

Reading the Writing *of* the Wall:  
The Israeli Security Fence/Palestinian Apartheid Wall as Semiotic Text

by

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Abstract

Using theoretical perspectives drawn from critical discourse analysis (CDA) and visual rhetoric, this study examines how the symbolic meaning of two structures, Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence/Palestinian Apartheid wall, are constructed in discourse. Many of the visual rhetorics associated with the structures, including graffiti on the fence/wall and the visual layout of the checkpoint, construct Palestinian and Israeli identity in specific ways. An analysis of interview, textual, and visual data reveals particular rhetorics and discourses operationalizing around the structures including the rhetorics of security, land grab, restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement, and the discourse of Promised Land. I conclude that the symbolic meaning of the structures and rhetoric of the “war against terrorism” align perfectly with Israel’s symbols and rhetoric of sovereign power. The myths created by these symbols are clear: (1) the State of Israel is sovereign; (2) Palestinians in general pose a threat to

that sovereignty; and (3) the protracted conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has no end because Palestinians continue to resist the colonization of historic Palestine.



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by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |      |
|---|------|
| LIST OF FIGURES.....  | viii |
| CHAPTER 1: THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CONFLICT AND THE WALL .....                      |      |
| Research Question and Why This Research Is Important .....                          | 1    |
| Symbols of the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict.....                                    | 9    |
| Israeli and Palestinian Conflict: Discourses and Rhetorics .....                    | 15   |
| Defining Discourse, Rhetoric, and Identity .....                                    | 21   |
| Defining Palestine, Israel, West Bank, Judea and Samaria, Occupied Territories..... | 23   |
| Overview.....   | 25   |
| CHAPTER 2: LOOKING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY .....                           | 28   |
| Theoretical Perspectives from Critical Discourse Analysis.....                      | 28   |
| Identity .....  | 30   |
| Ideology .....  | 33   |
| Looking, Othering, Binaries, and Imperialism .....                                  | 35   |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| The Power of Naming and Defining.....                         | 42 |
| Theoretical Perspectives from Visual Rhetoric .....           | 44 |
| Heteroglossia.....  | 45 |
| CHAPTER 3: SITUATING BETHLEHEM CHECKPOINT 300 & THE WALL...   | 47 |
| Research Setting.....   | 47 |
| Context of Data Collection .....                              | 47 |
| Situating Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the Wall .....         | 50 |
| Data and Data Collection Methods .....                        | 54 |
| Data from Interviews .....                                    | 54 |
| Data from the Wall.....                                       | 56 |
| Data from Textual Artifacts .....                             | 57 |
| Methods for Organizing and Analyzing the Data .....           | 58 |
| CHAPTER 4: RHETORICS CREATED, IDENTITIES CONSTRUCTED.....     | 62 |
| Visual Rhetoric .....   | 63 |
| Visual Rhetoric of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the Wall..... | 64 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Looking and the Construction of the Other .....   | 83  |
| The Rhetorics of Land and Land Grab .....   | 88  |
| The Green Line .....  | 93  |
| Palestinians as a Nationless Other .....  | 97  |
| The Rhetoric of Security.....   | 101 |
| Promise Land Discourse and Construction of the Other .....  | 108 |
| Graffiti and Challenging the Promised Land Discourse .....  | 109 |
| The Rhetoric of Security and Discourse of Promised Land Evident in Official<br>Israeli Discourse..... | 120 |
| Hegemonic Discourse and Ideology .....  | 121 |
| Challenges to the Rhetoric of Security and Discourse of Promised Land<br>.....                        | 126 |
| The Wall as Myth and Visual Rhetoric.....   | 142 |
| Mythological Meaning of Religious Structures and Places .....   | 144 |
| CHAPTER 5: MYTHS, NAMING, AND LESSONS LEARNED .....   | 147 |
| Visual Discourse and the Construction of Symbolic Myths .....   | 148 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Naming and Ethnic Cleansing .....                       | 155 |
| The Terrified Terrorists: Identity and Perspective..... | 163 |
| The Israeli/Palestinian Conflict: Lessons Learned ..... | 166 |
| Where Do We Go From Here? .....                         | 171 |
| What Can We Learn?.....                                 | 173 |
| REFERENCES .....  | 176 |
| APPENDIX A: UMCIRB APROVAL LETTER .....                 | 187 |
| APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....                    | 188 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Figure 1. Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence .....                                  | 11  |
| Figure 2. The “Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence” at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300..... | 11  |
| Figure 3. Map of the area surrounding Bethlehem Checkpoint 300.....           | 52  |
| Figure 4. Diagram of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 .....                           | 65  |
| Figure 5. The initial queuing line at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300.....           | 76  |
| Figure 6. Initial queuing lanes at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300.....              | 76  |
| Figure 7. Palestinian West Bankers on Fridays of Ramadan.....                 | 78  |
| Figure 8. The wall approaching Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 on Highway 60.....    | 91  |
| Figure 9. The “Security Fence” .....  | 103 |
| Figure 10. The “Anti-Terrorism Fence” .....                                   | 104 |
| Figure 11. Image of Palestinian children .....                                | 105 |
| Figure 12. Graffiti of a young Yasser Arafat .....                            | 112 |
| Figure 13. Graffiti of Leila Khaled on the Bethlehem side of the wall .....   | 113 |
| Figure 14. Graffiti symbolizing the Dome of the Rock .....                    | 116 |
| Figure 15. Banksy’s living room scene on the wall.....                        | 126 |
| Figure 16. Banksy’s beach scene on the wall .....                             | 127 |
| Figure 17. The wall, Jerusalem side, located at Bethlehem Checkpoint 30 ..... | 131 |
| Figure 18. Graffiti on the wall located near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 .....   | 132 |
| Figure 19. Graffiti on the wall with the names of Palestinian villages.....   | 133 |
| Figure 20. Letter from a Palestinian Refugee located on the wall.....         | 134 |
| Figure 21. Graffiti of Handala located on the wall .....                      | 136 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Figure 22. The Handala.....  | 138 |
| Figure 23. “Made in the USA” graffiti .....  | 139 |
| Figure 24. The Israeli Ofer Prison .....   | 143 |
| Figure 25. Graffiti showing hands, ladder, collapse of the wall, and Jerusalem ..... | 144 |

