I cannot be what you will
I shall always be that much more so
What I will.
Resist me-----
Repulse my dreams.
Thus is a spark brought from nothing...
Stone rubbed against stone
Upon thirsty grass,
Dried and baked by a burning sun... (1968:212).

Here the poet is calling for a revolutionary fire, praying for power and strength to create a change. He creates an interesting dynamic because instead positioning himself as the agent of resistance. He challenges his oppressor to apply pressure that will produce the liberating energy of fire as a result of his struggle against this oppression. His oppression thus becomes a source of his power.

"I Declare" by Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan is also a declaration of dedication to the revolutionary struggle:

As long as a hand-span of my land remains
As long as I have an olive tree-
A lemon tree-
A well-a cactus plant

...

As long as I have myself
As long as myself remain-
Bread and arms-
In the hands of freedom fighters! (89).

The poems are similar in that they evoke strength from seemingly insignificant parts of a

landscape: stones, sun, lemon tree, a plant. Both poets make a case for the power of

words, they both preach about finding power despite the surface powerlessness.

Richard Thomas speaks about the inevitability of victory in “Revolution”:

We will not die for nothing.
Not anymore.
Our deaths shall be noisy and beautiful to the last swing.
And deep.
...We aint radical or high;
We’ve thought it all over, and
Its marked on your calendar
Burning on our foreheads (196).

Fadwa Tuqan’s “My Liberty” uses similar uncompromising language:

My liberty-my liberty-my liberty
A sound I repeat
With my angry lips
Under the exchange of fire
And flames
I run after it
Despite my chains
And follow its tracks
Despite the night
And struggle ardently
For my liberty
...
I shall carve its name
Until I see it again
Extending to my homeland... (33-34).

The poems are similar in that for them revolution and freedom are already a reality. They paint is as an unstoppable force. The language of those poems is simple and straightforward. Despite the passion behind the words of both poets, the tone is measured, despite its urgency. It is used to convey poet's confidence in inevitable victory.

Ahmad Dahbour continues the theme of resistance in "Against", while meditating about the poetic cost of a revolutionary commitment:

Against a child becoming a hero at ten
Against a tree heart sprouting mines
Against my orchard's branches becoming
gallows
Against erecting scaffolds among the roses
of my land
Against what you will—
But after my country, my comrades, and
my youth were burnt,
How can my poems not turn into guns?
(1992:174-175).

The unwavering dedication to the revolutionary cause is only one aspect of these pieces.

There is also a sense of lamentation that can be read between the lines. The poets speak about turning their poems into weapons but also admit that this is done out of necessity and political urgency. In a way, similar to Baraka, who in "Black Art" proclaims that world full of injustice does not have a place for love poetry, poets seem to long for a day of victory when poetry will no longer have to be equated with 'guns' and 'gallows':

we want "poems that kill."

Assassin poems, Poems that shoot
Guns. Poems that wrestle cops into alleys
And take their weapons leaving them dead
With tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland. Knockoff
Poems for dope selling wops or slick halfwhite
Politicians Airplane poems, rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
Rrrrrrrrrrrrr . . . tuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuh
. . . rrrrrrrrrrrrr . . . (<https://genius.com/Amiri-baraka-black-art-annotated>)

Poets of both movements pushed the limits of language and poetry to new and exciting extremes. In many ways, the metaphor presenting poems as weapons was not a metaphor. Baraka pushes these limits and strives to turn his poem into a weapon by using onomatopoeia

And sound, creating a sonic experience of a Black liberation army. Dahbour's tone is less militant. And in a way he seems that he is mourning having to use his poetic craft toward a violent pursuit. Both poets, however, agree that the transformation of poetry into weapons is inevitable.

These two examples are significant because they complicate the earlier established discourse about the intimate connections between poetry and politics. And while the poems testify that dedication to the revolutionary cause was unwavering, they still reveal aesthetic burdens imposed by it. In no way does this complexity imply that poetic craft suffered from this ideology, but it rather speaks to the mastery of BAM and PPR poets who learned how to negotiate aesthetic and socially and politically conscious aspects of their work. And even though this characteristic is not unique for both movements, it certainly is a multifaceted platform on which Palestinian and Black poetry of the 1960s and 70s can be examined in comparative context.

Enemy of The Sun and Black Expressions of Palestine Solidarity

Enemy of the Sun: Poetry of Palestinian Resistance is one of the most substantial legacies of Black support for not only Palestinian cause but Palestinian artistic production of 1960s and 70s. The book was published by one of the Black Arts Movement presses: Drum and Spear Press. It was founded by the activists and ex-members of the Student

Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Charlie Cobb and Judie Richardson. SNCC was also the organization that (in)famously published the pro-Palestinian Newsletter in 1967, ramifications of which were discussed in the previous chapter.

The book was published in 1970, and is the first book of Palestinian poetry published in the United States. It features 12 Arab poets, including the leaders of Palestinian Poetry of Resistance like Mahmoud Darwish, Sameeh Al-Qassem, Fadwa Tuqan and Tawfiq Zayyad.

In “The Black Panther Party – For Palestine” Greg Thomas writes that the book was rejected for publications by a dozen of other publishing houses.⁹ This highlights how vital the support of Drum and Spear Press and, Black Arts and Black Power was for the Palestinians. It is fair to speculate that without the support of Black radicals who established Drum and Spear press, Enemy of the Sun would never get published. More importantly, the publication solidified the stance started by SNCC, a discourse that positioned Israel as a neo-colonial project and Palestinians as a part of the global revolutionary struggle for justice directly connected to the one waged by Black people in America.

Greg Thomas’ work on the anthology is very interesting and resonates with many hypotheses of this dissertation. He explores the role of Black Panther Party for Palestinian solidarity movement and some implications of Enemy of the Sun. In “How the Sun of Palestine Reached a Black Panther in Jail”¹⁰ he discusses an incident with George Jackson, a Soledad brother. After his death a volume of Enemy of the Sun was

⁹ Greg Thomas <http://samidoun.net/2016/09/the-black-panther-party-for-palestine-by-greg-thomas/>

¹⁰ <https://electronicintifada.net/content/how-sun-palestine-reached-black-panther-jail/15069>

found in his jail cell. Two handwritten copies of “Enemy of the Sun” and “I Defy” by Samih Al Qassem were published as one poem under Jackson’s name in the Black Panther Party newsletter¹¹. Thomas beautifully names this incident a ‘mistake of radical kinship’. The scholar attributes this phenomenon to the nature of language used by Palestinian poets, stemming from their experience of occupation, imprisonment and disenfranchisement: “When I’m reading [Palestinian] literature it’s not just the language of the prisoner that’s used, there’s the language of the captive — it’s understood as political captivity... In George Jackson’s writing, he’s writing about neo-slavery, and he’s using the language of captivity.”¹²

Thomas speaks about the language of Palestinian Poetry of Resistance as having a unique resonance with the language of the Black liberation struggle. The extent of intimacy that allowed to interpret Samih El Qassem’s words and experiences as the ones voiced by Jackson provides great insight into the background of this dissertation. Specifically, it exemplifies why a study of Palestinian experience can highlight some complex aspects of Black struggle and vice versa.

This example points to humanistic as well as political motivation behind Black Arts and Black Power support of the Palestinian cause despite backlash and political and financial consequences. The connection exemplified in the close intimacy between Jackson and El Qassem transcends ideology and political strategy. The aspects of this identification are complex and intricate and can only be fully grasped through poetry. The study of Enemy of the Sun is significant, because it provides an opportunity to explore Black and Palestinian from a different perspective. It adds a humanistic element and

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

emotional and artistic resonance to the discourse that earlier encompassed politics and ideology.

The preface to the volume was written by Samuel W. Allen, an African American intellectual and poet. At the time of the publication Allen was a professor of humanities at Tuskegee. His analysis identifies the aesthetic path of the poetry in a way that resonates with the arguments made about Palestinian poetry in the introduction to this chapter. Allen speaks about the significance of ancient tradition for poetry of the movement:

“It may be true that the poets, Al-Qassem, Qabbani, Darwish, Hussein and Touqan, break with the erotic tradition of their predecessors, the great Arab poets of earlier periods, but even though unifying theme is liberation, the reader hears at times the imaginative eloquence of a newer Antar” (viii).

The scholar draws a parallel between the Palestinian Poetry and Black poetry of the time and their role in consciousness raising: “This, basically, is a poetry of revolution and like the poetry of the Black revolution, it means to be political, it intends to move people to purpose; it hopes really, as prayer, to change things, to sing-as bullets on a mission, to change men’s minds” (ix). Here Allen speaks to one of the most prominent features of PPR and BAM poetry, the strife to turn poems into weapons and to utilize them as revolutionary tools. The fact that he is so cognizant of the revolutionary connection between Black and Palestinian poetry signals a complex understanding of not only Palestinian poetry but also of the Palestinian cause and experience on an intimate level. It expands involvement into Palestinian solidarity beyond just Black revolutionaries and Black Panther leaders to Black scholars. In the context of mainstream US academia and mainstream political discourse, Black people made a stance that contradicted both, an in a way carved an independent space for them.

As Allen moves forward with the preface, he does some close reading and deepens comparative analysis of the poetry of 'Black revolution' and Palestinian poetry. He begins his analysis by comparing Claude McKay's notorious sonnet, "If We Must Die" and Samih El Qassem's "Enemy of the Sun" as examples of Black and Palestinian defiance. This comparison extends the timeline of the connections between Black and Palestinian poetry back to Harlem Renaissance, for which McKay was instrumental.

Allen moves on to cite one of the most prolific poets of the Black Arts Movement, Haki Madhubuti (then Don L. Lee). The scholar mentions that Madhubuti actually met with the Palestinian Poets of Resistance at the Pan-African cultural festival in Algiers in 1969. He puts a poem from Don't Cry, Scream Madhubuti published the same year in conversation with a poem by Mahmoud Darwish. Later on, he includes Baraka's iconic Black Arts Movement poem "Black Art" in the dialog. The scholar draws parallels between Black and Palestinian poetry along their defiant and urgent message and the ideology that envisions poetry as a tool of revolution and liberation (xix-xx). These connections, which are also at the heart of this dissertation, highlight that the discourse comparing BAM and PPR poetry is not new and was something Black scholars and activists meditated on before any major analytical work on the movements took place. Above all, this fact emphasizes the strength and obvious nature of these connections.

Allen concludes his analysis by expressing admiration and support for the Palestinian poetry of the volume and its accomplishments and reinforcing the similarity between it and Black poetry:

"The poetry of this volume, it is soon clear, insists upon the rejection of aesthetically purist approach; it compels us to confront squarely the issue of liberation. It is basically, then, a poetry of revolution and, like the poetry of the Black revolution, it

means to be political; as poetry, yes it sings-as bullets on a mission; it calls for a change “(xxi).

Allen makes it clear that the connections between Black and Palestinian poetry of the time are as strong as they are complex. For the scholar the shared common ideological and aesthetic ground is not only obvious, it is also significant.

More importantly, the scholar highlights the fact that Palestinian poets, specifically Samih Al Qassem is aware of the plight of racism and disenfranchisement Black community face in the US. Allen cites “In Enemy Lines” which exposes the racist policies of Jim Crow era and aligns them with the Anti-Semitism:

Down with the shame of man
Raised by the Fascists waving mud-stained banners
Those words that say
No dogs, Jews, or Negroes allowed (xxii).

This quote is significant for two reasons. For one, it dismantles the notion of Palestinians as Anti-Semitic, Holocaust denying people, a crux of the Zionist ideology that allowed them to dehumanization and disenfranchisement of Palestinians. Moreover, it draws a parallel between the Black and American Jewish experience of oppression in the US. More importantly, this displays a very important ideological characteristic of Palestinian Poetry of Resistance that is also shared by BAM: The Third World orientation.

As mentioned in the introduction, Larry Neale, Ghassan Kanafani, and many other participants and critics defined this ideology as one of the key characteristics. The idea that in order to achieve true freedom and liberation, revolution has to be global and that in order to achieve it, all oppressed peoples of the world have to come together. Above all, the poem displays striking awareness of the plight of Black people in the US, Jim Crow and post Jim Crow laws and the depth of racism within the fabric of America.

