



**Arab American University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**Cultural Resistance in the Palestinian context:
Debating local Narratives and international experiences**

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requirements the Master's degree in Conflict Resolution
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Thesis Approval

**Cultural Resistance in the Palestinian Context: Debating Local Narratives and
International Experiences**

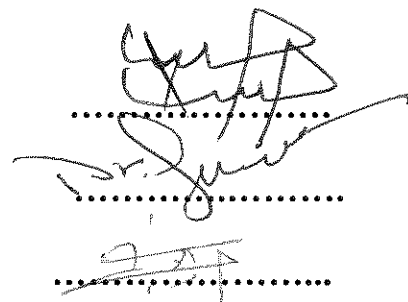
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DECLARATION

I Mustafa Hilal Mustafa Sheta, student of the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the Arab American University, aware of my responsibility of the penal law, declare and certify with my signature that my thesis entitled "**Cultural Resistance in the Palestinian context: Debating local Narratives and international experiences**", is entirely the result of my own work. I have faithfully and accurately cited all my sources, including books, journals, handouts and unpublished manuscripts, as well as any other media, such as the Internet, letters or significant personal communication.

I declare that I understood the concept of plagiarism and I acknowledge that my thesis will be rejected in case of plagiarism.

Name *Mustafa Hilal Sheta*

Signature *Mustafa*

Date *4.9.2022*

DEDICATION

To My Father, the man who raised me to perform all of life's tasks. no matter how big or small,
to the best ability and without complaint. he's the man I will always aspire to be.

To My Mother, who teach me to believe that anything was possible.

To My Wife, for making everything ... You're in every page

Dedicated to my kids, brothers, friends, and my work; The Freedom Theatre

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Special Thank

To my advisor; “The teacher: Ayman Yousef”, who pushed me not just to achieve the possible, rather, the impossible ... & to Mr. Bahaa Isayed for his great efforts in translation.

Abstract

This is an exploratory study of the Cultural Resistance concept in Palestine. In specific, this thesis the researcher argue that kind of struggle is important in the context of building the national identity and one of main Palestinian tools in conflict transformation.

The field research adopted on Participatory Action Research (where the researcher work as general director of The Freedom Theatre), and the method of historical analysis out of the descriptive survey research, where the researcher used personal interviews as a data collection tool; the selected sample for this study consisted of 49 culturalists inside Palestine and outside, as interviews with keys persons as cultural-policies makers, which focus on comparative studies between Palestine and another international cases such as South Africa, India, Brazil, Morocco, and Algeria, and the important of presenting the concept of cultural resistance in light of the retreat of the Palestinian cause from its position in the map of political action in the world, by answering; what do we mean by cultural resistance in the local context and based on global experiences?

Cultural Resistance is part of a national cultural movement that harnesses creative power and artistic expression in the pursuit of justice and equality, to develop a vibrant and creative artistic community in Palestine. While emphasizing professionalism and innovation, the aim of cultural organization is to empower youth and women in the Arab community and to explore the potential of arts as an important catalyst for social change.

Cultural Resistance is a form of resistance, (it isn't a substitute, but it is complementary), which necessarily has social and organizational implications associated with the concept of change. Although some of Palestinians believe that cultural resistance is confined to the practice of using

meanings and symbols to compete in the fight against dominant power. But also, it has a role in creating a collective identity based on the personality of the revolution against injustice, and a progressive cognitive knowledge tool based on deepening understanding, and analysis based on science, as a means of upgrading cultural policies.

The most prominent recommendations made by the researcher include but are not limited to empower the Palestinian theaters and financing the theatrical sector by Palestine Liberation Organization, within the integration of common and socially beneficial interests, through developing a specialized curriculum for drama and acting, which contributes to the national mobilization process and the creation of a conscious resisting generation, by reinforcing the Palestinian cultural identity, and establishing of cultural networks, such as; PPAN (www.ppan.ps).

The researcher also believes that it is the cultural resistance is a model of resistance in times of war and peace, and building the national identity and the local narrative, which need popular incubator in the context of an integrated process in coordination with different parties, according to the intellectual and ideological contributions of both Marx and Gramsci, based on Bertolt Brecht's creative work, especially in building the epic theater model.

This thesis addresses the impact of cultural resistance on creating an attractive leadership situation for the various arts schools, as a catalyst. The cultural activists in occupied Palestinian territories follow a line loaded with diverse ideas and expressions as a bullet of inspiration to resist the poverty, wars, censorship, hatred, and evocation of the beauty of the arts in the imagination, authenticity, friendship and multiculturalism, and on the approach of cultural resistance, which was inscribed by the moguls of Palestinian resistance literature such as Ghassan Kanafani, Naji Al Ali, Tawfiq Ziad, Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al Qasim, Rashid Hussein and many more.

Table of Contents

Thesis Approval	I
Cultural Resistance in the Palestinian context: Debating local Narratives and international experiences	I
DECLARATION	II
DEDICATION	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
Special Thank	V
Abstract	VI
Table of Contents	VIII
Chapter I	1
Introduction	1
Background	1
The cultural Dimension of Resistance	10
Research Problem	12
Research Methodology	13
Interviews	14
Research Objectives	15
Research Importance	16
Research questions	17
Research Hypothesis	17
Research Limit (2004-2020)	18
Theoretical Sets	19

Theoretical Justification	22
Previous Studies	24
Chapterization Plan.....	30
FinalRemarks.....	31
Chapter II	33
Theoretical Framework	33
Introduction	33
Palestinian Popular Critical Culture	44
Theater as Part of the Cultural Resistance Movement	47
Theories within Theater.....	48
Cultural Marxism between Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci	53
Chapter III.....	62
Cultural Resistance in a Global Context: International Experiences	62
Introduction	62
Cultural Resistance in the Context of the Masses and Creativity.....	64
Cultural Resistance: Cultural Jamming	68
Art under Oppression.....	73
Postcolonial Novels	74
Cultural Resistance in the Works of International Theater	77
Brecht, Marx and the Theater of Cultural Resistance	81
Chapter IV	87
Cultural Resistance in the Local Narrative: Palestinian Theaters	87
Introduction	88
The National Narrative of Cultural Resistance.....	91

The Emergence of Neoliberalism	95
The Manifestations of Cultural Action in the Palestinian Popular Resistance.....	98
The Culture of Resistance.....	100
Palestinian Theater and Cultural Resistance	101
The Early Beginnings of Palestinian Theater	107
The Palestinian theater was in tune with the contemporary national movement	113
The Palestinian Theater in the 1948 Occupied Territories	116
Theater in the Gaza Strip	119
The Palestinian Diaspora Theater	120
The Palestinian Theater and the Intifada	122
Palestinian Theater as a Revolutionary Platform for Awareness and Influence	124
Finally	129
Chapter V	131
Recommendations and Conclusions.....	131
Preface	131
Results	133
Recommendations	135
References	137
List of English Sources	137
List of Arabic Sources.....	145
Website.....	152
Interviews	152
المخلص	156

Chapter I

Introduction

‘The cultural action is not a philanthropy or social work, but it's a joint creative process of partners in an agenda that includes education, culture and a struggle for freedom, through cooperate with other similar forces in generating a cultural resistance, carrying on its shoulders universal values of freedom and justice.’ Julian MerKhamis

Background

For the oppressed, the arts have always been a powerful tool against the oppressors. For us Palestinians, artistic expression is an integrated part of our struggle for freedom, justice and equality. We are as Palestinian subjected to apartheid, colonisation and military rule. This conditions and gives direction to Palestinian cultural activists to work as part of a contribution movement to it is to create a platform for cultural resistance.

Cultural resistance means different things for different people, where the Palestinian definition has grown out of the artistic experiences during the past years, and is rooted in theatre practical work as well as in the analysis of the reality around the cultural Palestinian organizations.

The Freedom Theatre journey has not been easy. JulianoMerKhamis, co-founder of The Freedom Theatre, was brutally assassinated outside the theatre in 2011 by an unknown murderer.

Over a year of intense harassment by the Israeli occupation forces followed. Students, staff and board members were held captive for days, weeks or months. The theatre building was attacked and many children and youth were forced to leave the theatre out of fear. Another co-founder, Zakaria Zbeidi, had his amnesty revoked by Israel and has spent the past three years in 'safe custody' in a Palestinian Authority prison because there is a threat to his life, and in the end Israel arrested him, with dramatic events. The Freedom Theatre's General Manager Mustafa Sheta spent eight months in Israeli prison. Through the years the theatre has also been the target of criticism, in words and in actions, by groups and individuals in Jenin Refugee Camp.

The provoking of Cultural Resistance description, in this Juliano's text below

"What we do in the theatre is not trying to be a substitute or an alternative to the Palestinian resistance in the struggle for liberation, just the opposite. This must be clear. [...] We join, by all means, the Palestinian struggle for liberation, which is our liberation struggle. We are not healers. We are not good Christians. We are freedom fighters."

Poetry, music, dance, stories, theatre and other art forms have always had healing and unifying functions. Art helps us to live together, art talks about the relationships between humans, between humans and animals, and between humans and the planet. The importance of cultural expression for human wellbeing is well known. Participation in cultural activities strengthens creativity, identity, agency, communication and reflection. In a society like ours, art has an even greater role to play. Art deconstructs an oppressive reality and make it comprehensible, which is the first step towards changing it. Just as we cannot imagine more

colours than our eyes have seen, we cannot imagine a reality beyond our own experiences and frames of reference. With art, new colours appear¹.

The work in cultural organization raises questions – that is in fact the main responsibility of Palestinian cultural activists, to invite a multitude of voices, ideas and experiences and open windows to new worlds, without offer solutions. The questions will by themselves inspire thoughts, ideas, and ultimately change. And the answers will come from within the human being. Art teases, and forces to ask why, to challenge.

In the researcher's perspective, cultural resistance is not a substitute for any other form of resistance; it is a complement. Various forms of resistance can be described as a large mosaic where each stone represents a different form. Cultural resistance is one of the stones - but not just any stone: it is the stone that gives the entire mosaic a pattern, a meaning, a direction.

The Palestinian cultural resistance movement is diverse, vibrant and dynamic. It is a collection of creative works of art that intentionally tackle social and political challenges, thereby contributing to the growth of thought, communication and diversity in Palestinian community to discuss, analyzes and further develop the concept of cultural resistance in Palestine.

This research thesis presently has a working title, namely Cultural Resistance in the Palestinian context: Debating local Narratives and international experiences.

¹BuSabbath, Abdelali, (2015), Cultural resistance in the novel "The Flower Quay No Longer Answers by Malik Haddad", [Published Master's Thesis], The University of Batna 1, Algeria.

Whilst the primary motivation of the research project had to do with cultural organisations legacy, its central themes revolve around the concept of cultural resistance, which is analyzed by a number of authors in a number of ways.

Questions behind 'cultural resistance' consider, for instance, whether the resistance is put up not only against the colonial occupier in Palestine, but also against the risk of normalizing the occupation within the occupied territory by means of a political status quo. Additionally, an international aid economy and a consequential lifestyle of groups and attitudes of individuals may prolong rather than end the occupation. Other strands of cultural resistance relate back to the history of performing arts in Palestine and, more recently, to the continuity armed resistance and cultural resistance. Besides the analyses and theories of cultural resistance there is an equal amount of observations and testimonies about the cultural and theatrical practices of the cultural organisations in resistance to the multi-layered occupation.

As the research targets Palestinian as well as international theatre practitioners, academic researchers, political activists and solidarity movements, the ambition has been to strike a balance between aesthetic, historical, theoretical and political discourses. I have endeavoured to involve as many Palestinian scholars and practitioners as possible in relevant reference to the cultural organisations. This has lent authenticity and accuracy to many of the cultural analyses of the cultural organisations and its geopolitical contexts; for instance with perspectives and interpretations that draw upon historical studies, theatre research, postcolonial studies, international relations and more empirically based testimonies and observations.

In conclusion the research project will hopefully strengthen the local, regional as well as the international status of the cultural resistance and inspire further important works. It will most likely give a more concentrated background to the start of the freedom theatre and to the legacy and faith of its former leader JulianoMer-Khamis as well as to the variety of aesthetics and genres of theatres' performing arts. It will provide a greater insight to the local and communal work of the freedom theatre within the Jenin refugee camp, to the critical and open perspectives as propounded by leaders, staff and students at the freedom theatre and other theatres in west bank and to the future challenges in this field.

Cultural resistance is the broad use of arts, literature, and traditional practices to challenge or fight unjust, oppressive systems, and power holders within the context of nonviolent actions, campaigns and movements. At its core, cultural resistance is a way of reclaiming our humanity, and celebrating our work as individuals and communities. Cultural resistance tactics are particularly powerful because they serve multiple purposes. They inspire us to own our lives and invest in our communities, while building capacity for local leadership. These creative and artistic tactics provide a fun way for people to get involved².

One particularly fascinating arena for socioculturalresistance lies in the fields of popular culture and the arts. Though music and musical performance have often been ignored as epiphenomenal in the literature on Palestinian identity and nationalism, new studies of the Middle East have begun to refocus attention on the ways in which popular culture and

² Bloch, Nadine, (2016), the Arts of Protest: Creative Cultural Resistance, Arts Ideas, the New York Times, USA.

performance are in fact constitutive modalities for the negotiation of power and resistance, social interaction, and identity.

In keeping with this approach, this study highlights contemporary cultural associations, non-governmental organizations, and independent projects which seek to revitalize and restore Jerusalem as the cultural capital of the Palestinian people. This new wave of cultural activity (in the form of music, film, and arts festivals, concerts, and symposiums) in Jerusalem represents an important, yet often overlooked, front in the struggle for Palestinian self-determination and the cultural continuity of the Palestinian community.

The development of cultural organizations over the last 20 years has had a substantial effect on social and cultural life in Palestine. It has served as an important model for civil, non-violent resistance to the occupation. In this endeavour, cultural programs aimed at educating, entertaining, and or enlightening Palestinian audiences convey a sense of national pride and community. Furthermore, these programs have provided a constructive outlet for dealing with feelings of loss, depression, and dispossession brought about by the occupation.

Cultural organizations work to confront occupation policies that seek to dominate cultural existential identity, as well as to enhance and develop cultural life through music, dance, art, and film. Moreover, each has been instrumental in the development of several music, film, and arts festivals in Jerusalem and the West Bank. These festivals have become extremely popular, and offer valuable insights into how music and popular culture serve to facilitate communal interaction and collective identity formation. However, this cited should be seen as a microcosm

of a much larger social project led by various grassroots organizations to preserve and expand the Palestinian cultural practices³.

The researcher focus is to the theater and its central concerns, The Freedom Theatre as model, where Performing Cultural Resistance in Palestine are how theater's work might function and be understood as cultural resistance, and how this work negotiates external and internal pressures, and how the organization and its work might be sustained into the future.

This central aim has resulted in contributions from a wide range of individuals who make up the diverse community responsible for establishing and sustaining the theatre, which offers refreshingly diverse perspectives on a leading Palestinian cultural institution that deploys theatre and creativity as part of a struggle for liberation against oppression in its various forms⁴.

The researcher argues that to understand cultural resistance, the concept of culture must be examined. From the perspective of Palestinian Cultural Organizations, culture is the fine web that binds people together, gives a common language and a common framework. Stories shared within a group of people for a long time constitute a culture and a collective identity (which can manifest itself in a nation, a tribe, a people, a community, or something else). Each story is like a thread in a web and attached to other threads they form a culture. This collective reference map enables us to predict the actions of others, creating a secure and meaningful environment where we can understand and manage our situation. We know what we can expect of others and what

³ McDonald, David, (2004), *Performing Palestine: Resisting the Occupation and Reviving Jerusalem's Social and Cultural Identity through Music and the Arts*, Jerusalem Quarterly Journal, The Institute for Palestine, Beirut, Lebanon.

⁴ Hazou, Rand, (September, 2019), Review: *The Freedom Theatre: Performing Cultural Resistance in Palestine*, Theatre Journal, Volume 71, Number 3, P.p: 406-408, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

they can expect of us. We know what is acceptable and what is not. There is trust and confidence. There are rituals to strengthen the collective identity and there are procedures to handle tension and stress in the system.

Art, the expression of culture, is what makes us unique as human beings. Poetry, music, dance, stories, theatre and forms of art have always functioned as an identifying, healing and unifying factor. Art helps us to live together, art talks about the relationships between humans, between humans and animals, and between humans and the planet. In short it makes the chaos that we live in comprehensive.

The importance of cultural expression for human wellbeing and development is established. Countless researchers, therapists and educators around the world testify that participation in cultural activities strengthen creativity, identity, self-esteem, communication and reflection.

The concept 'sense of coherence' can help us better understand this condition. It is defined as: "The extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic, feeling of confidence that one's environment is predictable and that things will work out as well as can reasonably be expected."⁵ In other words, it is a mixture of optimism and control. It has three components: comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness.

Comprehensibility is the extent to which events are perceived as ordered, consistent and structured. Manageability is the extent to which a person feels they can cope with their current

⁵ Collingwood, Jane, (May, 2016), Your Sense of Coherence, Scientific Advisory Board, Psych Central, Newburyport, Massachusetts, USA.

situation. Meaningfulness is how much one feels that life makes sense, and that challenges are worthy of commitment.

Palestine today is a society of individuals that largely perceive themselves as living in an unorderedly and inconsistent situation with little structure, with low levels of coping and little sense. A society where challenges are unworthy of their commitment and where many dream of escaping in order to find opportunities elsewhere.

People in general are no longer able to protect the values that once held the community together. The interpersonal relationships are largely conditioned by fear. There are multiple layers of oppression, which we will discuss further below, reinforcing each other. This is no less of a culture but it is a culture that does not promote the freedom, health, dignity or agency of its people. It is simply not a very healthy place to live in.

The key idiom is cultural resistance, some Palestinian artists prefer the more dramatic term 'cultural Intifada,' but the politically recognizable act of 'resistance' has become an established cultural mission. That does not mean, however, that there is a consolidated understanding of the meaning of cultural resistance. In fact, the only shared description of the idiom is that it is about more than a resistance to the Israeli occupation. Everyone recognizes the equally significant resistance to the ideological compartmentalization and indoctrination of Palestinian society as well as the corruption of the Palestinian Authority.

This is linked to the concept of cultural resistance to four levels of occupation, namely the Israeli occupation, the normalizing compliance with the occupying conditions by the Palestinian Authority, the dependency on an international aid economy and the effect of all these pressures

and demands on individual attitudes and behaviors. Jen Curatola discusses the ways it contributes to Palestinian civil society through building social capital, promoting democratic principles and mediating between individuals and sites of authority. Furthermore, there is there is an alternative perspective towards the concept of cultural resistance by viewing the artistic projects, social work and political activism as a democratic counter-occupation⁶.

In an environment of oppression, “art for the sake of art” view cannot exist. Escaping the conflict means you are taking a political decision. Where there are two options; either to resist oppression or indirectly contribute to maintaining it. Art, in general, is connected to social, economic, political and intellectual factors and it can play an important, even indispensable, role in transforming human lives and ethically challenging conditions of injustice and oppression. Bearing in mind that art should not be losing its creative message and defining characteristics that distinguish it from other media of expression⁷.

The cultural Dimension of Resistance

The uprooting and confiscation of the primary means of production, i.e., land and the persistent colonial measures to restrict the development of the people and drain their capabilities limits the opportunities for economic development, which double the value of education and culture, which is required the process of controlling the educational process based on new bases that relate to the requirements of the market, steadfastness, and national struggle. where culture

⁶Curatola, Jen, (2018), Theatre and Civil Society in NGO-Ized Palestine, The Freedom Theatre: Performing Cultural Resistance in Palestine, Left-Word Books, New Delhi, India.

⁷DarZaid, Sharaf, (2015), Art Management in an Environment of Oppression, Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, Moldova.

paved the way for politics, and in the Palestinian case it is the dungeon and cornerstone in the crystallization of the liberating cultural project as a political liberation project.

It is known that "Culture is the essence of the national identity of a people. Therefore, when this people lack a culture of their own, they lack a special identity, and when they lack a special identity, they do not exist" as Zakaria Muhammad states. It is also known that there is no socio-economic formation that is not based on an infrastructure and a superstructure. The components of the superstructure include but are not limited to, beliefs, worships, and regulation.

The Persian Zoroastrian belief, where Persia occupied Palestine for more than 250 years, discussed the struggle between good and evil, angels and demons. There was a Canaanite language side by side with the Sumerian language of Mesopotamia and it developed until the alphabet was invented (Tell Balata Excavations in Nablus and Tell el-'Ajul in Gaza). It was said that the alphabet originated in Palestine and spread regionally and globally.

This ancient history indicates the beginnings of culture, and culture is the carrier of identity and occupies a large portion of the latter, and it is linked and a dialectical reflection of societal practice. The denial of culture is a denial of societal practice. Due to the culture residing in the depths of the human being and their consciousness, shapes their personality and contributes to changing it; it exists as long as the humans do.

Since "Identity is continuously renewable" -Adonis, this is the case of culture as well. Culture witnesses frequent transformations in connection with its historical context and the throes, twists and turns starting from the Canaanite period through the Arab-Islamic era, which lasted for fourteen centuries until the last century, which was marked by the Zionist project and ethnic

cleansing of 1948 and the birth of Fedayeen factionalism (with blood we write to Palestine) and Imprisonment, “she, whoever did not say goodbye to her children with a smile to the cells, never got pregnant nor gave birth,” MuinBseiso. “Culture is old, and the psychology of knowledge is saturated and should not be limited to a stage,” GaliShukri’s ‘Al-turathwalThawra (Tradition and Revolution).

This process has gone through birth, aging, death, and resurrection in continuous cycles. Culture is not “static,” and the acts of yesterday do not fit today’s acceleration. There is always new, which necessitates (the development of the best models, traditions, and results of existing culture from the Marxist viewpoint of the world,) Lenin, who read the Alexander Pushkin, the writings of Carl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the Greek heritage, Shakespeare, Balzac, etc. He also realized the importance of progressive elements in human heritage, where he does not confine himself to rigid templates and closes the windows of his creative mind⁸.

Research Problem

The definition of cultural resistance is still subject to controversies which may be considered by some as an attempt to impose new facts on what resistance concept we want in Palestine for the purpose of liberation. Some global experiences in this area may not have achieved great successes in terms of systemic, structural and methodological change in the national cultural movement, as was the case in Algeria, as well as indigenous people in America.

⁸Katamesh, Ahmed, (September, 10, 2021), The question of culture: Is there a Palestinian culture? Culture holder and portable of identity, Al-Quds newspaper, Jerusalem.

Research Methodology

In this thesis a methodology was adopted: Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is one of the most important methods of investigation and community research, which includes investigation, and development and change in societies. It is based on the modern theories of education of Paulo Freire and Orlando FalsBorda⁹; the basic idea of this theory is to try and understand the try to understand the world by engaging its components by thinking about the search process in order to change it, beside the Method of Historical-Descriptive Analysis.

The Participatory Action Research method was adopted as a main research methodology, where there are a number of prominent research methodologies for participative inquiry, including experiential learning, cooperative inquiry, and action learning. In this thesis, Participatory Action Research (PAR) is adopted. As “coming to know,” rather than a formal academic method of research. The PAR as a methodology for an alternative system of knowledge production, based on the people’s role in setting the agendas, participating in data gathering and analysis, and in controlling the use of its outcomes. PAR emphasizes the political aspects of knowledge production and creating knowledge directly useful to a group of people¹⁰. Where we found four essential characteristics of PAR¹¹:

⁹Colares da MotaNeto, João, (2018), Paulo Freire e Orlando FalsBordanagenealogia da pedagogiadecoloniallatino-americana, Universidad PedagógicaNacional, Facultad de Humanidades, Segundo semestre, Segundaépoca, 3 FOLIOS, N.º 48, Bogotá, Colombia.

¹⁰ Reason, Peter, Bradbury, Hilary, (2001), Participative Inquiry and Practice, The SAGE Handbook of Action Research, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, USA.

¹¹Quixley, Suzi, (October, 2000), Participatory Action Research: A Brief Outline of the Concept, Reconnect Action Research Kit, The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, Youth and Students Branch, Australia.

1. The problem of the research must be generated from a recognized community need.
2. The community members to be affected by the outcomes of research must be involved in the study process.
3. A team work approach amongst all involved in the research process is essential to effective outcomes.
4. The research results must be in the form of recommendations for action.

Interviews

The interviews on the cultural resistance topic offer rich materials that complicate the relationship between art and politics. It also warns against the concept of romantic resistance, since it is often used to resist the expression of "power diagnosis" to understand the dynamics of injustice and greater domination.

The movements in Palestinian cultural production, and more specifically in Palestinian cultures of resistance, are witness to the close connection between art and politics. Yet most mainstream academic literature on the Arab world's political systems and cultures tends to pay scarce attention to the culture-politics nexus. Although there are notable exceptions, the focus on formal politics, high-level diplomacy, political parties, and NGOs continues to prevail in many studies, which have consequently neglected alternative, informal political expressions and subaltern political subjectivities. For example, despite the large number of studies that complicate and nuance the picture of the spaces, places, and actors of the "political" in Arab and Middle East contexts, mainstream definitions of civil society remain biased towards a notion that privileges

the “mélange of associations, clubs, guilds, syndicates, federations, parties, and groups that come together to provide a buffer between state and citizen.”

Yet some observers were too quick to celebrate artistic and cultural production as a driving force of the recent uprisings and as naturally defiant and oppositional. In fact, the artistic productions stemming from and deployed as soundtracks of the political protests were varied and complex. Even when they were explicitly calling for a radical change of existing social and political orders, the oppositional and disruptive potential of these artistic expressions has sometimes been at risk of neutralization at the hands of political co-optation or market commodification. In a similar vein, protest art proved to be resistant to some oppressive structures, while contributing to strengthening others at the same time. Thus, protest art revealed the potential to challenge one established aesthetic regime, while simultaneously conforming to another¹².

Research Objectives

This study aims to identify the cultural resistance in the Palestinian context by evoking local examples and international experiences:

1. Achieving a collective definition cultural resistance.
2. Considering that cultural resistance is an integral part of the Palestinian resistance in the face of occupations (Israel / authority policies/ customs and traditions)

¹² Salih, Ruba, (2014), *cultures of resistance in Palestine and beyond: on the politics of art, aesthetics, and affect*, SOAS Research Center, University of London, UK.

3. Simulation and adoption the global experience in a liberal context, based on the conflict transformation framework.
4. The development of the cultural resistance concept in Palestine.
5. Explanation of the relationship of culture to politics.
6. Building a cultural model in Palestine.
7. The relationship of Palestinian culture with nonviolence and international boycotts movements.

Research Importance

There is a lack of theoretical studies and a lack of adequate research on the subject of cultural resistance. Moreover, this issue is not given the attention, just from the Palestinian cultural organizations. It is not considered a popular act but rather an elite one.

Furthermore, there is importance in presenting the concept of cultural resistance in light of the retreat of the Palestinian cause from its position in the map of political action in the world, and in light of the congestion of the agenda in the region, which shows new elements after the Arab Spring especially in Syria and Iraq.

The importance of the research is that it is the first attempt to define the determinants of a society to define cultural resistance and to examine the views of cultural activists in understanding the role of culture. This is especially seen in the performing arts, in being inspired to build the collective national identity in a virtual homeland.

