Humanism in the Autobiographies of Edward Said and Nelson Mandela: Memory as Action

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Abstract- *This paper focuses on the concept of memory as a form of humanist activism in the autobiographies of Nelson Mandela and Edward Said, namely The Long Walk to Freedom (1994) and After the Last Sky (1999), respectively. I have chosen Mandela and Said because they dedicated their lives and efforts to the service of the cause of freedom in South Africa and Palestine. Their engagement with the political causes of their countries turns into a concern with worldwide struggles for human rights and racial equality. While Mandela emerged as a vital force against apartheid in South Africa, Said was a well-known and influential Palestinian critic and intellectual whose writings tackle the Palestinian struggle for justice within the worldwide experience of imperialism and its binary oppositions of white/black, male/female, superior /inferior. I argue that their autobiographies bear witness to the plight of Black South Africans and Palestinians as both a shared memory resistant to erasure and as a call for justice. Mandela and Said use their personal memories and life stories to construct a public reading of the meanings of the events that shaped them. Both are concerned with the ways their people have been represented by others, and how they struggle to represent themselves.*

Keywords- *Memory; Action; Humanism; Representation; Stereotypes*

INTRODUCTION

> *Memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority.[1]*

In *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Edward Said argues that 'humanism is the only and the final resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history'.[2] For Said, 'the essence of humanism is to understand human history as a continuous process of self-understanding and self-realization, not just for us, as white, male, European, and American, but for everyone'.[3] Said perceives humanism as a secular, hybrid form of activism linked to a process of developing individual awareness. Humanism is not only an admission of the diversity and equality of human beings and human cultures, but also an objection to any violation of the right to equality of the self and the Other. Although humanism is essentially an individual attitude, Said argues that 'a fair degree of my own political and social activism has assured me that people all over the world can be and are moved by ideals of justice and equality'.[4] He thinks that a human tragedy or an act of violation can bring collective support

or protest worldwide. In suggesting that 'the core of humanism is the secular notion that the historical world is made by men and women and not by God',[5] Said appeals to human beings, regardless of their ideological, religious or cultural backgrounds. It is a humanitarian, yet utopian idea, that is 'centered upon the agency of human individuality and subjective intuition, rather than on received ideas and approved authority' and is 'sustained by a sense of community with other interpreters and other societies and periods'. Said confirms further that 'there is no such thing as an isolated humanist'.[6] Central to the service of humanist activism is a dominating system of mass cultural production such as media and advanced means of communication. Said explains that:

> *The Middle East, South Africa and Latin America provide evidence of a direct connection between specialized "area" scholarship and public policy, in which media representations reinforce not sympathy and understanding, but the use of force and brutality against native societies. "Terrorism" is now more or less permanently associated in public discourse with Islam, an esoteric religion or culture to most people. [...] A second example concerns popular meaning given the word "Indians" in discourse about Latin America, especially as the association between*

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[1] Edward Said, 'Invention, Memory, and Place', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Winter, 2000), pp. 175-192, p. 176.
[2] Edward Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 26.
[3] Edward Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 26.
[4] Said, 'Worldly Humanism versus the Empire-Builders', p. 3.

[5] Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, p. 51.
[6] Said, 'Worldly Humanism versus the Empire-Builders', p. 3.

Indians and terrorism is cemented.[7]

Said highlights the pivotal role played by international media and methods of mass communication in (re)circulate rigorous ethnographic representations and stereotypes that reinforce negative images about the Other. Stemming from his belief that 'politics is everywhere', Said argues that 'international media industry is the agent of packaged and commodified information, official narratives and justifications of power that the media, and maintain the status quo, keep things within an acceptable and sanctioned perspective'.[8] Nonetheless, Said assert that media 'can be mobilized in an entirely different way [through] unmaskings or alternative versions in which to the best of one's ability to tell the truth'.[9]