## CHAPTER 1: THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CONFLICT AND THE WALL

The Palestinian/Israeli conflict is a protracted, sectarian struggle going back to the emigration of diasporic Jews to historic Palestine in the early 20th century.

Manifestations of this conflict include Palestinian terrorism aimed at Israeli targets, Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, and numerous wars and conflicts with Israel's Arab neighbors including an Israeli military campaign against Palestinian factions in Gaza in 2014. Barnes and Bacon (2009) argued that the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, brought the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to the United States. The U.S. discourse regarding Islamic extremism began to manifest in U.S. news media, and U.S. foreign policy began to focus on terrorists' threats to the United States abroad. Even though the 9/11 hijackers were not Palestinian, not all Palestinians are Muslim, and not all Muslims seek the same solutions to the problems of the region, many Americans began to lump all terrorism together, discursively, to create an ideology and mythology that framed *most* terrorist acts throughout the world as violent attacks on Western-held values and ways of life. This simplistic understanding of terrorism led to the creation of rhetorical binaries needed for identity construction with respect to *us* (Israel, the United States, and other countries with Western-held values) and *them* (terrorists who attack these values).

Scholars have extensively analyzed various aspects of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and theorized about how particular challenges have prevented peace. But they have not examined a critical component of the conflict itself: how the symbolic meanings

of artifacts in the conflict, such as Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall the Israelis built for protection, manifest in discourse. This study seeks to answer how the symbolic meanings of artifacts manifest in the discourse of the conflict. Symbols of the conflict are easy to find: Israeli Jewish settlements, Israeli military personnel that seem omnipresent, checkpoints, bomb shelters in Israeli hotels, and the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, to name a few. Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and a wall that Israel built, ostensibly for security, are two prominent and highly visible symbols that have come to concretize the conflict. This study explores how these two symbols in particular represent myths and meta-signs that communicate, intentionally or unintentionally, ideologies to Israelis, Palestinians, and internationals.