The importance of the study is reflected in the outputs and results that can be used by decision-makers and by other social and political forces to activate cultural resistance in light of the failure of negotiations and the obstruction of the political horizon. This study is also important in the context of building a national strategy related to cultural effectiveness and deepening the role of cultural institutions in redefining the Palestinian National Project.

Research questions

The main question: What do we mean by cultural resistance in the local context and based on global experiences?

The following questions emerge from it:

- Why is cultural resistance an important option for Palestinians?
- Is cultural resistance a part of peaceful resistance or is it a revolutionary station for violent resistance?
- How can cultural resistance be activated at the social level and invested politically?
- Is cultural resistance a tactical exercise or a strategic action plan?
- Is it an alternative to the overall resistance or is it complementary to the resistance in Palestine?

Research Hypothesis

This study is based on the assumption that cultural resistance is seriously important in the Palestinian context and is considered a national decoration, which it is important in the context of

building the national identity and the weakness of other Palestinian options in mechanisms for the conflict resolution.

Research Limit (2004-2020)

The study will cover the areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories in 1948 along with international activists and specialists in the field of cultural resistance, culture in general and performing arts in particular.

The study is located in the period of time after Arafat, and during the Mahmoud Abbas period. Also, during a time after the completion of the 2nd intifada, the talk of development and separation of powers, the internal division and the absence of any political horizon in the context of the settlement.

The balance of power clearly tilted in Israel's favor, a superior military power, many Palestinians felt the recent round of conflict with Gazans brought them a tiny but significant victory since peaceful negotiations have yielded nothing. Where there is a decline in the Palestinian case due to the failure of negotiations and armed resistance (which caused massive internal chaos), and therefore the Palestinians have lost a strong grassroots leadership of women and youth, as political, cultural, social, and economic alternative through which Palestinians may regain their strength, resistance, and revolutionary unity, finding freedom for the prisoners and justice for the martyrs of Palestine¹³.

¹³ Barakat, Khaled, (May, 2021), An Alternative Path for a Free Palestine, This Week in Palestine, ISSUE 277, Al-Birah.

Theoretical Sets

The researcher tried to highlight the forms of the conflict transformations after the peace efforts to reach a real compromise which resorted to violence. This embodies the armed Intifada in 2000, and how it reached dire consequences for the Palestinians at all socially, economically, politically and demographically levels; we must look for other visions to find ways to create new mechanisms to end the conflict.

This research project aims to study the meaning of cultural resistance concept after more than 60 years of occupation, where negotiations and resistance have been ineffective, to reach satisfactory results. Thus, we should pay attention more to the global experiences, where other people's suffered under long occupations or to the intractable conflict. These are represented in the experience of India and South Africa, they resorted to mass mobilization and wide organization against injustice and access to sources of representation and fundamental rights in the context of national liberation stage.

The field that is in the grip of cultural resistance requires approaching the intellectual entity (Ontology) whose power and relation to the dominance of other authorities are affected. Gilles Deleuze was not right in his famous dialogue with Michel Foucault in 1972 about intellectuals and power, it was not entirely wrong to consider that dealing with this complex issue could not in any way be divorced from the relationship between theory and practice¹⁴.

¹⁴ Bin Bouaziz, Wahid, (2008), Cultural Resistance and Cultural Studies, Damascus Center for Theoretical and Civil Rights Studies, Örebro, Sweden.

The problem of the intellectual lies in the fact that he is content with his ivory towers without being involved in public concerns. Many intellectuals, including the leftists, whisper among themselves that they can meet their ideological opponents in the well-known traditional phrase: "We have met on the public dislike." Deleuze fears that the intellectual will fall into the trap of imaginary representation (non-nationalism; Cosmopolitanism). This is why he bases his view on the idea that practice is a fundamental criterion that allows the discourse of intellectuals to transcend the illusions of theory, but to dismantle the universality of the false theory itself. Every theory has to be hit by a wall, a wall of habits, ideology, creed and dogma, which allows the destruction and detonation of this knowledge cement is the hammer of practice.

Foucault doesn't differ from this point of view, but rather deepens it with a response that reinforces the relationship between the intellectual and the authority. When he responds to a question posed by one of the young Maoists: Why you don't stand with us, why you don't support us like John Paul Sartre?

Foucault replied that, based on his experience of dissecting the power and showing its symptoms, he discovered that there is a visible power that is often manifested in political discourse, and an irrational authority living in intellectuals' speeches.

According to Foucault, the role of the new intellectual is not to be confined only to the working class against the bourgeois class, nor lies in standing with the subordinate against the dominant nor with the woman against the man and not with the East against the West, where the intellectual will be occupied with a heavy debt of exposing and elucidating the rhetorical strategies of each authority in all expectations and colloquial structure. In this way, the concept

of power in Foucault will go beyond metaphysical good / evil; evil exists in the ruling political structure and goodness exists in the rule.

Foucault has overcome the evil trench and power in the organ's ideology of power; therefore, he asks the intellectuals who call for adherence to the ideas of the oppressed and marginalized class and group to pay attention to the power splits in the party organs as well.

Franz Fanon has woven his speech into representation through the practice of direct anxiety, away from the theoretical piety that is always behind the prejudices and oscillations in the positions where the intellectual is always located. It appears that the most important mistakes in the theory of "post-colonialism" dates back to the attempt to lay the foundations of the theory of universality of all the worlds that took place. If we proceed from the philosophy of revolutionary practice (Praxis) as a necessary condition in the analysis of the colonial structure, we will note that the racial exploitation and ideology are a center of gravity in continental colonial discourse; there are differences between colonial historical experiences in terms of form, despite all this, we can't deny that cultural resistance can't be monolithic or entrenched in one school, as attempts to understand how (Qualitative) as Edward Said did. There are those who are looking for the tactics that we resist, and there are those who resisted but with traditional tools or tools that still require development, innovation and awareness¹⁵.

¹⁵Faysal, Yasif Ahmad, (2013), Edward Said's Conception of the Intellectual Resistance, American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol.1, No.4, P.p:236-243, Oklahoma, USA.

Theoretical Justification

The Palestinian people fought multiple battles with the occupation, relying on their own strengths and triggering successive uprisings in which large segments of the population participated. They were characterized by a civil-popular character as well as a direct confrontation (armed struggle). It was described as an unequal power, balance, equipment, logistical support and field deployment on the ground, at a time when the world was not seriously interested in resolving the Palestinian issue. Moreover, when the international community failed to pressure Israel to grant the Palestinians the legitimate rights of return, self-determination and the establishment of a sovereign state. This is what prompted the Palestinian people to create new forms of resistance, and to show the ugliness of Zionist colonialism (the tool of global imperialism), despite the harsh conditions living under the occupation.

These new forms were used in with form of images, posters, and publications in order to publicize and advertise the use of modern media, smart computers, Internet devices and social networking pages to mobilize, lobby and pressure on decision-making circles. These could be included in cultural be included in cultural spaces, where the intellectuals played an important role in fuelling resistance and struggle, for freedom, where poets emerged with poems and provocative prose texts thus moving to theatres, festivals and televises with the production of national songs and television and film tapes. These deal with the Palestinian case according to approach documentary, historical and you open the prospects for a strategy of resistance¹⁶.

¹⁶Al-Khuwailidi, Zuhair, (2017), Cultural Resistance in Palestine, Arab Voice, New Jersey, USA.

There is no doubt that the Palestinian cause needs all forms of struggle and all possible resistances, including cultural, media and civil struggle. These are all needed in order to lift the siege on the Gaza Strip, end the Palestinian division between the parties and national forces.

Art (especially Performing Arts) has always been a form of resistance used by different groups to present their issues in creative and sensational ways, aimed at attracting attention and leading to discussions. Thus, the slogan "cultural resistance" was a source of inspiration in the context of the suffering of various peoples in the world from terrorism, globalization and loss of identity. These repeated attacks on the right of the people to live in a safe environment and peaceful life in every corner of the world, where that art expresses the Palestinians who still hold on to their identity despite decades of occupation and oppression; those who have had their land stolen but still maintain their culture, practices and faith despite all odds, and women who struggle to get their right to education with control their bodies and their future¹⁷.

Most activist organizations, art projects and events are geared by a cause that engenders one-way communicative expressions: speeches, exclamations, agenda driven discourse, confrontational gestures, and demos. Where crisscrossed between humble, challenging, principled and self-critical lines of reasoning and, by being rhetorically open-ended, it creates a contact zone overlapping the panel and the audience for a continued discussion about geopolitical conditions and activist positions in the performing arts. The challenge is to rethink

¹⁷ Lin, Maya, (2015), about cultural resistance "To fly ... we must have resistance", Andariya, Sudan.

on political theatre and cultural resistance by presenting a multi-layered scenario with considerations of external, domestic, monetary and subjective perspectives of occupation¹⁸.

Previous Studies

The cultural resistance in the circumstances of the occupation is a deep social act and action, where the occupation, faced with predictable armed resistance, can behave excessively in violence. However, in front of an isolated cultural act, it forced to adhere to less violent standards and try to circumvent this direct diplomatic act.

In this we recall Ghandi's experience (the power of silence), but the Palestinian situation differs from India as it is intertwined between the realistic, the imaginary. This weakens the enlightening society to use of cultural resistance in the face of the Zionist occupation, thus in light of the decline of the Palestinian options in the armed struggle or political struggle, the complementary alternative is the cultural and intellectual resistance.

There have been a multitude of studies that addressed the issue of the relationship between culture with resistance. They are as follows:

Ghassan Kanafani's 1968¹⁹ study titled "The Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation 1948-1968" was among the studies that connected and enriched our study. Kanafani's study aimed to clarify the relationship between the rifle and culture, given that the armed struggle is the fruition of the culture of resistance, and that the two are parallel. The writer

¹⁸ Johansson, Ola, (2018), *Performing Four Levels of Occupation, The Freedom Theatre: Performing Cultural Resistance in Palestine*, Left-Word Books, New Delhi, India.

¹⁹ Kanafani, Ghassan, (1968), *Palestinian Resistance Literature under Occupation 1948-1968*, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, Lebanon.

considered that the cultural form of resistance, is not of a lesser importance than that of the armed resistance itself, and therefore the rifles of the armed struggle are based on culture. The importance of this study lies in addressing poetry, story, and drama with texts of resistance against the occupier, using the analytical and descriptive approach. This reinforces what was stated in this study on the impact of literature, of which theater is one of its branches, and how it is able to create a culture of resistance.

"The House of Madness" by Tawfiq Fayyad was one of examples of plays addressed, in addition to the poems of Mahmoud Darwish and others, seeking to present another document of Palestinian literature in its form of resistance, in an attempt to document his role in that. One of the results of Kanafani's study is that literature in all its forms constituted a struggle lever for the armed struggle, and this was evident in the various texts that he presented, which called for all forms of struggle for liberation, in addition to the text writers' exposure to Israeli harassment, arrest, and, in some cases, exile.

While Frantz Fanon focused²⁰ in his book entitled "The Wretched of the Earth" on violence and counter-violence in resisting colonialism, where he believed that the response to colonialism must be a violent revolutionary response, against the state of colonialism, which is based on violence itself. Fanon states that if one wants to be a true and honest revolutionary, one must be part of the elements of the popular energy recruited to liberate the homeland. Fanon's book enriched our study on how to address the colonizer, where there's violence there's counter-violence. This shoulders the current study on the transformation of the violence state to a

²⁰ Fanon, Frantz (2015), *The wretched of the earth*, Translated by Sami Al-Droubi and Jamal Al-Atassi, Orbits for Arabic Research (madarat), Cairo, Egypt.

revolutionary state, based on awareness of the importance of theater being a tool for mobilizing the revolutionary national situation, serving the other parallel liberation tools, which Kanafani discussed.

Faisal Darraj's²¹ study entitled "On the Palestinian Cultural Identity" expressed the existence of the Palestinian cultural identity, and then how it was affected by the Arab identity, in the face of the Israeli identity. Farraj attempted to prove that the existence of the cultural identity is linked to the national identity, through which Palestinians defend their existence. This study served our current study, by highlighting the policy of the colonizer, and how to confront it, and that the best policy to address it is to develop an anti-culture based on self-understanding and identity, and self-awareness of existence. This was performed on stages on a later period. It seems like Faisal's ideas are parallel to Fanon's, where violence is countered by counter-violence, and the culture the colonizer is attempting to impose is matched by the culture of the natives, and in the Israeli case it is an unauthentic culture. Darra states that the identity must be preserved by strengthening the state of awareness of it, which creates a counter-state to the degenerative Israeli culture, which was stolen and attributed to the enemy. This intersects with the title of this study.

Silvia Osman's study²² entitled "About Education through Theater and Cultural Resistance" aims to identify the possibility of theater being an educational tool, and a cultural resistance tool in general, through purposeful plays, highlighting different types of international

²¹Darraj, Faisal, (2010), Identity, Culture, and Politics: A Reading in the Palestinian Case, Dar Azminah for Publishing & Distribution, Amman, Jordan.

²²Osman, Silvia, (2014), About Education through Theater and Cultural Resistance,Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences Vol. 116, P.p: 2235-2238, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

plays. Then developing identity and self, through cultural and intellectual openness to the world, considering art as one of the tools that are used to prove identity and self, through sensory expression. The study states that the individual learns, speaks, and practices cultural resistance in several manners, in order to uproot the prevailing patterns of thought, and create another state of change, which reinforces Darraj's ideas.

There are a multitude of Arab and international literary studies and articles that addressed the Palestinian theater and the Freedom Theatre. Muhammad Anis in his book entitled "The Theatrical Movement in the Occupied Territories" believes that theatrical activity did not receive the same attention as other literary activities, and this is due, according to his view, to the lack of studies or books addressing the subject of theater. Then Anis states that theater is a daily activity that deals with the audience's daily issues in the light of conflict, and he also considers that all theatrical experiences before the beginning of the seventies are copies of Arab theatrical experiences and considered them a poor imitation in both in presentation and form. Anis also considered that the beginning of Balalin Troupe in Ramallah early seventies was the beginning of a flourishing theatrical movement in the occupied territories, and he considered that the issue of occupation, the daily suffering it causes, the state of rejection and resistance of it were the main interest of the theater issues in general. This study has enriched our study in reviewing the history of the theatrical movement and its role in the struggle²³.

²³Anis, Mohammed, (1979), *Theatrical Movement in the Occupied Territories*, Dar Galileo and Dar al-Amel, Jerusalem.

While Yahya Issa and Omar Nakrash²⁴ in their study entitled "The Integration of Heritage in Palestinian Theatrical Scripts," *An-Najah University Journal* addressed the integration of heritage in the Palestinian theatrical scripts in all of its forms, and that the theatrical script will not be in isolation from the search for Palestinian identity. This study was to identify the mechanism of employing heritage in the Palestinian theatrical scripts, through analyzing two texts by the Dean of Resistance Literature "Ghassan Kanafani", and by the writer "Emile Habibi". This study benefited our study, as the Palestinian theater is a purposeful theater, presenting plays concerned with the Palestinian struggle against the occupation, forming an integral part of the state of awareness of defeating colonialism and liberation. We see, through this, that the Palestinian identity, and the state of awareness of it, are closely linked to the creation of a culture of resistance, which forms the basis of the struggle act that Ghassan Kanafani discussed.

As for the theater itself, the researcher found many studies aimed at highlighting the role of the Palestinian theater in the struggle and creating a state of resistance. There are various studies on the topic such as Samer Al-Saber's study (2013), Silvia Osman and Yana Taylor's studies (2014), and Erin B. Mee's (2012) study entitled "The Cultural Intifada: Palestinian Theatre in the West Bank (1987-1993).

The researcher Erin B. Mee seeks through this study²⁵ to research how to grant children a sense of normal life, through the games they offer, without normalizing with the occupation,

²⁴Issa, Yahya, and Nakrash, Omar, (2013), *The Integration of Heritage in Palestinian Theatrical Scripts*, *An-Najah University Journal for Research*, Nablus.

²⁵Mee, Erin, (2012), "The Cultural Intifada. Palestinian Theater in the West Bank," *TDR/The Drama Review*, p.p.167-177, New York University, USA.

while developing children's critical and creative thinking, and preparing them for a post-occupation society. The researcher mentioned the impact of three of the most important theaters in Palestine: The Freedom Theater in Jenin refugee camp, Al-Rowwad Cultural and Arts Society Theater in Aida refugee camp (outside Bethlehem), and ASHTAR Theatre in Ramallah - creating a theater for children and youth. The three theaters address a wide range of current political issues within Palestinian society and provide a haven for children to "play" and learn. She attempted to prove the importance of these theaters in alleviating the burden of pressure on children and youth as a result of the occupation. Al-Saber's objective in his study entitled "The Palestinian Theater in Jerusalem"²⁶ was to shed a light on the Palestinian situation under the Israeli occupation, where Palestinians face various forms of persecution. Therefore, this study attempted to show the role of theater in exposing the acts of the occupation and its arrogance and relentlessness, and to highlight the goals of the Freedom Theatre, which was established in 2006, as well as the importance of social theater as a purposeful theater, which contributes to the process of change that the participants seek. The writer asserts that this small theater has the ability to change the world, citing the words of JulianoMer-Khamis, whose slogan was "We will continue the path through our struggle for freedom." While Yana Taylor's study titled "Reflecting on Palestinian Theatre: A Resilient Theatre of Resistance"²⁷ aimed to show social and political injustice, and its impact on social and humanitarian activities, within the place whose residents are subjected to persecution. She also asserted in her study that the Freedom Theater, one of the Palestinian theaters in the north of the West Bank, is of an echoing resilient

²⁶Al-Saber, Samer, (2013), *Permission to Perform: Palestinian Theater in Jerusalem. (1976-1993)*, A dissertation University of Washington, USA.

²⁷Taylor, Yana, (2014), *Reflecting on Palestinian Theater: A Resilient Theater of Resistance*, P.p: 94-103, Performance Paradigm, Australia.

voice in Jenin's refugee camp, a resistance theater, a form of cultural resistance of the Palestinian society.

In the same context, Bernadette de Heer's study about "The Freedom Theatre"²⁸ aimed at showing a change in society through art, especially the use of art as a creative tool, to give a voice to individuals, minorities, and the oppressed. The study confirms that artists participate in society through different activities in many fields, and that professional artists balance their artistic practice, and their desire to contribute to society in contrasting ways.

Chapterization Plan

The thesis consists of five chapters, moving from the general to the more specific. The first three chapters pave the way for the reader to grasp the main issues researched, the objectives, the research questions, etc. The story (findings) starts with chapter four, where the plot will be in this chapter. Chapter five concludes, recommends and discusses the results of the research, which the researcher recommends to internal parties, in the end of the thesis;

Chapter one introduces the reader to the themes, rationale, relevance and objectives of this thesis. The chapter clarifies the main research question and sub-questions. This chapter presents the research methodologies used in collecting the data and analyzing it. This chapter explains the process journey of the research and how the researcher reached his findings.

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework of the thesis by defining the key terms and describing the field research of the thesis.

²⁸De Heer, Bernadette, (2018), *The Power and Struggle of The Freedom Theater in Palestine*, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands.

Chapter three addresses international experiences of Cultural resistance in a global context, supported with examples from World. In addition, this chapter examines Cultural resistance impact on artists and cultural NGOs.

Chapter four presents examples from Palestine of theatres using art as a form of resistance to occupation as well as a tool to challenge internalizing oppression and the authority policies.

Chapter five is the conclusion, recommendation and discussion that brings together and analyzes the findings of each chapter. It also addresses the research limitations from the perspective of the researcher.

Final Remarks

The arts have always been a powerful tool for the oppressed against oppressors, especially in the Palestinian case, where the artistic expression is an integral part in the struggle for freedom, justice and equality. Here the Palestinian people face the worst occupation in the world, the colonisation of Palestine in the midst of a policy based on racism and separation on an ethno-religious basis. These circumstances lead the Palestinian cultural organization to acquire practical guidance on what role it plays in the Palestinian revolution. Within a community movement that seeks change and contributes to creating a true platform for cultural resistance.

Cultural resistance still doesn't have a unified and clear definition which has different meanings for workers in the cultural field. This may push towards uniting the goals and visions of the various cultural and artistic groups and initiatives on a primary basis by believing in the role of culture and art in life and society. This cultural diplomacy as a soft and moving force

among the people can bring them together, so that the joint cultural movement is the new port of the next generation, which carries critical ideas and leads to a serious evaluation of the Palestinian political situation.

This aspiration has grown in cultural organizations during work experiences in performing arts rooted in the applied track, depending on the factual analysis.

However, we see that cultural resistance is a form of resistance, which necessarily has social and organizational implications associated with the concept of change. It is the work of the Palestinian cultural organization, which is closer to the wider use of arts in all its forms in challenging, fighting injustice and repression within the framework of nonviolent contexts to confront the occupation.

Some Palestinians believe that cultural resistance is confined to the practice of using meanings and symbols to compete in the fight against dominant power. This often carries a different vision of the reality surrounding it, and has a role in creating a collective identity based on the personality of the revolution against injustice. In addition to being a progressive cognitive knowledge tool based on deepening understanding, and analysis based on science, as a means of upgrading policies based on the principle of authority and power.

Repeatedly, from the point of view of the Palestinian cultural organization, the cultural resistance isn't a substitute for any form of Palestinian resistance, but it is complementary to this resistance. The Palestinian resistance can be described as a mosaic and the cultural resistance is a central stone, giving; style, meaning and direction, to perfect the mosaic.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

“The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

In studying such transformations, it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic, or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.”²⁹

Introduction

Art is a common human language that does not recognize borders or barriers. Art is not only a self-explanatory bridge between peoples and nations, but also a means of change when on the right path. It is also an act of resistance that becomes more effective alongside other means of resistance. Over the years, Palestinian civil society represented a network of popular and politicized organizations that support the national struggle. and the inalienable Palestinian rights, where cultural institutions enroll people into engaging in the Palestinian liberation struggle and

²⁹Marx, Karl, (2007), A Contribution to The Critique of Political Economy, Kessinger Publishing LLC, Whitefish, Montana, USA.

supported and advocated the resistance in various ways as tools by which they perform their struggle role³⁰.

The Palestinian resistance coincided with the beginnings of Jewish immigration to Palestine at the end of the nineteenth century, and the resistance escalated with the increase in immigration, then turned into political and military action, revolutions, and demonstrations with the imposition of the British Mandate. The comprehensive resistance continued after the establishment of the State of Israel and did not cease. The beginning of the Palestinian resistance of the Zionist project has been going on for more than a hundred years. In 1891, a large number of Jerusalem notables submitted a protest note to the Grand Vizier in Astana, asking him to intervene to prevent Jewish immigration and prohibit Jews from owning Palestinian lands. In the following year, the people of the village of Hadera and Mulabbis "Petah Tikva" noticed the increase in the number of Jewish settlements on their lands, so they launched an armed attack on them, which resulted in deaths on both sides. Jewish writings in European newspapers, during the same period, warned of an impending Arab revolution due to the Jewish immigration processes that the Arabs began to pay attention to.³¹

The forms of Palestinian resistance varied due to the change in political and military conditions. Some forms of the Palestinian resistance were of an armed character, both at the popular level represented in the form of uprisings that erupt in a city and then quickly the flames of anger would spread to most of the Palestinian lands, or at the level of "organized" military action, such as the one carried out by the Arab armies in 1948, which resulted in what was

³⁰Al-Skafi, Hussain, Shamhoud, Kazem, (2017), Symposium on the Language of Art, Abrar Islamic Foundation, London, UK.

³¹Pappé, Ilan, (2006), The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, Lebanon.

termed as the Great Nakba, and the consequent loss of land and displacement of the people. Other forms were of a political resistance nature, either by holding mass conferences or forming political parties, establishing associations or diplomatic missions, and appearing in international forums to demand the rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right to self-determination and the return of of Palestinian refugees to their homes. Others forms of resistance where of an economic nature, such as the establishment of national banks such as the Arab Bank and the National Trade Company, as well as the call for a boycott of Israeli and American goods, whether within the occupied territories or in the Islamic world.³²

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the rule of the so-called unipolar international system affected the Palestinian issue, and this was evident from the American bias in favor of Israel, and its constant use of the Veto against any resolution issued by the Security Council condemning Israel, in addition to the financial, political and military support to the latter, which aims at the superiority of Israel over its Arab counterparts, which is considered one of the constants of American foreign policy. The signs of the peace process appeared in the seventies and acquired an official character through the Madrid Conference of 1991, then crowned by the Oslo Accords and the consequent formation of a national authority and limited autonomy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, based on conditions of security cooperation, which made the authority an isolation wall between the Palestinian people and the Israelis, which affected the resistance greatly.

³² Abdel-Ati, Mohammed, (2014), *The Palestinian Resistance... The Revolution of the Human and the Stone*, Al-Jazeera, Doha, Qatar.

In Palestine, the uniqueness of the concept of culture from Palestine's counterparts in other regions and the world stems from characteristics imposed by exceptional facts represented in being under a settler and military occupation. In Palestine, too, we set out to confront the Zionist project by emphasizing our cultural identity. This identity includes different elements and combines distinct lifestyles with the arts and culture that set us apart. The cultural identity also relates to heritage, architecture, history, literature, poetry, story, novel, music, dance, theater, plastic arts, folklore, language, behavior, values, and morals, which were used as a weapon and strategy to defend existence, and to strengthen resistance against all forms of oppression practiced against us as a people.

There is no doubt that the Palestinian culture played a major role in the history and struggle of the Palestinian people in their struggle for survival, and in order to obtain their inalienable national rights. In the midst of the battle to protect identity and support the idea of steadfastness and resistance, the phenomenon of resistance literature and the culture of steadfastness emerged. I considered this as one of the peculiarities of the Palestinian cause regarding the role of culture in reviving the cause and its strengthening of the mechanisms of the resistance movement³³.