In the forthcoming analysis, I argue that Mandela's and Said's autobiographies or memories adopt humanist attitudes and perform acts that enhance understanding of racial difference and diversity, thus promoting the politics of co-existence and the peaceful settlements of struggles, rather than hostile and violent methods. However, the two thinkers posit justice as a precondition to peaceful citizenship. In their autobiographies, Mandela and Said relate personal experiences of themselves and their families to these of the wider circle of relatives and masses of Black South Africans and Palestinians in their historic and extended fight for recognition and equality. They utilize their growing national consciousness as a means of deepening and enriching their individual agency and transformation into a consciousness of social and political activism and self-liberation. At the same time, both Mandela and Said openly admit and think of the interests and needs of the Other in order to find a common ground. Thus, they represent a perfect, practical model of Said's idea of humanist activism as a form of 'inner faith', 'will', 'emancipation', and 'political activism and synchrony'.[10]

THE INSIDER MEMORIZES SUFFERING: HUMANIST, ARMED ACTION IN THE LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

Mandela concludes chapter three of his autobiography, 'The Birth of a Freedom Fighter', with the announcement that 'he was prepared to use whatever means to speed up the erasure of human prejudice and the end of chauvinistic and violent nationalism. He did not need to become a Communist in order to work with them. He found that African nationalists and African Communists generally

had far more uniting them than dividing them'.[11] Since his emergence as a freedom fighter in 1951, I argue that Mandela's autobiography evolves into a humanist effort for change and re-evaluation of the concepts of identity and resistance in South Africa.

Imprisoned, tortured and abused by the ruling white minority, Mandela symbolizes what he describes as 'the grave plight of the black people that compels them to resist to the death the stinking policies of the gangsters that rule our country'.[12] As an insider, Mandela could not detach himself from the sufferings and systematic process of assimilation, subjugation and dehumanization of the black natives in South Africa. While in prison, Mandela describes how apartheid policies are designed to break one's spirit and destroy one's resolve in the sense that 'the authorities exploit every weakness, demolish every initiative, negate all signs of individuality—all with the idea of stamping out that spark that makes each of us human and each of us who we are'.[13] Through these words, Mandela throws light on the imperialist cultural notions that dominated the South African political scene after the end of British occupation. Being themselves the victims of British imperialism, Afrikaners were now capable of exploiting blacks and running the concentration camps that they themselves once had to suffer within. The Afrikaners go from being the oppressed to the oppressors, by inventing and enforcing the apartheid system, with the maintenance of the same discriminatory cultural myths, as being different, superior and hence isolated from the allegedly barbaric Blacks.

For Mandela, then, the major evil of apartheid is that it is a 'culturally dehumanizing force, for it compels one to adapt by becoming more self-contained and insulated'.[14] In commenting on the Afrikaner cultural myths about their survival in face of British colonialism, Susan Gallagher describes how Afrikaner culture 'glorifies isolation and separation'[15] and consequently, they not only embrace 'disturbing colonial ideas such as flogging, death and extended punishment as being required when the colonized or in their case the barbaric blacks misbehave or become rebellious', but also complicitly conceive of 'institutional violence and injustice structures'[16] as a right and natural way to control and deal with the Other. To expose Afrikaner discriminatory and practices against native South Africans, Mandela adopts a humanist strategy of

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[7] Edward Said, *The Word, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 219.

[8] Edward Said, *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward Said*. Editor David Barsamian, (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 7.

[9] Edward Said, *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward Said*. Editor David Barsamian (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 97.

[10] Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, p. 48, 49, 51.

[11] Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), p. 73.

[12] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[13] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[14] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[15]Gallagher, Susan VanZanten, *A Story of South Africa: J. M. Coetzee's Fiction in Context* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 156.

[16] Abdul R. JanMohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', *Race, Writing and Difference*, Edited by Henry Louis Gates (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 80.

reconciliation and justice, through which he tries to 'underline the many matters that united our people rather than divided them'[17] to replace exclusive and isolating ideas and to 'expose atrocities and inhuman practice' that he was sure 'are condemned by the international community'.[18] For Mandela, black South African must appeal to the human conscience of the international community to promote their struggle for equality and freedom.