Symbols operate in discourse, and ideologies often shape discourse and the “construction of the other,” which involves a form of “gaze.” Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals have looked for years at visual manifestations of the conflict, including the Israeli-built wall between Israel and the Palestinians, checkpoints, and graffiti on the wall, and these visual artifacts have inevitably become symbolic. The identification cards, permitting process, and Israeli Jewish settlements also serve as discursive, visual props constructing Palestinian and Israeli identity. These visual rhetorics contribute and lead to the construction of other rhetorics that surround the conflict. Architectural structures and bureaucratic devices often symbolize the tensions between Israelis and Palestinians by framing each respective group in particular ways. For example, a prolific amount of graffiti is located on the Bethlehem side of the wall near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. The visuals represent vandalism, tags, and graffiti from prominent artists. Larkin (2014)

called the wall “the world’s largest canvas for oppositional protest art, global critique, and local resistance” (p. 142). The graffiti also reveal important insights and clues about how Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall serve as communicative symbols constructed by and contested in discourse. This study seeks to answer two critical research questions: How is the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall constructed in discourse? How does the presence of the wall and the checkpoint construct the discourses of *othering*? Palestinian and pro-Palestinian activists often name the wall Israel built the “Apartheid Wall,” which immediately evokes apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid policies in South Africa institutionalized racism through legislation by which the ruling, white majority separated and segregated various ethnic groups in South Africa to multiple, non-contiguous enclaves or “Bantustans.” Regan (2008) defined apartheid as “the system established from 1948 onward which had its roots in early moves to implement legislation designed to draw a distinction between black South African peoples and the white colonist” (p. 202). Apartheid means *separateness* and contrasts sharply with the Israeli naming of the fence as a “Security” or “Anti-terrorism Fence” (Regan, 2008). Both names, Apartheid Wall and Security Fence, are particularly significant with regard to how the wall is rhetorically positioned by Israelis, Palestinians, internationals, and Palestinian rights activists. Scholars often compare and contrast the separation and racialization strategies of South Africa with similar legislative mechanisms enacted by Israel (Regan, 2008; Chomsky & Pappé, 2015; Yiftachel, 2009). Yiftachel (2009) specifically offered an analysis of the Israeli colonial practices and legislative policies aimed at Palestinian Arabs and offered a comparison of these policies

with the South African apartheid regime (pp. 15–16). Israel, according to Yiftachel, is increasing and systematically creating “white” spaces for Jews and “colored” spaces for Palestinian Arabs, a strategy similar to South African apartheid. Israeli separation policies systematically confine Palestinians to ghetto-like spaces that resemble South African Bantustans. Israeli Jews, by contrast, live in relatively open spaces (p. 7).

Chomsky and Pappé (2015), however, contrasted South African apartheid to Israeli apartheid:

South Africa was different because the white population needed its Black counterpart. It was its workforce. Israel does not want the Palestinians. South Africa actually supported the Bantustans. They wanted them to develop because they had to reproduce the workforce and to be international recognized. (p. 76)

The distinction between South African apartheid policies and Israeli apartheid strategies, as pointed out by Chomsky and Pappé (2015), help inform the visual rhetoric of the fence/wall. The concrete construction of the wall near Israeli cities and settlements does not allow Israelis to see Palestinian spaces. In effect, it erases them, thus reflecting Chomsky and Pappé’s assertion that Israelis do not want the Palestinians. In other words, Israel is seeking to *erase* Palestinians.

Describing Israeli policies aimed at Palestinians as apartheid receives consideration from scholars. The use of *apartheid* to describe the wall differs greatly from the term *separation*, which implies that two spaces, places, people, or things are separated from one other. As discussed in this dissertation, fences and walls, by their very nature, separate. The two sides of a fence or wall also create separate and distinct

binaries: *here and there, us and them, this space and that space*, the *separate* from the *separated*. These binaries manifest in discourse, particularly regarding the Israeli versus Palestinian identity constructs that frame the conflict as two separate groups fighting one another physically and discursively. Furthermore, “separation,” as ideologically rooted mythology, does not hold the significant historical weight of the term “apartheid.” The latter term implies power to create a separate and unequal constructed identity built on the idea that one people group is superior to another people group. The superior group requires an ideological, institutional, and legal identity that is separate and distinct from the constructed inferior. Whites in South Africa posited themselves as superior to the inferior local Blacks, and they sought to legalize and legitimate separation policies aimed at them. The White minority thus ruled a Black majority. Part of this rule was the creation of separate and distinct homelands or Bantustans in which the local Bantustan has limited self-government (Regan, 2008; Chomsky & Pappé, 2015).