Culture is a free expression of sensations, feelings and humanitarian, emotional and creative situations. For example, on the musical level, special themes and popular words appeared, some of which were composed for the stone uprising (the First Intifada), and some were composed for armed and peaceful resistance. Moreover, there are creative cases that dealt

³³ Issa, Hanna, (2016), National Culture Unites and Does Not Divide, The Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies (masarat), Ramallah.

with the 1948's Nakba and the right of refugees to return, others related to aspirations of establishing a Palestinian state and national unity, and others that urge steadfastness in the occupation prisons and non-recognition during the investigation and torture process, in addition to a multitude of chants of pride for the martyrs, and songs addressed the various Palestinian cities Gaza, Acre and Jerusalem. If we look into another aspect of the creative cases, such as the story, in addition to the Zajal and Ataaba, and the traditional songs such as Al Rozana, Zarif Al Tawl, Megana, Al Dalouna, Al Sahja and Al Zagharit, one would recognize that the Palestinian story, poetry and novel constituted a form of resistance and a means of urging steadfastness and non-compromise. Writers and poets expressed their feelings and their connection to the homeland, urged struggle and resistance of the occupier, promoted patriotism, preserving the land and the olive tree through the story, poetry, and novel. This was considered a method of awareness-raising and political mobilization. There are many distinguished works by poets and writers such as Mahmoud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim, Tawfiq Ziyad, Emil Habibi, Ibrahim Nasrallah, Mu'inBseisu and Mourid al-Barghouti, and the list of those famous for their resistance literature in Palestine goes on.³⁴

The Zionist entity seeks to obliterate our identity and plant obstacles in the way of our cultural development. The occupation has practiced, and still is, a slow systematic policy throughout more than 70 years of occupation aimed at erasing the Palestinian identity. There are many instances of this policy, for example, they removed old stones from our Palestinian cities, such as occupied Jerusalem, and replaced them with new ones, and they used our stones in their

³⁴Elias, Rania, (February, 2010), The Role of Culture in Protecting Identity and Strengthening Resistance and Resilience, Right of Return Magazine, Vol. 37, P.10, BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Bethlehem.

museums and their streets to erase our history and write a new one for them. They also Hebrew-named Palestinian streets, cities, and villages, aiming to erase history and memory. They stole our songs, our folk dance, our Palestinian food "Falafel and hummus", and our folk costumes. They even participated in one of the international competitions, "Eurovision", in our traditional clothes. The list of violations and practices to erase identity is numerous, and it has political and cultural dimensions, behind which Israel aims to destroy the elements of identity and distort its cultural features. In response to these practices, we confronted them and still do, but we must draw up a plan and a cultural strategy to enhance steadfastness and resistance and preserve identity.³⁵

Cultural work is not a charitable or social act, but a creative process shared by partners through an agenda that includes education, culture, and the struggle for freedom, by cooperating with other similar forces in generating a cultural resistance that is obligated with the universal values of freedom and justice.

The main motive for this presentation is related to the legacy of cultural organizations, and their central themes that revolve around the concept of cultural resistance. It was pointed out that cultural resistance is indeed a basic concept in these institutions, but its definition and importance are still under discussion within the Palestinian cultural organization.

The questions that lie behind the concept of "cultural resistance" must be taken into consideration, about whether the resistance was not only established against the current colonialism of Palestine, but extended to confront the Palestinian compradorism, including

³⁵Kanaana, Sharif, (2011), *Studies in Culture, Folklore and Identity*, the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy - Muwatin, Ramallah.

resistance of normalization. Moreover, it should also take into consideration the international responses related to the call for disengagement from international aid, which was recently linked to the European conditional funding patterns. These patterns were related to the extension of the relationship between the West and the East, especially the United States and the Israeli occupation of the land of Palestine after the Oslo Accords, where the way of life resulted in the formation of the identity of groups and the attitudes of individuals, which may extend the life of the occupation instead of ending it. Cultural resistance forms date back to go back to the history of the performing arts in Palestine, which are linked horizontally and vertically with the armed resistance and are considered the creative and promotional arm of the concept of comprehensive resistance.

Cultural resistance was manifested in the life practices of many Palestinian and international playwrights and dramatists; academic researchers; political activists; and solidarity movements activists, ensuring achieving a balance between aesthetic, historical, theoretical, and political discourses and practical applications. The balance lends credibility and accuracy to many cultural analyzes and their geopolitical contexts, such as an analysis of perspectives and interpretations based on historical studies, theatrical research, postcolonial studies, international relations, and experience-based testimonies and observations.

There is a local, regional, and international position for cultural organizations in the context of direct national action, which is associated with a variety of aesthetics and different types of performing arts, which provides an insight into the local and community work of these

organizations among urban Palestinian communities, linked to critical and open views and challenges as presented by the leaders of the Palestinian cultural movement.

Cultural resistance is the widespread use of traditional arts, literature, and practices to challenge or fight repressive regimes or those in power injustices in the context of nonviolent actions, campaigns, and movements. At its core, cultural resistance is a way to restore our humanity and celebrate our work as individuals and as societies. Cultural resistance tactics are particularly powerful because they serve multiple purposes. They inspire us to own our lives and invest in our communities, while building local leadership's capabilities. These creative and artistic tactics provide a fun way for people to participate.³⁶

The importance of the cultural front, despite its centrality in the Palestinian national struggle for self-determination and the promotion of community communication between the various Palestinian groups outside the homeland or in the diaspora, is often ignored, especially those active in the file of reviving the city of Jerusalem and restoring it as the cultural and political capital of the Palestinian people. This new wave of cultural activity (in the form of music, film, and art festivals, concerts, and seminars) is a qualitative step within the framework of the work of the Palestinian Cultural Organization whose impact on social and cultural life in Palestine has developed in the last 20 years, and served as an important model for nonviolent civil resistance to the occupation through cultural programs aimed at educating, entertaining and/or enlightening the Palestinian public to enhance a sense of patriotism and belonging to the community.

³⁶ Adwan, Issam, (2014), Non-violent Resistance: The Great March of Return in the Gaza Strip (as a model), The journal of the Islamic university, Gaza.

Moreover, these programs have provided a constructive outlet to deal with the feelings of loss, depression, and dispossession caused by the occupation, as the cultural organization works to undermine the physical and cultural control imposed by the occupation, as well as to promote and improve liberal cultural life through music, dance, art and cinema, which was in line with the development of several music, film, and arts festivals in Jerusalem and the West Bank. These festivals have become extremely popular, providing valuable insights into how music and popular culture facilitate community interaction and collective identity formation. Nevertheless, this should be seen as a microcosm of a much larger social project led by various grassroots organizations to preserve and expand indigenous Palestinian cultural practices.

Based on the foregoing, cultural resistance can be viewed as the widespread use of arts and literature to challenge or combat traditional practices, unjust or oppressive regimes, and/or those in power in the context of nonviolent actions, campaigns, and movements. Therefore, it is a “well-hidden, transparent” insurgency, as an effort to expand the borders of formal tolerance, either by adopting a line the authorities consider ideologically dubious, or by highlighting some contemporary social problem, or both, as a form of nonconformity. However, it is not a public opposition in general, but it is a conservative position, despite this view, which may be dialectical, in connection with the four themes of the cultural system; ethical guidance to form a pattern of adult social relations; aesthetic guidance to create a sound public taste; scientific reasoning to determine the forms of public activity, and industry or applied art appropriate for each type of society³⁷.

³⁷Khadraoui, Osama, (2019), Malik Bennabi and the problem of culture, Al JazeeraNet Blogs, Doha, Qatar.

However, for a deeper understanding of what cultural resistance is, the concept of culture must be addressed from the perspective of the Palestinian cultural organization, as culture is a network that connects people to each other and provides a common language and a common framework. Stories shared within a group of people for a long period constitute a culture and a collective identity (for a nation, tribe, people, community, or anything else). Each story is like a chain in a grid and attached to other threads as this collective reference map enables us to predict the actions of others, creating a safe and meaningful environment in which we can understand and manage our situation. We know what we can expect of others and what they can expect of us. We know confidently what is acceptable and what is not based on rituals of strengthening collective identity as well as procedures for dealing with tension and stress in the system, which makes the chaos of our comprehensive lives based on our ability to express our culture through art.

Cultural expression is important to human well-being and development, as a result of promoting creativity, identity, self-esteem, communication and thinking through it. When a culture is put under stress, it activates its inherent coping mechanisms. If the latter is exhausted, the fragile network that makes up that specific culture is in danger of a severe collapse, where that the gap widens and the idea of mistrusting the common past, the present, and expectations of the future increases. When individuals' frustration for individuals accumulates, society becomes meaningless. Therefore, the latter's members have limited means to predict or change the course of events and they would feel exposed to the different will of others. This is a very devastating situation to be in.

The concept of "the feeling of cohesion" helps to better understand this condition. It is defined as: "the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring through dynamic feeling of confidence that the stimuli, deriving from ones internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable."³⁸ In other words, it is a mixture of optimism and control. It consists of three components: Understandability, manageability and meaning, including perceiving events as orderly, consistent, organized, and manageable in a way that enhances the individual's sense of handling their current situation, that life is logical, and that challenges are worthy of commitment.

Palestine today is a community of individuals who largely see themselves as living in a disorganized and inconsistent situation within a weak structure with low levels of coping and loss of sense of safety in a society in which challenges do not deserve their commitment and where many dream of escaping in order to find opportunities elsewhere. Palestinians are no longer able to protect collective values due to a network of interests that is largely conditioned by fear. There are multiple layers of oppression that reinforce each other. These layers are nothing less than a culture, but a culture that does not promote freedom, health or dignity for a people but simply creates an unhealthy place to live.

The main term in the paper is "cultural resistance." Some Palestinian artists may prefer the more dramatic term "cultural intifada," but the latter refers to an act of "resistance" that is politically recognizable, but an established cultural task within the space of culture. However, this does not mean that there is a firm understanding of the nature of cultural resistance, although

³⁸ Hammond, Alison, (2010) Patient education and self-management, *Rheumatology: Evidence-Based Practice for Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists*, Pp: 77-97, Churchill Livingstone Elsevier, London, UK.

it bears a common description related to confrontation and resistance to the Israeli occupation, but it extends to include resistance to the corruption of the Palestinian Authority. Nevertheless, there is a positive attitude towards the concept of the cultural resistance related to the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement against Israel, and this is linked to the repeated forms of cooperation and other relational issues according to a national agenda that defends a comprehensive vision of cultural, artistic, political and psychological resistance against occupations and injustice everywhere. This national agenda is alive in every waking and sleeping hour, and it is not forgetting those rental houses in the camps, until the Palestinians obtain the right of return.

This is related to the concept of cultural resistance to four levels of occupation, namely, the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian Authority's compliance-with-the-occupation normalization, dependence on the international aid economy, and the impact of all these pressures and demands on individuals (attitudes and behaviors), which Palestinian civil society contributes through building a social capital, promoting democratic principles, and the defense of the concept of cultural resistance that opponents are trying to attack through projecting artistic projects, social work and political activism as a western democratic occupation that does not express the East.

Palestinian Popular Critical Culture

The concept of "culture" is still one of the most ambiguous concepts, despite it being one of the most circulated concepts among people and through individuals and institutions related to culture and cultural programs. Many researchers believe that the concept of culture still lacks a comprehensive, all-encompassing definition, so that researchers and bodies concerned with

culture such as UNESCO repeated efforts to present this definition stopped. In the etymology of the term culture, it is indicated that the word culture acquired its intellectual meaning in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century. The French word, In the Middle Ages, meant religious rites, cultes, while during the seventeenth century it was expressing "cultivation of the land" and with the beginning of the eighteenth century it took a meaning that expresses the intellectual formation in general, and the intellectual progress of the person in particular. The coining of the term culture is the product of anthropologists, and therefore the concept of culture is the field most closely related to anthropological studies. Despite the multitude of contributions of other sciences in this field, especially in the context of providing a definition of the concept of culture, as mentioned in the reference to the definitions made by Kroeber and Kluckhohn. The French scholar Kluckhohn identified more than 160 definitions of culture, as it is a societal membership and a cornerstone in the socio-economic formation, where culture should be transformed into a philosophical practice, and it is absolute. Culture is biased towards justice, freedom, rights, dignity, ending exploitation and domination, the right of reasoning and thinking, beauty, knowledge, patriotism, democracy, courage, sacrifice and general liberation in order for a person to be human, not only thinking, but also living a life. Culture includes the fields of literature, media and art, such as cinema, singing, theater, music, painting, sculpture, embroidery, food, values and others, whether revolutionary, reactionary or conservative. In the era of globalization, cultural globalization strengthens the imperialist center's control over the parties around the world, where the powerful are able to impose inhuman dictatorship that preys on the weak under the pretext of free exchange and freedom of the market, based on its orientalist vision of the Western projection of the East and the desire to control it, that is, the control and

plunder of the North to the South, using many mechanisms, including its cultural and media mechanisms, as it exercises oppression against peoples. The oppression against the peoples aims to domesticate them, where nothing but engaging in the struggle process, on the basis of gaining critical awareness, frees these peoples from this control. Ignorance, idleness, and indifference are a direct result of the totality of economic, social and political domination.³⁹

Dr. George Habash, Hakim al-Thawra (the conscience of the revolution), says: It is possible to overcome a military and political defeat, however, a cultural defeat, is a cruel thing.⁴⁰ The importance of the cultural front appears in the play of the Syrian playwright Saadallah Wannous in pointing out that it is impossible to destroy a people that were able to survive with their culture and that defending the national culture is defending the existence of the nation. The national Palestinian culture is the defender and protector of the national identity and the entire liberation project, and it is in a constant clash with the hostile culture. The culture justifies the Palestinian narrative in the face of the opposite narrative. As thought and ideas determine and politics decide, there is no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory. Hence the danger of marginalizing the liberation culture and the national intellectuals, as the political and cultural wings complement each other. The cultural intellectual may guide the political, and the political may be armed with a cultural stock attracting the cultural intellectuals into the political trench⁴¹.

³⁹Abu Al-Hamam, Azzam, (2010), Cultural Media: Controversies and Challenges, Dar Osama for Publishing & Distribution, Amman, Jordan.

⁴⁰Habash, George, (2009), Revolutionaries Never Die, (Dialogue, Malbrino G.), (Trans Al ShiekhHussien, A.), Dar Al-Saqi, Beirut, Lebanon.

⁴¹Katamesh, Ahmed, (2019), Current Intellectual Approaches, Pp: 365-380, Ramallah.

Theater as Part of the Cultural Resistance Movement

Theater is the soul of the nation, its food, and the address of its progress and greatness. In the theater's space, people express their social and political issues, and paint their dreams and aspirations, and that is why it is considered the closest art to the self, as this art depicts the human experience in movement and speech and transmits it on stage in its true non-hypocritical. It, from one side, seeks to address the various issues of society, in a manner commensurate with their aspirations, and to spread awareness as well as social and intellectual renaissance, from other sides. It will always remain an effective tool, in the hands of playwrights to feel the pain of society.⁴²

Life is a massive theater, the people on it act several roles through the existing social interaction. Life is a great drama. We are all actors who play our real roles. When we go to the theater, which is a reflection of reality and a mirror of all this great drama that is happening, we try to talk about this life, we change the reality we live in to a different reality most of the time, perhaps a better reality, or we live tragic or comedic heroic stories; where we would laugh to an extreme situation that makes us laugh, or to cry perhaps, as if we are looking to find some sense and highlight it, because we always strive for change⁴³.

When talking about theater, we talk about an art that has existed for thousands of years. The beginnings of theater were marked by the Greek theater in the sixteenth century, where there was the first book, written by Aristotle, to criticize poetry and theater, establishing some classical

⁴²Affoneh, Nuha, (2016), Arabic Theatre in Palestine Since (1975-2000), Palestinian Ministry of Culture, Al-Bireh.

⁴³Haj Ahmad, Mohammed, (2020), The role of theater in the culture of resistance; Freedom theater in Jenin camp as a model, [Published Master's Thesis], BirzietUniverity.

rules for the latter. It is worth mentioning at this stage Thespis, the first actor, who used to glorify the gods through the art of Dithyramb. This art is based on glorifying the gods through chorus and chants. The tragic theater was in Greece, where plays were held in Athens alongside religious parties that were of a dancing and chants nature over multiple seasons of the year. Then was the Roman theater, which appeared three centuries after the Greek one, where it was also associated with religious parties, and it also served for recreation and leisure. The Roman theater extended to the Middle Ages as well to incorporate religious parties against the Christian church. During that period plays that embodied the stage between the life on world and the hereafter, as well as the struggle of Christ with the demons were apparent. During the renaissance period plays started to clearly evolve, where the sacred holy character was fading to be replaced by earthly tragic comic character, simulating and projecting reality through scripts, and the focus was on morality and beauty. That period also witnessed the appearance of realistic characters, and the identification of the play's time and place for people to watch. Thus, it spread to the rest of Europe, and then to the Arab world, whose existence was truly and effectively established by the writers of Syria and Egypt.⁴⁴

Theories within Theater

No work, whatever it may be, can function but according to a specific method or theory. The models that constitute a framework or experiences that can be used later, in creating similar cases in other places, that proceed with the same action and direction, to reach the results, must be studied as well. The study of the theatrical resistance models; the consequent theories, or the

⁴⁴Saleh, Majied, (2002), History of Theater through the Ages, Al-Dar Al Thakafiya for Publishing, Cairo, Egypt.

different theatrical theories related to the actor, the type of theater, and its goal, as well as theater pioneers' attempt to create similar models around the world. We will focus on the state of theater in Palestine, where the people are still using their various tools in the struggle, including various arts.

The theater, like other arts, has its different theories, and the playwright usually follows some of the theatrical theories in force, and applies them to the actor. Where the actor is subject to mood or psychological swings. Critics are used when criticizing plays, to criticize based on theater theories. There are a multitude of theories that are consequent of various cultures and eras, and they are concerned with many facets, including ones that address the cognitive and psychological aspect of the actor, and others that control and organize the latter within a certain system. Acting is an art that should be mastered by the actor. This art forms the relationship between the actor and acting, through gestures and language, so does the play revolve around a certain theory or not? Is it possible to mix between theories for one play or not? As plays change according to time, place and social changes⁴⁵.

We can practice many cognitive theories in the theatrical field; epistemology that is concerned with the human being and their character; the theory of the Italian scholar Francesco Robertello, which attempts to blend between the character and personality of the playwright and the theatrical performance, in order to for the playwright to harmonize speech and gestures with the personality of the actor, and then Alonso LópezPinciano's theory, which recognizes that the gestures of the actor's movement must be expressive of the importance of the objective and

⁴⁵Carlson, Marvin, (2010), *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*, (Trans. WajdiZeid), National Center for Translation, Giza, Egypt. (Original work published 1984).

appropriate to it, and that this drama mirrors the inner world of the actor, and the actor on the stage harmonizes between pronunciation, pronunciation, stillness, as well as the simulation and imitation movements. There is a theory on the art of acting that determines the actor's understanding of involuntary action, and reflex action, then it appears on the stage, and that the actor's expressions must match their words, high or low voice, the center of control⁴⁶.

Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and Konstantin Stanislavski, by the twentieth century presented new theories on theatre. Stanislavski linked the progress of theater to the actor's creativity by the latter strictly following a system based on scientific foundations. The actor must be well prepared, their subject shall not be theoretical, and they must master the art of creativity in acting. What Stanislavski calls the acting system is achieved through emotional and psychological sources, summoning the imagination, alongside strengthening the actor, and working with the latter to feel and sense, and dismantling the theatrical role into small units, which are accomplished by the actor. Brecht, however, through his writings and works, opposed Stanislavski and accused him of being natural, not improving the development of the character, because he, Stanislavski, narrowed the relationship between the character and the environment, whether on the family or the work relationship levels. Brecht believes that the relationship between man and society is a close relationship, where Brecht's drama calls for the existence of a modern human being; calling on society to change. Drama according to Brecht is not according to feelings and emotions, but a reason-based drama affects logic, meditation and thinking. The objective is not the character itself per se, but rather the creativity of the character is what achieves the main goals of society through drama via opinions and ideas. Brecht was not

⁴⁶Ibid.

concerned about the character's gestures but felt what is expressed by the latter when conveying the goal, as well as linking the gestures with all social contexts is sufficient.⁴⁷

The ideas of Antonin Artaud, the author of a book and theory 'The Theatre and its Double' circle back to the Theatre of Cruelty, which calls for the reorganization of human existence as a great means, in the sense of transforming the human psyche to a spiritual strength, as psychological facts are better. Artaud wrote about the Theater of Magic and the Theatre of Ecstasy, and that the masses do not want this kind of theater, as it is a sum of psychological feelings, feelings of sin, anger, and contentment that the viewer does not want to address. Thus, the theater of cruelty reveals a mental illness, to be stripped before the eyes of the spectators, for that people strive to expose every deceiver, corrupt or abnormal to humanity. Artaud states that the theater is a double to this life, life hides a black darkness, and this theater after the end of the play has a comprehensive objective. Artaud's psychodynamic theory explains the universe in the language of strength and interaction and attempts to reorganize human existence. The researchers sees that the revolutionary and the resistance theaters' events are similar to Brecht's, where one wants humans to always rise to change societies, and has something of Artaud's theory, which corners man until naked before people⁴⁸.

The loss of a sense of cultural identity can be compared to a tree without roots, and so are Africans in the diaspora, particularly in the advanced industrial regions of North America and Europe, where they made the relentless quest for cultural identity the central focus of their liberation struggle. White America realized the consequences of capitulating to the quest of

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Abu El-Hassan Salam, (2008), Theater Theories, Modern Discussion, Iraq.

blacks to eradicate illiteracy, and thus blacks were not allowed to learn to read and write in English, as white fears were so great that they prevented blacks from developing a distinct form of verbal expression⁴⁹.

Cultural critic Michael Eric Dyson explains that blacks have always sought literacy because education afforded them the opportunity to rediscover themselves and shape their identities. Moreover, Frantz Fanon, the famous Caribbean scholar, and the author of *The Wretched of the Earth*, provides an important analysis of contemporary and neocolonialism, its ultimate source; White supremacy, as a system that affects non-whites in the United States as much as the rest of the world in the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America. Fanon believes that these processes essentially strip each member of the oppressed group of their humanity, and therefore resistance is the only correct response of the oppressed. Thus, it appears that resistance provides the necessary and sufficient condition for establishing the perfection of the individual, that is, true liberation, authenticity, and achieving the maximum cultural potential of the individual. Edward Said was distinguished this regard y his continuous addressing of culture on the one hand and imperialism and colonialism on the other, the technical and temporally differences between them, as well as the extent of the contrast between the concept of culture in the East and West, and between colonial regimes and occupied peoples⁵⁰.

⁴⁹Green, Charles, Smart, Ian Isidore, (1997), *Ebonics as Cultural Resistance*, Peace Review Journal, Routledge and covering peace and conflict studies, USA.

⁵⁰Ibid

Cultural Marxism between Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci

Marxism considers art as a tool for awareness, through which it is possible to change the reality of human life. The Marxist theory stems from the principle of justice and equality, rejecting status quo and exploitation. It also discusses the superstructure represented in ideology and politics, which is based on socioeconomic relations. Marxist traditions represented in the Aristotelian theater and called for change and resistance to reality.

Erwin Piscator is considered one of those affected by the Marxist theory. Piscator was searching for the theater of resistance and looking to crystallize its ideas when the theater turned into a political one. With the help of Bertolt Brecht, who embraced Marxism after the anarchist stage, Piscator produced his theory of the theater influenced by Marxist thought, where his theory revolutionized the structure of performance and the rearrangements with enticing motives. This theory is based on addressing the concepts of Aristotelianism with a new theater that calls for stimulating the ability of man to take action and resistance. The new theater also pushes the spectator to decide after an objective confrontation with the events, being fully absorbed by it, then manipulating their feelings and consuming their emotion in order to interact with the events. The revolutionary variable in the theater's authority has opened the doors for many trends later, such as the documentary theater, verbatim theatre, which produced a new discourse as seen in the plays of Peter Weiss, which maintained communication in the discourse of protest, incitement and resistance through the mechanisms of his book dedicated to the discourse of script and performance, exactly like the speech that came in the Song of the Lusitanian Bogey, where it were a direct exposure, through documents, to the liberation revolutions around the

world, in addition to the permanent reminder of human revolutions in their various places of residence.⁵¹

Although Karl Marx did not have a fully developed theory of culture, based on his understanding of history and politics. Marx's approach to the concept of culture was critical to both cultural theory and practice, and the time-space consequences of this linked to the conditions of production of culture and its relationship to Marx's concept of history about culture as discussed in his base model and its relation to the superstructure, where Marx argues that every significant period in history is marked by a particular "mode of production", i.e., the way society is organized (communal, feudal, capitalist, etc.) to produce the material necessities of life in general, so that each mode produces specific methods to obtain those necessities and builds specific social relations between workers and those who control the mode of production and societal institutions (including cultural organizations). According to this analysis, the method of production determines the shape of the political, social, and cultural society, and its possible development in the future, as Marx explains: "The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general."⁵²

This claim is based on certain assumptions about the relationship between substructures and superstructures in the context of Marx's interpretation of culture; where infrastructures consist of a mixture of "productive forces" and "relations of production", where productive forces refer to raw materials, technology, workers and their skills, and other tools, while

⁵¹Jabr, YousufRashid, (2007), The Function of Incitement between the Theater Authority and the Theater of Authority, Al-Academy Journal, Vol. 47, College of Fine Arts, University of Baghdad, Iraq.

⁵²Madiya, Said, (2009), Mahmoud Amin El Alem in Arab Intellectual Life, Publications of the Palestinian People's Party, Ramallah.

production relations refer to the class relations of those who work in production. The individual's class position and the individual's relationship to the mode of production, in this sense, are determined. As for the superstructures, they are institutions (political, legal, educational, cultural, etc.), and what Marx calls certain forms of social consciousness: political, religious, moral, philosophical, aesthetic, cultural, etc. This consciousness is generated by those institutions and thus determines the series of ways of thinking and patterns of behavior that legitimize the activities of the substructure. Thus also the resistance to exploitative demands in the capitalist society appears in the form of a class struggle in which culture plays a key role in the drama of legitimacy and challenge, as a mechanical relationship between cause and effect "economic determinism". What happens in the superstructure is a negative reflection of what happens in the substructure, often resulting in a vulgar "reflection theory" of culture, Hollywood as a model. Carl Marx is considered the main critic of the process of cultural disintegration that began with the beginning of the modern era and continued unabated. The matter is influenced by Marx's concept of ideology as a false consciousness. Nevertheless, Marx sees that culture is a historical process and that the economy is a socio-political economic activity that subordinates culture to culture as the embodiment of all aspects of human inductive activity⁵³.

Viewing revolutionary political change as a multi-factorial, multi-scale, long-term process allows analysis of visible shifts in social identities and realities. However, the main problem with this approach is that it does not take into account change except in terms of separation, transformation and transition, or in terms of modernity versus tradition. While many

⁵³Bouraoui, Michael, (2018), *Cultural Hegemony: Gramsci Meets Bourdieu*, (Trans. Kholoud Al-Zughayer), Al-Jumhuriya, Syria, (Original work published 2012).

studies focus on the dynamics and indicators of change, they have not sufficiently considered the role of culture in shaping the basis of revolution or in determining how the latter developed, which is what Antonio Gramsci reviews and explores in understanding of how to view cultural production as a driver of revolutionary change. The cultural context determines the way through which revolutions develop, just as cultural production (theater, music, dance and the arts in general) reflects revolutionary sentiments and the broader context that helps produce them, where everyday concerns collectively encouraged people to hope for change and take action by mobilizing in the streets thus providing these social movements a resource rich with basic materials that can shed light on the role of culture in the causality and the how of the revolution⁵⁴.

There are several measures of analysis that can be used to understand political and social change: Individual, collective, daily, historical, local, and global. Comparing these levels provides insight into how social narratives are constructed about the past. For example, intellectuals during revolutionary periods reconstructed the past and redefined narratives about their current efficacy, just as a stable authoritarian regime can foster revolutionary destinable myths about the fate of people.

The Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci assimilated the concept of the traditional intellectual and its difference from the organic intellectual in a culturally enlightened, non-class revolutionary equality-based society as an intellectual front line for the dissemination of ideal culture, paving the way for the masses to be affected by the development of "critical self-

⁵⁴Harman, Chris, (Spring 2007), Gramsci; the Prison Notebooks and philosophy, International Socialism (2nd series), No. 114, London, UK.

awareness" in the transfer of culture among the masses. This calls for strengthening the counter-hegemony discourse, reflecting Gramsci's theoretical and critical concerns, especially his interest in education and culture as a means to promote freedom, and his belief in the importance of class autonomy in a synthesis of cultural and social criticism⁵⁵.