Overall, Allen's analysis brings to light some of the key points of this dissertation:

BAM and PPR's

1. Shared belief that poetry can serve as a weapon or a revolutionary tool.
2. Significance of poetry for consciousness raising.
3. Combination between continuity of tradition and innovation in Black and Palestinian poetry.
4. The impact of the Third World philosophy.
5. Overall powerful and multifaceted connections between the poetry of BAM and PPR.

Historical examples of Black solidarity with Palestinians and their ideological and political causes and consequences will be discussed in another chapter of this dissertation. This particular part of this study seeks to emphasize the psychological, emotional and more humanist aspects of Black and Palestinian solidarity.

The introduction to the volume, written by Nasser Aruri and Edmund Ghareeb also offers some interesting perspectives on Palestinian poetry of the period. For one, they identify a significant shift in Arab and Palestinian literature post 1967 war. Specifically, they identify this literature as 'less inhibited' and describe the gradual process of its politicization (xxvii).

The authors identify 1967 and on as a period when Palestinians gained an unprecedented opportunity to unify Palestinians living in the diaspora with Palestinians living in the occupied territories (xxx).

This specific phenomenon made turning Palestinian poetry of Resistance into a movement possible in a way that was unprecedented as well. One of the most interesting arguments made by the authors is the impact Palestinian liberation movement of the era

made not only on Palestinian, but overall Arab poetry. In a similar fashion, historical and literary scholarship done about Black Power reveals that BP and BAM also made a tremendous impact on poetry Chicana/o poetry, Native American Poetry, Asian American poetry and inspired aesthetic and political transformation beyond US borders.

Scholars speak about the features distinguishing Palestinian poetry from the larger Arab poetic production of the time and reinforcing their connection with poetry produced by oppressed peoples around the globe:

The poetry of Palestinians in captivity differs from the literature of the Arab world in general; it is devoid of any signs of hopelessness and defeatism. It reveals a profound understanding of the colonial settler society and draws on the experience of oppressed people in similar areas such as Algeria, South Africa and Rhodesia. The young Palestinian poets in Israel share the struggle of all the oppressed people, and have in common their demands for social justice, liberation, and progress (xxxiii).

Echoing the quote by Samuel Allen, the editors highlight the impact of the Third World philosophy on Palestinian poetry and reinforce the sense of solidarity with oppressed groups worldwide the poetry created. The scholars bring up an important aspect of reality Palestinian poets in Israel were and still are faced with, that prompts why Palestinian and Black solidarity was not only natural but deeply rooted in parallel experiences. They discuss Salim Jubran and his life as a dark-skinned Arab Palestinian in Israel. The incident describes an incident in a cab when he is stopped by Israeli police and asked for an ID because of his dark complexion. Even despite this racist and inhumane treatment, when confronted by his driver about the stop the poet states:

I am very happy...our status here is still better than that of Blacks in Rhodesia, and even the Blacks in America...After all, I am permitted to travel with whites in the same car. I can even eat in the same restaurant. But it is better that I don't speak Arabic or read an Arabic newspaper (xxxix-xl).

Like poetry of Samih El Qassem, Salim Jubran demonstrates deep awareness of Black experience in the United States. He is profoundly aware of the nature and enforcement of segregation and institutional racism beyond Jim Crow. More importantly, he expresses sympathy and confronts the injustice embedded in these practices. He is able to see beyond his own oppression and develop a sense of identification with people thousands of miles away.

It is important to remain cognizant of the level of understanding Palestinian poets of Resistance had developed toward the experience of Black people in the US in order to understand the full extent of the nature of this study. In addition to offering some perspective on why and how Black solidarity movement for Palestinians was forged and exemplified, it offers some insights into Palestinian sympathy and comradery with Black America.

Edmund Ghareeb and Nasser Aruri conclude their discussion on Third World ideology and attitude toward racism with a powerful statement:” ...The Arab resents racial discrimination; that he aspires for equality and dignity; that he identifies with Arab nationalism; and that he shares the feeling of the millions of oppressed people around the globe, whether in Vietnam, Africa, or the American ghettos” (xli). The authors reinforce Jubran and El Qassem’s sentiment and proclaim their support for various global struggles. Moreover, the editors make a case for solidarity between Palestinians and Black people along the lines of racism and sympathy with African peoples, which was an integral part of Black Power and Black Arts ideology and political agenda.

Close Reading of the Poems

Enemy of the Sun's significance is not limited to serving as a bright example of Black solidarity with Palestinians in BAM and PPR era. It offers some insight into Palestinian imagination of Black life and experience and the depth of Palestinian poets' sense of comradery with Black America. It also highlights some direct ideological and aesthetic similarities between the two movements, which can be traced through a closer examination of the volume.

"In Enemy Lines" by Salim Jubran is an interesting poem that addresses many of the issues raised in this study, most fundamentally, the parallels between Black and Palestinian experience. It is especially poignant because it narrates an actual encounter between a Black sailor and a Palestinian living in Israel. Two men accidentally meet on the street and the speaker invites the sailor to a bar to ask about his experience of Jim Crow. The poem was also discussed earlier by Allen.

The first interesting aspect of the poem is awareness of the nature of United States racism, policies of segregation and their institutional nature, as discussed above. However, the fuller message of the poem is more complex and narrates an intimate encounter between two oppressed people. The speaker is curious about the sailor's life, but he is reluctant to speak of his subjugation. Instead, he yearns for escape from the harsh realities of racism, so the speaker inquires about freedom, epitomized in Africa:

Tell me of the land of black fire
Have you heard of a hunted lion?
Of the forests becoming ashes in the night
Of a field planted with martyrs
Of a people grown in a land
Watered with blood of the murdered
Of a sun born pregnant with bread, dreams and freedom?
Have you heard of Africa? (109).

Jubran describes Africa as a land of revolution and beauty. Prompted by the extensive successful anti-colonial struggles waged on the continent since Ghana's independence of 1957, Africa became a crucial political and symbolic icon for the Black Power and Black Arts Movement. It also became a space for Palestinian revolutionary nationalism, one of the few spaces in the world where Palestinian guerrillas, politicians and activists were given an opportunity to exist and prosper. Especially Ghana, Tanzania, and of course, Egypt. In fact, Gamal Abdelnasser became an important icon for Pan-Arab and Pan-African movements alike. The role of Africa as a source of cultural and political pride for BAM cannot be overestimated. It's was a very deliberate conscious decision on behalf of the editors of SOS: Calling All Black People to include a whole section of poetry dedicated to Africa.

The imagery used by Jubran reflects the continent as a symbol of revolutionary inspiration: 'black fire', 'forests becoming ashes at night', 'land planted with martyrs' and above all 'sun born pregnant with bread, dreams and freedom' reinforce Africa as a land of courage, abundance and freedom. This is a turning point of the poem, where Black sailor sheds the burdens of racism and raises his voice to speak of the continent. He comes alive and enthusiastically responds to the speaker:

"I hear, I hear, the rolls of the Simba's drums
I see a black beauty
Writhing like an angry fire
In a dance of bloodied love" (109).

The sailor the speaker is engaged with views Africa in colors and images similar yet different. Even though the images of violence are still preserved in 'angry fire' and

‘bloodied love’, there is a sense of love, eroticism and intimacy, a longing unfamiliar to the Palestinian speaker. It is crucial to recognize the poet’s sensibility to the fact that despite of similarity of their experience, a Black man’s relationship with Africa is still unique and much more intimate. The poet gives the sailor his own voice and his own vision. A vision deeper than a revolutionary emblem.

The speaker is intoxicated with the talk of revolution and freedom. Confined by the oppressive Israeli borders, he longs to hear more about other places of revolution and freedom:

“Speak to me of Cuba.

What do you know of a people that are
no longer a crucified Christ” (109).

It’s interesting that the speaker uses a metaphor from Palestinian and Biblical myth to describe colonization. ‘Crucified Christ’ here represents the complex and all penetrating experience of colonial and state oppression. By using this poetic tool, the speaker also creates a sense of identification between him and subjugated peoples of the world, thus performing the Third World worldview characteristic for Palestinian and BAM poetry alike.

This poem’s insight into the experience of US segregation and racism offers a significant background for Black and Palestinian solidarity but is not limited to it. Its tone is saturated with hope, revolutionary fervor and acute awareness of the revolutionary struggles waged worldwide. The speaker transcends oppression as a singular aspect of Black experience and the sailor becomes an agent of liberation, a symbol of Black radical internationalism and cosmopolitanism.

“The Fall of the Masks” by Samih Al Qassem is an interesting piece of the volume. It resounds with the Black Arts and Black Power philosophies in interesting

ways as well. In the introduction to SOS: Calling all Black People the editors Bracey, Sanchez and Smethurst identify Frantz Fanon as one of the key influences of BAM. His discourse on anti-colonial struggle had a profound effect on not only BP as well. Essentially, The Wretched of the Earth introduced the colonial discourse into both movements and outlined major strategies of Black liberation. The central metaphor of the poem is reminiscent of Fanon's other prolific study: Black Skin White Masks. The book explores the psychological effects of colonialism and colonial violence. Al Qassem's poem revolves around exposing Israel and its role in Western neo-colonialism and imperialism:

You, the stooge of colonialism
The agent of skyscrapers
And guardian of petroleum
Which flows in the midst of wolves (67).

Especially after of publication of Black Power: The Politics of Liberation by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in 1967, which affirmed Black people as a colonized nation within the United states, anti-colonial discourse became an integral part of BAM and Black Power political imagination. Malcolm X, Carmichael, Baraka, Newton, Neale and many other BAM and BP figures all came to envision Palestine/Israel conflict as a struggle between the colonizer and the colonized.

"A Song for Men" by Mahmoud Darwish can be connected to BAM poetry on multiple levels as well. When he talks about the place of poetry in society he portrays a very particular vision:

We shall write poetry
From our throats
And transcend our wailing
Make it into wine

To be served in the festival
And sung in the streets
In the factories
In the quarries
In the fields
In the clubs (82).

The idea of poetry as a public phenomenon is integral in Black Arts ideas and ideals. BAM poetry was read on street corners, during political rallies and bars, just like the spaces Darwish identifies as places for his poetry. These poets' ideas on the place of poetry also speaks to Karenga's ideology on the place of art. Poets of PPR and BAM both longed to make popular art out of poetry. This idea is also reflected in the aforementioned anthem of BAM, "Black Art" when Baraka urges "And Let All Black People Speak This Poem". Darwish ends his poem with a sentiment of empowerment: "Yes, I am an Arab/I repeat-and unashamed" (87). This sentiment strongly resounds with "I am Black and I am proud" a slogan introduced and popularized by James Brown, whose influence on BAM and BP is more than tangible. Black pride and Black empowerment became one of the central philosophies of Black radicalism of the 60s and 70s.

"Defiance" by Mahmoud Darwish continues the line of thinking he started in "On Poetry" and also echoes Baraka's philosophy expressed in "Black Art":

You may fasten my chains
Deprive me of my books and tobacco
You may fill my mouth with earth
Poetry will feed my heart, like blood
It is salt to the bread
And liquid to the eye
I will write it with nails, eye sockets and daggers
I will recite it in my prison cell -
In the bathroom
In the stable
Under the whip
Under the chains
In spite of my handcuffs

I have a million nightingales
On the branches of my heart
Singing the song of liberation (92).

Like the BAM anthem, Darwish's piece believes that poetry can serve as food for the soul and provide light and hope even in the darkest hour. The poem cannot be silenced or eradicated, it is invincible and simultaneously vulnerable. Just like Baraka's lines 'Or black ladies dying/of men leaving nickel hearts/beating them down' poetry can grasp the most intimate aspects of the human experience but at the time powerful enough to 'breathe like wrestlers'. The steadfastness of poetry is a major theme of Black Arts and Palestinian Poetry of Resistance and is found in many volumes of poetry of both peoples. Aside from the ideological and political similarities, the two poems are resonant in their defiant and militant tone, uncompromising attitude expressed in the aforementioned lines.

"The Unknown Continent" by Samih Al Qassem explores a similar theme, inquiring into the Black experience through the eyes of a Palestinian in Israel. The poem portrays the US as a far, unreachable, almost mythical place:

"How are the storms to reach you
Jazz band club in New York?
The blackman is hungry and fearful
The wolves of KKK roam the forest" (183).