In this way, Mandela's struggle is not merely a political effort but also a cultural one. He has first to 'know the enemy's purpose and interests before adopting a strategy to compromise with them'[19], and second to convince his people that 'their survival depended on understanding what the authorities were attempting to do to them, and sharing that understanding with each other'.[20] In order to overcome the sense of separation and hostility on both the cultural and political levels, Mandela continues that 'the masses now had to be prepared for new forms of political struggle',[21] through which the oppressed people and the oppressors reckon that 'the forces of freedom and those of reaction is not very far off'; hence 'truth and justice will prevail'.[22] Put this way, Mandela declares that his target is 'the creation of one nation out of many tribes, the overthrow of white supremacy, and the establishment of a truly democratic form of government'.[23]

In commenting on Mandela's autobiography, Bill Keller affirms that it shows 'a practical man who chooses tactics over principles' and a 'shrewd balancer of honour and interests'.[24] He is 'neither a messiah nor a moralist nor really a revolutionary'. I partially agree with Keller that Mandela is a pragmatist to the core. Throughout his struggle for freedom, Mandela adopts different strategies. In 1953, he was among the first African National Congress leaders to argue for a shift from peaceful civil disobedience to armed insurrection. Even after his colleagues rejected violence as premature, he arranged an unauthorized mission to China to request weapons for the cause,[25] writing that 'nonviolence was not a moral principle but a strategy; there is no moral goodness in using an ineffective weapon'.[26] In 1961, the A.N.C. leadership endorsed armed struggle a few weeks, after Mandela was acquitted on charges of treason. Mandela explains that 'the armed struggle was imposed upon us by the violence of the apartheid regime' and that 'if the oppressor uses violence, the oppressed have no alternative but to respond violently'.[27]

Mandela argues that since the apartheid government was not only pursuing its standard divide-and-rule strategy in attempting to separate Africans from Coloureds and Indians, but was also eager to show the international community that they were being treated properly, oppressed South Africans had the right to defend their 'dignity'. There were stories in the press about the inhuman conditions on Robben Island, about how the prisoners were being assaulted and tortured. These allegations embarrassed the government, and even when it tried to deny them, Mandela spotted the positive side of collective oppression in South Africa. He claims that locking Blacks together in prison and camps 'reinforced their determination. They supported each other and gained strength from each other. Whatever we knew, whatever we learned, we shared, and by sharing we multiplied whatever courage we had individually'.[28] Mandela's autobiography describes the power, determination and honour of the black leadership in fighting against oppression. Throughout these years, Mandela's tactics of negotiation with people of racial difference like Indians and Coloured people and with individuals of theoretical difference like Communists who 'treat Africans as human beings and their equals',[29] are a 'sign', bell brooks argues, 'of [his] privileging of a model of integration, wherein allegiance to blackness was abdicated in the interest of erasing race and promoting an ethos of humanism that would emphasize commonalities between blacks and other races in South Africa'.[30]

However, in 1990, Mandela negotiated with different armed parties in South Africa 'laying particular emphasis on our resolve to cause no more harm to human life'.[31] He supported the ANC's decision to suspend the armed struggle, declaring that 'we had to recognize international realities. Since the ANC faced 'international marginalization', Mandela supported the initiative to deescalate sanctions imposed by the European Community. In 1991 and during the first annual conference of the ANC, Mandela underlined the demanding tasks before the ANC, to transform itself from being an illegal underground liberation movement to a legal mass political party. In doing so, Mandela endorsed peaceful settlements and just political transformation in South Africa. His efforts were crowned with the first democratic elections in 1994, which the ANC won by an overwhelming majority.

In *Nelson Mandela: the Man and the Movement*, Mary Benson drew attention to the way in which Mandela's autobiography explores the complex relationship between

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[17] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom,* p. 333.

[18] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom,* p. 312.

[19] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[20] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[21] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[22] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[23] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[24] Bill Keller, 'The Practical Mr. Mandela', *New York Times Book Review* (December, 1994), p. 18.

http://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/18/books/the-practical-mr-mandela.html

[25] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom,* p. 210

[26] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[27] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[28] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

[29] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 214.

[30] *Bell brooks,* Killing Rage Ending Racism (London: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 241.