The revolution is viewed, anywhere and at any given time, as essentially a process of cultural reform, which would justify the existence of a systematic relationship in Gramsci being greatly influenced by the thought and work of Karl Marx in the context of conceptualizing the problems of English Victorian industrialization and capitalism⁵⁶. Gramsci believed that industrialization was wreaking havoc in the English society and the great depression that accompanied it during the war, which led to the formation of Gramsci's literary and cultural criticism direction and trend during the Second World War, a period during which the traditional literary forms were discarded in favor of new, experimental, and revolutionary approaches with the aim of revolutionizing the standard life experiences of those who live on the margins. Gramsci believed that the possibility of change depends on the human will, on which he based his center-periphery view, such as the duality of popular culture and world culture, or the culture of the people and the culture of elites. Gramsci's new perspective meets the traditional Marxism in that area, such as the proletariat-bourgeoisie struggle "the core periphery", that the neo-

⁵⁵Laclau, Ernesto, Mouffe, Chantal, (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso (New Left), London, UK.

⁵⁶Meiklejohn, Alexander, (2006), *Education Between Two Worlds*, Aldine Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA.

Marxist theory of Gramsci is not just a materialist theory, as it considers that culture has a major position in struggle and change, especially through criticism⁵⁷.

Gramsci pointed out that technological and industrial development provides new tools for capitalist control of society. Thus, Gramsci's theory describes "dominance of power" as the imposition of universal values and special interests of the ruling class over the ruled and dominated, i.e., who accept and approve of the political system as a quasi-natural state, meaning that the political system is not only imposed by coercion, but is also imposed by the cultural consensus of the rulers and the ruled. For Gramsci, social transformation was possible through the breakdown of hegemony and the 'creation of a new subaltern hegemony', where class forces would be balanced in what Gramsci termed the 'war of position'. It is the unconventional concept, which leads to hegemony away from political control and power, since according to this war of positions between dominant/oppressed narratives,

The structural crisis can accelerate the slow process of change, where the main narrative loses hegemony while the dominant political system suffers from instability, and is not immediately replaced by a previously affiliated unified counter-discourse (the historical conventional opposition), but rather the multiplicity of voices and opinions continues during the process of counter-hegemony, given that the recently constructed discourse will cease due to the dominance of a counter-discourse that marginalizes any revolutionary discourse, thus preserving cultural pluralism. Therefore, it appears that Gramsci was interested in culture as he perceives it as the gateway to political change and that his view of hegemonic relations is drawn within a

⁵⁷Wellek, Rene, Warren, Austin, (1954), *Theory of Literature*, Lowe and Brydone, London, UK.

class model. Thus, Gramsci was suggesting hegemony to be produced and sustained through culture⁵⁸.

Gramsci centered the life of the working class and the oppressed within his analysis, as his revolutionary theory opened 'new horizons' to political and social relations, where Gramsci succeeded in bringing the lives of the marginalized to the forefront of political and social relations as the core of the political world. Rather than theorizing hegemony, Gramsci was more concerned with how ordinary people live life; Gramsci's profound design for a new cultural policy directed by the intellectuals, not only in order to tackle the barrier between the center and the periphery, but also transforms the margin into a center, through a design putting the culture as they center of the revolution. The struggle of the cultural and ideological intellectuals against state hegemony can pay off only when these intellectuals are able to transform libertarian culture into a public concern that authorizes civil society as an organic revolutionary practice relevant to social and political criticism.⁵⁹

Gramsci called for the dissemination of culture as a driver of revolution, where the literature of the revolution enlightens the public by re-projecting the ordinary experience in a fantastic way and redefining the sense of self and the other. Thus, it plays a major role in finding and shaping facts, in calling out intellectuals to develop a common culture based on Gramsci. In the broad sense of the word, the human masses do not distinguish themselves, nor become independent per se without organizing itself. There is no organization without intellectuals, or in

⁵⁸Molden, Berthold, (2015), *Resistant pasts versus mnemonic hegemony: On the power relations of collective memory*, Memory Studies Journal, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, USA.

⁵⁹Germino, Dante, (1986), *Antonio Gramsci: From the margins to the center, the journey of a hunchback*, Boundary 2 Journal, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, USA.

other words; without organizers and leaders, without the theoretical aspect of the interdependence of theory and practice, which characterizes the existence of a group of people 'specialized' in the theoretical and philosophical preparation of ideas.⁶⁰

This is crystallized in Gene Sharp's call to reject obedience or imposed non-violent reality. Sharp believes that "the rulers' authority stems from the consent of individuals, and that nonviolent action is the process of withdrawing consent and refusal to obey."⁶¹ Thus, rejecting cultural projections of dictatorships, repressive regimes, or even occupation. This is more evident in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s explanation of the nature of nonviolent resistance, of which cultural resistance is considered a part, as it does not mean weakness or passivity. The non-violent resisters are not cowards, but rather strong, as resistance requires strength, as violence needs strength, nonviolence also needs strength. The peaceful resister is not passive or afraid, in this case there is no physical assault on the opponent, but rather a spiritual activity of the force, which is a non-violent resistance to evil. The nonviolent resistance does not aim to achieve victory, but rather to create friendship and understanding, as well as taming the opponent. This resistance attempts to awaken a feeling of moral shame and its goal is salvation and reconciliation. The consequences of nonviolence are the creation of a loving society, compared to the consequences of violence, which are bitterness and tragedy. Nonviolent resistance attacks evil, not its perpetrator, as in the case of fighting racism.⁶²

⁶⁰Ives, Peter, (2004), *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*, Pluto Press, London, UK.

⁶¹Wills, Matthew, (2017), *A refusal by subjects to obey; Gene Sharp's Theory of Nonviolence*, JSTOR, New York, USA.

⁶²Ulafor, Onoh John, (2020), *Martin Luther King Jr's Philosophy of Non-Violence: A Paradigm for Global Black Race towards Conflict Resolution and Peace in Africa*, *Journal of Socialization, Journal of Thought Results, Research and Development of Educational Sociology, Sociology and Education Study Programs*, Indonesia.

Nonviolent resistance is the willingness to accept strikes without responding, meaning accepting violence without practicing it, as the Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi says, "Suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason." Thus, the nonviolent resistance not only avoids physical violence, but also avoids spiritual violence, refusing to hate the opponent. A person must have a sense and morals to break the chain of hatred. This can only be done by highlighting the ethics of love at the heart of our lives. We are discussing a philosophy of nonviolence based on the principles of social, political, economic, and religious foundations that aims to defeat the occupier through popular awareness, and peaceful confrontation. Gandhi said: "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man." In 1932, the resistance began by fasting and abstaining from eating and drinking "a hunger strike" in protest to a bill that enshrines discrimination in elections against Indian caste. The strike was in order to create the power of rejection, maintain readiness, and anticipate the counterattack of the idea of the identity, the nation, the state and the homeland, and thus the ember of the cultural resistance remains self-prepared for continuous resistance⁶³.

⁶³ Ali, Faisal, (2020), Culture of Resistance, Symposium, Yemeni Intellect Forum, India.

Chapter III

Cultural Resistance in a Global Context: International Experiences

"No country can really develop unless its citizens are educated"

Nelson Mandela

Introduction

The study of the concept of cultural resistance is not linked to geography or history, but rather meets a special objective need in the context of expressing an opinion or defining a position. Therefore, studies focus on cultural resistance to expand the understanding of the use of cultural resistance in civil resistance, to identify and analyze the strategic functions of cultural resistance, and to increase the ability and effectiveness of the use of cultural activity, especially the arts in organizing, mobilizing, and accomplishing nonviolent direct actions. Cultural resistance, based on this description, expresses the principle of rejection of authority. Gene Sharp says: The power of rulers derives from consent of the subjects; non-violent action is a process of withdrawing consent⁶⁴.

Works of cultural resistance fall within artistic activities and events, such as literature; writing; language preservation; two- and three-dimensional arts; music and sound; movement and dance; as well as theater and circuses; traditional crafts and traditional ceremonial rituals;

⁶⁴Sharp, Gene (1990), *Civil Disobedience*, Palestinian Centre for the Study of Nonviolence, Jerusalem.

spatial planning and defense of the space-time of historical buildings; and building cultural institutions as platforms and stages for performances, in addition to media that accompanies all of those activities and events in order to document and archive.

The most prominent examples of cultural resistance include, but are not limited to Palestine, India and Estonia in resisting occupation, the struggle for rights and anti-racism in South Africa and the United States of America, and anti-totalitarianism, anti-corruption and anti-authoritarianism in Chile and Indonesia.

Therefore, the most prominent strategic function of cultural resistance is to motivate (by clarifying the vision, providing psychological and emotional support, and providing a framework for commitment); promoting group formation (by building a collective identity, creating an awareness raising and self-awareness container, creating a collective culture and values, and encouraging unity); developing the awareness drivers (increasing the effectiveness of internal and external education and public relations, expanding the possibilities of political discourse, and undermining the control over powers); making space (for self-organization and identity makers, for a political discourse, for the opposition that can reduce the risks of repression, to practicing organizational development and self-governance); and innovating constructive programs (cultural work can often be direct work itself, modeling the future, encouraging tactical innovation through creative and traditional programs, as well as providing fundraising mechanisms)⁶⁵.

The concept of cultural resistance has limited in the context of being a reaction to attempts to westernize and orientate societies and that it comes as a rejection and non-tolerance front against tampering with the basic components of national identity. Thus, the outputs of cultural resistance differ and vary from one environment to another based on the causes of this resistance, even though most play a defense role rather than an attack.

⁶⁵Opata, Christian Narh, Sarbah, Alfred, Nusenu, Angela, Tetteh, Stephen, (2017), *The Cultural School of Strategic Formulation (Strategy Formulation Based on Social Interactions, Beliefs and Traditions)*, Scientific Research Publishing Inc, Wuhan, China.

Cultural Resistance in the Context of the Masses and Creativity

Cultural resistance is an accessible method of artistic expression that expresses - through a wide range of media - opposition to or criticism of political, economic, social, or other relevant conditions in a society. Cultural resistance focuses on raising awareness of an issue and calling for justice; it doesn't function for merely sympathy. Creative cultural resistance can include very exciting and high-risk acts, such as controversial murals, the occupation of privately owned or contested space, performance art critical of the government, or competitions. Low-risk resistance also exists on smaller scales, including putting up posters, hitting pots and pans, indoors dim lights, or even speaking a certain language. Community activists use cultural resistance to collaborate with diverse populations affected by whatever conditions are protested and to build community. Dialogue participants celebrated the power of artistic and cultural expression in jurisdictional work, but also warned of potential problems or the recreation of inequality⁶⁶.

The works of cultural resistance must be inclusive and recognize the power and privilege of the artists producing such works. Bridging the gap between artists and community members; participants emphasized the value of artists who take the time to connect with them, grow to understand the issues at hand, and facilitate equal participation in the process. The interests and feelings of society, that way, will be represented by acts of cultural resistance⁶⁷.

Cultural resistance a tool to promote identity formation and contribute to a disruptive counterculture that protests and sometimes mocks the oppressive constraints of the dominant culture. Creative resistance messages and strategies can cross barriers such as race, class, and age to enhance and empower the people involved in the movement.⁶⁸

Researcher Nadine Bloch defined the challenges facing cultural resistance as threats against activists' work and unanticipated problematic effects of their work. Some cultural resistance artists have noted the risks associated with the use of tactics considered "politically

⁶⁶Awad, Sarah, Wagoner, Brady, (2017), *Street Art of Resistance*, Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture, Palgrave Studies in Creativity and Culture, London, UK.

⁶⁷LeVine, Mark, (2015), *When Art Is the Weapon: Culture and Resistance Confronting Violence in the Post-Uprisings Arab World*, Religions Journal, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, Basel, Switzerland.

⁶⁸Gray, Colin, (1999), *Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

dangerous". The existence or the high-level of the threat against cultural resistance depends on the nature of cultural production, as well as the relationship between the threat and the specific values, norms, and identities of authorities or political figures. Bloch emphasized, the "facades of 'marginalized classes'" can be dangerous, so they generate fear (fear of the unknown, sometimes of harm, confiscation or destruction of materials, arrest or even violence).⁶⁹

In addition to creative mechanisms, practitioners of creative resistance must be aware of and prevent the potential negative consequences of their action. When portraying certain issues, places, and people, activist artists should avoid entrenching stereotypical, racist, sexist, and classist representations and messages in their work. Communicating and working together, the people the artists advocate for are more likely to approve and be empowered by the works, and the artists can confidently stand behind their production. Finally, it is also important to promote sustainable tactics within the movement by using local materials that do not cause environmental harm or social disruption.

Addressing the idea of cultural resistance in the analysis of confronting racism is a legacy of analyzes carried out by fighters in the struggles against colonialism. Fanon's research was one of the most direct analyzes on the subject, as his writings refer to what can be called an unusual concept of culture and people. As a political concept with the formation of trends of psychological energy, what he wrote on violence and counter-violence should not be taken out of its concepts of culture and its status under the impact of colonialism. Then the concept of culture and people, where culture is of two sides; it is not only self-liberation, but also realizing self-identity and its value determinants. On this regards, Frantz Fanon says:

"The effort that human beings pay for self-capturing and self-scrutiny, as well as the permanent tension caused by their freedom, are the two factors through which they manage to create the ideal conditions in a humanitarian world."⁷⁰

⁶⁹Bloch, Nadine, (September, 2012), Cultural Resistance: The arts of protest; New Tactics (website), <https://www.newtactics.org/conversation/cultural-resistance-arts-protest>

⁷⁰Al-Dabouli, Mohammed, (2017), Franz Fanon and the resistance to colonialism in Africa: A reading of the revolutionary violence dialectic, Democratic Arab Center for Strategic, Political & Economic Studies, Cairo, Egypt.

The African Bissau-Guinean activist Amílcar Cabral recognized that the extension and dominance of capitalism depended critically on dehumanization of the colonial subject, and central to the process of dehumanization was the need to destroy, modify or reformulate the culture of the colonized, because it is essentially through culture, 'the history', the colonizer sought to resist domination and assert their humanity. Culture, for Cabral, as well as for Fanon, is not of an aesthetic artwork, but an expression of history, the basis of liberation, and a means of resisting domination. Cultural resistance to colonialism is essentially subversive; thus, Cobral's words demonstrate their value, where he says: "The value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign domination lies in the fact that culture is the powerful manifestation at the ideological or ideal level of the material and historical reality of a dominated or controlled society."⁷¹

Despite the power of neoliberalism and the trillions of dollars at the disposal of corporations, banks, financial institutions, governments, and local elites, people did not lose their desire to make history, and to engage in the struggles they demonstrated. People create their own humanity to build the foundation for a true universality. The mass movements in Egypt, Tunisia and Burkina Faso that led to the overthrow of local tyrants are but a few examples of these struggles. I have written elsewhere about the uprisings and other protests that have swept the continent as a result of growing discontent with austerity, as these uprisings and protests reflect the re-emergence of resistance in which culture is once again manifested taking on liberational dimensions. Consider how millions took over Cairo's Tahrir Square: Songs, music and dancing were just some of the evident features. People's security, defence, food provision, health care, childcare, and shelter, all this was recreated by those present. Decisions were made collectively. Just a month prior to the events, people were seemingly indifferent and apolitical, then turned into political beings willing to put their lives on the line, participate in mass meetings, and unleash their creativity. This demonstrates that engaging in struggles not only unlocks people's ability to claim their humanity, but also to reinvent themselves, which is something Fanon asserted, as many of the current movements stem from the energy and creativity of young

⁷¹Manji, Firoze, (27 January 2017), culture, power, and resistance reflections on the ideas of Amilcar Cabral, Sixth Annual Report: State of Power, The Transnational Institute, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

people. One of the effects of neoliberalism has been the quest to demolish and undermine the experiences and knowledge of history⁷².

Fanon states: "Colonialism is not satisfied with snaring the people in its net or of draining the colonized brain of any form or substance. With a kind of perverted logic, it turns its attention to the past of the colonized people and distorts it, disfigures it, and destroys it. This effort to demean history prior to colonization today takes on a dialectical significance." In such circumstances, Fanon points out: "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it." In underdeveloped countries, previous generations simultaneously resisted the pernicious agenda of colonialism and paved the way for the emergence of current struggles.⁷³

Marxist scholar Michael Neocosmos argues that the Western liberal concept of humanity was inadequate from creation, and that this inadequacy has become more evident in terms of reliance on exploitation, colonial oppression, and racism for its existence as it exercises its hegemony over the entire world in an inhuman manner. Thus, the contradiction in the liberal concept of the world between limiting freedom, equality and justice for the minority and its denial of the majority is not yet contested. Therefore, the search for a real world without excluding the apparent "barbarians" has become more compelling. With the exception of cases of genocide or the violent reduction of indigenous peoples up to cultural and social irrelevance, the colonial era was not enough, at least in Africa, to cause any significant destruction or deterioration of the basic elements of the culture and traditions of the colonized peoples, the cultural renaissance does not and cannot be detached by the popular masses, in fact the people carry their own culture, and they are its source, and they are the only entity truly capable of preserving and creating that culture - in short, it's the masses which make history⁷⁴.

⁷²Ibid

⁷³ Fanon, Frantz, (1967), *Black Skin, White Masks*, Translator, Charles L. Markmann, Grove Press, New York, USA.

⁷⁴Neocosmos, Michael, (2016), *Thinking Freedom in Africa: Toward a Theory of Emancipatory Politics*, University of the Witwatersrand Press, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Cultural Resistance: Cultural Jamming

The research identifies the field of cultural jamming as an eclectic concept. It brings together a world of creative and participatory resistance that reclaims public spaces in the context of rapidly changing communications technology. The concept of cultural jamming, rooted in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, gained scholarly interest due to the dominance of Western media-oriented consumerism in the 1980s. Advances in media, technology and art forms in the past two decades have led to a paradigm shift in the way resistance art and jamming techniques work; advancing the concept of cultural jamming beyond the traditional concept of merely 'blocking out or isolating the dominant culture', this calls for a reconsideration of cultural jamming as a phenomenon in the context of dramatic shifts in communication technologies when media hoaxes, flash mobs, advertising parodies, and memes take over the public space as innovative practices of resistance to mainstream culture⁷⁵.

Essential reading on the evolution of resistance and activism through culture was important, bringing together emerging and innovative participatory practices of cultural jamming into a single anthology. The book addresses the broad spectrum of cultural jamming in the advanced media environment. It argues that cultural jamming as an evolving concept is more participatory and "fun" than ever before and has ventured significantly into political and social forms of activism around the world⁷⁶.

These days are witnessing the development of creative art forms and performance techniques that are more visible and effective due to technical developments in information and communication technologies, especially social media. By bringing together distinguished contemporary cultural jamming, grassroots activists, and artists in the field, it "directs its history, maps its transformations, tests its strength, and assesses its efficacy", with a clear identification of cultural jamming through two primary approaches. First, cultural jamming has surpassed the idea of "isolating a culture" into a more participatory practice in the context of similarities

⁷⁵Cole, Nicki Lisa,(October, 18, 2021), Understanding Culture Jamming and How it Can Create Social Change. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/culture-jamming-3026194>

⁷⁶Boden, Sharon, Williams, Simon, (2002), Consumption and Emotion: The Romantic Ethic Revisited, Sociology Journal, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, USA.

between media producers and consumers. Second, the concept of cultural jamming has shifted from being perceived negatively as a tool of obstruction to a more positive and constructive view as a form of resistance that uses creative art forms and appropriate media content.⁷⁷

The idea of cultural jamming transcends Western democracies and argues that despite divergent political contexts, the expansion of communications technology balances media-assisted activism across national borders. The chapter by Mark LeVine on 'Jamming' cultural jamming during the Arab Spring, and Hanna Baranchuk's chapter on the Pussy Riot protests in Russia, support claims about the universality of cultural jamming in the context of advanced communication technologies. The jamming culture takes over existing cultural forms, works sequentially to preserve them, and is perspicacious, amusing, anonymous (mostly), participatory, political, and transcendental⁷⁸.

"Culture jamming" is an increasingly popular way to reclaim our public spaces from the signs and symbols of global capitalism, and cultural jamming was first coined to describe radio frequency interference or to express the culture of jamming or the culture of vandalism and is now used to describe any form of guerrilla communication that confuses and/or distorts the message conveyed by the media. The central idea is that the media and advertising media have taken popular culture in order to reshape it and place it back into society as the encapsulation of one central idea: The answer is consumption. This induction of consumption is more than just a corporate strategy to increase profits. Advertising is not just a broker between supply and demand⁷⁹.

As private space and private life play an increasingly important role in globalized societies, collective spaces, political discourses, and alternatives are neglected and marginalized: They are impolite, they are not "in", and the conscious act of seeing has given way to

⁷⁷Fyfe, Nicholas, (1998), *Images of the Street Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space*, Routledge: Publisher of Professional & Academic Books, Milton Park, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxford shire, England, UK.

⁷⁸Nadaf, ArifHussain, (June, 2018), *Culture jamming: activism and the art of cultural resistance*, International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media, Center for Culture, Media & Governance, JamiaMilliaIslamia (University), New Delhi, India.

⁷⁹Carducci, Vince, (2006), *Culture Jamming: A Sociological Perspective*, Journal of Consumer Culture, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, USA.

automatically absorbing the thousands of images and millions of messages we receive daily. It is the saturation of our environment, through television, radio, buses, subway stations, rubbish bins, mailboxes, building facades, clothing, and many others, that depoliticizes our everyday experience, and is the target of cultural vandalism. Cultural vandalism places itself into the interference, introducing subversive meanings into the complex semiotic universe, and the most practiced form of cultural vandalism on a large scale is “graffiti, lampposts, modified slogans on billboard, fake T-shirts, etc. The key is to redefine and reclaim our surroundings, wresting them from the hands of big corporations.”⁸⁰

Graphic dissidence in the digital age as a result of the massive diffusion of information and communications technology, it is becoming easier both to work with the images that set the scene for consumer society, and to publicize the results. The tools at our disposal now are a far cry from just the poster-making of the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil War, but also from the use of graphic dissidence in the 1960s and 1970s anti-aids activists and the ecologist movement and others. There is no doubt that digital innovations have brought about changes in traditional anti-regulation methods, thanks in part to the advent of multiple modes that can be adapted to the specific needs of each cause or mobilization. Web formats quickly mobilize activists internationally, or when faced with limited resources. Paper and ink can be used during difficult times, such as during armed conflicts, or when working with populations that are still excluded from the digital age.⁸¹

The cyberspace as a “public” space is invaluable, and consequently, it is difficult to assess the impact of a graphical dissent limited to the modification or creation of images. However, cultural vandalism sometimes presents its alternative messages in a less ambiguous arena in contemporary society: In the common space. Advertising has multiplied in recent years, invading streets, plazas, and outdoor spaces with consumer messages. Without any questioning or discussion, the elements of our urban environment, public transport and buildings became

⁸⁰ LeVine, Mark, (2005), *Why They Don't Hate Us: Lifting the Veil on the Axis of Evil*, One world Publications, London, UK.

⁸¹ Milstein, Tema , Pulos, Alexis, (2015), *Culture Jam Pedagogy and Practice: Relocating Culture by Staying on One's Toes*, *Journal of Communication, Culture & Critique (CCC)*, Oxford Academic, Volume 8, Issue 3, Oxford, UK.

advertising media. What were once spaces to meet and interact, spaces for exchange, spaces for diversity and integration – in short, political spaces – are now just locations to place images and slogans that relate to the individual not as a citizen or as a person, but as a consumer and a commercial target. Thus, in exchange for the stipulated price, public space, which was for everyone, becomes private space. Just as happened with social services, pensions and health care, the limits of the “privatisable” extend yet further to take in this last tiny bastion of “society”, and final vestige of “collectivity”. Once the television set has managed to relay mainstream ideology into every living room, the elimination of this final frontier completes consumer society’s takeover. Yet the walls will not fall silent: through the massive use of stencils, stickers, graffiti; through the painted mustache and the speech bubble; through liberating billboards, altering the landscape, *détournement*, and the manipulation of our urban environment etc.; dissidence blurs the idyllic image of social consensus.⁸²

Cultural sabotage as social critique, so the peak in cultural resistance cannot be separated from the increasing activity of new social movements, from the events of Seattle to the emergence of the misnamed “anti-globalization movement”. For example, the biggest action by the French antipub (anti-advertising) movement, which altered, broke, subverted and graffitied a Paris overrun by advertising, took place in November 2003, to coincide with the European Social Forum being held in the city. Although many counter-publicity actions are openly and clearly political acts, it is clear that not every act of cultural sabotage is a political expression, nor do they all reflect support for an alternative social model. Nevertheless, any intervention into mainstream discourse opens a door to imagining other possible worlds.⁸³

These concepts of culture and resistance provide the overarching narrative framing as the question about the role of protest music, and why have funerals become a political platform? where both songs and funerals are significant because they are major sites of resistance in Swaziland (as example) because they are tangible everyday forms of resistance. Songs and

⁸²Dery, Mark, (2010), *Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of Signs*, The Open Magazine, Pamphlet Series, Westfield, New Jersey, USA.

⁸³Galdón-Clavell, Gemma, (October, 2006), *The Art of Cultural Resistance*, translated by Kate Wilson, Centro de Investigación sobre Drogas y Derechos Humanos, Lima, Perú.

funerals are perhaps not readily thought of as primary sites of resistance; nevertheless, they provide a unique window on how people resiliently find ways to free their voices under the tyrannical regime⁸⁴.

Struggles over "culture" play a prominent role in Swazi politics and "resistance" to the monarchy's cultural claims is a central theme of this thesis. The intent of this thesis is not to embody culture into a "thing", into an amorphous and abstract force above or outside society. Cultural meanings of whether elites or subaltern groups are always placed in the context of specific struggles over class, race, gender, land, and work. Culture is a product of history, not a fixed state of being. We often frame the debate about global governance as a conflict between a set of international legal norms, such as free trade or human rights; something we consider a national "culture". Government actors and legal scholars emphasize cultural claims as a justification for disavowing certain international legal requirements. For example, European countries seek exemption from some international trade agreements that set barriers to imported music films by arguing that imports threaten their cultural identity or industries. Japan, Norway, and some indigenous countries claim a cultural right to whales that would replace the international ban on whaling. Some theocratic or developing countries claim cultural exceptions for engaging in practices that contravene the international human rights of women and sexual minorities. In general, practices involving commercial trade or environmental resources are not considered by the international community as authentic cultural. By contrast, the international community tacitly, if not always explicitly, recognizes that gender norms are culturally authentic and therefore entitled to greater respect for international law. How and why do we assume that some social behavior is authentically cultural and when does culture outperform international legal standards? This article explores how government actors and legal researchers make cultural claims in different legal contexts and suggest a relation between the dissemination of cultural exceptions and the globalization project.⁸⁵

⁸⁴Debly, Teresa, (September, 2011), *Culture and Resistance: Swaziland 1960-2011*, Master Thesis, University of New Brunswick, Canada.