The speaker's portrayal of Black experience in America is painted with dark colors and defined by fear, hunger, poverty and threat of racist violence. The fact that the poet chooses the metaphor of the forest to portray in US challenges the idea of the country as a cradle of civilization, democracy and progress. The poet highlights the fact that the presence of the KKK and life conditions of the Black community define the real nature of the US. The poem ends with the speaker calling on the Black man to rise for revolution:
Descendants of Old Abe!

Shake the marble of history,
Rise to the sky,
Rise above the band of stupid maggots
And halt-for
The earth grumbles
The rivers of blood (198).

The poem reflects the militant, urgent tone characteristic for BAM and PPR, echoes Baraka, Sun Ra, Don. L. Lee as well as his comrade poets. The imagery is vivid and striking, also an important feature of poetry of the two movements. The poem is an unequivocal call to arms, this time, for Black people.

Conclusion

Enemy of The Sun: Poetry of Palestinian Resistance is an invaluable artifact of Black and Palestinian solidarity. It is the only book by non-Black authors published by Drum and Spear Press, an important Black Arts Movement publishing house. This points to the significance Palestinian cause played in the movement and how revolutionary BAM and Black Power stance on the conflict was at the time.

On another hand, the level of awareness of Black experience expressed in the poetry of Salim Jubran and Samih Al Qassem and the sympathy expressed in the lines discussed above document the fact that this solidarity was mutual. Samuel Allen, author of the preface to the anthology, as well as its editors, Nasser Aruri and Edmund Ghareeb, all point to multiple parallels between Palestinian and Black struggle and poetry of the time. They highlight poets' dedication to revolution and the instrumental role they envisioned poetry to play in this process. Both Palestinian and Black poets viewed this struggle as one transcending national borders, echoing the ideology of post-Bandung world Third World movement. They urge for innovation and political dedication of

poetry and erasing the lines between poetic and political. They deploy poetry in the service of the people, demand its accessibility to the masses. Enemy of The Sun is a synthesis of central ideas and philosophies of Palestinian Poetry of Resistance but it also highlights the resonance between it and the Black Arts Movement.

In 2008 Remi Kanazi, a Palestinian-American Spoken word poet, published Poets for Palestine, a collection of poetry about and for solidarity with Palestinians. One of the contributors to the volume was no other than Amiri Baraka, one of the key engineers of the Black Arts Movement. He titled the poem “Enemy of The Sun”, which was not a coincidence.

George Jackson and Amiri Baraka are known as icons of BAM and Black Power, and the fact that they both read the anthology makes it plausible to argue that the volume had wide readership among the Black radicals of the era.

CHAPTER IV

THE PARALLELS BETWEEN BLACK POWER AND PALESTINIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND THE GENESIS OF BLACK/PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

The intertwined ideological influences of Black Power and the Palestinian liberation movement created some parallels between the nature, tactics, and goals of these movements. For one, they both relied on grassroots organizing and organizations by the people and for the people, much like the poetry of their artistic counterparts. Both Palestinian and Black radicals focused on infrastructure and independent institution building. They had an acute awareness of the needs of their communities and designed dozens of programs that would address them: from food to medical care to education. The programs organized by PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) and Black Panthers, had a similar political goal behind their organization efforts: political and economic independence from their oppressors. Cultural work performed by the artistic wings of these organizations and the movements they represented, performed addressed the challenges of both communities just effectively as the social programs.

The first major challenge faced by both peoples was the lack of unity. While Black Americans deployed Civil Rights strategies to combat the segregationist policies of Jim Crow in the South, urban Black population of the North was facing a different set of challenges: racism, poverty, unemployment, segregation, to name a few. And while the

end effects of Jim Crow might have been similar, if not the same, the power dynamics involved in the sustaining of these oppressive structures were not the same and thus required different resistance tactics.

Prior to the June war of 1967, Palestinian population faced a similar divide. The population of the Gaza Strip and West Bank were under the mandate rule of Egypt and Jordan. The Palestinian population that remained within the Israeli borders was under the strict rule of the Israeli government, with political marginalization on multiple levels. In the aftermath of the war, Israel gained full control of the said territories and full control over the Palestinian population. This moment became the first time since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 that Palestinians finally gained a chance to unite.

Although 1967 is the actual date on which the isolated Palestinians inside Israel physically met their fellow Palestinians, who until then had been under Hashemite Jordanian or Egyptian rule, the process of discovery and recognition remained rather slow and tentative until the West Bank uprisings of 1973-76. The 1970's, thus, for the first time provide us with an opportunity to talk about Palestinian literature as a whole, rather than the two literatures of exile and of occupation (Ashrawi, 77).

This time was indeed an unprecedented opportunity for a unified struggle. And while the rest of the Arab world is overtaken by shock and disappointment of defeat, Palestinians saw a new opportunity for a revolution.

In 1966 Martin Luther King and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), announced that they were moving to Chicago to establish a Freedom movement there. Arguably, this move can be construed as the nascent attempt to unite the Southern and Northern black struggles for justice. However,

it was not only that BAM and BP take central stage in the Black political scene, but that is there a chance of true unity within the African American freedom movement.

However symbolic, it is important to remember that the call for ‘Black Power’ was issued by Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) in the aftermath of the 1966 Meredith March in Mississippi. Nevertheless, the man who issued the call was a product of the North (and the Caribbean) and the progressive leftist circles of New York City. King’s move to Chicago in order to address the plight of urban Blacks, and the call for ‘Black Power’, which is often cited as the beginning of Black Power era can serve as the historical landmarks that ushered a new era of Black liberation. Black Power did not only differ in ideology, rhetoric, and strategies of resistance. Arguably, it also created a sense of unity between different parts of Black population across the United States. BAM, with its major organizations in the South, such as the Free Southern Theater and BLKARTSOUTH, strengthened this bridge and made it possible to speak of a non-homogenous, but unified political and artistic struggle.

Similarly, Palestinians and the rise of PPR created a new sense of closeness between Palestinians in Israel and in the Occupied Territories. The majority of the most prolific poets of the movement, such as Mahmoud Darwish, Tawfiq Zayyad, Samih El Qassem, and Rashid Hussain, were from what came to be known as “Arab Israel.” But Fadwa Tuqan, the most prominent female poet of the movement was from Nablus, West Bank. Despite harsh suppression and censorship, Palestinians developed a stronger desire

for unity and connection. Poetry was without a doubt an important reason behind and the means of this connection. It was used to transform, inform, inspire, and mobilize people.

Palestinian people were also facing new opportunities for unity and shifts in the way they viewed their struggle. First and foremost, the aftermath of the 1967 war meant that for the first time since the creation of Israel, Palestinians who had been divided by the Egyptian and Jordanian mandate in the Gaza Strip and West Bank could finally interact much more easily. More importantly, they had an unprecedented opportunity to connect with their brothers and sisters living within the Israeli borders. This was possible through such media and events as radio shows, newspaper publications, and poetry readings.

Arguably, this powerful sense of unity, cultural, political, and spiritual, can be attributed as one of the most important and lasting accomplishments of BAM and PPR alike.

Iconoclastic Nature of BAM and BPP

As Black community faced more and more outbreaks of violence against the non-violent Civil Rights struggle, people begin to question the methods of the movement. ‘Black Power’, black pride and the rise of the Black Panther Party in 1966 created a dramatic shift in black attitudes. By the late 60s and early 70s, the Black political stage is almost completely taken with the image of a Black Panther, black leather, raised fists, and of course, weapons.

The nature and icons of the Palestinian struggle changed as well. In *The*

Palestinian People Kimmerling and Migdal write about the nature of this change:

The image of the survivor also evoked the fast-disappearing fellah. But this was a more passive hero, demonstrating *sumud*, or steadfastness...At the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s, the *feday* dominated the Palestinian symbolic universe, as Palestinians groped for a response to the new conditions wrought by the June war (243).

The image of persistence embedded in the concept of ‘*sumud*’ can be compared to the image of the non-violent and persistent Civil Rights worker and the ‘We Shall Overcome’ philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr. ‘*Fidai*’, the Palestinian Freedom Fighter, a man with a Palestinian scarf and a Kalashnikov rifle, resonant with the image of the Black Panther, gained prominence within the same framework of time. Even though successful anti-colonial movements were raging on the African continent, revolutions in Cuba and China captured the imagination of Black radicals, the image of the Palestinian freedom fighters mesmerized them like no other. To a large extent this was due to the fact that PLO channeled substantial efforts into publicity. Not dissimilar to Black Panthers, who gained national prominence and fame (as well as infamy), Palestinian guerrilla fighters rose and affirmed themselves as the sole heroes among the defeated Arab nations who could not match Israel’s military prowess. Poets of Palestinian resistance as well as artists were crucial for popularizing and glorifying guerilla fighters. Similarly to Panthers, who to a great extent were cultural nationalists and relied on artists and cartoonists to get their message across, PPR raised collective voices, lionizing radical Palestinian figures and organizations.

Palestinian and Black organizations that dominated both movements can be compared in several ways. PFLP and SNCC, for example, were both organizations that

originated and solidified as parts of student movements. As discussed above, many of these organizations relied on Marxist and Leftist networks and models. PLO and BPP can be compared in the ways that they gained prominence: both designed a solid infrastructure that would serve the basic needs of the communities they served. Black Panthers had an extensive list of community programs: from the famous free breakfast programs to schools. Providing for even the most mundane needs like free shoe program to buses to prison, BPP gained trust from the Black community. PLO, once it established itself in Lebanon in the 1980s, also dealt with issues from road maintenance to free clinics.

Both BAM and the PPR faced suppression and censorship. The Israeli government issued house arrests to and/or imprisoned all the major poets of Resistance; anti-Zionist, pro-Palestinian political writing was considered national treason, especially when practiced by Arab writers.¹³

In "Palestinian Poetry of Occupation Hanan Ashrawi provides the details of the strict censorship procedures Palestinian poets were facing since the 1967 war (78). She adds on to highlight the volatile nature of the censorship as well:

It is almost impossible to predict what might be censored, in as much as it is difficult to predict the whims of the censor. Anything which might threaten "the security of the state" is forbidden, but that is quite fluid since, according to the emergency laws, thinking thoughts harmful to the state is a legally punishable offense. Until recently, for example, the word "Palestine" was considered threatening enough to be censored even in West Bank children's textbooks (79).

The US government was threatened by the rise of BAM as well. The FBI's Counter Intelligence Program, or COINTELPRO, that was originally meant to dismantle

¹³ Ghassan Kanafani, *Al Adab Al Felestene Taht El Muqawama: 1948-1968* (Palestinian Resistance Literature Under Occupation: 1948-1968).

the Communist party in 1956, became a consistent threat to BAM and BP.

In the introduction to the 2007 edition of Black Fire, Baraka claims the US intelligence to be responsible for the end of BARTS. To one extent or the other, many BAM and BP organizations, as well as their Palestinian counterparts could be considered underground or semi-underground. Even though the degrees of suppression and intervention in different Palestinian and Black organizations differed, both BAM and PPR scholars claim poetry to have been an effective tool in transmitting information to the people and avoiding censorship by the means of the figurative language of poetry. Nevertheless, just like PPR poets, many famous BAM figures like Baraka and Askia Toure were jailed. Many, like Nikki Giovanni were under surveillance.

BAM and BP can also be compared in character in terms of the importance of publications and printed press. While BAM and its popularity and burgeoning relied on the Journal of Black Poetry, Negro Digest (later Black World) and many others¹⁴, the Palestinian movement connecting Palestinians of Gaza West Bank and Israel would not be possible without publications like Al-Jadid, Al-Itihad and Mashraf¹⁵ in which all major PPR writers, such as Darwish, Zayyad and Jubran, published.

BP and the Palestinian Liberation Movement were both international or internationalist in nature and ideology. Inspired by Malcolm X, Abdelnasser, Fanon and their political visions, they did not only see themselves as organizations fighting for global justice, they implemented this ideology by making themselves international. The BPP had an office in Algeria and inspired similar organizations worldwide, from Australia to India to, interestingly, Israel. The PLO was also notoriously international in

¹⁴ See Black Arts Movement by James Smethurst for details

¹⁵ The Palestinian People, Kimmerling and Nigdal 2003

nature with many offices around the world from Yemen and Tanzania to Soviet Russia, and at many points staffed largely by non-Palestinians.