[31] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom, p.* 210

individual rights, state violence and resistance in 20th-century South Africa. For Benson, though imprisoned for more than twenty-three years, Mandela 'became the embodiment of the struggle for liberation in South Africa [out of] such total dedication, such total commitment and no soul erosion'.[32] Mandela succeeds in, Benson argues, showing that 'he took to violence, not because he wanted to, but the laws of the land pushed him over the brink'.[33] Tim Juckes agrees with Benson that Mandela's political activism 'shows an awareness that action seeking to transform the society must be appropriate to the circumstances' in the sense that 'only once the state had developed legislation that could make peaceful protest illegal and had made clear its determination to destroy the opposition did it become necessary to intensify the [violent] struggle'.[34] Benson and Juckes view Mandela's autobiography within the lenses of the historic struggle against apartheid.

This paper focuses on Mandela's humanist perspective of end of struggle in South Africa. In Mandela's view, Black South Africans' political problems stem largely from the refusal of Afrikaners and Western powers to really see the humanity of native South Africans and their point of view. Through addressing the international community, Mandela and his party put 'the South African government under growing international pressure, as nations all across the globe began to impose economic sanctions'.[35] He appeals to the humanness and the ethical challenge of Western people as viewing representations of violence and suffering in distant places like South Africa. Mandela highlights the ANC's contact with the international community as the following:

> On the international front, Oliver held talks with the governments of Great Britain and the Soviet Union, and in January 1987 met with the U.S. secretary of state, George Shultz, in Washington. The Americans recognized the ANC as an indispensable element of any solution in South Africa. Sanctions against South Africa remained in force and even increased.[36]

As political violence and international pressure intensify, Mandela 'tries to arrest the spiral of violence'.[37] He met with Chief Buthelezi, declaring that 'I will go down on my knees to beg those who want to drag our country into

bloodshed',[38] Chief Buthelezi agreed to provisionally register for the elections in exchange for 'a promise to subject our differences over constitutional issues to international mediation'.[39] As the whole world celebrates the release of Mandela from prison, Mandela 'wanted his organization to make sure we took advantage of the euphoria generated by [His] release [utilizing] changes in travel, communication, and mass media [as] the world had accelerated; things now happened so fast'.[40] Mandela is concerned means of approaching the international community and forming nonviolent centres of pressure on oppressive political systems worldwide. It is an astounding example of peaceful resistance to discrimination.

THE OUTSIDER RETELLS HISTORY: HUMANIST, CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT IN *AFTER THE LAST SKY*

Said's autobiography, *After the Last Sky* is read within the politics of exile and diaspora. In *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, W. J. T. Mitchell regards *After the Last Sky* as 'a thread leading the writer and his readers back into the labyrinth of otherness and the self-estrangement of exile'.[41] Mitchell continues that Said's memorial narratives accompanied by the photographs of Jean Mohr displace the 'anonymous terrorists by a set of visual facts that Palestinians are also women, children, businessmen, teachers, farmers, poets, shepherds, and auto mechanics. That the representation of Palestinians as ordinary human beings'.[42] Carol Shloss asserts that 'the function of this book, in addition to the act of assembling, is to show forth what seems to be absent about the humanness Palestinian people'.[43] Mitchell and Shloss, like Benson and Juckes, address the doubleness of the *After the Last Sky*'s form as well as the interplay between text and image as a means of revealing the political message of the autobiography.

This paper focuses on issues of nonviolent resistance and possibility of peaceful settlements in Said's retelling of the history of struggle in Palestine. In *Representations of the intellectual*, Said reveals that 'although exile is one of the saddest fates', for intellectuals, it can stand for a median state of discovery and quest for freedom and justice. As an intellectual exile, Said assigned himself 'the role of a marginal, an amateur, an outsider, a disturber of the status

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[32] Mary Benson, *Nelson Mandela: the Man and the Movement* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 994), p. 2.

[33] Benson, *Nelson Mandela: the Man and the Movement*, p. 3.

34 Tim Juckes, Opposition in South Africa the leadership of Z.K. Matthews, Nelson Mandela, and Stephen Biko (*Westport: Praeger, 1995), p. 83.*

[35] Juckes, Opposition in South Africa *the leadership of Z.K. Matthews, Nelson Mandela, and Stephen Biko*, p. 314

[36] Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom, p. 333.

[37] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom,* p. 354.