⁸⁵Ibid

Art under Oppression

What is the meaning of artistic resistance to socio-political oppression with free minds? And how was art in apartheid, like South Africa, used to simultaneously resist political and social oppression as well as contribute to the liberation of minds?

Each artist and art connoisseur has their own definition and meaning of art as self-expression and communication tool, as a form of spiritual and cultural expression and means of communication, as a language and way to freely express and explore what you feel, "the arts have a voice and can be heard" as the conscience of society, where we value abstract art and talk about landscapes and nature. However, art, under oppression, must address certain social and political purposes as well."⁸⁶

"First World" artists use art to express themselves by highlighting personal struggles, where in the "Third World", artists use art to express the needs of society, and to highlight socio-political struggles. However, someone might understand this duality to mean that there are no social and political obstacles or struggles in the "first world" or that personal struggles are less important in the "third world"⁸⁷.

The use of art as a tool or a form of social - or individual - expression is not confined to one region, but perhaps has a significance under conditions of oppression.⁸⁸

Art in oppressed regions is a vehicle for building knowledge and a powerful tool for resisting political oppression, facilitating social change, raising awareness, and liberating minds. Art is about self-actualization that plays an important role towards freedom, democracy and the health of a society in transition, art plays a pivotal role in the historiography of social and political change, most importantly, perhaps, during conflict, to express, explore and understand

⁸⁶Peffer, John, (2009), *Art and the End of Apartheid*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.

⁸⁷Assefa, Hizkias, (October, 14, 2004), *Re-imagining self and Other in Processes of Reconciliation: Stories from an African Peace Builder*, Symposium, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA.

⁸⁸Amabile, Teresa, (September, 1998), *How to kill creativity*, Harvard Business Review, Boston, USA.

oppression, and it has a very vital role to play in a situation of persecution, being able to spot a crisis, discover and explore conflict for a good society⁸⁹.

Cultural resistance in South Africa (as example of the arts under oppression) is a form of nonviolent artistic resistance, in which South Africans have used the cultural boycott strategy as an element of pressure against the apartheid state to isolate and weaken the regime. Artists around the world have been invited to refuse to come to South Africa as part of the cultural boycott movement, which has weakened international cultural exchange with the apartheid state, as a powerful strategy in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa⁹⁰.

Postcolonial Novels

This project is about fighting songs, the power of narrative in resistance, and the ecstasy of restoring the past into the present to advance the search for a liberating future. Within the current international system, postcolonial states construct narratives by imagining their history and visualizing what it means to be a state and who belongs to it. They have the political and institutional power in the post-colonial state of state-building to devise policies that further define the meaning of belonging. Theater, as an art form, allows communities living within these states to challenge these narratives, reclaim narratives of belonging and history in the face of exclusionary nationalism, and democratize who speaks for the state, granting a platform to the most disadvantaged and oppressed.⁹¹

The post-colonial conditions in India make it worthy of a comparative study with the repressive British Mandate history in Palestine. The British colonial rule in India had a lengthy colonial history that ended with the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 by the British, where the events of the partition caused heavy losses in lives and land. It is rooted in the collective memory of the most affected communities and is central to their understanding of

⁸⁹Badsha, Omar, (2011), *Towards a people's culture, Art and Resistance under apartheid*, South African History Online (SAHO), Cape Town, South Africa.

⁹⁰DarZaid, Sharaf, (August, 2012), *Art Management in an Environment of Oppression*, Master Thesis, Faculty of Art and Economics, Utrecht School of the Arts, Netherlands.

⁹¹Herrington, Sandra, (1988), *Performance Polemics in a Plural Society: South African Theater in Transition*, Philosophy PHD Thesis, Arts Faculty, Natal University, Durban, South Africa.

national belonging. During the post-colonial period of nation-building, Muslims and indigenous communities belonging to India's significant tribes were marginalized by cultural and religious nationalism, Hindutva. These nationalist ideologies repeated the oppression promoted by the colonial powers and continued to impose colonial repression after the end of the official colonial period. Moreover, postcolonial states also deprived the working class, stripping it of the ability to define state narratives⁹².

Theater in post-colonial India is an effective tool of resistance in the face of these cultural and religious nationalities rooted in the historical traditions of resistance theater in this region. It provides the opportunity for the most politically, socially and economically oppressed levels of society to have a say in the definition of a postcolonial state. Theater in India dates back to ancient Sanskrit traditions and during the colonial period it played an important role in challenging British narratives and history. The central part of the anti-colonial movement in India was the establishment of the Indian People's Theatre Association, a group of progressive artists who advocated India's independence from the British and eventually transformed into the basis and inspiration for the theaters of resistance in India during the post-colonial period and even today.⁹³

Theater in India provides a platform to elevate the narratives of those that the post-colonial state does not include in its conception of belonging. It brings community members together in large numbers to build a collective identity in the face of the state's attempts at homogenization. Theater, as an art form, allows people in this region who are neglected by the state to embody their own stories, giving them more expressive power through the physical act of performing and participating in political issues. Theater in India provokes reactions from the post-colonial state as it threatens the state's monopoly on the narrative of belonging and is thus an effective tool of resistance.⁹⁴

⁹²Tharoor, Shashi, (2020), *A Dispatch from India's Culture War*, Project Syndicate, New York, USA.

⁹³Dharwadker, Aparna, (October, 2011), *India's Theatrical Modernity: Re-Theorizing Colonial, Postcolonial, and Diasporic Formations*, Theater Journal, Vol. No. 63, 3, Asian Theater and Performance, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

⁹⁴Bhatia, Nandi, (2004), *Acts of Authority/Acts of Resistance: Theater and Politics in Colonial and Postcolonial India*, Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

One of the most prominent leaders of contemporary resistance theater in post-colonial India is the Delhi-based Jana Natya Manch. This theater has had an impact on prominent political theater practices in India, playing a founding role with acting inspired by the work of the Indian People's Theatre Association. Combining the synthesis of street theater and progressive campaigns across the country, this Indian theater demonstrates its ability to respond to political events through its power as a theater of resistance. For example, a play titled "Yeh Dil Maange More, Guruji" that responded to the rise of Hindu nationalism days after the start of the 2002 Gujarat riots that led to the mass killing of Muslims with state approval. Artist Jana Sanskriti in Kolkata relied on the works of Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, applying it to their own political contexts and linking local theater to cultural resistance movements and global political theater movements, using the Forum/Platform theatre, which is a working methodology for the theater of the oppressed. The spectator then would have a say in the context of the narrative, as a tool to enhance the efficacy of the societies that the post-colonial state is trying to suppress, especially in rural India, and amplify their state-ignored voices like rural West Bengal, allowing rural people to debate narratives of the post-colonial state and be part of the dialogue on what it means to belong to the state and what the future of the state will look like. Moreover, the Budhan Theatre is the voice of the Chara community's, an indigenous tribe subjected to police brutality and criminalized by virtue of its existence. Working with local scholars and activists, the Budhan Theatre tells the stories of community members brutally murdered by the police, provides methods for indigenous communities to learn more about the history of discrimination against their communities, and to engage in response to institutions such as police forces that support these exclusionary state narratives.⁹⁵

Samudaya theater movement of Karnataka embodies the role of theater in the midst of crisis, as their work demonstrates how theater can be effectively opposing in intense political moments. Samudaya was founded in crisis during India's state of emergency between 1975-1977. During this period of time, Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, declared martial law and civil liberties were stripped under her authoritarian rule. Samudaya was founded as a cultural

⁹⁵Deshpande, Sudhanva, (2018), *Solidarity is Not a One-Way Street, The Freedom Theatre: Performing Cultural Resistance in Palestine*, P: 339, Left-Word Books, New Delhi, India.

organization during the Emergency which would bring together progressive movements and use theatre and the arts to mobilize populations. Its central work today is focused on coordinating with progressive campaigns, and leading cultural marches discussing pressing political issues across the state of Karnataka.⁹⁶

In the Indian context, theatre is about remembering the promise of India as a secular state in response to rising Hindu nationalism, amplifying the prevalence of state violence against Muslims, indigenous communities, and the working poor, and performing democratic agency through theatre in response to these policies. However, these theatres have their limitations, including the challenges that these groups face including the replication of oppressive societal norms in their practices, transforming the urban-centric perspective of theatre when engaging rural populations, and the politics of funding, with the continuation of local political movements being subject to international influence⁹⁷.

Cultural Resistance in the Works of International Theater

The importance of theater is reflected in the prevalence and diversity of the forms it takes on the local and global levels in today's society. In fact, throughout the centuries, theater has played an important social and ideological role. It has been used by societies and elites alike to propagate and disseminate ideas in order to unite society (moral plays), for social improvement (neoclassical plays) as well as to incite and promote revolutionary ideas (Brecht's Theatre)⁹⁸.

In many places, theater is funded by the states through state theaters - the national repertoire is presented as well as translated and/or updated international plays. However, it can be said that with the growth of political and economic crises, the gap between two forms, community theater and the state, grows wider. The global economic crisis has witnessed theater evolution, again, into a useful societal tool for highlighting important local issues, such as;

⁹⁶Panjwani, Aly, (Spring, 2019), *Theaters of Resistance: Reclaiming Narratives of Agency in Post-Colonial India and Palestine*, A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Honors in Culture and Politics, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, USA.

⁹⁷Ibid

⁹⁸Al-Habib, Sawamly, (2011), *The Nature of the Critical Movement and Its Role in Theatrical Practice in Algeria*, Faculty of Arts, Department of Dramatic Arts, Oran 1 University, Algeria.

police, and global issues, climate change in many different ways, mass demonstrations, and public squares. It will also be argued that state deals, in general, escalate popular resistance by attempting to fit a radical working-class culture into pre-existing structures to neutralize opposition. As the case with other art forms, the influence of Enlightenment and Romantic ideas can still be seen to this day, and the importance of theater in the study of recent social, political, animal and climate issues will ensure, in an immediate and negotiable manner, that theater as a mirror of society is a form difficult for the state to control⁹⁹.

The theater has a multitude of rituals, and the spectator must be aware of the theatrical act in order to be a critic and a connoisseur, and able to place the message within its context, and interact with it; and this is not difficult. The theater raises its audience to understand it. The relationship between the stage, the actors and the audience is giving and development-based streamlined relationship, that even if the show is weak, the viewer who has developed that relationship, can identify that weakness and can view that depth as well. This art first started as a dramatic text, written in prose or poetry, and acted through dialogue, directed to the viewer as a target to address a problem, or to present a right, or a conflict. The theater uses many elements, which are also called theatrical elements, such as decoration, clothing, written text, and director, and these elements includes dancing and singing. If theater was found in the days of the Greeks, its presence in Greece was a catalyst for its spread in other cultures.¹⁰⁰

This art began to glorify the gods through chants, and the theater was not known at the time as an independent literary art, nor was it divided into tragic or comic genres, until a hundred years after its birth in the 6th century BC, where a number of tragic scripts by Sophocles were noted. These scripts were based on dialogue between the characters, with a choir chanting song from material taken from ancient myths. Then plays were held in Athens, when parties that glorified the gods were held; plays were held twice a year, once during late winter, and once during early spring, and they had a religious relation. Through these festivals, the quality scripts

⁹⁹Croidheáin, Caoimhghin, (December 2019), *Popular Theater as Cultural Resistance: Engaging Audiences Worldwide*, Boston University, USA.

¹⁰⁰Mahmoud, Mahmoud, (2009), *The Emergence of Theater and the Development of Theatrical Art*, Translated, Al-Noor Library.

would be selected to be performed. The plays were of two dimensions: a religious dimension and an artistic one. Some of these plays were based on satire, comedy and criticism of the gods, this heralded the existence of comedy at the time, with the beginnings of *The Frogs* by 'Aristophanes', which was in essence a mockery of the gods. Greek theaters widespread due to the invasions that existed at that time. Theaters were held in the open air in the form of terraces, entry-free due to the state's supervision of it, to educate and refine morals, and to exhibit the religious dimension at the time. The actors wore some clothes designated for their roles, with some masks to form special roles, and actors would move, sing, perform poetry, and dancing, and they were prominent figures in the Greek society¹⁰¹.

Martin Luther's revolution during the Renaissance affected the theater, stripping it off of its religious character into a worldly, profane tragic one. For example, in Italy, theater was based on drama, folklore and beauty, through parties and associations, such as Machiavelli's play, which is a satire comic. The focus, during the Renaissance, was on ethics and integrating tragedy and comedy in plays, where the acting character appeared and adhered to the three units of the play; namely place, time, and script.¹⁰²

The art of opera appeared and addressed the Italian aristocracy¹⁰³, for the latter to hear and watch lyrical performances on theaters. It became a popular art, with a wide-base audience, and this art, later, moved to France and Britain. This art relied on presenting nature, away from illusion and imagination, as well as guiding and educating people virtue, and steering clear from vices. The actors 'Jean Racine' and 'Pierre Corneille' were found in many tragedies, then 'Molière' produced comedy plays. The popular theater appeared in Europe by the eighteenth century, and plays were written for actors, according to the tastes and desires of writers, under the rules followed for acting. *Romeo and Juliet* and *King Lear* plays, which addressed reform and criticism within society, were constructed. The theater was associated with several schools,

¹⁰¹Bulbul, Farhan, (2001), *Reviews in the Arab Theater: From its Inception until Today*, a study, Arab Writers Union, Damascus: Syria.

¹⁰²Hamdan, Abdul Majeed El-Haj, (2019), *History of the Roman Theater (200 BC-330 AD)*, Ph.D. Thesis, Damascus University, Syria.

¹⁰³The first opera, entitled "Dafne", was created with the hope of reviving classical Greek drama as part of the broader Renaissance movement.

or sects, such as the romantic school, which extensively combined tragedy and comedy, and brought together many religious figures, of high and low social status, then brought about laughter and crying, and simulation of nature. And with high and low social status, then laughter and crying, and imitation of nature¹⁰⁴.

The one who wrote the most in this field is 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau', who called for a return to the embrace of nature and revolution, completely, and defending the freedom of the individuals. The writers embraced the exalted character of humans, and moved to the nature school, which attempted to address the formation and treatment of man. Then appeared the so-called theater as a treatment, healing, and purification of individuals. Hence, the beginning of the Social Theater, which identifies societal issues and addresses them. Then was the emergence of Russian theater in the eighteenth century as well, and the presence of Tolstoy and Bogayev, who established the theater in Moscow, and adhered to realism through acting on stage, so that it achieves its objectives.¹⁰⁵

After 1370's war, the theater turned towards the symbolic school 'symbolism', drawing an ideal spiritual world, and ignoring the outward appearance, but entering the psyche of the actor, their gestures, words and symbols, and rebellion against reality, also influenced by the Dada School, which came as reactions to the First World War, and to the western mindset that incarcerated humans turning them into war tools, ignoring their spiritual problems. Thus, the revolt against reality began. Moreover, there are many schools that have been affected by theater, such as the surrealist school¹⁰⁶.

As for the new world theater, which was established in the twentieth century, it was based on the creative work of the actor instead of focusing on the script, the preparation of a multitude of dramatic scenes focusing on movements, language and sounds, and on the reconstruction of social reality. Some plays appeared in the United States thanks to the establishment of special studios for actors, such as Deans, Bernado, and Tayler, where the actors

¹⁰⁴ Saleh, Majied, (2002).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Hamdaoui, Jamil, (2006), History of the World Theatre, Diwan Al-Arab: A Free Platform for Culture, Thought and Literature.

improvised instead of being controlled by the script or deviating from it. Improvisation has become a new task in today's theatrical work. The actor became improvised in his speech, instead of controlling the text, or going out on it. Improvisation became a new task today in theatrical work, and the so-called Great Theater 'Street theater' and marginalized artists appeared in America, who presented their plays in open spaces, such as public stadiums, cafes, and churches. Theater in general has witnessed increased development in the late twentieth century, in light of the new policy for literature and theater, and the presence of specialists, theaters, and art colleges¹⁰⁷.

The scholar Shmuel Moreh believes that there are differences between Arab and European theater, as Arab theater differs in its form from the European counterpart, and differs in its essence as well, as performances in essence depend on dialogue, movement, costumes and other elements of the theater, in order to evoke the past and revive it in the present. At a time when European theater in relation to religious rituals developed; the Arab theater evolved from imitation, amusement, irony and criticism, as it moved from criticizing opponents and their behavior, to criticizing rulers and judges.¹⁰⁸

Brecht, Marx and the Theater of Cultural Resistance

'Bertolt Brecht' created the theory of epic theater, after sensing the decline of European theater in the twenties of the twentieth century. Brecht believes that there is no longer any meaning for the theater of the individual, on the grounds that the interest of the modern theater has been directed towards the groups and their interests, rather than the individual. Brecht attacked plays that addressed issues and dramas of individuals, such as 'Shakespeare', where Brecht believes that Shakespeare preferred his major characters, such as Lear, Macbeth and

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Al-Khatib, Moaz, (July, 2008), *Dramatic Literature in Palestine: Samih Al-Qasim and the Qirqash Play as a Model*, [BA in Arabic Language Thesis], Haifa University.

Othello from their human societies and distancing them from their families and friends, to the point where they are stripped of their feelings.¹⁰⁹

Brecht notes that the objective and focus is to "find the means to eliminate these social conditions that are difficult to bear."¹¹⁰ He also asserts that "the dramatic means the reckless, the flamboyant, the contradictory and the dynamic, so what is the reality of this dramatic form and its meaning? All is evident in Shakespeare's works, where he develops all human relations of the great solitary in four chapters; Lear, Othello, and Macbeth, with the family and with the state, and he pushes the characters into a land of desolate and complete solitude. Characters had to show greatness in their fall, a method that leads to subjecting all stages of drama to the last stage. Moreover, this drama is characterized by a barbaric character, the first phrase in the tragedy exists to serve the second, and all phrases are for the final one, as for its meaning - the drama - revolves around the great individual suffering, future ages must call this drama an alienation drama"¹¹¹.

Alienation is the fixed concept in the epic theory that characterized Brecht's theater, which was the motive that prompted the recipient to consider a different reality, a one that can happen and be achieved, and created a distance between the actor and the audience through a dramatic setting based on controversy and according to a comprehensive vision between the performance and the intended alienation effects on the other hand. Therefore, Brecht's Alienation is considered an essential technique in epic theater. He rejected theatrical illusion in classical theater, as the latter seeks to surprise the audience, and raise imaginary questions.¹¹²

In essence, the theory of Alienation effect is based on "substituting a stable and essentially critical intellectual activity for the spectator instead of the latter's suppressed, lived and untouched activity. The action taking place on the stage would resume a position that

¹⁰⁹Khllaf, Ajwaj, (2016), The Impact of Brechtian Theater on Maghreb Theatre: Le cadavreencerclé (The Encircled Corpse) Play as a Model, [Master's Thesis], Department of Arts, Faculty of Arts and Languages, University of Abu BakrBelkaid, Algeria.

¹¹⁰Weber, Betty Nance, Heinen, Hubert, (2010), Bertolt Brecht, Political Theory and Literary Practice, The University of Georgia Press, Athens, Greece.

¹¹¹Ibid

¹¹²Khllaf, Ajwaj, (2016).

exceeds the familiar daily activity and would appear as a weird thing that would amuse us. An example given of alienation says: Alienation is achieved when some ask: Have you ever looked at your watch? Whoever asks me this question often knows that I look at it several times, but by asking that question, they strip me off the look which I used to cast on my watch, this look that no longer tells me anything. Brecht stresses that if the world seems strange, it awakens in the spectator the desire to change it.¹¹³

Brecht employed all the available theatrical elements before him to serve his theory of alienation. He always sought, at the level of script or performance, to make the viewer alert, not immersed in the characters or events in a way that fails to achieve the emotional feeling of the event or cause the distraction of the conscious, critical and thinking mind.

Brecht always seeks to educate in his theater, to protest and reject, and this does not require the characters to live by illusion and integration, but rather it needs a conscious and vigilant ground, as well as the realization of the surroundings, understand reality, criticize it, reject it and evaluate revolutions, in order to aspire towards effective change. Therefore, the role of the actor is a job that requires the latter to study, read and research. The actor is an active revolutionary, and an element of the upcoming change. The actor in the epic theater does not need to embody an emotional state in which the viewer may integrate, employing their emotional state that dominates the main act and event, where the observer then no longer realizes the main event on which the performance is based, which is to shed light on social and political issues. Reason takes precedence over emotion. Moreover, Brecht broke the natural state upon which Aristotle based his natural school, and that the theater consists of a beginning, a middle and an end, even exceeded that to tear down the fourth barrier, or in other words, the imaginary wall that separates the actor from the audience. Both the actor and the spectator engage together in the event presented, the event which represents the core of their suffering, and together they search for solutions that lead to change. Solutions that transform the theater into a tool for change, protest, rejection and revolution.

¹¹³Weber, &Heinen, (2010).

Marxism considers art as a tool for awareness, through which it is possible to change the reality of human life. The Marxist theory stems from the principle of justice and equality, rejecting status quo and exploitation. It also discusses the superstructure represented in ideology and politics, which is based on socioeconomic relations. Marxism rejected traditions represented in the Aristotelian theater, and called for change and resistance to reality.

Erwin Piscator is considered one of those affected by the Marxist theory. Piscator was searching for the theater of resistance and looking to crystallize its ideas when the theater turned into a political one. With the help of Bertolt Brecht, who embraced Marxism after the anarchist stage, Piscator produced his theory of the theater influenced by Marxist thought, where his theory revolutionized the structure of performance and the rearrangements with enticing motives. This theory is based on addressing the concepts of Aristotelianism with a new theater that calls for stimulating the ability of man to take action and resistance. The new theater also pushes the spectator to make a decision after an objective confrontation with the events, being fully absorbed by it, then manipulating their feelings and consuming their emotion in order to interact with the events. The revolutionary variable in the theater's authority has opened the doors for many trends later, such as the documentary theater, verbatim theatre, which produced a new discourse as seen in the plays of Peter Weiss, which maintained communication in the discourse of protest, incitement and resistance through the mechanisms of his book dedicated to the discourse of script and performance, exactly like the speech that came in the Song of the Lusitanian Bogey, where it were a direct exposure, through documents, to the liberation revolutions around the world, in addition to the permanent reminder of human revolutions in their various places of residence.¹¹⁴

The content presented meets with what Brecht, the German, said in his theory, and stresses the importance of history, which is man-made, since history is the development of consciousness from alienation to human liberation. History, in this regard, is not considered a

¹¹⁴Jabr, Yousuf Rashid, (2007).

mere accumulation of events and actions of great men, or mere successive periods in the form of tides, or recurring patterns of the making of unseen forces.¹¹⁵

In a related context, Marxist theory lays down certain methods or criteria for perceiving the world, through which it reaches specific judgments on phenomena, speculations and suggestions about the application. It calls for the use of thought to interfere in reality as long as this reality is subject to the possibility of social intervention, where a developing society that moves from the old to the new, from submission to thinking, and from inherited to criticism needs enlightenment more than it needs revolutionizing. Enlightenment is a condition for revolution, and revolution without enlightenment is just a social change and a revolution in the situation brought about by the existing authority in society, and it changes with the change of authority.¹¹⁶

This is consistent with Brecht's view that people's lack of self-knowledge is that their knowledge of nature does not provide them with sufficient assistance. There is an unbridled desire for Brecht to argue, balance, and doubt, and turn around actions and human viewpoints. Brecht relied on Marx's ideas, where the latter considered that "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it"¹¹⁷.

Brecht in the Narrow Logic - Aristoteles Latine Interpretibus Variis: "Theatre is the production of vivid images of real or arguable events that occurred among people." This theater requires, in addition to a certain technical level, a strong movement in social life, enriched by the free discussion of life issues with the aim of addressing them, a movement capable of defending this interest against all opposing trends. ... The epic theater is the broadest and farthest experience towards the great contemporary theater, and it must not overcome all the mighty difficulties that all living forces have to overcome in the field of politics, philosophy, science and art.

¹¹⁵Al-Awani, Mohammed, (2013), Theater Studies... Theoretical and Practical, Syrian General Organization of Books, Ministry of Culture, Damascus, Syria.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

Curt Bernd Sucher, the German critic, believes that theater should remain a center of enlightenment, and it must challenge all new reactionary trends. We should not allow the theater to be a source of entertainment and relief, nor a place for lost ideas. Theater shall not become a mere live acting cinema.¹¹⁸

However, Brecht says: Let me tell you that the causes of the suffering and the dangers to which countless tormented and oppressed people are exposed to are unknown. Nevertheless, they are identified by a significant number. Of this number, there are many who know the authoritarians' methods, in detail as well. But few who know the ways to eliminate the authoritarians. Thus, the eradication of the authoritarians can only take place when a sufficient number of people know the causes of the pain and the dangers they suffer from. The key matter, then, is to communicate this knowledge to as many people as possible.¹¹⁹

We realize what Brecht said, on the phenomenon of alienation,: "Alienation as a condition practiced and lived by man is conditioned by social and economic factors, and eliminating these factors is the basic step towards establishing a non-alienated human society"¹²⁰ Therefore, the artistic work should identify the causes of alienation to have the audience look into this alienation within themselves and address it, so that the artistic work would be meaningful, where it can influence the recipient, nudge them into addressing or resisting the culture of despair, frustration and alienation imposed and deepened by corrupt policies.

Theater, according to Brecht, is based on liberating bourgeois theatrical art, granting it an educational function, and a revolutionary tool to incite the oppressed classes in society to revolt. Brecht started his revolution on the dramatic theater by creating a new model in line with the requirements of his time, represented in the educational play, which helped him to highlight and raise his first principles of epic theater, which required a new form different from the form of Aristotelian¹²¹.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Khllaf, Ajwaj, (2016).

Chapter IV

Cultural Resistance in the Local Narrative: Palestinian Theaters

The cultural resistance manifested itself in Jenin camp, first through the establishment of the Al-Hajar Theater (The Stone Theater) in 1989 and then the establishment of the Freedom Theater in 2006, as the culture of resistance was able to bring out the internal revolution owned by the Palestinian people in their confrontation with the Israeli occupation. As for the events during the battle of Jenin camp in strengthening the steadfastness of the resistance fighters to the occupation forces, they are related to the culture first and foremost, then to the battle, as every person, whether in Palestine or outside, has a revolution inside them that can be exploited and expelled. What helped us in Jenin camp was the field leadership of all the political forces possessing the required and appropriate character and charisma to bring out the latent energies of the youth and their inner strength. God Almighty created man from dust, in a

dialectical relationship between man and the earth, where the latter has an inner core itself, within which a revolution resembled in a volcanic boiling. Hence, the question is how to extract it, use it and benefit from it, as is the optimal human use of oil and petroleum. This example is representing what happened in Jenin camp, where within the essence of every revolutionary fighter a revolutionary 'oil' well that the leadership was able to extract and use against the occupation through equality and matching, as was Ziyad Al-Amer, who followed Ghassan Kanafani's words, "Do not die before you are a match." Do not raise your hands and go out. What I learned and implanted within me was the constant desire to try, and there is no such thing as impossible. This extended throughout my pursuit, and every time I would fall, I remembered this lesson not to raise my hands, to try my best to escape, and to jump not for death, but for life... Culture is a central gateway that brings out the latent revolution and creativity. This is evident in the resistance-culture relation that was highly effective during the camp battle in achieving national unity and providing a popular social incubator as the cornerstone holding the idea of resistance, and struggle in the face of injustice¹²².