The history of Black and Palestinian liberation movements is complex and interesting. While it's possible to argue that different forms of radicalism and nationalism occurred in both communities prior to 1960s. However, the wide range of ideological and political similarities between Black and Palestinian liberation demonstrated during 1960s and 1970s is unprecedented.

Aside from the similarities of them that made an imprint on the nature of BAM and PPR, both movements embraced and advocated and embodied the principle of art that is accessible and directed at the masses with intimate connections between their spiritual, emotional, and political struggles. PPR came from a long-standing tradition of poetry festivals and audience-based art, a tradition where poetry penetrated multiple public spaces from weddings to political rallies and demonstrations. BAM also carried out this mission by making street corners, rallies, bars, conferences, and open public events key places for their performances. As a result, poetry and drama, which were easily performed in such spaces, became the defining genres of both movements. The full extent to which BAM and PPR re-imagined the relationship between art and public are yet to be explored.

Examples of Black and Palestinian Solidarity in the Era of BAM and PPR

The complex and multidimensional parallels between Black and Palestinian cultural and political resistance, especially their internationalist character, resulted in actual encounters between the prominent figures of both movements. Algeria, Tanzania,

Cuba, Egypt, and the Soviet Union were some of the sites where BP and Palestinian freedom fighters and poets met and interacted. These encounters often resulted in public demonstrations of solidarity of various kinds, from mutual publications, conference resolutions and documents to public proclamations.

The shared ideological matrix dictated the strategies and the natures of institutions of both movements, as discussed in the chapter on ideology of BAM and PPR. Malcolm X, Elijah Mohammad's 'Afro-Asiatic Man', Marxism and Marxist-inspired revolutions, the Third World Movement, Frantz Fanon, global anti-colonial movements, and various forms of Islam all became catalysts for both revolutionary imagination and political direction for both people. Under these circumstances, the emergence of pro-Palestinian discourse was not only natural, it was basically unavoidable.

The first, and probably the most (in)famous example of Black Power solidarity with the Palestinians was Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's 1967 publication of "Third World Round-Up: The Palestine Problem: Test Your Knowledge" in its newsletter. The newsletter exposed Israel's racist practices towards Palestinians and Jews of Arab and African descent, its colonial practices in the region, and its connections to apartheid in South Africa.

In "Blacks and Jews in The Civil Rights Movement" Clayborne Carson explores the role of Jewish participation and influence on SNCC and the meaning of the aftermath of the Pro-Palestinian newsletter. Carson highlights the fact that SNCC did not have

Jewish membership in numbers as great as NAACP and CORE, for example. However, the presence of Jewish members was felt and marked after the publication “Test Your Knowledge”. While religious identity was not at all significant to these members as they joined the group, Carson states “they entered the movement as whites, as though some would leave as Jews” (575). Carson cites the beginning of Stokely Carmichael’s leadership in May of 1966 as the beginning of the transformation of SNCC and the time when Civil Rights goals started to be expanded and revised. One of these steps, as Carson points out, was the establishment of the International Affairs Commission and the beginning of the initiatives to meet with various Third World governments. He gives a detailed description of the sequence of events that led to the publication of the newsletter and identifies Ethel Minor, a Civil Rights activist who has also affiliated with NOI and had many Palestinian friends during her college years, as being central to the raising of the issue of Israel and Palestine (582). The tremendous backlash that followed the publication required a response, and Jim Forman, the head of the International Affairs Committee decided to publicly embrace the Pro-Palestinian stance, despite the criticism of anti-Semitism. Carson identifies this event to have posed complex ideological challenges for the organization and reaffirms it as one that caused a move toward an open Pan-African, Third World orientation (584). This can be fairly interpreted as the moment when SNCC transformed from a Civil Rights to a Black Power organization.

Reflecting on the magnitude of the event, the scholar stated: “Thus it happened

that a few dozen black activists became the first, and for some time the only, major Black organization to take a stand against Israel in the Middle East dispute” (585). In A Shadow Over Palestine, Keith Feldman echoes Carson and also highlights the publication of the newsletter as a major landmark for the history of the organization (60). The full extent of the significance of the newsletter for SNCC and for Black liberation and the movement from Civil Rights to Black Power can only be revealed in the larger context of BP solidarity expressions provided further in this dissertation.

Reflecting back on this incident Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael), who was instrumental in introducing colonial and internationalist discourses into Black Power and Black Arts Movement, offers some new interesting perspectives in his autobiography Ready for Revolution. He opens his narrative about the incident with a powerful statement: “There’s been one issue in particular-the question of justice for the Palestinian people-on which I seem to have made my most implacable enemies. So be it. I’m proud of my support over many years for the human rights of the Palestinians (557)”. He goes on to recall the beginnings of his radical education and emphasizes the impact of Jewish radicals of New York City on him and his first march in support of Israel. He also recalls his first introduction to the Palestinian problem through the pages of Muhammad Speaks. His journey toward a pro-Palestinian stance was not a matter of anti-Semitic prejudice or an impulse. He joined a reading group on the issue with several other radicals, including Rap Brown and Ralph Featherstone, where they read anti-Zionist materials and books, but also a lot of works by prominent Zionist thinkers. Something that has not been mentioned earlier in the discussion of the scandal and ‘hysteria’ that followed the

publication of the article is the fact that it was not meant for the open public. Ture states that given more time, SNCC rephrased some of the language of the article. However, he also expresses awareness that the backlash would have been tremendous regardless of the chosen language (557-562). He concludes his narrative of the incident with a passionate statement: “I can tell the world: I am not, have never been, nor can ever be anti-Semitic or anti-Judaic. However, I am and will be unto death, anti-Zionist” (563).

It is important to highlight that Ture’s stance on Palestine/Israeli conflict does not only stem from his self-education on the issue and his view of it as a colonial or neo-colonial. In “The Black Panther Party-For Palestine” Greg Thomas points out that Ture adhered to the political imagination coined by Elijah Muhammad and adapted to a certain extent by W.E.B Du Bois, Amiri Baraka, and Malcolm X, to name a few. This philosophy considers Palestine and Palestinians an African people, and Ture expressed this stance when he called Palestine “tip of Africa” in one of his speeches.¹⁶

The Congress of Afrikan Peoples (CAP) was one of the most influential Black Power organizations. Due to the efforts of CAP, first Black mayor of Newark was elected, as well numerous Black representatives. In the introduction to the collection of documents and speeches of the conference organized by CAP, Amiri Baraka writes: “There will be Congresses until we meet in Congress as one people, whether in Harlem or Johannesburg, whether resisting the oppression of Israelis or Quakers, one people, one flag, one leadership, one identity, purpose and direction” (xix).

This quote is significant because it highlights Israel and fighting against Zionism as one of the central goals of the organization. It expresses the Third World vision earlier

¹⁶ <http://samidoun.net/2016/09/the-black-panther-party-for-palestine-by-greg-thomas>

highlighted as a major ideological characteristic of BAM and BP. It draws a connection between the struggles of Black diaspora in Harlem, Black people in South Africa and the Palestinians.

Howard Fuller, the president of Malcolm X Liberation University, delivered a powerful address at the First Modern Pan African Congress. He framed his speech by formulating the black liberation struggle through nationalism and Pan-Africanism. He also addressed the state of Israel and his view of the nature of the Jewish state:

Israel is a settler colony. There is no such place as Israel. It is Palestine, and so that all of you, all of you niggers who saw fit to sign that document saying that you support Israel, you are supporting nothing. We must understand that those Europeans who call themselves Jews moved to Palestine, took the land in 1948. This is what it's all about, and America is a settler colony" (59).

Fuller's conviction of the colonial design of Israel strongly resonates with Malcolm X's and Larry Neal's. Neal, one of the key engineers of BAM, also envisioned Israel as a neo-colonial state and an ally of US imperialism.

It is interesting that Fuller feels compelled to address the Palestine/Israel conflict in a speech centered around black nationalism. If the speech is read within the framework of black internationalism and Third World philosophy, it becomes apparent that the speaker seeks the kind of nationhood that does not violate land rights of the indigenous inhabitants of any given land. The parallels he draws between the colonial, settler nature of Israeli and of the United States poses serious questions about the kind of black republic Black Power must strive to achieve. The fact that Fuller rejects Israel as a model for nationalist pursuits once again emphasizes the significance the conflict had on formulation and understanding of black nationalism and black internationalism alike.

Among several black organizations like SNCC, RAM, CAP, the League of

Revolutionary Black Workers, who issued public or membership-wide statements in support of Palestinians, Black Panther Party stands out as the one most actively engaged in Palestinian solidarity work. The impact of this work cannot be overestimated in Black radical and internationalist scene, for BPP still remains the most iconic organization of the Black Power Era.

In Geographies of Liberation: The Making of the Afro-Arab Political Imaginary

Alex Lubin provides a comprehensive history of the Black Panther Party solidarity with Palestinians. For example, in 1969 Black Panther published a letter of support from the Popular Front of Liberation of Palestine. In November of 1975 Black Panther newspaper published an editorial by Farouk Kaddumi, one of the PLO leaders. During BPP leader Eldridge Cleaver's exile in Algeria, he met the PLO leader Yassir Arafat and two leaders exchanged statements of support in the organization's newspaper (126-127). BPP co-founder Huey Newton also met Arafat and subsequently published a "Position Paper on Palestine" in the 1974 issue of the organization's newspaper. Lubin also unearthed the history of Newton's travels to the Middle East in 1980, specifically Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and Israel. He toured refugee camps and met with Arafat again. In the position paper written in the aftermath of his travels, Newton praised the organization for their social and refugee relief work (128).

Aside from political speeches, declarations, visits, meetings and conferences where Black and Palestinian radicals and poets met, publications were a major vehicle for demonstrating BP and BAM solidarity with Palestine. For example, a series of articles published by Hoyt Fuller in The Negro Digest, later Black World. The articles criticized Israel and its connections to world imperialism and oppression of Black people. Soon

after, the publication was shut down due to lack of funding. Many BP figures believe withdrawing of the funding was a retaliation on behalf of Zionist organizations.

In 1970 “Drum and Spear Press” (one of the main presses of BAM, founded by former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members) published Enemy Of the Sun: Poetry of Palestinian Resistance. The collection contained all major poets of PPR and was the only publication not by and about Black diaspora. In “The Black Panther Party-For Palestine” Greg Thomas points out that the anthology was denied publication by a dozen publishing houses prior. The anthology is a brilliant example of Black Arts Movement solidarity with Palestine.

The key figure of BAM in Chicago, Haki Madhubuti, attended Pan-African cultural festival in Algiers in 1969. Keith Feldman gives a great account of the festival in A Shadow Over Palestine. He highlights the fact that the event was opened by the Algerian president’s remark about the significance of culture as a weapon of liberation (83). This idea was a central creed for both Black and Palestinian cultural nationalists of BAM and PPR. Aside from Madhubuti, Ed Bullins, a leading Black Arts dramatist was in attendance, along with Charlie Cobb of SNCC (and Drum and Spear Press and bookstore) and Eldridge Cleaver (Ibid). No doubt, it was in large part the connection that Cobb made in Algiers that led Drum and Spear to publish The Enemy of the Sun a year later. Similarly, Cleaver’s close relationships with the PLO representatives whose office will turn out to be very close to the one of BPP in Algiers was facilitated by the festival.

Upon his arrival home from the conference, Madhubuti published a special, Pan-African issue of the Journal of Black Poetry, which included all the major poets of Palestinian Resistance: Salim Joubran, Samih El-Qassem, Tawfiq Zayyad, and Mahmoud

Darwish. The poets are identified by the guest editor in a provocative matter (e.g., “poet, guerrilla fighter of occupied Palestine”) ... Madhubuti points out that the poets refer to their writing as ‘poetry of necessity’ and expresses a strong sense of identification with the concept. It is important to highlight that Madhubuti describes the poets as ‘guerilla fighters’, reaffirming a shared philosophy of BAM and PPR that was seeking to erase the borders between poetry and politics. He thus makes the reasons behind this, on the surface, unexpected publication, obvious.