[38] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom,* p. 354.

[39] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom,* P. 380.

[40] Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom, p. 352.

[41] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 312.

[42] Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, p. 315.

[43] Carol Shloss, "Double-Crossing Frontiers: Literature, Photography, and the Politics of Displacement," in Marsha Bryant (ed.) *Photo-Textualities,*(Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), pp. 141-51, p. 145.

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quo', whose major task is 'breaking down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are so limiting to human thought and communication'.[44] Unlike Mandela, Said lived the majority of his life outside his native land. He was neither a political prisoner nor did he experience physical harm or abuse. However, Said, like Mandela, spent all his life 'speaking truth to power'.[45] *After the Last Sky* combines Said's personal reflections—on exile, the plight of the Palestinians, how they have been represented by others, and how they struggle to represent themselves with a critical evaluation of the process of resistance in Palestine, the aim being 'to integrate public and private realities, and to apprehend the extraordinary variety of individuals and activities called Palestinians with the aim to reach a just settlement with the Israelis'.[46]

Said regards Israeli politics as 'a system of virtual apartheid, in which the rights of Arabs and Jews are legislatively unequal'.[47] As a result, he suggests that Palestinians have to learn from the South African experiences through addressing 'the cultural and political aspects of the Palestinian struggle' worldwide rather than 'locking it within feelings of rejection and armed resistance'.[48] Said admits that the Afrikaners and the Israelis suffered under the unspeakable racist practices of British imperialists and the Holocaust, respectively. Yet, he condemns their use of their tragedies to gain the compassion of the international community and to marginalize their inhuman apartheid policies against black South Africans and Palestinians. For Said, Israelis and Afrikaners, then, are indirect tools of strengthening American and British imperialist domination, respectively.

Said argues further that the passive image of Palestinians in international media plays a significant role in re-enforcing Israeli oppression. Said explains how Arabs do not usually control the images that represent them; they have been confined to spaces designed to reduce or stunt them; they have often been distorted by stereotypes which picture them as 'so low, barbaric, and antithetical as to merit re-conquest', and after 9/11 as 'the iconic terrorist'. As such, in Palestine, 'legal armed resistance' ensues, with 'the disastrous suicide bombings', showing Palestinians, like South African rebels, as 'terrorists'.[49] Yet, Said suggests that, as in South Africa, economic interdependence in Palestine can be utilized as a means of promoting values of just co-existence and acceptance of the Other, rather than a source of exploitation and subordination of Palestinian people. For Said, hostility and violence in Palestine result from 'the absence of secular

and genuinely liberating ideas'.[50] Said suggests, therefore, that Palestinians have to work on the political and cultural levels to 'promote their cause for the international community' and to 'integrate public and private realities', emphasizing that 'the Israelis are not solely to blame, we are guilty'.[51] Said, like Mandela, focuses on violence in Palestine, 'whether it has been the violence of our uprooting and the destruction of our society in 1948, the violence visited on us by our enemies, the violence we have visited on others, or, most horribly, the violence we have wreaked on each other'.[52] Sabra, Shatila, and Bourj el-Barajneh—the ugly, sprawling Palestinian refugee camps lying just south of Beirut–have once again been besieged, bombed, and ravaged in disgraceful acts of racism that should be used to increase international recognition of the justice of the Palestinian cause. Said sympathizes with the Jews who suffered the Holocaust and are the victims of anti-Semitism, but maintains that 'they cannot use those facts to continue, or initiate, the dispossession of another people that bears no responsibility for either of those prior facts'.[53] He advocates efforts to 'cross the line of separation that maintains current apartheid between Arab and Jew in historic Palestine', highlighting the facts that:

> *Despite their enormous power, Israelis have not succeeded in achieving either the acceptance or the security they crave. […] The South Africans in a country twenty times bigger [than Palestine] couldn't for long maintain apartheid. It's unlikely that Israel, which is surrounded of course on all sides by Arab states, is going to be able to maintain what in effect is a system of apartheid for Palestinians when Palestinians are equal in number with them and if you add the other Palestinians and the other Arabs in the region, vastly outnumber them.[54]*

Inside occupied Palestine, Said, like Mandela, supports 'legal armed resistance', the first and second intifadas and praises 'the solidarity of Palestinians in face of the hostile enclosure created around them'.[55] However, he underlines that Palestinians become 'creatures imprisoned by the affable international consensus telling us that, yes, we deserve self-determination, but that we must still be dependent on others, and still wait before we get it'.[56] Said

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[44] Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 23.