Introduction

The Palestinian situation has employed a multitude of means and tools in resisting the occupier. These tools aim to change the reality in which the Palestinian lives, inciting the latter to

¹²²Zubeidi, Zakaria, (April 2017), A Speech during the Culture of Resistance Symposium: The Invasion of Jenin Camp and its Role in Strengthening the Palestinian National Identity, Freedom Theatre, Jenin camp, occupied Palestine.

face this occupation to achieve liberation. Therefore, the cultural act was one of these tools that carried this message. The Palestinian cultural front presented topics that would increase the importance of raising awareness of liberation and creating a culture of resistance that leads to a state of struggle at all levels, such as the impact of arts on awareness of change and liberation. We will not be able to liberate Palestine through performing and visual arts, but it helps the Palestinian people to be strong and believe in themselves, so that he can liberate the land and the human¹²³.

It is not analysis, theorizing, and writing the history of the occupation that matters, but rather field practice, struggle action, resolving this issue and ending the conflict situation by winning the battle over the enemy. If it is not achievable now, then the right thing to do would be to start intellectually preparing and logistically assembling for the struggle as well as to consider the cultural and intellectual resistance to eliminate the weakness¹²⁴. Cultural resistance as part of the Palestinian revolution, and doesn't also sing the failure, or the impeded progress, of the other forms, and it does not translate the intention of peoples and societies of abandoning the option of complete and comprehensive liberation and struggle by all means, but rather employs all abilities and capabilities in order to gain independence and achieve liberation from colonialism and settlement.¹²⁵ Consequently, there will be weakness in confronting plots, responding to attacks, confronting distortions, history manipulation, restricting creativity, multiplying forms of prostration, surrender and submission, and the rising waves of appeasement, normalization and

¹²³Nazzal, Yousef, (June, 2020), Personal Interview, Palestinian Performing Arts Network, Al-Bireh.

¹²⁴Rosanvallon, Pierre, Viveret, Patrick, (1982), *Towards a New Political Culture*, [Trans. Khalil Ahmed Khalil], Dar Al-Talia'a, Beirut, Lebanon.

¹²⁵Katamesh, Khaled, (September, 2020), Personal Interview, El-Funoun Palestinian Dance Troupe, Al-Bireh.

recognition amid a climate of defeat and within the framework of impotence, neglect and disintegration.¹²⁶

The development of a self-proud Arab culture in Arab societies; a culture that dynamically and energetically interacts with its surroundings eliminating its inferiority complex means that these societies will be on an equal footing with another societies, connecting with them through mutual benefit relations breaking technological blockade, absolute cultural domination and complete intellectual dependence.¹²⁷ In this context, the concept of cultural resistance serves as an important option for the Palestinians.¹²⁸ It is a form of resistance that must be taken into account by any nation seeking its freedom and liberation. The Zionist occupation, represented in its political tool (Israel), promotes that historical Palestine is a land without a people. To achieve this vision, the occupation seeks to obliterate any confirmed evidence of the roots of the Palestinian people rooted in their land, and the practices of the occupation exceeded the concept of obliteration to the concept of substitution and theft: (The Palestinian traditional dress is being used in the El Al company, and the falafel has become an Israeli popular dish). Cultural resistance is not a mere cultural act that can be planned and directed against the plans of the occupier and its vision, rather deeper and greater. The cultural resistance can be summed in the Palestinian personality that has been on the ground for hundreds of years. (Facial features, voice, image, nature, dance, food, and place... Everything). The Palestinian cultural resistance is to exist and maintain the position on the occupied land.¹²⁹ Cultural resistance is capable of

¹²⁶ Hammouri, Iman, (September, 2020), Personal Interview, Popular Art Center, Al-Bireh.

¹²⁷ Mahmoud, Hawass, (2014), On Cultural Security, Al-Mustaqbal Newspaper, Iss. 5000, P: 19, United Arab Press Company, Beirut, Lebanon.

¹²⁸ Staiti, Iyad, (July, 2020), Personal Interview, Al-Kamandjâti Association, Ramallah.

¹²⁹ Issa, Mohammed, (October, 2020), Phone Interview, Yes Theater, Hebron.

raising critical issues and questions related to people's steadfastness and their challenge to oppression, because it liberates minds and feelings before it liberates bodies. Cultural resistance is a way of communication between the components of society and documenting its experiences, it is the voice of self-criticism of our choices when we have narrow choices. Moreover, cultural resistance can bring people together and unify their orientations through a non-factional non-partisan interest-based value dialogue.¹³⁰

The National Narrative of Cultural Resistance

Revolutionaries and freedom fighters, in the history of the national liberation movements in the world, would go to the people in rural areas or in small towns, carrying their liberation message on the palms of their hands. Sometimes, those involved in the national movement would arrive with their weapons on them, but often that was not the case, as there were the schoolteachers crossing the fields, or the Fedaei 'freedom fighter' who would hang in a café having nothing on them but a gazette or a brochure. However, this way of work methodology cannot always be effective on its own for members of liberation movements. Most likely the audience was illiterate, whether it was in Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Cuba, or Egypt. The supporters had to read literature to small groups of supporters, sitting around the fire, which in Latin means focus. The fire was the focus of the people, and it was literature that ignited them to

¹³⁰Rabah, Mohammed, (August, 2020), Personal Interview, Palestinian Circus School, Birzeit.

focus their grievances and aspirations at the heart of their national liberation movements (Chimurenga¹³¹)¹³².

Cultural resistance's primary work dimension is the civil resistance that deals with humanitarian problems and is represented in working on the issuance of UN resolutions in favor of the Palestinian cause and seeks to pressure, through decision making elements and influencing forces in the UN's institutions, such as UNESCO, the Security Council, and UNRWA, in order to enact laws that protect land ownership and historical rights in Palestine by international bodies.¹³³

Gazettes and pamphlets transferred the news of the struggle, but they were also important documents containing an analysis of the conflict, which one would expect, similar to a speech given by leader nowadays. The national liberation newspapers and gazettes also published poems, excerpts from plays, stories and news of the cadres and their experiences in the margins. If one examines *El Moudjahid* (Algerian National Liberation Front newspaper), or *GiaiPhong* (Vietnamese National Liberation Front newspaper), one can note the creations of literary fiction alongside educational lessons. The mind cannot function without the heart, and it is not possible to develop perceptions of tomorrow's revolution without looking at the leaps of imagination that were necessary to start the revolution's march. Culture is not only the space to convey the

¹³¹Chimurenga; is a Shona language word for liberation, which entered common usage during the Rhodesian Bush War. The word's modern interpretation has been extended to describe a struggle for human rights, political dignity, and social justice.

¹³²Chung, Fay, (2006), *Re-living the Second Chimurenga: Memories from the Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe*, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden.

¹³³Qaissiah, Batoul, (March, 2021), Personal Interview, Theater Department, Palestinian Ministry of Culture, Al-Bireh.

message, but rather the field through which the future is envisioned.¹³⁴ This was crystallized in the Palestinian case through Al-Hadaf (The Target) magazine, the mouthpiece of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, where the artistic resistance of the martyr Naji Al-Ali was showcased when the latter created the masterpiece signature of “Handala” through artistic drawings and caricatures. Documentary films were produced on the Nakba. Bands employed the traditional conservative song, the Dabka dance, folklore, and folk lyrical heritage in order to introduce the Palestinian cause. In the literature of the resistance, the matter was represented by the martyr Ghassan Kanafani in the novel “Men in the Sun,” Ishaq Musa al-Husseini in the *Memoirs of a Hen*, which was issued in 1943, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra in “In Search of Walid Masoud” and Emile Habibi in the novel “The Secret Life of Saeed: The Pessoptimist” and Murid al-Barghouti in “Tal Al-Shutat,” Elias Khoury in “Bab al-Shams” and Rawda Ashour in “Al-Tantouria” novel, which was published in 2010¹³⁵.

The countries of national liberation have kept culture at the center, and education has dominated the present of work. It was essential to change the views of the whole world, and books had to be free of racist ideologies. Moreover, the physical requirements for such a development had been to move the statues of the colonist on their horsebacks from central squares into museums. Then Radio stations, and at later stage, television stations broadcasted useful programs to the people. Nevertheless, and to be accurate, these stations meekly constantly praised the leadership. Information about agriculture as well as discussions of what was happening in the still colonized world, which were conflicting or discordant and disharmonious

¹³⁴Huynh, Ngoc, (2016), *The Time-Honored Friendship: A History of Vietnamese-Algerian Relations (1946-2015)*, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA.

¹³⁵Shayeb, Yousef, (July, 2021), Online Interview, Al-Istiqlal Cultural Platform, Ramallah.

to put together. A choir of children sang on All India Radio, long live Nelson Mandela, Nelson Mandela long lives as a kind of ploy to broadcast it in a program on the importance of planting legumes to supply nitrogen to soil. It was all culture: A culture of solidarity, a culture of work, and the culture of daily life. It had to be founded on a new principle, which was the main purpose of the national liberation movement. The nation had to be seen simply as one nation, but in that formerly oppressed world, which is the Third World. To enter that wide world, it was necessary to dive into that world's imagination, and books had to be translated, not only technical books, but the creative works of people from other national liberation countries. It is noteworthy that the "Lotus" magazine was published in Beirut in English, French and Arabic, and was edited at the same time by the beloved Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The Lotus magazine was the magazine of the Afro-Asian world and published the works of the Lotus Prize winners for African and Asian writers, people such as Alex La Guma (South Africa), Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Ousmane Sembène, NgũgĩwaThiong'o (Kenya), Amilcar Cabral (Guinea-Bissau), Agostinho Neto (Angola), Marcelino dos Santos (Mozambique), Malek Haddad (Algeria). The permanent office of Afro-Asian writers was launched in the late fifties of the last century in Cairo in the Dar Al Odabaa (House of Writers). The objective was to establish a solid base for those who produce the literature of resistance.¹³⁶ The Palestinian literature of the resistance was born in times of suffering, during al-Nakba as a result of a sense of fading and loss at the time of displacement, a feeling of defeat at the time of Naksa and the need for revolution and intifada, resistance poetry emerged through Ibrahim Toukan, Mahmoud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim,

¹³⁶Rana, Aziz, (2014), Break the Silence: An Interview with Vijay Prashad, the legacy of multiculturalism and what's left of third-world solidarities, Asian American Writers' Workshop. New York, USA.

Mu'inBseisu, FadwaToukan, Abu Arab and Tamim al-Barghouti, which helped strengthening the collective national identity for Palestinians in their various places of residence¹³⁷.

The Palestinian cultural resistance includes a set of important points consisting of a set of basic foundations and national constants.¹³⁸ The youth protest movements in the Arab street (the Arab Spring) provided the Palestinian uprising with the required dynamism, the necessary impetus, and the revolutionary fuel to the Palestinian cause; a dose of value-added struggle, and brought it back to the fore of the scene in terms of accomplishing reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas, or on the level of building communication bridges between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in a comprehensive confrontation to the Zionist ideology, and in confrontation to the policies of despair and marginalization, provided that the confrontation is of a significant degree of awareness, maturity, creativity, innovation, formation and organization¹³⁹.

The Emergence of Neoliberalism

Once the "Third World" project concluded in the eighties of the last century, the production of a culture of resistance stopped as well. Internal class contradictions overlapped with the way in which the colonial countries handled debt crises, which were paid for by the Third World experience of command economy and solidarity. Now, neo-liberalism arrived, and it is, in the end, a restoration of the power of the capitalist class, whether this power is seized by workers' union in major countries (the center) or by national liberation movements in the periphery countries. The media found itself being privatized, so its new owners made celebrate

¹³⁷ Abdel Rahman, Fathi, (May, 2021), Phone Interview, The Popular Theater, Al-Am'ariCamp.

¹³⁸ Jalal, Nader, (May, 2021), Phone Interview, Palestinian Institute for Cultural Development (NAWA), Ramallah.

¹³⁹ Tafesh, Loai, (February, 2020), Personal Interview, Naqsh popular art Center, Jenin.

the new liberties of neoliberalism. These new freedoms and liberties include living without any obligation to others, the word "enjoy" has been introduced to the vocabulary of many languages around the world, just as advertising companies are telling the inhabitants of India, South Africa, Indonesia, and Libya to achieve self-respect by buying new and better items. The cultural space calling for solidarity has receded or withered before neoliberalism clamped down on it. The level of choice has become confined to supermarket shelves, but the desires and choices of ordinary people are not within their reach most of the time. However, we know realize that them being able to buy what they desire can be their highest achievement.¹⁴⁰

This means that the task of education now relates to the building of renewed mind towards organizing a renewed society in a renewed world. The principal means to achieve the goal are the institutions of education and culture. This can be summed in the development of scientific thinking and the cultural identity immunity. The use of education for the purposes of development means that education is a main actor in societal development. Education is of a dialectical vital relation with the missions of revitalizing civil society and rehabilitating human rights by strengthening the values of citizenship, consolidating the rule of law, and eliminating fanaticism, regardless of ethnic, sectarian or clan status, as it violates the rights of citizenship, and human security. This places the education process in a central pivotal position in politics and social matters¹⁴¹.

¹⁴⁰Chan-Tibergien, Jennifer, (2006), Cultural Diversity as Resistance to Neoliberal Globalization: The Emergence of a Global Movement and Convention, *International Review of Education*, Vol. No. 52, 1/2, Springer Science and Business Media, Berlin, Germany.

¹⁴¹Hashhash, Mahmoud, (October, 2020), Personal Interview, Culture and Arts Program, A. M. Qattan Foundation, Ramallah.

Imagination and creativity are evident in Jana Natya Manch's work (folk theater group) in northern India, where the group performs highly politicized theater works in the street, non-educational plays. It is also similar to the Vietnamese revolutionary theater: Allusive, suggestive, funny, more inspiring than educational¹⁴².

The Jana Natya Manch's theater group understands, in the words of communist philosopher Louis Althusser, that art "cannot determine the means by which it is possible to remedy these various consequences" of reality. Nevertheless, art lights the way, and the "struggle organizations" pick up on the task, because art stems from another branch of knowledge; the science of society that has a theory about the mechanisms that produce the social effects depicted by art. For the xx comrades, this theory is Marxism, and the militant organization is the trade unions and the Communist Party. For others, the militant organization may be a national liberation group or movement, and the theory is other ideologies. The key point is that cultural work is complex and cannot be reduced or limited to political work. Cultural work already performs political work in its pleasant way. Cultural politics will allow us to focus our attention on building the confidence of the masses on the usefulness of the struggle against present misery. Then it will be the task of self-confident militant organizations to carry this new consciousness and raised awareness forward, for a better world.¹⁴³

The struggle against the class discriminatory enemy is not limited to the social politics actor, rather, the thought and culture produced by liberalism and neoliberalism must be confronted and dismantled. It is no longer easy analyzed and interpreted battle, therefore the

¹⁴²Deshpande, Sudhanva, (2018).

¹⁴³Ibid.

conventional means of struggle used to engage in this battle are worth renewing and developing to match the current complexity. Confronting imperialism and its neoliberal policies requires expanding and uniting the fronts in order to change the balance of power, as does imperialism itself, which builds fronts to share influence in the world and control it.¹⁴⁴

The Manifestations of Cultural Action in the Palestinian Popular Resistance

Armed violence is nothing but a means that the oppressed resort to under the pressure of the oppressor after having exhausted all the peaceful methods in their various forms; petitions, writings, conferences, artistic and cultural festivals, sit-ins, demonstrations, road closures, and others. That is, the oppressed might never need to resort to that mean, where their struggle is limited to popular civil resistance, including cultural resistance.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, a culture of resistance must be reproduced with a moral dimension, combining individual freedom with the freedom and liberation of the society, and the pursuit of justice and the redistribution of wealth. There are factions and movements, some of which have withered, others stumbled, and others continue in their attempt to rebuild liberating political and social resistance forces that seek a just world order.¹⁴⁶

In light of the decline and dissolution of the national political discourse, and in the absence of a broad and continuous popular movement, intellectuals, academics and writers who hold a critical vision of the current situation must be mobilized to reformulate a national discourse and a comprehensive national liberation culture that pertains to our society and our

¹⁴⁴ Abu Oun, Anas, (November, 2020), Personal Interview, El-Funoun Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe, Al-Bireh.

¹⁴⁵ Abdel Fattah, Awad, (2019), On the Need for a Culture of Resistance, Rumman Cultural Magazine, Palestinian Refugee Portal, Mar Elias Refugee Camp, Beirut, Lebanon.

¹⁴⁶ Elayyan, Khaled, (July, 2021), Personal Interview, First Ramallah Group, Ramallah.

relationship with the Israeli society. A culture that confronts Zionism and its blatant racist and colonial regime, whilst confronting political lies and deception, as well as internal criminality, and aggression against women. This violence should be returned to its source, the apartheid and colonial regime¹⁴⁷. The cultural resistance is a part of the resistance against the colonial political regime. This requires holding the occupation to resume its responsibilities and rehabilitating the society organization's professional institutions. The cultural resistance, similar to its role as a lever for the armed struggle against the occupation, it is also a lever for political negotiating action, and even helps Palestinian diplomacy to make a breakthrough to strengthen the bonds of cooperation and gain international support for the Palestinian cause.¹⁴⁸

Cultural resistance concept is related to the term "popular resistance" in the Palestinian context, and it has a peaceful, non-violent form of struggle for the emancipatory liberation project. The interest in this model increased as it is similar to global models of struggle, resistance and fighting injustice, such as the Gandhi model in India, Martin Luther King's in America, Nelson Mandela's in South Africa, and the experiences of democratization and democratic transformations in Eastern Europe at the end of the eighties of the last century¹⁴⁹, This is what the researcher intended in the thesis about non-armed, non-violent resistance. As for violent or non-peaceful resistance, it is the armed resistance or direct action against the occupation or the authorities. Cultural resistance is an integral part of peaceful resistance and a revolutionary station for violent resistance¹⁵⁰. Literature and thought provide the fighter with the

¹⁴⁷ Ata, Mohamad, (May, 2021), Personal Interview, Wishah Popular Dance troupe, Al-Bireh.

¹⁴⁸ Muallem, Edward, (June, 2021), Personal Interview, Ashtar for Theatre Productions and Training, Ramallah.

¹⁴⁹ Youssef, Ayman, (2017), Palestinian Popular Resistance: Attitudes, Vision, Palestinian Affairs Journal, No. 268, p. 24-43, Palestinian Research Center, Palestine Liberation Organization, Ramallah.

¹⁵⁰ Shafee, Mohammed, (December, 2020), Personal Interview, Nablus performing art and circus school, Nablus.

determination and energy needed for defining their objectives and raising their awareness. Cultural resistance is not a tool, but rather an existing and stable state, an end and a means.¹⁵¹ The impact of cultural action on society is to raise critical questions, provoke constructive dialogue, and raise the voice of the voiceless. Then, the society must define its tools, whether it was using weapons or using utensils.¹⁵²

Cultural resistance is a complete, integrated, and interconnected state with all forms of comprehensive, interim and strategic resistance, and therefore it is not a substitute for any other form of resistance. Through cultural resistance we define our social contract and our moral controls in resistance.¹⁵³

The Culture of Resistance

It is an alternative and counterculture to the culture of domination, enslavement and violation of human rights and freedoms of peoples, meaning that it is a culture of freedoms, justice, and human dignity. It is an existential issue linked to the being of the resisting human beings, and to the extent of their conscious knowledge of themselves, the challenges they face, a vision commensurate with the objectives of their resistance, and the certainty of its feasibility.¹⁵⁴ The resistance cannot be based on the mere struggle objective, rather it must be governed by a national and humanitarian value system, under social behavioral standards, political measures,

¹⁵¹ Makhoul, Samer, (October, 2021), Personal Interview, Al-Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque, Ramallah.

¹⁵² Zreineh, Nicola, (April, 2021), Personal Interview, Al-Harah Theater, BeitJala.

¹⁵³ Zmorrod, Shadi, (August, 2021), Online Interview, Palestinian Circus School, Belgium.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Hassan, Said, (2017), The Culture of Resistance, The Culture of Resistance Manifestations in Contemporary Arab Literature, the Conference of the General Union of Arab Writers, Algeria.

and a value system that raises collective consciousness¹⁵⁵. Contrary to what was justified by the European culture in justifying the tyranny of imperialism and passing its plans, the culture of resistance confronted it by awakening the national and religious sense of rejecting colonialism, and resisting the oppression imposed on peoples¹⁵⁶. This is evident in demonstrating the importance of strengthening the Palestinian entity and personality to remain resilient and based on education.¹⁵⁷ Activating cultural resistance through more activities, events, festivals, and organized work of cultural institutions, as well as establishing local and international cultural networks to obtain more support and advocacy for the Palestinian cause.¹⁵⁸

The cultural resistance, as part of the comprehensive existential resistance in Palestine, is a permanent tactical act of a plan with a strategic dimension¹⁵⁹. It should be encouraged to use culture beyond the traditional framework through circulating it among the public to be an approach that can be relied upon as a tool of dialogue and discussion, which must take place in open spaces and with influencers directly, whether in schools, mosques, churches, ministries, institutions and companies, and thus the cultural action would become accessible by all people not monopolized or limited to a group of people or institutions¹⁶⁰.

Palestinian Theater and Cultural Resistance

In the Palestinian case, and in connection with the Palestinian national history, the framework of its options to end the occupation within several tracks, including direct and

¹⁵⁵ Remawi, Itiraf, (March, 2019), Personal Interview, The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, Jerusalem.

¹⁵⁶ Said, Edward, (2014), *Culture and Imperialism*, [Trans. Kamal Abu Deeb], Dar Al-Adab, Beirut, Lebanon.

¹⁵⁷ Freij, Jamil, (October, 2020) Personal Interview, Magnificat Institute, Bethlehem.

¹⁵⁸ Aburedwan, Ramzi, (June, 2021), Online Interview, Al-Kamandjâti Association, France.

¹⁵⁹ Shawamreh, Maher, (December, 2020), Personal Interview, The Orient & Dance Theater, Al-Bireh.

¹⁶⁰ Abu Saa', Alaa, (September, 2021), Personal Interview, Dar Qandeel for Art and Culture, Tulkarm.

indirect; Like armed struggle and peaceful struggle, violent and non-violent resistance, we bring this thesis to shed light on Palestinian theatrical practices in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, occupied Palestine in 1948 and the diaspora in general, specifically in the West Bank; Focusing on Freedom Theater as a case study, in how theater makers in these contexts represent the Palestinian experience with regard to the ongoing Israeli settler colonialism, I seek to provide a fuller definition of Palestinian theater and highlight its various features. Since nonviolent resistance is a defining aspect of Palestinian artistic expression, based on a number of supporting theories to analyze how Palestinian theater practitioners respond to Israeli colonial practices as well as reflect on the ever-changing social and political realities of the Palestinian society.

The Palestinian theater is a civilized phenomenon that depicts and addresses various issues, including the Palestinian cause. Through theater, collective concerns and demands for rights are addressed, as a form of patriotic and national education, as well as political and civic resistance. Despite the harsh circumstances the Palestinian theater went through due to the Nakba, which had a negative impact on our general cause, it also affected the theater positively charging it to be a significant driver using the performing arts to resist the occupation with a cultural, artistic, and human awareness content. As a powerful tool in the hands of the oppressed against the oppressors, the Palestinian theater it does not take a neutral position on the issues of colonialism, occupation, and Zionist military rule, as well as apartheid and human rights issues.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹Tobasi, Ahmed, (April, 2019), Personal Interview, The Freedom Theatre, Jenin camp.

Theater is an art that simulates the mind and the heart, and a tool for raising awareness of the dangers of colonialism. Theater, during every Palestinian exposure to a new facet of the occupation's facts, nourishes the soul and the heart, and urges the youth to resist the facets of this occupation. The plays present images of steadfastness and Palestinian resistance, where theater is considered an integral part of the Palestinian people's lives.¹⁶² The theater's message is political, patriotic, and humanitarian, concerned with the issue of change and renaissance in the Palestinian society. We change, teach, enjoy, and resist through theatre.¹⁶³

Palestinian theaters, especially in the West Bank, within creative tactics, contribute to the Palestinian resistance, based on the work of Gabriel Varghese addressing the concepts of steadfastness and the reassertion of identity in an attempt to engage theater makers in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian diaspora. The engaging is to be based on plays and performances related to these concepts in showing how Palestinians face the conditions under which they live, as they strive to preserve their cultural heritage through the Palestinian theater within the Palestinian context of nonviolent resistance and what is at stake in regard to its performance¹⁶⁴.

Thus, in the context of creating a state of awareness, the theater showcases the creative repository that the Palestinians are most proud of. The spectators of the plays do actually think about what is going around, and creating a dilemma within the spectators that lead them to change.¹⁶⁵ This is carried out as part of a documentary mission of what is happening on the land of Palestine, as a contribution to writing the Palestinian novel with far implications for resilience.

¹⁶² Massou, Khalid, (November, 2019) Phone Interview, Inad Theater, Bethlehem.

¹⁶³ Shbib, Bayan, (October, 2020), Personal Interview, Ashtar for Theatre Productions and Training, Ramallah.

¹⁶⁴ Varghese, Gabriel, (2020), *Palestinian Theater in the West Bank: Our Human Faces*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, UK.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Shyoukhi, Raed, (October, 2021), Phone Interview, Yes Theater, Hebron.

The Palestinian works mostly address the context of the occupation, where it shows they exhibit images of steadfastness and resistance. Thus, the appropriate definition of the Palestinian theater is a tool that encompasses words, culture and art, which it is an organized act of awareness not an improvisation, corresponding to violence with counter-violence.¹⁶⁶ Theater acts as a response to a societal need for positive change by empowering young people, children and women in their homeland, and enhancing their sense of responsibility by granting them self-confidence, and discussing important issues, in harmony with resisting the occupation with steadfastness, awareness, and expressing the Palestinian situation freely. The main function of the Palestinian theater is to communicate daily lived stories and issues to the world, through the language of theater, which is considered today as a globally spoken language.¹⁶⁷

Palestinian theater is a complex cultural practice that defies simple or easy definition of its role. Aside from the relatively meager research on the subject, and the insane lack of documentation, especially theatrical work relation to resistance and specifically nonviolent resistance in the context of the occupation. Theatrical activity is an approach based on political intervention, where it is no longer confined to the discussion of Palestinian national political issues, but extends to spread awareness on the importance of combating the hegemonic processes carried out by settler colonialism, within 3 main concepts linked to the Palestinian narrative on the active role of the anti-occupation culture: resistance, steadfastness, and reasserting identity¹⁶⁸.

The Palestinian theater employs culture and art to consolidate the concept of citizenship, and calls for freedom of expression and mutual respect, while striving to raise awareness and

¹⁶⁶ Ataya, Fidaa, (March, 2021), Personal Interview, Independent Theater Artist, Ramallah.

¹⁶⁷ Barham, Marina, (January, 2021) Personal Interview, Al-Harah Theatre, BeitJala.