It is important to note that Enemy of the Sun was the only publication by non-Black authors ever published by Drum and Spear Press. Similarly, Madhubuti’s publication of PPR poets in Journal of Black Poetry was the only such occurrence as well. There are two possible, though not mutually exclusive explanations of this phenomenon. One is the belief in the kind of kinship between Palestinians and Black people that was expressed by Baraka, Fuller and Kwame Ture, envisioning Palestinians as African peoples and thus an integral part of Black liberation struggle.

Black Arts Poets on Palestine

BAM, described as ‘aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept by Larry Neal, also absorbed pro-Palestinian sentiment. Aside from the aforementioned publications, one of the most important figures of the movement, Neal proclaimed:

The Negro leadership voiced strong support of the Israelis during the conflict and they were given a great deal of exposure in the racist press. But the nationalists had no adequate means of presenting the Arab side of the conflict. So powerful was the pro-Israeli propaganda that most pro-Arab militants were labeled as racist ‘anti-Semites.’ Popular approval of Zionist aspirations in the Middle East is not based on Biblical mysticism, but on the cumulative results of good propaganda for over forty years. An analysis of international realities clearly indicates that

Zionist interests are decidedly pro-Western and that these interests are neo-colonialist in nature and design (143).

Like Malcolm X, Neal demystifies the state of Israel as a fulfillment of a religious prophecy and points to its colonial nature and political interests. To him black support of the Zionist cause was solely a result of misinformation and propaganda. In its essence, Neal's argument is that an educated understanding of the conflict makes pro-Palestinian stance inevitable among Black radicals. This rhetoric is impossible to divorce from the influence of BP and again reinforces the connection between the two.

Baraka and Neal, arguably the most influential figures of BAM, were also probably the most outspoken supporters of the Palestinian cause in the era between 1960s and 1970s. Among other BAM figures who have documented expressions of pro-Palestinian sentiment were Marvin X and Askia Touré Both participate in the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement and other pro-Palestinian activism to this day. From my brief conversations with BAM poets like Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez and Kalamu ya Salaam, they all expressed undivided support and awareness of the Palestinian plight.

The biggest testimony of significance of Askia Touré's pro-Palestine activism is probably his coining of the concept of 'African-American Intifada' as a reference to Black Arts and Black Power. The poet's choice to describe the movement using a Palestinian concept, "Intifada" ("uprising", "shaking off") is not a coincidence, but an expression of a radical political and ideological stance. By using the Arabic word used by Palestinians to describe collective effort to resist Israeli occupation, Toure evokes a prolonged and complex history of African American solidarity with Palestinians.

In A Shadow Over Palestine Keith Feldman evaluates the significance of Palestinian solidarity and colonial discourse for Black Power:

Anticolonial affiliations with Palestinian national liberation offered grounds from which to critique the normative violence that marked liberating civil rights contradictions. All the more remarkable was how, by the end of the 1970s, the coordinates of Black Power's Palestine were overlaid by new politics of relation (99).

Aside from this theoretical contribution Palestinian solidarity made for the movement, it also posed interesting questions about Palestinians and Arabs as an African people. This contributed to the formation of the concept Alex Lubin calls the 'Afro-Arab political imaginary.' This kind of imagination compelled Black Arts and Black Power figures to think and rethink on how they viewed themselves and their liberation struggle and their part as a world majority. This identification with the Palestinian cause as an anti-colonial struggle is rooted in political and cultural imagination that erases or at least complicates the borders between Africa and the Middle East. Moreover, forming an independent stance on a major world conflict that was, to say the least, unpopular in dominant US politics reaffirmed Black radicals as an independent community, and in a sense a sovereign political unit.

In 1972, the National Black Political convention took place in Gary Indiana. Black people of various political beliefs and backgrounds attended seeking to draft their political future. One of two resolutions passed as the result was supporting the existence of a Palestinian state (Joseph, 282). It is very telling that support for Palestinians was one of only two issues this politically and ideologically diverse group of Black people was able to agree upon as a majority. It is indicative of how deeply the Palestinian cause penetrated Black politics and Black political vision as a result of Black Arts and Black Power Movements. The conference was by no coincidence concluded by Amiri Baraka, a champion of the Palestinian cause with his legendary 'It's Nation Time'.

Melani McAlister sums up the role of the Middle East for Black radical tradition in Epic Encounters: "...Middle East, both ancient and modern, played a central role in re-figurations of black radicalism" (124). Palestine, as the most contested and talked about area of the Middle East, had an impact comparable to Egypt. Occupation of Palestine and the existence of Israel was seen by the majority of Pan-Arab nationalists as the biggest threat for their goal of a unified Arab nation and was thus an epicenter of their agenda. The prominence of the Palestinian cause made an imprint on the intersections between Pan-Arab and Pan-African ideology and in turn translated on the political vision of Black Power Movement.

For the Palestinian side, Black solidarity between 1965 and 1975 was invaluable. This was the time when this support crystallized and became an organized movement. And even though political beliefs of the BAM and BP were marginalized within the larger US narrative, these movements were the pioneers who introduced pro-Palestinian discourse into American politics only a bit over a decade after the founding of the state of Israel. According to Edward Said Palestine is 'America's last taboo'. Half a century after the end of BAM and BP, this discourse is still in the margins. And, while Arab American and progressive Jewish groups deserve acknowledgement, this discourse in the U.S. owes its life to Black Arts and Black Power more than any other group in the country.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY LEGACIES: BLACK POWER, BLACK LIVES MATTER AND BLACK PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

The legacies of BAM, PPR, their political counterparts and the solidarity movement that formed in the 1960s and 1970s are multifaceted. Movements of those decades made a profound impact on the twenty-first century political consciousness of Palestinian and Black alike. Palestinian activists and politicians still seek nationhood, a goal that was formulated during the 1960s and 1970s when Palestinians for the first time separated themselves from Arab nationalism.

Palestinian people still recall the 1960s and 1970s as the time of a rise of an amazing new wave of Palestinian insurgency that was powerful, unifying, and internationalist in nature. The era is often referred to as ‘Palestinian Revolution’ and still serves as a source of pride and hope for liberation.

As far as Black community is concerned, the Black Power influence is undeniable as well. Black Lives Matter (BLM), a movement that was founded in 2012 to fight police brutality and for improvement of Black life, cites Black Power as one of its major influences. More importantly, very much like BAM and BP BLM defines itself in internationalist terms: “We see ourselves as a part of the global Black family and we are aware of the different ways we are impacted or privileged as Black folk who exist in different parts of the world.”¹⁷ As discussed in the chapter on ideology, this rhetoric was first crystalized and popularized in the 1960s and 1970s. Black Lives Matter is saturated with ideological creeds of BAM and BP: black pride, black dignity, black self-

¹⁷ <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles/>

determination. The movement is also a grassroots movement and relies on popular participation and resistance, and contains many Black Power and Black Arts icons, such as raised fists and naturals and traditional African dress. The continuity between BP and BLM is irrefutable, the very concept of 'Black' and 'Blackness' as opposed to "Negro" or "African-American" are arguably some of the most significant legacies of BAM and BP.

There is now an extensive history of solidarity between BLM and Palestinians that started in 2014. As protests in the aftermath of the shooting of Michael Brown were sweeping Ferguson, Missouri and the rest of the nation in the summer of that year, Palestinians were protesting Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip. Having combated U.S. produced tear gas and seeing the pictures of BLM protesters being gassed, Palestinians began posting advice on how to cope with tear gas on twitter. These sincere acts of solidarity escalated into great numbers of signs expressing solidarity with each other that culminated in #GazatoFerguson. As a result, different groups BLM activists visited West Bank to meet with Palestinian youth activists.

On August 1, 2016, Movement for Black Lives, a coalition consisting of over 60 organizations, published a list of six demands directed at relocating U.S. resources in order to improve Black life in America. The sixth demand read: "In addition, approximately 3 billion dollars in US aid is allocated to Israel, a state that practices systematic discrimination and has maintained a military occupation of Palestine for decades."¹⁸

¹⁸ <https://policy.m4bl.org/invest-divest/>

The coalition's awareness and criticism of occupation and oppression of Palestinians strongly echoes the rhetoric of BAM and PB. This resonance is apparent in the language of the statement and its formulation emphasizing discrimination and racialization of Palestinians. The statement mirrors the proclamations made by BP and BAM figures brought up in the previous chapters of this dissertation in its rhetoric and urgency.

BLM and Coalition for Black Life are not the only organizations that expressed solidarity with Palestinians in the recent years. Hundreds of Black intellectuals, activists, scholars and artists signed a letter expressing solidarity and sympathy with Palestinians in 2015. When 2300 Palestinian prisoners went on forty-day strike in the Spring of 2017, dozens of Black people from different walks of life expressed support for their act of resistance. These are just a few of many examples of Black community standing with Palestinians in the recent years. And potential for the future is endless and necessary.

BAM Influence on Hip Hop and the rise of Palestinian Hip Hop

Political alliances between Black people and Palestinians are not the only ways in which BAM, BP, Palestinian Liberation Movement and PPR defined the contemporary lives and struggles of both peoples. The cultural and artistic impact of these movements and collaborations between them is quite substantial and manifests itself in hip hop, slam poetry and the popularization of these black cultural forms in Palestinian and Palestinian-American communities.

The rise of Palestinian hip hop in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Israel as well as emergence and rise to prominence of Palestinian spoken word poets, such as Suheir Hammad, Tahani Salah, Remi Kanazi, to name a few, are not the only important BAM inspired phenomena among Palestinians. It is even more significant that continuing the traditions of Black and Palestinian movements, these artists are using their craft to inspire and participate in the liberation movements of both peoples.

Indeed, hip hop is probably one of the most interesting and useful ways to engage the nature and legacies of Black Arts and Black Power movements, PPR, and the Palestinian Liberation Movement. In the introduction to Black Arts Movement James Smethurst illuminates the impact of BAM on hip-hop:

Many of the more explicitly political hip-hop artists owe and acknowledge a large debt to the militancy, urgent tone, and multimedia aesthetics of the Black Arts Movement and other forms of literary and artistic nationalism. The phenomenal growth of hip-hop-infected performance poetry and poetry slam events and venues, often run by African Americans, recalls the Black Arts Movement in both popularity and geographical dispersion (3).

It is significant that Smethurst sees not only structural and ideological, but also an actual aesthetic connection between BAM and hip hop. There's strong resonance between the tone and message as well as its delivery between the two, but also between the places where both originated. In the concluding chapter of the book, Smethurst reiterates the connections between hip hop and BAM further, emphasizing the importance of hip hop:

Political hip-hop artists from DJ Afrika Bambaataa to Mos Def have seen the Black Arts movement as a crucial ancestor. In turn, Black Arts Writers look at the socially engaged 'political', 'underground', and 'alternative' rappers as their linear descendants...All poetry in the United States written over the last three decades was created during the era of hip-hop. Some poets have attempted to essentially write against rap, some more directly have allied themselves with the forms and sensibilities of

hip-hop, and some located themselves in between, but they all have had to take hip-hop into account” (371-372).

The scope of hip-hop’s influence on contemporary radical and poetic scene is precisely what makes it a great way to connect BAM, PPR and Palestinian hip hop. Much of the scholarship produced about the Black Arts and Black Power movements within the last decade highlights the impact the movements produced on hip hop. James Smethurst discusses that in the introduction to the Black Arts Movement, Alex Lubin touches upon it in Geographies of Liberation, Sylviane A. Diouf’s and Komozi Woodard’s *Black Power 50* and Sohail Daulatzai’s Black Star Crescent Moon explore these ideas as well. At the same time, hip hop is a productive lens through which to explore the relationship between Palestinian and Black radical culture, ideology and history. Hip hop became the ground where some of the most radical aspects of BAM and BP would intersect: black nationalism, black Islam, the revolutionary ideas and ideals of Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, Arafat and Abdelnasser alike.