Similar to the way South African Whites constructed indigenous Blacks as inferior *others*, native Palestinian Arabs are constructed as inferior others by Israeli Jewish leadership, specifically, and the West, in general. Said (1978) argued that the Western construction of Arabs, specifically, and the “Orient,” in general, supports an ideological formation and framework that posits Arabs and Orientals as a people who *require* domination (p. 9). Said has argued that the privileged role of culture, particularly Western culture, has largely been ignored in discussion of empire and the modern imperial experience, particularly given the global reach of European imperialism in the early 19th and 20th centuries that “still casts a considerable shadow over our own times”

(p. 5).

The use of the word “apartheid” to describe the wall thus further transforms the wall into a mythological construct that ties it to South African apartheid policies. “Separation,” by contrast, evokes a need for separation, for identity construction or security as the interview data for this study demonstrates. Rogers and Ben-David (2010) examined the various contexts and terms used to describe the structure that separates parts of the West Bank from parts of Israel, which are also terms that connect to rhetorical strategies of various speakers and evoke debate. Rogers and Ben-David’s findings indicated that Israelis and Israeli sources consistently refer to the structure as the “Security Fence,” whereas the Palestinian choice of names differs depending on context.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon designated the term “Security Fence” and approved the initial construction of the fence in the early 2000s (Rogers & Ben-David, 2003). Palestinian sources, Palestinian activist websites, Israeli activists, and many internationals call this same structure the “Apartheid Wall” or the “Separation Wall” ([www.stopthewall.org](http://www.stopthewall.org); [www.electronicintifada.net](http://www.electronicintifada.net)). B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, calls the structure the “Separation Barrier” ([http://www.btselem.org/topic/separation\\_barrier](http://www.btselem.org/topic/separation_barrier)). The Palestinian Grassroots Anti-apartheid Wall Campaign calls the structure the “Apartheid Wall” and argues that the wall’s primary goal is to confiscate more Palestinian land (<http://stopthewall.org/the-wall>). The International Court of Justice used the term “barrier” (U.N. News Centre, 2004), whereas the United Nations used “West Bank Barrier” (United Nations, 2005). Palestinians interviewed for this research study call this same structure “the wall.” This

study will use the term “wall” because I feel it most accurately describes the structure located around Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 where this research study has its primary focus.

The US, other Arab countries, and the United Nations in particular have played and continue to play significant roles in facilitating talks between Israeli and Palestinian leadership in an attempt to resolve the conflict. Political failures, such as the Oslo Accords and the Camp David talks, have further perpetuated Israeli plans of disengagement and separation from Palestinians, particularly in Gaza where rival Palestinian political factions compete for power. The West Bank governing party, Harakatal-Filistin (FATEH), has often competed rhetorically with governing factions in Gaza, particularly Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyyah (HAMAS), for the political and rhetorical framing of peace agreements with Israel. The result of these attempts to resolve the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is often a stalemate on the fundamental issues that divide Israelis and Palestinians: borders for the Israeli state and future Palestinian state; Palestinian refugees’ right of return; Israeli Jewish settlements on internationally recognized Palestinian land in the West Bank; harsh security policies aimed at West Bank and Gaza Palestinians that restrict their freedom of movement; and the ultimate fate of Jerusalem.

This chapter contextualizes the research study and the research questions specific to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, discourses, and symbols of the conflict, including Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall, which together are the primary focus of this research study. Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 is located on the wall and serves as a gate

through the wall. It is the main access point for West Bank Palestinians to enter East Jerusalem and Israel proper. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) reported in 2014 that 4,000 to 6,000 Palestinian workers pass through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 each day between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. West Bank Palestinians with Israeli permission to enter East Jerusalem and Israel proper must pass through this checkpoint. International visitors who wish to access important religious, cultural, and historic sites in the southern West Bank also must use this checkpoint.

In this chapter, I first offer background on the Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence/Palestinian Apartheid Wall as a symbol of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Then I discuss the discursive practices surrounding the fence/wall to situate the research question. Then I offer a brief background on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, which is complicated and multi-layered. Stakeholders in the conflict include not only Palestinians and Israelis, but also international audiences such as the United Nations, the United States, and Israel's neighbors. I then define terms important to the research study including *discourse*, *rhetoric*, and *visual rhetoric*. Scholars have defined these terms differently, and I explain how this research study uses them. Defining terminology is also critical to understanding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and related discourses and ideologies. Naming spaces and places is a significant point of contention between Israelis and Palestinians. I discuss the various names used in Israeli/Palestinian discourse, and I outline how I plan to use these names. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a brief overview of Chapters 2 through 5 of the study.