¹⁶⁸ Varghese, Gabriel, 2020.

raise the cultural and artistic level, as part of the collective identity, playing an important role in contributing to the struggle and resistance, in order to preserve identity and convey our just cause to the world in a humanitarian language.¹⁶⁹ Thus, achieving the goal of the Palestinian theater in reshaping and reconstructing the distorted Palestinian national identity, redrawing the image of the Palestinian as should be, as an awareness-raising act of resistance through art.¹⁷⁰

Palestine has never seen peace, where once the Ottoman rule was taking its final breath, WWI outbroke, followed by the British Mandate on Palestine, and then the fall of the entire Palestinian land under the Israeli occupation in 1967. Palestine faced this occupation with its various tools, and culture was one of that set of tools. Culture's most prominent manifestation was the theater as an important tool in consolidating awareness of the concept of cultural resistance. The resistance literature appeared stimulating feelings, presenting information and ideas in an easy memorable way by both the minds and the souls, and forming a national mobilization that contributes to raising awareness of the struggle for liberation, thus enhancing the importance of art in people's various social, economic, and political issues. Moreover, the soul yearns for dramatic work, so the writers were interested in bringing out this contrasting type distinguishable from what was produced prior to 1960.

Most existing studies indicate that Palestinians did not practice Western theater until the early twentieth century, where Palestinians were profoundly influenced by theater after World War I. Theatrical activity, with the arrival of the British occupation, witnessed a significant increase in Palestine and prominent playwrights emerged, of which Jamil al-Bahri, Najib Nassar,

¹⁶⁹ Aoun, Iman, (January, 2021), Personal Interview, Ashtar for Theatre Productions and Training, Ramallah.

¹⁷⁰ Bakri, Mohammed, (November, 2021), Online Interview, Independent Theater Artist, Haifa.

and the Saliba brothers. According to Reuben Snir in "The Palestinian Theatre: Historical development and the Contemporary Distinctive Identity," Palestine at that time "began to witness a cultural renaissance, encouraged by the political renaissance, especially in light of Zionist activity and economic recovery, due to the British Mandate for Palestine"¹⁷¹. This revival prompted the continuation of Palestinian theatrical development, where many serious, but unsuccessful, attempts were made to establish professional theater companies in the 1930s and 1940s¹⁷². On the nature of production in this period, Snir asserts that modern performances were limited for many years. Plays were supposed to be staged in schools or by student groups, implying that "the educational nature of this theater activity was dominant". Moreover, the Palestinian theater during this period, according to Snir, was "generally unconcerned" with the political situation on the ground and the national struggle against British-Zionist colonial aspirations.¹⁷³ This completely contradicts the visions of the Palestinian theater actors, as art in general, and not only theater, communicates a number of messages and is not limited to one message. Art is considered a reflection of the reality of life through the reality lived issues raised. In the Palestinian case, the theater is still dealing with an issue that has not been answered yet, the issue of occupation. Politics and culture in this sense are interconnected. Cultural work was created from the womb of suffering, with a clear direction titled resistance, whether on a social level, or on the level of armed resistance to the occupier, as an authentic and legitimate part. Art is a tool, weapons are another, and the two serve the objective of liberation as various struggle

¹⁷¹Billington, Michael, (June, 2001), Drama that brings us the news, *The Guardian*, Royal Court, London, UK.

¹⁷²Billington, Michael, (July, 2002), Alive from Palestine, *The Guardian*, Young Vic, London, UK.

¹⁷³Snir, Reuven, (1996), Palestinian Theatre as a Junction of Cultures: The Case of Samih al-Qasim's Qaraqash, *Journal of Theatre and Drama*, vol. 2, Haifa University Studies, Haifa.

tools. Art also fosters a generation that is aware of its issues, and capable of self-development, which is what we need to create a culture of continuous resistance¹⁷⁴.

The Early Beginnings of Palestinian Theater

After the proclamation of the settler-colonial state of Israel in 1948, Palestinian society and its various communities were forcibly separated and torn apart - an event known in Arabic as the Nakba (the catastrophe). With the expulsion of a large number of the Palestinian population from their homes and the ensuing dispersal into and out of Palestine, the growing theatrical movement of the past three decades has been flattened. Snir notes: "All that remained of the promising Palestinian theater of the 1940s were very few amateur troupes, especially within clubs and schools"¹⁷⁵. For these reasons, the period between 1948 and 1967 is noticeably left out of most historical narratives on the Palestinian stage. However, Palestinians who lived in Israel during those times participated in various cultural productions, whether sponsored by the Israeli government or the Israeli left-wing - (the latter claims its opposition to Israeli practices and demanded equal rights for all people). A survey of Palestinian theater activities in what he calls "the Arab sector in Israel" was presented. Those were mainly concentrated in Haifa and Nazareth, both of which were dominant centers of Palestinian intellectuals and culture¹⁷⁶.

More than half a century ago, Haifa, Jaffa, Acre, Nazareth and Jerusalem were the cities of the Palestinians envision of establishing a cultural and artistic renaissance, and a meeting point for the cultures of the East and the West. However, this dream was severed with the

¹⁷⁴ Al-Raee, Nabeel, (April, 2019), Personal Interview, Independent Theater Artist, Al Aroub Refugee Camp.

¹⁷⁵ Snir, Reuven, 1996.

¹⁷⁶ Ende, Werner, (1979), *The Palestine Conflict as Reflected in Contemporary Arabic Literature, The Contemporary Middle Eastern Scene: Basic and Major Trends*, Opladen: Leske&Budrich, Germany.

dispersal of the Palestinian people in the Nakba, which not only destroyed the dream, but also the path of an entire people who found themselves, all of a sudden, displaced in all parts of the earth, in camps and exiles. Nevertheless, the Palestinian people had to rebuild their entity and culture. In Haifa, Umm Kulthum and Farid al-Atrash sang, Youssef Wahbi, Naguib el-Rihani, Amina Rizk performed and acted, and we met Tawfiq al-Hakim, al-Mazni, May Ziada and Mikhail Naimy.¹⁷⁷ The Palestinian theater also had a partial impact and influenced some Jews and Israelis to join the struggle act against the occupation and its continuation, and attempted to intellectually recruit some to join the ranks of anti-Zionism, similar to some of the French who fought alongside the Algerians on the land of Algeria during the war of liberation¹⁷⁸.

The violent shock of the Nakba cause by the Zionism hit had been a great disappointment to the Palestinian theater following the prominent activity and the important milestones achieved by the time of the British Mandate. This setback led to the dispersal of Palestinian theater artists, where the theater, after 1948, lived a phase of loss of value, artistic depression, and recession, as well as complete stillness until 1965, the year of the launch of the Palestinian revolution.

Despite the defeat, the 1967 Arab Israeli War, also known as the Six-Day War, greatly affected Palestinian life, and thus all cultural activities in Palestine. It can be considered that the first emergence of the Palestinian Professional theater was after 1967. Snir argues that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the war, effectively reconnected the two regions, which was a major factor in prominently reinforcing the idea of Palestinian

¹⁷⁷ Hlehel, Amer, (April, 2021), Phone Interview, Independent Theater Artist, Haifa.

¹⁷⁸ Ibrahim, Geroqe, (October, 2021), Personal Interview, Al-Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque, Ramallah.

national identity.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, the period following the 1967 war until the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994 is often seen as a crucial stage in the formation of the national political and cultural consciousness, and in the revival of the Palestinian theater after the 1948's catastrophe. Many Palestinian troupes, despite the numerous issues and obstacles, including Israeli censorship¹⁸⁰, both amateur and professional, appeared in the occupied territories, especially in the seventies, and helped create a Palestinian theater with a distinct identity, they include: the Troupe of the Jerusalem Institute for the Arts and Theatre, Al-Masara, Al-Nahid Troupe (The Palestinian Rising Theater Troupe), Al-Nujoum, Al-Ajab Box (Magic Box), Al-Sanabel, and Al-Dababees, as well as Balalin (Balloons); a theater company that has made significant contributions to the growth of the theatrical movement in Palestine.¹⁸¹

That period witnessed the formation of what is known as the Al-Masrah Al-Nahid "The Rising Theatre". The naming might be what the founders wanted to express, which is rising again, and restoring the Palestinian theatrical life. The name might also be a title to hold on to the land through culture and shed light on the relationship of the generations with each other to enhance the values of resilience, survival, and steadfastness, to build a theatrical cultural life and crystalize the Arab national identity¹⁸².

The emergence of theater in Palestine was linked to its emergence in the Arab world, especially in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. However, it difference setting it apart from other Arab theaters was the intellectuals and researchers lack of interest, which would have had contributed

¹⁷⁹ Snir, Reuven, 1996.

¹⁸⁰ Jawad, Rania, (October, 2011), Francois Abu Salem, Jadaliyya, ezine, Arab Studies Institute, Beirut, Lebanon.

¹⁸¹ Al-Khatib, Moaz, 2008.

¹⁸² Abu Esheh, Hussam, (September, 2021), Phone Interview, Independent Theater Artist, Jerusalem.

to highlighting, promoting and developing the theaters. The lack of interest might be attributed to the weakness of the theatrical movement in Palestine in general, the failure of most individual experiences, and the lack of continuity of Palestinian theatrical writing. The events, revolutions, the mandate and then the occupation remained among the most prominent factors that weakened the theater and scattered the efforts made in that field. Palestine was introduced to theatrical art in the last quarter of the nineteenth century through several attempts of historical value that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially after the First World War, when schools became active in performing plays, especially national and historical plays. Attempts to establish a Palestinian theater of a clear vision were made during the British Mandate in Palestine, specifically in 1918. These attempts were pursued until the 1948's Nakba. Several other factors contributed and influenced the continuous endeavors to establish said theater, including the role of national and foreign schools in reviving arts and literature among students, the visit of Egyptian and Levantine theater troupes to Palestine, the establishment of the Palestinian Radio in Jerusalem in 1936 under the direction of Ibrahim Toukan, and the prominent acting activity of the Al-Jawzi family in this radio, as well as the establishment of newspapers and printing presses in Palestine, which contributed greatly to spreading awareness and artistic sense among the public¹⁸³.

The sixties witnessed an active theatrical movement action, through the establishment of several troupes, and the performance of many works. The work and increased activity were blessed with a new Nakba in 1967, that have imposed a more difficult and bitter reality. This

¹⁸³Mahamid, Muhammad Abd al-Raouf, (1989), *Theatrical Movement in the West Bank*, Center of Revival of Arab Scientific Heritage, Taybeh.

made the first three years of the new occupation difficult and bitter, especially when Dayan issued a military law prohibiting the formation of cultural clubs and trade unions, which prevented the development of theater troupes into mass and public troupes and prevented the formation of theater troupes in all of the occupied areas¹⁸⁴.

The seventies were a qualitatively fertile period, where youth amateur groups gathered forming theater troupes complementing one another. In 1968, the first theatrical troupe was formed in the Construction Workers Syndicate, by Zakaria Shaheen, and a play entitled "Al-Tarid" was performed. 1969 "The Theater Family" amateur troupe was formed in Ramallah¹⁸⁵ and trained on the performance of Samih al-Qassem's play "Qarqash". However, the occupation authorities refused to allow them to perform it.¹⁸⁶ After that, the troupe's efforts were limited to organizing evenings in which poems by the Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet and others were read, accompanied by music and expressive movements.¹⁸⁷

The Palestinian theater is not only attached to reality, but is an expression of this reality, which does not require theatrical fantasy, fabricated drama for suspense, nor a plot. The reality is a dramatic reality in nature and is also very complex and has room for tragic, comedic and absurdity.¹⁸⁸

It can be said that Palestine witnessed a theatrical prosperity that began in the early seventies. where we can call this period; The Palestinian theater prosperity period of theater in

¹⁸⁴Ibid.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Al-Sawahri, Khalil, (1980), The Early Beginnings of the Theater Arriving in the Occupied Territory, Aklam Magazine, Amman, Jordan.

¹⁸⁷ Maraashly, Ahmed, (1984), The Palestinian Encyclopedia, The Palestinian Encyclopedia Authority, Damascus, Syria.

¹⁸⁸ Abo Saloum, Ahmad, (October, 2021), Phone Interview, Sanabel Theater, Jerusalem.

Palestine after 1967's Naksa, during which theater troupes, such as Balalin, Al-Hakawati and others were founded, and employed theater to discuss social and political issues in an attempt to spread national awareness and educate the importance of theater as a tool in the struggle. Artistic maturity was the prevailing feature of this period distinguishing it from the previous one.¹⁸⁹

Samih al-Qasim was one of the most prominent writers in the resistance theater with a patriotic character. His writings are highly symbolic and direct challenging the Israeli military institutions.¹⁹⁰ He showed his interests in establishing a Palestinian theater that carries a high artistic and cultural message, as well as a political message capable of influencing international public opinion regarding the Palestinian case at the same time.¹⁹¹

There are some plays that addressed resistance in Palestine, and were considered as resistance plays, but their writers were not from Palestine. Plays such as "an Olive Branch", (Zahra min Dam) "A flower of blood", (HaflatSahar min Ajli 5 Huzayran) "evening's soirée for the 5 of June", (Al-Filasteneyat) "The female Palestinians", "the strangers", and (QiraatalaShahadatQassim) were produced by Egyptian and Syrian writers. It seems that the theater movement in Palestine did not reach its desired extent. Palestinian writers were unable to convey this Palestinian tragedy on stage, despite the globality of Palestinian events.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Al-Mallah, Yasser, (1976), The Theater of Occupation in Palestine, [Master's Thesis in Arabic Language], University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.

¹⁹⁰ Al-Sawahri, Khalil, 1980.

¹⁹¹ Taha, Hasan, (October, 2020), Online Interview, Independent Theater Artist, Nazareth.

¹⁹² Abu Afifa, Talal, (1982), Farafer Theater Troupe, Al-Fajr Literary Magazine, Jerusalem.

The Palestinian theater was in tune with the contemporary national movement

The theater began to take shape in the early seventies of the last century, especially in the cities of Ramallah, Al-Bireh and Jerusalem, despite the fact that the theater and its patrons were subjected to Israeli obstacles, represented by the prohibition or censorship of performances, in addition to the complexities of obtaining permits and permissions for performances. Palestine was completely under the Israeli occupation, which administered educational and cultural institutions and controlled their course, direction, and content. The occupation was constantly trying to impose its policy aimed at preventing any act that would resist it, in addition to the lack of a framework, and the absence of sponsorship and support.¹⁹³ Muhammad Anis, in his book entitled "Theatrical Movement in the Occupied Territories", states that theater before 1971 was more of an amateur activity, and considered it a weak imitation of the theatrical movement in the Arab world, especially that in Egypt. He further adds that there were festivals and limited participation in those festivals in Ramallah, Jericho, and other regions. Anis sees that the beginning of the prosperity of theater began in the early seventies, with the establishment of the Balalin Troupe, which was self-financed and dependent on tickets for its continuation of activities. The troupe was formed by individuals who sensed their responsibility as theater fans towards the issues of their people, and started their theatrical action out of their faith and love for this art. Moreover, some theater troupes were active in the camps. Most of these troupes have adopted a teamwork style¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹³ Abd al-Salam, Walid, (1990) Moving Forward Toward Our Theatrical Movement, Al-Kateb Magazine, Jerusalem.

¹⁹⁴ Anis, Mohammed, 1979.

François Abu Salem is considered the founder of The Palestinian National Theatre (El-Hakawati Theatre), alongside: Jackie Lubeck, RadiShehadeh, Edward Al-Moallem, who later founded the ASHTAR Theater with his wife Iman Aoun. In 1973, the first folkloric theater festival was held in the city of Ramallah, and the festival continued to be held annually until 1975. This festival had a significant impact on the formation of a number of theaters that split from each other, such as Edward Al-Moallem and ImanAoun's theater¹⁹⁵.

These theater troupes were not living in a state of prosperity and working in the best conditions, nevertheless, they produced plays at the lowest costs. The El-Hakawati Theater experience is a model for that state. El-Hakawati, and after a long and hard search, found a place, which was an old cinema that had been burned. The founding artists made a great effort to transform this abandoned cinema into a theater in 1984. It is noteworthy that the performance "Mahjoub, Mahjoub", which was a production of El-Hakawati Theater, has presented 120 performances¹⁹⁶ despite the lack of full-time artists due to the lack of support and care, which may be of help to the artist for independent artistic work. Nevertheless, they were not hindered by this obstacle, but tackled it as they tackle the obstacles imposed by the occupation.¹⁹⁷

This stage was characterized by attempts to have a theatrical assembly in order to advance and develop. In late 1974, theatrical momentum had reached a large extent, characterized by the abundance of works and performances, lack of capabilities, and hesitant interaction from the audience. Therefore, most of the working troupes at that stage met and discussed the idea of the assembly to coordinate the work of the troupes and the relationship with

¹⁹⁵ Jabr, Mohammed, (1981), Symposium, Al-Fajr Literature Magazine, Jerusalem.

¹⁹⁶ Kittab, Daoud, (1982), A Meeting, Al-Fajr Literature Magazine, Jerusalem.

¹⁹⁷ Shehadeh, Radi, (1998), Palestinian Theatre, Palestinian Ministry of Culture, Ramallah.

the audience, as well as to establish close relations with the playwrights. The "Palestinian Theater Association" was created as a result. And its first activity was a major art festival in Jerusalem in 1975, but then the situation worsened in most of the troupes, turning this assembly into an intensification of a previous stage, instead of being the beginning of a new phase. Attempts aimed at assembling and supporting the theatrical movement continued but did not achieve any tangible result.¹⁹⁸

The Assembly's work stopped in 1975, and in 1976 a second attempt was made where coordination was made between the remaining troupes to form the "Family of the Palestinian Theater Assembly" (Ausratu Al-Tajamuu' Al-Masrahi al-Falastini, but this attempt failed again due to the downturn of theatrical work during this stage. In July 1979 an invitation was sent to discuss the issue of the grouping efforts resulted in an agreement that led to the establishment of the assembly under the name "Palestine Theatrical Work Assembly." In 1980, the assembly ended. At that time another assembly called "Artistic Work and Development Assembly" was announced in 1979 and was dissolved in 1981. A proposal was made on establishing a "Palestinian Theater Staff Association" that is based on individual-membership, rather than the troupes. Still, these efforts did not yield anything. In 1982, the Arab Thought Forum in Jerusalem expressed its willingness to support the theatrical movement in the occupied territories, through the formation of the "Directorate of Theater and Folk Arts", setting great objectives for its work. However, the Forum did not impact the theatrical life due to its failure to commit to the implementation of the planned. During the Intifada, some theater personnel

¹⁹⁸ Mahamid, Muhammad Abd al-Raouf, 1989.

established the "Theater Personnel Association" in Jerusalem and Gaza, but it did not resume its work¹⁹⁹.

The Palestinian Theater in the 1948 Occupied Territories

As for the theater in 1948 occupied Palestine, the Palestinian theater mobilized its capabilities in creating a theatrical audience, especially in Jaffa with the beginning of the formation of the theater in 1967. The theater having had gone through a split, suffered weakness in 1971.²⁰⁰ Many active troupes were formed, such as: Al-Balad Theatre, pioneered by Radi Shehadeh.²⁰¹ Beit al-Karmeh, which was closely monitored by the Ministries of Education and Culture in an attempt to contain the Palestinian theater in the 1948 occupied territories.²⁰² Some Arab playwrights and theater staff attempted to exploit the Hebrew theaters by presenting Arab works, MakramKhoury and Youssef Abu Warda presented their works through the Municipal Theater in Haifa. In 1982, they presented the play "Al-Jazeera" (The Island), "NatrinoGodot" (We're waiting on Godot), and "Al-DaraweeshYabhathun an Al-Haqiqah" (The Dervishes Are Searching for the Truth.)²⁰³ This theater is committed to presenting an Arab play every year. It is clear that this is not considered an establishment of an Arab theater in the true sense of the word, but rather it is an Arab platform within the framework of a Hebrew theater, as the Municipal Theater Administration in Haifa called it, just as there is a major stage, a smaller stage, and an experimental stage inside the building. The Arab theater troupes attempted to free their efforts

¹⁹⁹ Abu Ali, Nabil, (1996), The Palestinian Theatre ... Reality and Ambition, Al-Rai Magazine, No. 2, Gaza.

²⁰⁰ Maraashly, Ahmed, 1984.

²⁰¹ Shaheen, Ahmed, (2000), Encyclopedia Book of Palestine in the Twentieth Century, The National Center for Studies and Documentation, Gaza.

²⁰² Maraashly, Ahmed, 1984.

²⁰³ Ibid

from the dependency through the establishment of a pan-Arab theater in the 1948 occupied territories. The first trail took place in 1981 by officially registering the theater, and presenting the play "The Clown" by al-Maghout, but the experience was faced with the difficulty of reality, the scattered of theatrical artistic staff, internal disagreements, and the absence of official Arab adoption and sponsorship of the theater by the heads of the Arab local authorities²⁰⁴. It is clear that Jerusalem has received the performances of most theater troupes,²⁰⁵ which did not turn a cold shoulder to performing in other villages and cities. However, it was the great thirst for theater that prompted many educated and intellectual individuals from the villages to install the idea of setting up village theater troupes, at an early period (in the forties and fifties).²⁰⁶

On the other hand, several attempts were made to unify theatrical cadres within the 1948 occupied Palestine in an assembly, association, or a union. The first attempt was an initiative made by a group of intellectuals and writers, who invited theatrical members to the Nazareth cultural center to discuss the establishment of a Pan-Arab theater, but this attempt failed. The second attempt was immediately after the establishment of the "Popular Arts Institute" was run by Samih Al-Qasim in 1982, where it called for the establishment of a Pan-Arab theater, but the differences between the theater members hindered the attempt. The third attempt was early 1983 by announcing the establishment of the "Arab Theater Association" and it consisted of the members of the teams that founded the association, which are: Al-Gharbal Theater in Shafa Amr, Galilee Theater in Tamra, the Popular Theater in Sakhnin, Al-Majd Theater in Majd Al-Krum, Araba Cultural Center Theater, Olive Branch Theater in Al-Makr, Fatafeet Al-Sukkar Troupe in

²⁰⁴Khoury, Makram, (1987), Meeting, Al-Shorouk magazine, Al-Mashreq Foundation, Shefa-'Amr.

²⁰⁵Mahamid, Muhammad Abd al-Raouf, 1989.

²⁰⁶Moreh, Shmuel, (1987), Translations and Monuments in Arabic Literature in Israel 1948-1987, Translated by Mahmoud Abbasi, Arab-Jewish Cultural Center, Haifa.

Acre, Al-Batouf Theater in KafrManda, and Al-Ahly Theater in I'billin, and the Brothers Theater in Shefa Amr. The association made several efforts, but its activities stopped after two years, and most of the troupes joining it stopped as well.²⁰⁷ The troupes' closure, individualism, and the absence of institutional support were the reason behind the failure of attempts to assemble, in addition to their reliance mostly on the membership of the teams rather than the membership of individuals.²⁰⁸

The reality of life in the 1948 occupied Palestinian territories created a catastrophic form for the Palestinians who survived on their land after the Nakba, especially the actors in the field of theater and performing arts, whose goal was to preserve their existence, identity and collective entity by resisting attempts to obliterate, distort and Israelization, the theater personnel were even chased and persecuted on the basis of their artistic activity within the national, social and creative functional vision of theatre.²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, a few of them swept into the quagmire of coexistence and normalization in complete disregard for the harsh reality and the ugly reality of the occupation.

Regarding the state of the Palestinian theater in the 1948 occupied territories, in practice the theatrical movement surpassed the amateur stage to a professional stage and the improvisation to organization. Nevertheless, some entertainment and commercial performances take place, or some performances that are heavily based on ideological and political discourses as they are supported by the Palestinian Arab parties. Still, there are a number of theatrical works

²⁰⁷Shaluot, Afif, (1981), glimpses of the history of our local theater, Al-Shorouk magazine, Al-Mashreq Foundation, Shefa-'Amr.

²⁰⁸Aqel, Abdul Latif, (1976), The Experience of Local Theater, Al-Bayader Magazine, Gaza.

²⁰⁹Zoubi, Karma, (2015), Palestinian theater during sixty years, Research Journal of Language, Literature and Thought, No. 9, P.p: 221-243, Al-Qasemi Academic College, Baqa al-Gharbiyye, occupied Palestine.

that were employed to express social, humanitarian and national issues that criminalize the occupation. Nowadays, there is a lot of direct interaction, communication, and cooperation between the playwrights in the various Palestinian territories regardless of the number preceding the territory be it 67 or 48, in addition to the continuation of some attempts to create a space for cooperation with the Israeli side, as seen in the series “Fauda” (Chaos) as a model²¹⁰.

Theater in the Gaza Strip

Many local theater groups were found in the Gaza Strip through personal initiatives, including the “Al-Shumoo Al-Thahabiya” (Golden Candles Troupe), which was established in the seventies, then stopped; “Firqat Al-Nujum” (The Stars Troupe) formed in 1976, and soon after stopped; the “Al-Shabab al-Hur al-Islami al-Falastini” (Palestinian Islamic Free Youth Troupe) was formed in 1978, and was discontinued in 1984; and the “Fiqat Amallil Fanniwa al-Masrah” (Amal Troupe for Art and Theater) was formed in 1984, and the Military Commander suspended it in 1985. However, its members continued to work.²¹¹ Theatrical work continued in Gaza, even during the intifada, where Hanadel Troupe was formed in 1989, then stopped due to administrative circumstances after it presented several plays, and some of its members continued to work, forming new troupes, including: The South, Canaan, and Hope²¹², which presented works through which the image of the Intifada and its interaction in Palestinian society was

²¹⁰Zidan, Fidaa, (February, 2020), Personal Interview, Independent Theater Artist, Beit Jann.

²¹¹Al-Madani, Rashad, (1988), Theatrical movement in the Gaza Strip, Al-Bayader Magazine, Gaza.

²¹²Abu Ali, Nabil, 1996.

presented, in an attempt to rise from the reality of the occupation, and the continuing need for sacrifices, until reaching the objectives²¹³.

The theater in the Gaza Strip is at a standstill due to the political situation, the "Palestinian division," which has prevented artists from reaching Arab and international theaters, as well as the continuous wars that have destabilized theatrical and artistic work in Gaza, the last of which was the bombing of the Saeed Al-Mishal Foundation for Culture and Science in 2018.²¹⁴ The Gazian theater still suffers from weak financial capabilities and human resources, despite individual attempts to advance the reality of theater in the Gaza Strip.²¹⁵

With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Pan-National Theater Troupe, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture in Gaza, presented the play "AlaAynak, yaTajer" (before your eyes, merchant [Lit.] In everyone's face [Idiomatic]), which told the story of a Palestinian neighborhood that lives under harsh economic situation. Moreover, the theater department in El-Karama Center for Culture & Arts performed "Tarabish" play that addressed the acquiescence of the Arab world and its failure to defend Palestine and protect it from occupation²¹⁶.

The Palestinian Diaspora Theater

As for the Palestinian diaspora theater, several Palestinian troupes were formed in Arab capitals, including the Palestinian Arab Theater Association in Damascus in 1966, which formed

²¹³ Abu Jahjough, Othman, (1994), Palestinian Theater institution, Tawabel Magazine, Gaza.

²¹⁴ Abu Yaseen, Ali, (September, 2021), Phone Interview, Said Al-Meshal Cultural Center, Gaza.

²¹⁵ Qaoud, Hassan, (October, 2020), Online Interview, Theatre Day Productions, Gaza.