The origins of hip hop are traditionally traced to 1970s, the South Bronx and DJ Cool Herc. Some critics emphasize the importance of Black soldiers travels to Jamaica and experience of block parties and state that block parties originated from that experience (17). No matter which theory one is to subscribe to, BAM influence on hip hop is undeniable. In terms of ideology and politics it can be found in the influence of Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam, and the BPP. Specifically, the militant aggressive message of empowerment and pride embedded in the rhetoric and vision of these figures and organizations. Malcolm X and the BPP, specifically Huey P. Newton, are some of the most common allusions in the lyrics of majority of socially conscious hip hop. These names are found in the songs of such now classic hip hop artists as Public Enemy and

Tupac Shakur and more contemporary ones, such as Talib Kweli, Mos Def, Lupe Fiasco, Nas and Kendrick Lamar, to name a few. Malcolm X and BP figures are cited as a reminder of the glorious history of black liberation, a source of pride and inspiration.

Moreover, these black militant figures are celebrated and glorified by hip hop artists quite often. Legends of hip hop like 2Pac, NWA, Mos Def, Dead Prez, Wu Tang Clan and countless others evoke BLack Panther Party, their leaders, raise fists and multiple aspects of Black Power icons. Nationalism and nationalist language made it into hip hop as well. There's a reason why Afrika Bambaataa for example, created the Zulu Nation, an internationalist hip hop awareness group. A lot of doctrines of the group, in fact were influenced by Nation of Islam and Five-Percenters.

Afrika Bambaataa explains the inspiration NOI on hip hop: "Hearing the teachings of the Nation of Islam made a lot of people get up and try to get the drugs out of their community...and when we started the music called hip hop, which didn't have a name at the time, it brought a lot of elements of these different movements together" (Quoted in Turner, 144). Indeed, hip hop became a movement in order to save the lives of the Bronx youth amongst poverty, unemployment and gang violence. NOI and their teachings on discipline and community made a profound impact on Bambaataa, who decided to use the music to improve the conditions of black life.

When Jay Z created his entertainment company in 2008, he named it Roc Nation for a reason. The cultural nationalism of Maulana Karenga, the idea of black people coming together as one, based on the fact that they possess their own language, their own culture imprinted very deeply on hip hop. The genre is extremely self-referential, it has

its own language and an extensive culture. The citizens of the hip hop nation are also not difficult to identify.¹⁹

Aside from the revolutionary rhetoric pertinent to BP, Malcolm and NOI, Black and Orthodox Islam made a strong impact on hip hop and can be served as a ground for connecting the music to the Middle East and Palestine specifically. Like many figures of Black Arts and Black Power like Baraka, Askia Toure, Mohammad Ahmad, hip hop artists followed suit and converted to Islam. Yasin Bey, known as Mos Def is probably the most notable one, along with Ali Shaheed Muhammad and Kamaal Ibn John Fareed (Q-Tip) of the rap group A Tribe Called Quest, as well as Ice Cube and many others. It is also important to highlight that the 5 percenter philosophy that came out of NOI has been a great inspiration for many socially conscious rappers.

BP's influence on Tupac Shakur is undeniable. His mother and stepfather were both actively involved in the BPP. He alludes to Huey Newton and other members of the party in his songs frequently. He also has a song dedicated entirely to BPP titled "Panther Power". The song is dedicated to the discussion of black history and black citizenship, the marginalized place of Black people in the national United States narrative: "The American dream wasn't meant for me...never gave me nothing but slavery". He uses Black Panthers as a symbol of revolution and the tool to achieve it: "Time to change the government now panther power". Even in the darkest place of despair, Black Panther Party is able to uplift the spirit of black people and become a source of pride and strength: "Don't you ever be ashamed of what you are/It's ya panther power that makes

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of the connections between nationalism and Hip Hop see Pulse of the People by Lakeyta M. Bonnette

you a star"²⁰. Tupac Shakur's impact on socially conscious hip hop artists of the future generations cannot be overestimated. Black Power and Black Panther legacy was carried through his songs with him.

Mos Def, who converted to Islam and changed his name to Yasiin Bey in 2011, often incorporates Islam and even Arabic culture into his lyrics. His father was himself a member of the Nation of Islam. In his duet with Talib Kweli (known as Black Star), "Astronomy", he references Islam twice. First in reference to the veil: "Black like my baby girl's stare/black like veil muslimin wear". It's interesting the rapper chooses the Arabic word, "muslimin" to describe Muslims. In fact, he uses Arabic language in his lyrics quite often. For example, in "Umi says" he uses the Arabic word "umi" (mother) and "abi" (father). He is also known to have expressed a pro-Palestinian stance during his performances. Def has developed a strong positive sense of identification with Arabic and Islamic culture.

BAM and BP ideologies of black pride, black self-determination, Black and more orthodox forms of Islam and celebration of black masculinity comprise a substantial part of the ideological matrix of socially conscious hip hop today. The full extent of the imprint BP and BAM icons made on hip hop is difficult to trace, but impossible to overestimate. 1960s and 1970s imagery and representations of blackness are still celebrated today-with the images of Black Panther uniforms, black fists in the air, red black and green flags to name a few.

Ideology and iconography of BAM and BP translated themselves into aesthetics and defining distinctive features of hip hop. The very practice of reciting poetry to music

²⁰ <https://genius.com/Strictly-dope-panther-power-lyrics>

was popularized by BAM figures like Jayne Cortez, Sonia Sanchez and Amiri Baraka. In a way, this innovation popularized by BAM has been an integral part of Black literary tradition since blues poetry was created by Langston Hughes in the 1920s. This collaboration between poets and musicians displayed by BAM artists and developed by hip hop artists translated from the first movement to the other in many ways. BAM/Hip Hop artists took up the experimentation with rhythm characteristic of BAM and pushed it further. Rhythm and beat became the main characteristic features of hip hop.

As James Smethurst points out in Black Arts Movement, one of the biggest accomplishments of BAM was changing the way the country thinks about art and public spaces. BAM through BARTS and almost one thousand institutions nationwide, street theater, street poetry readings made that happen. The Wall of Respect in Chicago, displaying the leaders of black liberation as well writers, musicians, artists, athletes can be fairly considered predecessor of graffiti art.

Like BAM, hip hop was shaped by the everyday experiences of black community: unemployment, poverty, drugs, gang violence, and police violence. The artists took the anger and the pain embedded in racism and disenfranchisement and translated it into powerful and intricate language of poetry. BAM and Hip hop artists enacted the philosophy of art “for the people by the people, about the people” philosophy popularized by Maulana Karenga and adapted by Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal to a great extent as well. There’s no doubt this philosophy was adapted and even developed by hip hop artists. The very emergence of hip hop cannot be divorced from a strong need to voice the anger and frustration of the most basic challenges of the black community.

Just like BAM, hip hop artists found ways to develop a deep understanding of the black community. Not only to identify these emotions, but reflect them through the rhythm and beat in the ways that would create a deep sense of identification, and above all, a sense of relief. Public orientation, emphasis on sound, performance, deep social consciousness with BAM as catalyst and hip hop as the movement that developed these qualities, also strongly resonates the ideology and aesthetics of PPR of the 60s and 70s.

Palestinian Hip Hop

Palestinian hip hop, with its rise at the end of 1990s, stems from the ideology and aesthetics of US hip hop just as much as it draws on the traditions of PPR. The most prominent Palestinian hip hop group, DAM demonstrates this fusion. Their website describes the band of the following terms:

DAM's music is a unique fusion of east and west, combining Arabic percussion rhythms, Middle Eastern melodies, and urban hip hop. Their work has been influenced by artists as varied as Ghassan Kanafani, Ahlam Mosteghanemi, Mahmoud Darwish, Naji al Ali, Tupac, Biggie, Public Enemy, MBS, K'naan, and Pharoahe Monch.²¹

This collection of influences is a synthesis between U.S. hip hop and PPR traditions, icons and their and their legacies. Kanafani is the person behind the very concept of 'Culture of Resistance' and 'Literature of Resistance;'" Darwish was probably the most famous poet of PPR. The fact that the rappers place them alongside the icons of political hip hop idols like Tupac, Biggie, Public Enemy, and Pharoahe Monch, who themselves are progenies of BAM attest to the power of ideological, political and aesthetic connections between BAM and PPR.

²¹ <http://www.damrap.com/about>

That Palestinian youth chose hip hop as a main mode of expression is not a coincidence. It is in fact it proves the idea that BAM and PPR were similar in their ideological and aesthetic characteristics. The creators of DAM immediately developed a sense of familiarity with hip hop. They admit that they often did not understand the lyrics of the rap artists they admired. They say the songs *sounded* like their lives. Police sirens and gunshots are only part of it. The Arab traditions of rhythm and beat and engaging the poetry with them, overall oral nature of Palestinian poetry made this cultural syncretism unavoidable.

In Jil Oslo: Palestinian Hip Hop, Youth Culture, and the Youth Movement

Sunaina Maira explores the reasons behind the rise and formation of the Palestinian hip hop movement: “I argue here that Palestinian rap is a poetics of displacement and protest, which simultaneously unsettles and recreates national and cultural imaginaries” (14). Using poetry and art as a means of political expression and protest as well as their intimacy with the nationalist imagination and cause are some of the key characteristics of BAM and PPR. And, even though Maira does not directly address these movements, her arguments about the emergence, character and significance of Palestinian hip hop align perfectly with the ones from the aforementioned movements: “In this book, I view hip hop as a youth subculture and as a form of cultural production that is inextricably intertwined with the political and social” (15). This kind of connection between culture and politics, as discussed in the chapter on ideology, was fundamental for the philosophy of BAM and PPR, an art that is actively politically engaged and reflects and serves the needs of the masses. Moreover, she believes that Palestinian hip hop became not only a reflection of the political situation, but a site where politics get challenged and

reformulated. The poetry produced by BAM and PPR artists had such functions as well. The poems not only reflected and described political situation, they also shaped the political direction of the liberation struggle. Partially due to the fact that many BAM and PPR figures were also activists and politicians, but also because of the amount of power the poets of both movements believed to possess, they did not only strive to support, inspire and find a resonant note with their community, but also to be its leaders.

What Maira says about the origins of hip hop is controversial and compelling: “Hip hop cannot be compartmentalized as simply a “Western” cultural form as it interacts with and draws on diverse cultural expressions” (37). This stance is innovative and probes a lot of scholarship written about hip hop. Taking into consideration the enormous gap between the aesthetics of hip hop and American cultural and aesthetic tradition, it does make sense to think of the genre as a non-Western form. In part, this can be explained by the influence of BAM on the music and its Afrocentric nature. Indeed, the fact that Palestinian youth and the youth all over Middle East and Africa could identify with this music so quickly and so deeply really does challenge the fact that hip hop is a purely Western music.

DAM, or Da Arabian MC’s are pioneers of Palestinian hip hop. Born in a small town of Lydd, which they often compare to the projects of Compton, the challenges faced by the members of the group as second-class citizens in Israel are indeed similar to the ones of U.S. black youth in the projects: drugs, poverty, police brutality, unemployment, racism

I took things in my own hands
And went looking for some manual work
Found a job that didn’t require army service
They asked, “Name?” I said, “Mahmoud.”

They said, “Change it.” I said, “Request denied.”
They said, “Job denied” (Quoted in Maira, 51).

The lyrics directly and simply describe the reality of being an Arab Israeli, where people have to choose between their true identities and employment and survival. Similar debates take place within the black community when sometimes people feel compelled to change their names to ‘less ethnic’ to avoid discrimination.

DAM’s first hit is “Who’s the Terrorist?”, a song that strikes in the heart of racist Zionist rhetoric that portrays Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians solely as sources of violence:

Who’s a terrorist?
Me, a terrorist?
How am I a terrorist
When you’ve taken my land?
You’re the terrorist!
You’ve taken everything I own while I’m living in my homeland (Quoted in Maira, 52).

They subvert the rhetoric and turn the tables on their oppressor, challenging the discourse and imagery portraying Palestinians as violent, uncivilized, incompetent, savage people. In many ways, this is a colonial rhetoric using racist stereotypes that parallel the ones used against Black people.

The rappers continue to challenge the narrative of Israel as ‘the only democracy in the Middle East,’ and, like many songs by NWA and Public Enemy, expose the corrupted and racist judicial system of Israel:

You want me to go to the law?
You’re the witness, the lawyer, and the judge.
I’ll be sentenced to death,
To add up to the majority at the cemetery (Quoted in Maira, 53).