[45] Said, *Representations of the Intellectual,* p. 23.

[46] Edward Said, *After the Last Sky*: Palestinian lives / Edward W. Said; photographs by Jean Mohr (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 142.

[47] Said, *After the Last Sky*: Palestinian lives, p. 142.

[48] Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian lives,* p. 12.

[49] Edward Said, 'Israel, Iraq and the United States', Counterpunch (2002), pp. 19-21, p. 20.

[50] Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian lives,* p. 123.

[51] Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian lives,* p. 7-8.

[52] Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian lives,* p. 5.

[53] Edward Said, 'A desolation, and they Called it Peace', *Al-AhramWeeklyOn-line*, Issue No.383 (June 1998), p. 13.

[54] Edward Said, *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward Said.* Editor David Barsamian, (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 7.

[55] Said, *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward Said*, p. 44.

[56] Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian lives,* p. 12.

explains further how the rise of Abdel Nasser fired all Arabs – especially Palestinians – with the hope of a revived Arab nationalism, but after the Union of Syria with Egypt failed in 1961 and the defeat of 1967, Palestinians were 'left alone to fight for existence'.[57] Palestinian dependency on others, Said asserts 'makes little sense to [himself as] an outsider', who, unlike Mandela, spent all his life analysing the mental habits of the colonizer. For Said, realities on the ground require Palestinians not only to 'dog Israeli military might with their obdurate moral claim, their insistence that they would prefer not to leave, not to abandon Palestine forever, and with exposure of their atrocity or inhumanity', but also to be 'open to the Other', rather than sinking into the 'hostilities of our struggle'.[58]

Tracing the similarities between the historical struggles of Black South Africans and the Palestinians against discrimination, Said is optimistic about the possibility of a peaceful settlement between conflicting parties, based on the condition that 'one has to face the other party and to take responsibility for what one did'.[59] Said, like Mandela, defends Palestinians' right to land through propagating politics just citizenship and co-existence.

CONCLUSION

In their autobiographies, Mandela and Said adopt a unique and advanced form of nationalism in the sense that they never ask the colonizers, namely the Afrikaners in South Africa and the Israelis in Palestine, to leave. Rather, they propose just citizenship and co-existence. Mandela and Said represent themselves as products of the socio-political and cultural experiences of their families and countries. Both speak truth to power; both reconcile their aspirations for justice and freedom with the harsh realities on the ground and both uphold the right of the oppressed to resist injustice by all means. Mandela announces that 'nothing is more dehumanizing than the absence of human companionship'. In their autobiographies, Mandela and Said trace long journeys of suffering, resistance and success on the personal and national levels. They are positive figures whose personal success is inseparable from the national struggle of their countries for recognition and justice. The two autobiographies describe with pride, respect and understanding acts of suffering, abuse and collective oppression of Black South Africans and Palestinians. While Mandela takes armed resistance as a way to peaceful settlement in South Africa, Said focuses more on cultural resistance as a means of just settlement in Palestine. Yet, both consider historical facts and the dominant attitude of the international community. The practicality and optimistic sense of the two books show trust in the justice of their cause and encourage their people to resist. The fact that Said mentions the South African experience as an example to be followed by Palestinians initiates a new and distinct trend in the Palestinian intellectual perception of notions of nationalism. Both revolutionize their cultural perception of the rights of the Other, before fighting to overthrow oppression in South Africa and Palestine.

In this way, Mandela's and Said's autobiographies challenge colonial stereotypes of Black South Africans and Palestinians as either menacing rebels/terrorists or as wretched vagrants/ refugees. In doing so, they not only represent new images and traditions resistant to colonial stereotypes about Black South Africans and Palestinians, but also expose the complicit attitudes of the international community towards racial discrimination in the two countries, with the aim to appeal for the cause of justice and acceptance of difference.

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