²¹⁶ Abu Jahjough, Othman, 1994.

a theater troupe, performed in Arab capitals, and participated in theater festivals.²¹⁷ The theatrical movement in the diaspora was not satisfied with merely performing works that dealt with the Palestinian issue. Therefore, it performed scripts of a struggle and a general humanitarian concerns and trouble nature. This enriched its artistic and intellectual experience of the diaspora movement where it gained a wide audience. Several theater troupes were also formed under the tutelage of the various Palestinian organizations in Lebanon, such as: The Mass Media Troupe, the Tal al-Zaatar Troupe, the Directive Media Troupe, and others. Nabil Al-Haffar believes that the new developments on the Palestinian political scene since the Oslo Accord has had a great impact on the Palestinian theater in general, especially diaspora theater, as the horizon of expression narrowed, financial support was lacking, and intellectual and political attitudes and behaviors varied regarding the on-going events at the "peaceful settlement" level, dispersing the gathering of theaters, and lowering their voice.²¹⁸

Theater was associated with refugee camps in the diaspora and in Palestine, and all of its themes touched on nostalgia for the homeland, in a comic style that highlights the oppressed or the Fedayeen as the victor. These performances continued for more than two decades, that later on were studied in institutes and universities as professional courses, instead of hobbies or gifted talents.²¹⁹

²¹⁷Maraashly, Ahmed, 1984.

²¹⁸Haffar, Nabil, (2000), *One Hundred Years of Arab Theater in Keeping Up with the Nationalism Renaissance*, Arab Affairs Magazine, Arab League, Cairo, Egypt.

²¹⁹Istanbouli, Kassem, (June ,2021)Online Interview, Lebanese National Theater, Tyre, Lebanon.

The Palestinian Theater and the Intifada

The first intifada in 1987 affected the political, social, cultural, and literary life, and its impact on the theater was positive, as the Palestinian theater revived and new troupes emerged, but they did not spread, producing printable written works and scripts aimed at resisting the occupation.

After the start of the Palestinian revolution, many Palestinian theater troupes were formed in some Arab countries and within the occupied territories. Shortly after, 1967 Naksa took place. Palestinians, after the defeat, sensed the inevitability of doing something that expresses their rejection of the occupation, hence the theater that was a popular destination²²⁰.

The theater was revived again, based on individual experiences, which were, for the playwrights, the nucleus of life. Theaters crystallized and in 1977 the strongest theatrical show was launched by François Abu Salem, who established the "Hakawati Troupe" and played an active role in the Palestinian theater movement.²²¹

The eighties and the beginning of the nineties witnessed a qualitative shift in the Palestinian theater, where it became the ambassador of Palestine. The occupation was not pleased and was dissatisfied with these theatrical performances, and deliberately placed obstacles before the actors. The main issue the actors would face was the absent right to freedom of movement and the need for a permit from the occupation authorities to move, in addition to strict censorship. Therefore, the actors presented mobile theatrical performances, crossing Palestine

²²⁰Ghazaleh, Raeda, (August, 2021), Personal Interview, Independent Theater Artist, BaytSahur.

²²¹Khalil, Amer, (December, 2020), Phone Interview, El-Hakawati Theatre, Jerusalem.

from the south of Hebron to the north of Jenin, training the camp youth and marginalized villages on the arts of theater, Dabka and photography.²²²

The mobile theater experience created an unprecedented movement at the level of the Palestinian theater, as it had an awareness-raising effect on the people and pushing them into the first intifada. The theater activities slowed their pace during the intifada, but it was resurrected by the generation that grew up in the theater of the sixties and seventies. That generation has borne the responsibility of reviving the theater creating theatrical troupes, such as ASHTAR, Al-Harah, Yes, Al-Kasabah, The Popular Theater, Basta, Rasa'al and The Freedom Theatre.²²³

Certainly, the first intifada (1987-1993) and its aftermath generated new conditions for Palestinian society and its cultural activities. After the Oslo Accords (1993-1995) and the subsequent establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, the theater in Palestine was subject to a set of new challenges, especially that companies are now organized differently with the presence of formal Palestinian institutions, i.e., the Ministry of Culture. While it is not the intention of this thesis to draw a comprehensive outline of theatrical activity in Palestine, it does focus on a number of such work teams (some created by former members of the Hakawati Theatre Troupe) by drawing attention to their performance style. Moreover, Palestinian theater makers in the diaspora were engaged in an effort to study Palestinian theater in an attempt to broaden its definition beyond the constrained political narrative²²⁴.

²²²Nasrallah, Sana', (2020), *The Palestinian and Jordanian Theatre ... Theater of Revolution, Politics and Struggle*, Al Jazeera Publications, Doha, Qatar.

²²³Saleem, Shaden, (July, 2021), Personal Interview, Independent Theater Artist, Jerusalem.

²²⁴Ghoneim, Kamal, (2003), *The Palestinian theater: a critical historical study in theatrical literature*, Dar Elharm for Heritage, Cairo, Egypt.

Despite the presence of these theatrical troupes under the occupation and the resistance to the occupation, they were able to produce a theatrical resistance theme. The troupes even employed the theater to be a tool of resistance in the future through the theatrical scripts that are taught to the actors directed at the Palestinian viewer. The scripts included but are not limited to Ghassan Kanafani's plays "Al-Bab" (The Door), the play "Bayt al-Junoon" (House of Madness) by Tawfiq Fayyad, the play "The Tragedy of Ernesto "Che" Guevara" by MuinBseiso, and the plays "Qirqash" and "The Son" by Samih al-Qasim.²²⁵

Palestinian Theater as a Revolutionary Platform for Awareness and Influence

The importance of theater is it being an artistic, cultural, and knowledge space that introduces a thought and argues the existing one. Theater affects and is affected by society. The theater analyzed and the Palestinian theater as a history and human philosophy for those in charge of it, and for the target audience, in an attempt to show the culture of resistance, after the idea of theater was analyzed²²⁶.

The internal cultural artistic scene lacking Palestinian playwrights and academics who are capable of creating art and capable of artistic management, has delayed the emergence of valuable theatrical attempts in the occupied territories. The first theatrical assembly was in the West Bank in February 1975 under the name of "Palestinian Theater Association" as a prominent

²²⁵Shehadeh, Radi, 1998.

²²⁶Atawneh, Rafif, Sharonah, Saja, (2016), Designing the National Palestinian Theater, Palestine Polytechnic University, Hebron.

milestone in the occupied territories preceded by a multitude of important theater troupes that were established in various Palestinian cities.²²⁷ These troupes include, but not limited to:

- The Theater Family Troupe, which turned into the Balalin Troupe, was established in 1970 in Ramallah.
- Dababis Troupe, founded in 1972 in Ramallah.
- Al-Hakawati Theater in Jerusalem, which owns a theater hall, was opened in 1983 and is still present today.
- The Kasbah theater in Jerusalem, which was transferred to Ramallah during PNA's era.
- The Freedom Theatre, which opened in 2006 on the ruins of the Al-Hajar Theatre, which was established in 1989 and was demolished during the invasion of Jenin refugee camp in 2002.

In light of the political changes that the region witnessed, which was represented in the peace process, the evacuation of the occupation forces from some Palestinian cities and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, its intellectuals, artists and writers were encouraged to start a new renaissance and restore what was destroyed by the occupation on the level of humans - their upbringing, thoughts and beliefs, as well as entertainment²²⁸.

On the official level, the Palestinian Authority established a number of institutions concerned with art and theater, such as the Ministry of Culture, which produced a number of professional theatricals works in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in addition to supporting teams

²²⁷Ghoneim, Kamal, (2010), The Modern Theatrical Movement in Palestine, The Islamic University, Gaza.

²²⁸Affoneh, Nuha, 2016.

and contributing to the development of amateurs and talented people. It also established the Palestinian Child Theater. The Ministry of Information, which included a Theater Department and its media. Universities also took an interest in this field and opened special departments for theater²²⁹.

On the private level, various troupes and civil institutions working in the field of theatrical art have been active and have worked on producing many meaningful and serious theatrical works, in addition to the great activity and educational theatrical movement in the West Bank, such as Al-kasbah Theatre, Al-Hakawati Theatre, Al-Harah Theatre, ASHTAR Theatre, Yes Theatre, The Freedom Theatre, and others. Despite all this effort, the Palestinian theater is still heavily suffering to this moment, it suffers from the loss of the audience, in addition to the loss of the national institution capable of developing a national plan aimed at developing and sponsoring the Palestinian theater.²³⁰

The Palestinian theater is characterized by being a young theater, and it is a theater of resistance that needs support. It is as free as a bird that rejects every restriction, it flies away, and returns bearing legitimate hopes and dreams.²³¹

The Palestinian theater used the European theater to develop its educational curricula in the performing arts academies affiliated with the Palestinian theaters. This requires the attention, especially that of the cultural actors and policy makers in Palestine, in terms of creating a culture of theater in schools, institutes and universities. Therefore, the Palestinian theater actually

²²⁹Ibid.

²³⁰Nassar, Mohammed, (2014), The Palestinian Theater between experience momentum and effort dispersion, General Union of Palestinian Writers, Ramallah.

²³¹Nasrallah, Sana', 2020.

transcended the obstacles of occupation and marginalization of power by using street theater as the Theater of the Oppressed and the Playback Theater, which addresses with the oral stories of people and their daily concerns, so its relationship with the street and the public has become a strong and distinct relationship, and based on the philosophy of “If you do go to the theater, the theater would go to you”.²³²

Today, the Palestinian theater tends to contribute and participate in private plays, by performing them in the European and American countries’ theaters, and in other foreign theaters, in an attempt to convey the image of the Palestinian people and their suffering, such as the “The Siege” play, a production of The Freedom Theatre.²³³ Despite the problems related to the adoption of some foreign donor organizations of many Palestinian theatrical works, under various agendas and aspirations, such as reducing the culture of resistance, promoting a culture of peace and coexistence, there are Palestine supporting organizations that support the state of cultural awareness in general, at a time when there is insufficient Palestinian governmental support to the Palestinian theater movement. This gives a credit to foreign contributions for reviving the Palestinian theater despite the political agendas’ issues²³⁴.

Therefore, we see that theater has been linked to the Palestinian experience, which rejects the occupation. The writer uses the theatrical scripts, and the patriotic sense, to express the social, political, and cultural life, as a Palestinian requirement to end the oppression and persecution inflicted upon them. These are the very things that will later turn into uprisings, and

²³² Abu Al-Hayjaa, Faisal, (June, 2020), Personal Interview, The Freedom Theatre, Jenin Camp.

²³³ Odeh, Ranin, (May, 2021), Personal Interview, The Freedom Theatre, Jenin Camp.

²³⁴ Abu Shalabak, Najlaa, (2018), *The Cultural Colonial Appropriation and Theft of the Original Heritage*, Beit Al-Maqdis Center for Documentary Studies, Gaza.

intellectual revolutions, attempting to change reality, and institutionalizing the struggle in a new method, where violence is met by violence, through transforming the violence inflicted against peoples into a cultural movement. The mission of the said cultural movement is to direct counter-violence towards liberation, and create an institutionalized struggle culture to armed struggle, that relates to the idea of liberating the oppressed and colonized humans, using all available tools and various forms of struggle. This is what Fanon called for during the Algerian revolution, which led the revolution to liberation later. We see the Algerian theater's work, as an example of the institutionalizing of the struggle, where Algeria was not introduced the Western theater, but it was practiced in it some different artistic forms, as popular manifestations in the squares, or through markets or cafes. With the fall of Algeria under French occupation, these platforms turned into hotbeds and centers of protest revolutions, through the use of performance techniques, to spread and promote the spirit of struggle²³⁵.

In Palestine, on the footsteps of the Algerian model is The Freedom Theater in Jenin camp, which was founded by JulianoMer-Khamis in 2006, and has taken on a revolutionary cultural character with its slogan "Resistance through Art".²³⁶ Art being one of the struggle levers and the representation of the liberation identity. The Freedom Theater was as a continuation of the 'Stone Theater', which was founded in 1988 by Giuliano's mother; Arna Mir²³⁷.

²³⁵Yousoufi, Ghanaian, KarimaTigrin, (2015), Using the history in Algerian Theater and Its Purposes: The play "Hannibal" by Ahmed Tawfiq Al-Madani as a model, UniversitéAbderrahmane Mira, Béjaïa, Algeria.

²³⁶Hlehel, Ala, (2013), The Freedom Theatre and Honoring the resistance's poet, Journal of Palestine Studies, No. 95, P.p 292-298, Beirut, Lebanon.

²³⁷Slyomovics, Susan, (1991), To Put One's Fingers in the Bleeding Wound: Palestinian Theatre under Israeli Censorship, The MIT Press Journal, Cambridge University Press, USA.

Finally

The Palestinian theater is part of the Palestinian cultural organization that harnesses the creative power and artistic expression in the pursuit of justice and equality, as a mission to create an engaging pioneering situation that follows a path loaded with various ideas and expressions as an inspiration for resistance to poverty, wars, censorship, misery, and hate. That pioneering situation evokes the beauty of theater in imagination, authenticity, friendship, and multiculturalism that can be seen within the Palestinian cultural resistance. The latter's cornerstones were laid by the founding actors of resistance literature, such as Ghassan Kanafani, Naji Al-Ali, Tawfiq Ziyad, Mahmoud Darwish, Rashid Hussein, Juliano MerKhamis and many others.

Arts have always been the powerful tool in the hands of the oppressed against the oppressors, and the performing arts are the components of the struggle and an integral element in the struggle for the freedom of Palestine. The Palestinians are facing the extremist occupation in the world, the real face of colonialism and oppressive colonial imperialist military rule, under a Zionist policy that relies on ethnic racism and segregation.

Thus, the role of the Palestinian theater is linked to raising the state of awareness, as a basis for a culture of a generation that seeks change and liberation. The Palestinian theater is an epic theater in harmony with the Palestinian national situation. It plays a role in advocacy and awareness, and raises important issues related to the values of justice, freedom, and equality. It is a critical, monitoring and evaluating theater, that works to consolidate the right of the Palestinian people of resistance until true independence, by using performing arts as a tool for liberation

from the occupation. Locally, by raising a generation capable of challenging all forms of oppression and injustice by using artistic production, activism, creativity, and education to challenge the occupation and the limitation of freedoms in Palestine. Therefore, the main function of the Palestinian theater is to create a creative artistic nucleus critical for a cultural resistance movement within the broader Palestinian struggle concept at the heart of a free democratic Palestinian society. It is worth noting that the Palestinian Performing Arts Network is a result of intense cooperation between 15 Palestinian artistic institutions working in the performing arts in dance, music, circus, and theater. The Network plays a collective role in promoting Palestinian cultural identity, and upholding the value of freedom of expression, as it is a means of demonstrating the highest Palestinian Arab human values, the liberation struggle, and the empowerment of the social fabric, so that the performing arts are one of the means and tools for liberation.

Chapter V

Recommendations and Conclusions

Cultural Resistance: It is the practice of using meanings and symbols, i.e., culture, to combat a dominant power²³⁸. Cultural resistance is the widespread use of traditional arts, literature, and practices to challenge or fight repressive regimes or those in power injustices in the context of nonviolent actions, campaigns, and movements.²³⁹

Preface

There is a significant impact of the Palestinian theater as an awareness inventory, creating a state of creative awareness among the Palestinians, evident in the latter's being in tune with the idea that there is a struggle role for the Palestinian theater's presenting the Palestinian experience in an exceptional manner that enhances steadfastness and cognitively shed a light on the nature of rights based on the awareness of the culture of the Palestinian people. The theater plays its conscious role towards change and awareness of national issues in the context of its liberal message in tune with the values of freedom and justice; the right of the people to resist. Cultural resistance, in this context, as a central slogan that seeks to raise the national issues of the society under occupation, through the use of the language of theater towards just approach to independence and liberation from the occupation, raising awareness of the state of the national struggle. This is what the occupation, or some intellectual trends that do not perceive culture and the performing arts specifically as a tool of awareness and resistance, fight in various ways. Those intellectual trends even believe that culture and the performing arts contrast the collective societal ideologies, even though performing arts depend on the concept of individual freedom,

²³⁸Cultural Resistance, Sociology, <http://sociology.iresearchnet.com/sociology-of-culture/cultural-resistance/#>

²³⁹Bloch, Nadine, 2012

and this completely matches the occupation's endeavor to demolish any possibility of building a bridge of communication with the world through the global language of the theater. In the case of the Palestinian theater, the common is a resistance educational and training curriculum based on a culture of rejection and the awareness of freedom, which is related not only to the local context of confronting injustice, but it simulates all the stories of freedom fighters around the world in a framework that makes the Palestinian cause an international humanitarian issue.

This all must be linked radically with reducing the gap between society and the Palestinian cultural organization, prompting the people to accept the idea of theater as a mobilizing case for political, social, and national change, and helps to accept the actors in this field societally, especially with regard to the expression and presentation of social issues and people's concerns in an effort to change the people's reality. This highlights the organization and organizer role of influencing and recruiting young adults and children through presentations and conscious promotion of national culture, so that cultural resistance would be an integral component of the state of struggle and steadfastness as it is an authentic expression of reality. Cultural resistance aims to produce and introduce and educated resistance artists to the world, so that they would be able to introduce and educate on the Palestinian cause through a revolutionary epic theater focused on influencing youth and creating educated models capable of change, especially women, as a platform for expressing opinion and prevailing stereotyped ideas, through an enlightening thinking methodology.

The dependency on external funding practices a great pressure on the Palestinian cultural organization, especially from Europe after the 1993 Oslo Accords, where the funder is interested in setting and imposing their agenda on organization, contradicting the cultural organizations' main endeavors to invest in national identity as a comprehensive framework for the Palestinian people in the homeland and the diaspora, especially in light of the political division. This was evident in the European Union political financing conditions, which were rejected by the majority of civil society organizations, especially the cultural ones. These conditions were pressuring the organizations to stop directing their mission and goal towards promoting the concept of identity and awareness of the culture of resistance, as an extension of a historical

struggle situation Unfortunately, that mission was not supported by the Palestinian government, which focuses on supporting the security sector based on political and economic annexation and dependency agreements with the Israeli occupation.

Results

Based on the foregoing analysis, presentation and conclusion, the thesis resulted in a set of principal results, conclusions and concluding observations, summarized in the following points:

- 1- There are two real actors of cultural resistance in the Palestinian case, and they are not an isolated phenomenon, but rather a part of the context of the state of resistance that aims for liberation, and the right to self-determination.
- 2- Many field observations focused in their aspects and directions on the close connection between cultural resistance as a model and building the national identity and the local narrative in the light of the Palestinian situation.
- 3- Cultural resistance is a practical applicable Palestinian option that can affect and influence, provided that it is consistent and harmonious with other political, popular and national variables.
- 4- The Palestinian cultural situation of resistance can be a supportive element not only for negotiations and politics, but also for armed resistance as one of the manifestations of the Palestinian national struggle.
- 5- The cultural resistance enriched and benefited from models of peaceful and nonviolent resistance in the Palestinian case, especially those that took place in Ni'lin, NabiSaleh, Budrus and other sites, given that cultural resistance is a model of resistance in times of war and peace.
- 6- Cultural resistance cannot be achieved effectively and in depth unless it has popular incubators and a national culture in tune with the masses and with the political leadership, which must be ready to reap the benefits of this resistance action.
- 7- There is no integrated strategic Palestinian vision regarding the importance of investing models of cultural resistance and placing them in the context of an integrated process in coordination with cultural institutions, civil society organizations and other actors.

- 8- Theoretically, the study relied on the intellectual and ideological contributions of both Marx and Gramsci, especially in light of the interaction between the superstructure and infrastructure forces and to better invest in them by Palestinians.
- 9- Despite the importance of the contributions of Marx and Gramsci, the current study relied on Brecht's work, especially in building the epic theater model, which is manifested in rejection, protest, and non-acceptance, making this a continuous national situation until the objectives are achieved.
- 10- The epic theater in the context of the Indian and South African cases had contributions and innovations as they developed in the context of apartheid and colonialism, which has clear similarities to the Palestinian case. The theater in Algeria, Morocco, and Brazil, on the other hand, was in harmony with a national situation that relied in part on armed struggle, because it contributed to creating an environment conducive to all forms of peaceful and violent struggle.
- 11- The most prominent issues and implications posed by the Palestinian theater include criticism of social backwardness and ignorance as well as highlighting various inferior retarded social models, addressing the situation of women in Palestinian society and the need to enable women to exercise their freedom and responsibility in society.
- 12- Intellectually, the Palestinian theater criticizes the lack of judgment and the reliance on misconceived stereotyping, prejudices that contribute to spreading a spirit of dependency among the masses.
- 13- The Palestinian theater aims to demonstrate the importance of the land and the necessity of preserving it and to emphasize the national constants, while portraying the harsh conditions experienced by the masses under the occupation and the need to overcome these conditions by uniting efforts and bearing responsibility.
- 14- The Palestinian theater contributes to highlighting the leading role of the working class in the process of building and developing society in terms of this class being the most revolutionary and productive class.
- 15- Theatrical act is an important tool in the process of raising awareness and prompting change and human advancement. It constitutes a state of knowledge that represents an

important model in the context of promoting the culture of resistance among actors in the Palestinian theater. It is a tool to raise the level of awareness and a mean of resisting the occupation through strengthening the Palestinian cultural identity based on the idea of liberation and national mobilization.

Recommendations

Which can be summarized as follows:

1. The necessity of empowering Palestinian theaters and financing the theatrical sector by the Palestinian Ministry of Culture, which is interconnected with the need of the Palestinian public's support of national cultural work and to attend artistic activities, in which the various sectors participate, especially children, youth and women, within the integration of common and socially beneficial interests. This can be achieved by strengthening the relationship with the Ministry of Education and adopting the ideas of the Palestinian cultural organization in implementing extracurricular activities programs in Palestinian schools and universities, such as developing a specialized curriculum for drama and acting and adopting it by the relevant ministries.
2. Establishing theater school and university troupes, establishing a national competition to popularize theater culture, and working on training and qualifying teachers to use theater methods in the unconventional and unorthodox educational process.
3. Developing academic programs on the performing arts and launching a theater diploma aiming at providing the actor with an accredited university degree (An Arab American University-Freedom Theatre joint program, for example), which contributes to the national mobilization process and the creation of a conscious resisting generation.
4. Strengthening the role of culture in popular organizations and demonstrating its importance in the struggle by reinforcing the Palestinian cultural identity, which facilitates an understanding of the role of theater in change.
5. Activating the role of Palestinian playwrights, and supporting artists, through the establishment of networks, unions, and active cultural groups and gatherings.

The most prominent trends in the Palestinian theater were based on a creative professional case that carries and transmits through its aesthetic works social issues and contents, as well as performances that are saturated with national and political issues, to express the identity of Palestinians around the world and their issues in a modern creative language, where the intellectual, social, and aesthetic presence raises the spiritual and psychological unity of Palestine.

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الملخص

المقاومة الثقافية في السياق الفلسطيني: مناقشة الروايات المحلية والتجارب الدولية

هذه دراسة استكشافية لمفهوم المقاومة الثقافية في فلسطين، وعلى وجه التحديد يجادل الباحث في هذه الأطروحة بأن

هذا النوع من النضال مهم في سياق بناء الهوية الوطنية وأحد الأدوات الفلسطينية الرئيسية في تحويل الصراع.

اعتمد البحث الميداني على البحث الإجمالي التشاركي (حيث يعمل الباحث كمدير عام لمسرح الحرية)، وطريقة التحليل التاريخي من خلال الاستقصاء الوصفي، حيث استخدم الباحث المقابلات الشخصية كأداة لجمع البيانات، فقد تكونت العينة المختارة لهذه الدراسة من 49 ناشط ثقافي داخل فلسطين وخارجها، كلقاءات مع أشخاص رئيسيين من صانعي السياسات الثقافية، وتركز البحث على الدراسات المقارنة بين فلسطين ومقاربات دولية أخرى في جنوب إفريقيا والهند والبرازيل والمغرب والجزائر، وغيرها، مع بيان أهمية تقديم مفهوم المقاومة الثقافية في ظل تراجع القضية الفلسطينية عن موقعها في خريطة العمل السياسي في العالم، بالإجابة على ماذا نعني بالمقاومة الثقافية في السياق المحلي القائمة على التجارب العالمية؟

فالمقاومة الثقافية هي جزء من حركة ثقافية وطنية تسخر القوة الإبداعية والتعبير الفني في السعي لتحقيق العدالة والمساواة، من أجل تطوير مجتمع فني نابض بالحياة ومبدع في فلسطين، مع التأكيد على الاحتراف والابتكار، فإن هدف من المنظمة الثقافية هو تمكين الشباب والنساء في المجتمع العربي باستكشاف إمكانات الفنون كمحفز مهم للتغيير الاجتماعي.

إن المقاومة الثقافية هي شكل من أشكال المقاومة (وليس بديلاً عنها ولكنها مكملة لها)، والتي بالضرورة لها آثار اجتماعية وتنظيمية مرتبطة بمفهوم التغيير المجتمعي، رغم أن بعض الفلسطينيين يعتقدون أن المقاومة الثقافية محصورة في ممارسة استخدام المعاني والرموز للتنافس في مواجهة القوة المهيمنة، ولكن لها دور أكبر وأوسع في تكوين هوية

جماعية مبنية على شخصية الثورة ضد الظلم، كونها أداة معرفية تقدمية مبنية على تعميق الفهم والتحليل القائم على العلم كوسيلة للارتقاء بالسياسات الثقافية.

ومن أبرز التوصيات التي قدمها الباحث، على سبيل المثال لا الحصر؛ تمكين المسارح الفلسطينية وتمويل القطاع المسرحي من منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية، ضمن تكامل المصالح المشتركة والمفيدة مجتمعيًا، بتطوير منهج متخصص للدراما والتمثيل، مما يساهم في عملية التعبئة الوطنية وخلق جيل مقاوم واعي، من خلال تعزيز الهوية الثقافية الفلسطينية، وإقامة شبكات ثقافية.

كما يرى الباحث أن المقاومة الثقافية هي نموذج للمقاومة في زمن الحرب والسلام، وبناء الهوية الوطنية والرواية الفلسطينية، والتي تحتاج إلى حاضنة شعبية في سياق عملية متكاملة بالتنسيق مع مختلف الجهات الفاعلة، تبعاً للمساهمات الفكرية والأيدولوجية لكل من ماركس وغرامشي، اعتماداً على العمل الإبداعي لبيروتولت بريخت، خاصة في بناء نموذج المسرح الملحمي.

وتتناول هذه الرسالة تأثير المقاومة الثقافية في خلق وضع قيادي جذاب لمدارس الفنون المختلفة ، في إطار منهجيته الناشطون الثقافيون في الأراضي الفلسطينية المحتلة، كخط مليء بالأفكار والتعبيرات المتنوعة، كرسالة للإلهام لمقاومة الفقر والحروب والرقابة والكراهية واستحضار جمال الفنون في الخيال والأصالة والصداقة والتعددية الثقافية، وعن فكرة المقاومة الثقافية التي رسمها أباطره أدب المقاومة الفلسطينية مثل غسان كنفاني وناجي العلي وتوفيق زياد ومحمود درويش وسميح القاسم وراشد حسين وغيرهم ...