Sunbula points out that challenging unjust and inaccurate imagery and representation, particularly the way the Western media portrayed the second intifada, is what compelled the band to write the song. Tamer Nafar, the leader of the group is acutely aware of how media representation and imagery affects the political situation and perpetuates political oppression. To a great extent, this kind of awareness was formulated by DAM's understanding and admiration of NWA, Tupac, Public Enemy and other socially conscious rappers they describe as their inspiration.

Other DAM hits, most notably "I don't Have Freedom" strongly resonate with BAM and PPR ideals:

We want an angry generation
To plough the sky, to blow up history
To blow up our thoughts
We want a new generation
That does not forgive mistakes
That does not bend
We want a generation of giants (Quoted in Maira, 54).

The lyrics pose demands practically identical to the ones of "Black Art" by Amiri Baraka, who demands 'poems that kill' and demands "Black people understand/that they are the lovers and the sons/of warriors and sons/of warriors". It also resonates with the message of "It's Nation Time" that urges for an awakening, revolutionary insurgence and rise of a new generation of black people:

Time to get together
time to be one strong fast energy space ...
black genius rise in spirit muscle ...
the black man is the future of the world ...
come out niggers
Il niggers negroes must change up
come together in unity unify for nation time
it's nation time (Baraka,1970:101).

An amazing element of Palestinian hip hop that it also became a platform for young women to express themselves and assert their right for equality in a patriarchal society. Arapeyat is one of the most famous female Palestinian rap groups. Aside from their feminist agenda, they point to hip hop as a source of national awareness and national pride. Safa Hathoot, a member of the band living in Israel, says that she learned about ‘wataniya’ (nation pride, national consciousness) and leading figure of PPR Mahmoud Darwish from hip hop (Maira,56).

The roots of Palestinian hip hop are complex and interesting, it is a unique art form that synthesized BAM and PPR Third World, anti-colonial, consciousness raising, revolutionary spirit and aesthetic traditions also embodied in hip hop. Importantly, Amal Egeiq sees a continuity in this kind of tradition referring it back to the amudi, social realist poetry that emerged after 1948 (Sunbula, 76). PPR is without a doubt another stage of this cultural tradition.

Slam Poetry

When discussing the cultural legacies of BAM, James Smethurst identifies slam poetry as a genre of Black expression that was influenced by the movement to an extent as great as hip hop. He discussed the popularity of slam poetry events nationwide and the impact of BAM on this phenomenon:

“Many of the black fans and performers of these poetry venues...looked back on the Black Arts Movement as one of their chief inspirations. Such a sense of ancestry can be seen also in lionization of Amiri Baraka, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez and the Last Poets...” (16)

Indeed, the emphasis and experimentation with rhythm, urgent, militant tone, performative and aural nature of Slam poetry stem from BAM and their search for a

black aesthetic. For political and aesthetic reasons similar to DAM, Palestinian-American poets embraced Slam poetry as a tool of expression and change. The most prominent of them is without a doubt Suheir Hammad.

Her appearances on the famous Def Jam series hosted by Mos Def and her poem written in the aftermath of 9/11, “First Writing Since,” talking about the complexities of being Arab, Palestinian, Muslim and American in post-9/11 world, earned her a great amount of publicity. Hammad, a daughter of Palestinian refugees who grew up in Brooklyn New York, published five collections of poetry, directed, acted in and produced four plays, had a leading role in a film, and appeared in countless anthologies. Her experiences as a woman of color growing up in Brooklyn and her and her parents’ experience as refugees and, above all, her dedication to the Palestinian cause define her poetry. Her experience and deep sense of identification with Black culture, her aesthetics of hip hop and slam poetry and dedication of 1960s and 1970s revolutionary and transnational ideals make her a brilliant example of the intersections of BAM, PPR and their political counterparts.

Her poem, “Taxi” urging her audience to ‘read Baraka’ and Mahmoud Darwish is the ultimate demonstration of intertwining legacies of BAM and PPR coming together to produce a new powerful ideology of liberation. “Taxi” is from Hammad’s first collection of poetry, Born Palestinian, Born Black published in 1996 and is a tribute to Black activism and writing for Palestine and also a testimony of the parallels between Black and Palestinian diasporic experience of racialization and oppression in America. The inspiration for the poem is a piece by June Jordan, “Moving Towards Home,” written in

the aftermath of Jordan's visit to the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in 1982.

Hammad prefaces her first collection with the lines from Jordan's poetry and creates a framework through which she urges the reader to understand her poetic craft and its message. Moreover, she creates a sense of intimacy between Black and Palestinian-American experience and draws parallels between the processes of racialization both communities face. Middle Easterners are identified as white under US affirmative action policies despite the systemic institutional and other forms of racism. Hammad's proclamation of her blackness rooted in her experiences is an important political statement that calls for a rethinking of racial policies towards Arabs and specifically Palestinians in the U.S. It is also important that she comes to this kind of racial awareness through June Jordan, a Black feminist poet who saw an intimate correlation between her black experience and Palestinian refugee experience.

In the afterword of the 2008 publication of the book, Kazim Ali writes:

Black, in her case, not being mere ethnic marker but a political position in relation to dominant power structure. As Hammad herself explains in her introduction to this book, the word has numerous historical and political meanings that she embraces, but the word to contemporary audiences means one particular thing, though the politics it encompasses—an opposition ultimately not based in race, as Malcolm X began to point out in his last speeches after his return from Mecca, but in class... (93).

The racial and ethnic implications of Hammad's statement are multi-dimensional according to Ali. In the end, 'Black' here signifies a position within a hierarchy of power. In a way Ali boils down Palestinian-American and Muslim-American experiences to a form of oppression that even white people in America experience, as rooted in class. It is important to note that Ali evokes Malcolm X, the 'spiritual father' of BAM and BP to

make his argument. It's a testimony to the extent of influence X made on Hammad, her poetry and political vision.

Malcolm X, Darwish and Baraka are among the multiple threads that connect Hammad to BAM and PPR and the larger tradition of progressive Black and Arab writing. Marco Villalobos, who wrote the preface to the 2008 edition of the book views her place in this tradition as following:

The reprinting of Born Palestinian Born Black is a large part meant for the young whose pens will draw from the deepest of inkwells, beginning with Hammad to dip into that well again, to dive headlong into Darwish, Fadwa, and Baldwin; into Audre Lorde, Madhubuti and Rumi... (18).

It is important that the author places her alongside Haki Madhubuti, one of the most prolific poets of BAM, and Darwish and Fadwa Tuqan, the most famous female poet of PPR. He seems to sense the continuity between their poetic legacy and Hammad's writing.

Throughout the years Hammad was connected and likened to other BAM poets, such as Sonia Sanchez, along with Palestinian poets of the PPR, such as Darwish and Zayyad. Her aesthetic, relying on oral tradition, rhythm, performance, tone strongly resonates with the aesthetics of both movements. Her political vision is a synthesis of the ideologies of Third World Movement, Fanon, Malcolm X, Nasser, the key ideological components of BAM and PPR. Hammad's poetry and activism perpetuates the intertwined aesthetic and political traditions of these movements, breathing new life into their legacies.

Palestine in American Hip Hop

Given the connections between BAM and Palestine and the movement's impact on hip hop it was only a matter of time until Palestine and Palestinians made their way into hip hop lyrics. The Method Man of Wu Tang clan, for example, has a song titled "P.L.O. Style". There seems to be an ambiguity about whether he is talking about the Palestinian Liberation Organization, he makes it clear that it is implied:

The street life is the only life I know
I live by the code style it's mad P.L.O...
Iranian thoughts and cover like an Arabian
Grab a nigga on the spot and put a nine to his cranium.²²

The rapper is referring to the reputation the PLO gained after they embraced guerilla warfare during the era known as Palestinian Revolution in the mid-late 1960s and 1970s.

Lupe Fiasco is (in)famous for supporting the Palestinian cause and has been glorified for that by Palestinian American and pro-Palestinian community. In "Words I Never Said" he raps:

Jihad is not a holy war, where's that in the worship?
Murdering is not Islam!
And you are not observant
And you are not a Muslim
Israel don't take my side 'cause look how far you've pushed them.²³

Fiasco dismantles the myth constructed by the rhetoric of the United States imperialism that portrays Islam as an inherently violent religion. He also implies that Israel is complicit in this rhetoric. Fiasco has been known to perform with Palestinian flags on

²² <https://genius.com/Method-man-plo-style-lyrics>

²³ <https://genius.com/Lupe-fiasco-words-i-never-said-lyrics>

stage as well. It is fair to argue that his view can be attributed to the influence of Black Power and the pro-Palestinian views forged during the era.

Black Arts/Power Movements and Contemporary Hip Hop

Kendrick Lamar unquestionably among the most popular rappers today. His rapping skills, old school orientation, especially the legacy of Tupac Shakur, amazing beats, socially conscious topics of his music, and interesting and intricate metaphors earned him recognition among many segments of the hip hop nation. On July 29, 2015, activists gathered at Cleveland State University protested police harassment. As the standoff with the police began, the students started chanting “Alright,” a song from Kendrick Lamar’s latest album, “To Pimp A Butterfly.” The hip hop artist’s lyrics systematically addresses such issues as poverty, substance abuse, and police brutality, and he has become a role model and generational voice, especially for Black youth. The song’s message is simple and straightforward: “We’re gonna be alright.” The chanting of the song by the protesters was seen by the media as an astounding new phenomenon. However, the tradition of using music and poetry as political slogans in fact can be traced back to the days of slavery, and without a doubt peaked during the Black Arts and Black Power. The effects of BAM on Lamar’s music are difficult to overlook. Aside from the intricate and provocative lyrics, he often prefaces his songs with actual poetry, poetry that stands out through high emotional resonance with the black community, complexity of the metaphors, and often, provocation, so common for BAM. Aesthetically, Lamar often engages in reading his poetry or rapping over the sounds of experimental Jazz, in the fashion that “Black Art” by Baraka was known to do along with many BAM artists who engaged in this kind of experimentation. “For Free (interlude)”, “God Is a Gangsta” and

his 2016 Grammy version of “Alright” all involve experimental jazz music that is more than a background for the lyrics. It’s an active participant in creating the sound and overall aesthetic feel of his pieces.

Aside from these aesthetic influences of BAM, Lamar also demonstrates the impact of Black Power and the BPP. More interestingly, he engages with the Middle East politics in “Hiii Power.” The song was meant to be a powerful artistic and political statement. Lamar claims to have been under strong influence of Tupac. The song has multiple references to the Black Power icons Malcolm X, Huey Newton, and Fred Hampton. More interestingly, it has the references to Egypt, that were very common for BAM and PPR as both peoples saw the country as a source of African cultural and historical pride. The refrain in the song is “I be off the slave ship/ Building pyramids, writing my own hieroglyphs” that changes into “Build your own pyramids, write your own hieroglyphs” and finally into “Got our own pyramids, write our own hieroglyphs”²⁴. The lines signal the artist’s call to abandon the slave mentality and shackles of racism and discrimination and remember the glorious past of black people. After lines presented as an imperative, there’s a progression toward realization of this goal. The people “got” the pyramids. The revolution has been completed.

The historical background of the song is extremely important and endows the song with even more transformative power and vision of the Middle East and Black revolution. The song was recorded in 2010 and released in 2011 as a part of his “Section 8.0” record. In December of 2010 the “Arab Spring” sparked in Tunisia. By 2011 the revolution had touched Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman,

²⁴ <https://genius.com/Kendrick-lamar-hiiipower-lyrics>

Bahrain, Sudan and, of course, occupied Palestinian Territories. The video for “Hiii Power” features multiple clips with the footage from the Arab Spring, especially the revolution taking place in Egypt, the location of the pyramids. The video and the lyrics show and call for a revolution. The last shot of the video is the rapper pouring gasoline on himself, the action took by a Tunisian man who sparked the revolutions. This gesture is unequivocally demonstrated a powerful sense of identification with not only Egypt, its history and present, but also the Middle East generally. It evoked the kind of cultural political and cultural bridges created by NOI, BPP, and Malcolm X.