### *Symbols of the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict*

Central to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is land ownership in general and control of what Israelis generally call “Israel” and what Palestinians generally call “Palestine.” The disagreement regarding naming specifically focuses on land defined by and related to the Green Line, which was brokered by the United Nations and separates Israel from its Arab neighbors, specifically the Jordanian West Bank. Israeli Jewish settlements often locate on the east side of the Green Line, an internationally recognized *de facto* border, and therefore on land that is internationally recognized as Palestinian. One official source, the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, uses intentional visual rhetoric to frame the “Anti-Terrorist Fence,” 1949 armistice line or “Green Line,” and location of Israeli Jewish settlements. The visual and verbal rhetorics in the website argue that the fence serves only one role: security. This specific Israeli source rhetorically frames the fence as a tool that provides security to Israelis and prevents terrorist attacks by Palestinians living in the West Bank (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007). The Israeli website name for the structure is the “Anti-Terrorism Fence.” The website further argues that the fence does not define an internationally recognized border between the State of Israel and a future Palestinian state. Statements in the website reject the recognition of the Green Line as a border, arguing, for example:

The former “Green Line” was the armistice line between Israel and Jordan during the years 1949–1967. It was not the final border between the countries which was to be determined in peace negotiations. The “Green Line” ceased to exist

following the Arab threat to Israel's existence in the spring of 1967, which led to the Six Day War in June of that year. The drafters of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 in November 1967 recognized that the pre-June 1967 lines were not secure. (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007)

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website includes a map that does *not* show the Green Line; a visual tool, a map, becomes a rhetorical device that frames *all* of the land as belonging to the State of Israel and subsequently denies Palestinian claims on the contested land (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007). The path of the Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence illustrated on this Israeli website clearly positions the fence on the east side of the Green Line, carving and curving to further position Israeli Jewish settlements, deemed illegal under international law, on the Jerusalem side of the fence east of the Green Line. The website further uses visual rhetoric to convey that the fence is just that—a fence. In Figure 1, note the image of the fence that is on the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:



*Figure 1.* Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence  
Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007

The image of the Anti-Terrorism Fence, labeled “intrusion detection fence” on the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, contrasts sharply with an image of the “fence” located at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300:



*Figure 2.* The “Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence” at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300  
Photo by R. Chad Holt.

Many Palestinians argue that the “fence” manifests into a wall. Palestinians and internationals, including travelers who pass through the checkpoint and international governing bodies such as the United Nations, argue that the wall confiscates more Palestinian land for the purposes of Israeli settlement development and expansion. The wall is devastating to the Palestinian economy in the West Bank, because tourists and other visitors refuse to subject themselves to rigid security procedures at various checkpoints located along the Anti-Terrorism Fence. As discussed in this dissertation, the wall symbolically and mythically communicates that some *thing* or some *one* must be contained behind the 8-meter high concrete walls. Someone or something needs monitoring through the use of watchtowers positioned near checkpoints such as Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. The impact of these visual rhetorics on the identity construction of Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals is discussed in this dissertation.

The word “fence,” used by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website also conveys an ideological myth of containment: the fence *contains* Palestinian terrorists located in the West Bank, and this containment proves fundamental to providing security to Israelis. Cohen (2006) asserted that fences and walls “contain” ideologically: the terrorist contained behind the fence poses less of a threat to Israeli citizens on the other side of the fence. Hart (2005) pointed to cognitive linguistics that assert certain images and embodied schemas that constitute the foundation for human reason. Hart suggested that the schemata of “containment” and the concept of “container” provide the frame that

leads to the construction of the political discourse surrounding immigration (p. 189). The container or containment schemata directly apply to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the rhetorics of Promised Land and security. Israeli security measures, specifically the Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence and permit systems, “contain” the Palestinians in the “container” of the West Bank, thus further framing them as immigrants in contested land that *belongs* to the Israelis.

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website argues Israel’s historical and religious connection to the contested land. The Hebrew God’s “promise” to give historic Canaan (modern-day Israel, the West Bank, and parts of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt) to the descendants of Abraham, the nomadic shepherd from Ur in southern Mesopotamia who became the patriarch of the Jewish people, informs the Promised Land rhetoric. The affirmation given by the Hebrew God to the descendants of Abraham in the land of Canaan repeats throughout the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 10:19, 12:6–7, 13:15, 15:7, 15:18, 17:18, 26:2–5; 50:24; Exodus 6:8; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 6:10, 9:1, 31:20; Joshua 5:6; Judges 2:1). Jones (2009) argued that the Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence ensures the coherence of Israeli ideological boundaries relative to Eretz Israel (Land of Israel) and Zionism.