Black Activism for Palestine After Black Power and Black Arts Movement

The multiple acts of support for Palestinians displayed during the Black Arts and Black Power era, solidified it as a black solidarity movement the existence of which was undeniable by 1975. This movement, that still manifests itself today through progressive Black movements, gained even more momentum by the end of the arguably most turbulent era in Black history.

Andrew Jackson Young, Jr. politician, diplomat, activist, Civil Rights leader and executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership organization realized the high price of being a part of this movement immediately. In 1977 President Jimmy Carter appointed Young to be the first African-American ambassador into the United Nations. Four years after the end of BAM and BP, Palestinians were still pursuing their nationalist goals of the PPR era and calling for creation of the Palestinian state. Young met with the PLO representative with observer status, to the UN, Zuhdi Terzi, in Kuwait on July 20th to discuss the proposal. By August 14th Young no longer held his prestigious and

historical position in the UN. The backlash from the black community as the result of this incident was tremendous. NAACP took a careful position, however. The Board of Directors ‘adopted a resolution which condemned violence regardless the source’ and called for peace negotiations (Miller, 44). A more progressive move was made later when the organization called on the White house to stop ignoring PLO, and expressed support for Palestinian sovereignty (Ibid).

Young’s organization, SCLC, outraged by the White House response took measures into their own hands and embarked on a tour of the Middle East with intention of meeting both Palestinian and Israeli representatives. The ten-man delegation visited Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and saw the aftermath of the Israeli warfare against the PLO. The culmination of the visit was the meeting with the PLO leader Yassir Arafat himself. Earlier embraced by the militants of the BPP, Arafat found himself holding hands with the Reverend Joseph Lowery and singing the Civil Rights anthem, “We Shall Overcome” (Ibid).

Shortly after, the first African American to run for US presidency and leader of PUSH, Rev. Jesse Jackson, traveled to the Middle East with a similar purpose. The Israeli government’s refusal to provide an audience for Jackson and his team only pushed the group toward a more pro-Palestinian stance. He released the following controversial (for the time) statement: “PLO recognition is not an endorsement of terrorism of terrorism any more than the recognition of Israel’s right to exist in an endorsement of bomb raids” (Quoted in Miller, 25). These gestures were received with mixed feelings by in the US, with a lot of speculations about the possible new role of Black community in the unstable Middle East continent, and some with inflammatory remarks toward Lowery and

Jackson. James Baldwin was outraged about Young's fate and wrote an open letter to the New York Times, "Open Letter to the Born Again" defending the Civil Rights leader and criticizing Carter's decision.

In the Winter of 1981, Journal of Palestine Studies, a prestigious publication that remains one of the most important journals on Middle East and Palestine published a special issue "American Blacks on Palestine." The issue explored the aforementioned examples of Black solidarity with Palestinians and inquired into the nature of this collaboration. The scholars Ronald W. Walters, Jake Miller and Walter Newby to name a few, explored the reasons behind Black and Jewish alliances and the early Zionist sentiment and the reasons behind the transformation of Black thought and stance on Palestine. Alfred Moleah provided a thorough analysis of the parallels between South African Apartheid and the Palestinian experience. The issue stands as one of the examples of Palestinians acknowledging the history of Black solidarity and providing a context on this alliance as well as highlighting its cost and ramifications. This dissertation hopes has an intellectual project very similar.

Black Literature and Palestine Post BAM

A discussion BAM, BP and Palestinian impact on black literature must begin with David Du Bois' novel And Bid Him Sing. Published in 1975, as Black Arts Movement moved toward its end, the novel is a brilliant example of black internationalist and Afro-Arab political and cultural imagination. Partially based on the author's own experiences in Cairo, Gamal Abdelnasser's Cairo to be exact, the work has all the trademarks of the political optimism as well as problems of the era when black radicals sought to create a new home for themselves among 'Afro-Arab' brotherhood. In "Towards an Afro-Arab

Diasporic Culture: The Translational Practices of David Graham Du Bois,” Keith Feldman discusses how the novel unveils some of the complex issues that arise with the black romanticization of Egypt and Cairo as the locals of for new black radicalism and internationalism. For example, it shows how blackness and African American conceptions of race fail to translate to the ones of the region (152).

Feldman also explains the difficult cultural work the novel performs, unifying black radical and internationalist imaginations with Middle Eastern and Palestinian experience:

And *Bid Him Sing* thematizes various modes of translation practiced in a North African and Arab context. Such modes of translation are linguistic, transnational, and multi-generic, moving between English and Arabic, US and Third World grammars of blackness, jazz and poetry, history, fiction, and autobiography. In this way, the novel dwells on, and extends, the practices of diaspora offered by David Du Bois' closest kin that, through a rich mix of translation grounded in his own life experiences, brought into focus relationships between African Americans and Arabs in general, and Palestinians specifically” (153).

Feldman effectively points to the multiple ways in which euphoria created around Cairo and Egypt by Malcolm X and other black internationalists overlooked many serious issues understanding of complexity of race and fetishization of black bodies and black people in general.

David Du Bois is not only a prolific participant and critic of black internationalism. He was also extremely active in pro-Palestinian movement. He famously edited Huey Newton’s position paper on Palestine for the Black Panther and published series of pro-Palestinian articles himself. Out of many black internationalist figures that created cultural and political bridges between Black America, Middle East and Palestine, David Du Bois deserves a special place for he was probably the only figure

to embrace this political imagination but also remain alert of the potential problems that arose with it.

Arguably as a legacy of Black Arts and Black Power Movements and their dedication to the Palestinian cause, Black artists, poets and activists continued to express their solidarity even after the movements came to an end. June Jordan was without a doubt the most active and vocal black supporter of the Palestinian cause in the decades that followed BAM and BP. In the aftermath of Sabra and Shatila massacre, the poet and essayist traveled to the refugee camps in 1982. She was deeply affected by the destruction and human loss she witnessed and wrote one of her most famous poems, “Moving Towards Home”. The poem presents a detailed account of the horrific events that took place during the massacre with precision and sensitivity of an eye-witness:

Nor do I wish to speak about the army that lit continuous
flares into the darkness so that others could see
the backs of their victims lined against the wall
Nor do I wish to speak about the piled up bodies and
the stench
that will not float
Nor do I wish to speak about the nurse again and
again raped
before they murdered her on the hospital floor
Nor do I wish to speak about the rattling bullets that
did not
halt on that keening trajectory
Nor do I wish to speak about the pounding on the
doors and
the breaking of windows and the hauling of families into
the world of the dead
I do not wish to speak about the bulldozer and the
red dirt
not quite covering all of the arms and legs
because I do not wish to speak about unspeakable events...²⁵

²⁵ <https://20thcenturyprotestpoetry.wordpress.com/2013/10/30/june-jordans-moving-towards-home/#more-86>

The conclusion of the poem creates a whole new understanding of race and racialization and also creates a firm bond between African Americans and Palestinians:

I was born a Black woman
And now
I am become a Palestinian
Against the relentless laughter of evil
There is less and less living room
And where are my loved ones?
It's time to make our way home. ²⁶

It is difficult to provide a single interpretation of these lines. But by stripping herself of her black identity to replace it with Palestinian one, she creates a deep sense of identification and solidarity with the victims of the massacre and the people as a whole. The pain of her experience transforms everything that she knew about herself and her identity. By proclaiming herself a Palestinian, she embraces a cause that was a matter of humanity and sympathy with another, but now has become her own cause on a most immediate, intimate level.

Jordan dedicated several other poems to Palestine: “Intifada,” “Intifada Incantation Number 8,” and “To Sing a Song of Palestine” to name a few. “Moving Towards Home” however remains the most well known and most powerful one. The poet also extensively wrote about Palestine and Palestinians in her political essays. Not a single collection of essays since 1980s is without an essay on the matter. In “Affirmative Acts” she emotionally confides on the depth of her concern over the future of Palestinians and again draws an immediate connection between it and her own future, as well as the future of the world: “At night, I go to bed afraid to close my eyes, or sleep; I ask my soul these questions aching on my conscience; What will happen to that little girl, that child of

²⁶ Ibid

Palestine? What is happening to you and me?" (87). The sentiment here echoes the one expressed in the poem. This type of intimate connection she draws between her destiny, the destiny of her U.S. readers, especially Black Americans, and Palestinians in Lebanon is essentially an expression of the kind of ideology Bandung conference created and black internationalists embraced later on. It is the conviction that one's individual liberation and the liberation of oppressed peoples overseas are inseparable.

In the last decade of his life, Amiri Baraka identified 'Anti-Zionism' as a major political direction. Palestine appears very often in one of his last poetry collections Somebody Blew Up America (2003). Blunt political support of Palestine came at a high price to African Americans since the end of civil rights and until the present day, but the bonds have still not been broken. Baraka's poem is included in Poets for Palestine, a 2008 anthology of writers of many backgrounds dedicating their poetic art to the (non) country, including poems by Suheir Hammad. Amiri Baraka's poem "Enemy of Civilization" follows one Mahmoud Darwish's. The first line of the poem is a reference to the anthology published by Drum and Spear Press, which makes it clear Baraka was not unfamiliar with the anthology.

The full spectrum of legacies of BAM, PPR and Black solidarity movement with Palestine that emerged between 1965 and 1975 is beyond the scope of this chapter. The major examples of cultural, ideological, historical and political effects of this legacy can be summarized by citing the emergence of Palestinian hip hop and Palestinian-American slam poetry, #Gazatoferguson, and the recent BLM calls for divestment from Israel citing disenfranchisement of Palestinians, along with the multiple public displays of solidarity with multiple aspects of Palestinian struggle. Angela Davis is the most outspoken Black

Power era activist for the Palestinian struggle; her 2016 book Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement links Black and Palestinian struggles, continuing the rhetoric articulated by multiple figures of Black Arts and Black Power era. Marvin X has been extremely active in the BDS movement. Askia Toure participates and organizes in pro-Palestinian events and fundraisers. Palestinian rappers and slam poets still dominate Palestinian cultural stage and still use their art as a platform for new articulations of identity and freedom.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Black solidarity with Palestinians has been making headlines a lot lately. Temple University Professor, Marc Lamont Hill, got fired from his position as a CNN contributor for a speech criticizing Israel at the United Nations in November of 2018. Around the same time, Alice Walker got under fire for an allegedly anti-Semitic poem, “It’d Our (Frightful) Duty”. Walker dedicated years to pro-Palestinian activism. In fact, in June of 2011, she was aboard the flotilla to the Gaza Strip. The flotilla was meant to challenge the Israeli blockade of the Palestinian territory.

The biggest scandal, however, arose when Angela Davis, a Black Power Movement icon, was stripped of her award from Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. The reason behind this decision was charges of Anti-Semitism. Like many Black Power leaders discussed in this dissertation, Davis has been an outspoken pro-Palestinian activist and writer. In 2016, she published Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine and the Foundations of a Movement. The book explores the connections between US and Israeli imperialism and the oppressive practices both nations deploy to maintain and expand their power: surveillance practices, police and state violence, torture. Moreover, she explains how the prison-industrial complex is connected and benefits from these practices in both US and Israel. Even more recently, Ilhan Omar, the first Somali-American Congresswoman, faced serious backlash from the Democratic party for criticizing the government for the “allegiance” to Israel.

These events are connected to 2014 and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the upsurge of Black activism for Palestinians: #GazatoFerguson,

including Palestinian liberation to BLM charter and Movement for Black Life, numerous videos, letters and proclamations of support on behalf of Black artists, activists and politicians, as explored in this dissertation.

In turn, this phenomenon can be traced to the 1960s. Since the Black Power era that propelled the emergence of Black/Palestinian solidarity movement, there has been a steady correlation between radicalization of Black politics and Black/Palestinian solidarity. After Black Power, Black feminism rose its powerful voice connecting Black, female, queer liberation to the liberation of Palestinians. When socially conscious hip hop lifted its head high between the late 1970s and now, Palestinian cause was on the lips of its artists. The recent changes in US and Black politics show some hope that one day, because of all the efforts of Black Americans and Palestinians, the two people will embrace each other once again, but this time in a world they dared to dream of and fight for.

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