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website evokes rhetoric of terrorism that justifies ideologically the construction of security apparatuses. A simplistic understanding of terrorism led to the creation of rhetorical binaries needed for identity construction with respect to Israel and its binary, the Palestinians. The fence reinforces this binary construct because of the dual-sided nature of fences. The very notion of a fence is to create a

boundary or marker designating a space *here* versus a space *there*, which is a binary construction. The term “security” further adds to the binary construction by positing that which needs to be secured against a binary of that which threatens that security. Binary in discourse surrounding the fence is clearly evident in the visual and verbal data collected for this study. Along with the creation of binary, the fence perpetuated the West Bank Palestinians’ identity construction as a security threat.

Cohen (2006) argued that the Israeli Anti-Terrorism Fence’s restriction on movement compromises Palestinian access to cultural and religious sites, prohibits Palestinians from visiting family members in areas cut off from the West Bank, and eliminates employment opportunities for Palestinians in cities such as Jerusalem. The wall also eliminates the ability for many Palestinians to farm, because they cannot access their land due to the location of the fence. Cohen argued that the fence serves a purpose other than reducing the number of Palestinian terrorist attacks in Israel: “In addition, the wall has allowed Israelis to feel that they are protecting themselves from contact with the Palestinians, a much broader desire than the specific matter of suicide attacks” (p. 682).

Cohen described the two dominant interpretations of the fence:

It is intended to protect Israelis from the plague of West Bank suicide bombers by keeping them out of Israel and by containing them in parts of the West Bank.

From the Palestinian perspective the wall is a land grab. (p. 682)

Until the 1967 takeover of East Jerusalem and the West Bank by Israel from Jordan, the Israelis solved their Palestinian “native problem,” a term used by Cohen, by physically removing Palestinian Arabs from Arab villages and cities and by destroying Arab

infrastructure west of the Green Line. The newly occupied territories of East Jerusalem and of the West Bank east of the Green Line re-created the problem of the native Palestinians. Cohen argued that the fence provides a compromise to the native problem, primarily the ideological constructions of security and separation and framing the wall as a means to accomplish both ideals (pp. 682–695).

Other scholars agree with Cohen's (2006) assessment (Billing and Churchman, 2003; Falah, 1996; Shaul, 2006; Usher, 2006). The fence severely limits the movement of Palestinians. It curves and carves through farms, streets, and cities in the West Bank and separates farmers from the fields, students from their schools, and workers from their jobs, thus creating a highly visible obtrusion of normal, daily life (Cohen, 2006, p. 683; Interview Data, 2012).

### *Israeli and Palestinian Conflict: Discourses and Rhetorics*

In the early 2000s, during the second Palestinian intifada, armed Palestinians attacked Israeli targets. In response to these attacks, the Israelis enacted security policies aimed at preventing Palestinian terrorism. Many of these security policies manifested in the form of physical structures (the Israel Anti-Terrorism Fence and barricades constructed on roads inside the West Bank) and physical objects such as checkpoints, barricades, and gates located within the Anti-Terrorism Fence and inside the West Bank and Israel. Israel's leadership frames Israeli Jewish settlements as “security” structures,

many of which are located deep inside the West Bank. Identification cards identify Palestinians' place of residence and thus determine their access to areas both inside and outside the West Bank.

The physical structures and security apparatuses create multiple rhetorics among Israelis, Palestinians, and the international community. The rhetorical practices and discourse surrounding the wall directly connect to, and intersect with, other discourses surrounding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The discourses also manifest in physical symbols such as the Anti-Terrorism Fence, Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, other checkpoints, Israeli Jewish settlements, Jerusalem, and the ID and permit systems, to name a few. Some of these discourses manifest internationally in the United Nations. Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists protesting the barrier use multiple rhetorics to talk about the wall, including the rhetorics of a restriction on Palestinian movement and Palestinian land rights. Other protest rhetorics manifest in graffiti on the barrier.

Khalidi (1991) asserted that the “crux and kernel” of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and what Khalidi called the “Palestinian Problem” are two national movements: the Zionist movement manifested in the State of Israel, and the Palestinian national movement. To describe the mass emigration of world Jewry to Palestine, Zionist thinkers would often use the tagline, “a land without people for people without a land.” The problem with this rhetoric is that Palestine was indeed inhabited by millions of Palestinian Arabs, so it was not “a land without people” as Zionist rhetoric claimed. Many Palestinians had established historic Palestine as their homeland for millennia. Both national movements use visual rhetorics and naming as a discursive strategy in their

respective struggles to establish two nations on the same land and in the same cultural and geographic space. Israelis largely evoke security and Promised Land rhetorics, whereas Palestinians largely evoke a historical rhetoric that posits them as historical natives.

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict connects to broader rhetorics of land rights, land ownership, and security. Dreams and plans for a Jewish state located in Palestine began among Diaspora Jews, particularly in the late 1800s, when Jewish scholars and thinkers such as Alkalai, Kalischer, Herzl, and Hess began to dream of a national Jewish home in historic Palestine. As a result of these influential thinkers, the Zionist movement began, and the first of many Jewish migrations to Palestine occurred in the late 1800s (Barnes & Bacon, pp. 275–304). This large influx of immigrants created tensions and hostilities between native Palestinian Arabs and migrant Jews. The migration of Jewish immigrants continued in several large waves over the next few decades, and the new immigrants frequently engaged in hostile and violent activities against the native Palestinian Arabs, who saw the immigration as an attempt to colonize Palestine. In 1948, a declaration of the Jewish State in historic Palestine led to the defeat of Palestinian and Arab armies by Jewish militia groups. Conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, often backed by Arab countries neighboring the newly formed State of Israel, occurred frequently over the next 50 years.

The Palestinian terrorist attacks of the intifadas born out of over 100 years of Jewish migration to Palestine, and from Palestinian frustration over Jewish colonialism, directly connects to multiple rhetorics surrounding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The

passivity and political leveraging of the Palestinian cause by neighboring Arab countries and leadership further informs rhetorical practices, specifically graffiti rhetorics. Israeli Jews and Jews outside of Palestine who subscribe to the rhetoric of Jewish rights to the land often refer to themselves as “Zionist,” referencing a hill called Zion located just outside historic Jerusalem. This hill represents the historic location of the ancient Judean King David’s city. King David expanded the Israelite kingdom in approximately 1000 BCE and conquered Jerusalem, taking it away from the native Canaanites (1 Kings 8:1; 2 Kings 19:21; Isaiah 8:18; Isaiah 33:14). Further shaping the rhetoric of the Promised Land and the rhetoric of the Palestinian Other is the Hebrew God’s biblical mandate to the Hebrews to destroy all living things in the Promised Land, specifically the native inhabitants and all of their religious sites, buildings, and infrastructure. For example, Numbers 21: 2-3 reads, “Then Israel made a vow to the Lord: ‘If you deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities.’ The Lord listened to Israel’s plea and gave the Canaanites over to them.” Promised Land narratives evident in the Hebrew Bible point to a Hebrew, God-endorsed war aimed at native inhabitants of the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 2:30–35, 7:2–6, 20:10–18). The Hebrew Bible Book of Joshua also outlines a bloody and violent conquest of Canaan on behalf of the colonizing Hebrews, who conquered the land, removed its native inhabitants, and developed their own language, culture, and religious beliefs (Joshua 6:17, 21, 8:24–29, 10:28, 30–32, 37, 39–40).

These religious texts, located in the sacred scripture for Jews, not only frame historic Palestine as *ours*, given to *us* by *our* Israeli God, but they also frame natives as

*others* in need of removal. Israeli military campaigns during the 1948 war followed this religious framing of *ours* versus *others* binary rhetoric in regard to rights to the land. Falah (1996) argued Israel deployed a “total war” strategy during the formation of the Jewish state and its war with Palestinians in 1948. Total war “produces large-scale devastation” in which all buildings and structures, regardless of their historical or cultural significance or importance, as well as densely populated cities, become targets for destruction because total war involves ethnic cleansing or the expulsion of Palestinians from their native land. Arabic buildings, homes, and significant places of culture, worship, and art were destroyed as part of the Israeli total war campaign (p. 257).

The Palestinians name the formation of the Israeli state *al-Nakba*, Arabic words meaning “the catastrophe.” Mahmoud Darwish (2008) recorded the testimonies of various Palestinians who lost their homes, land, and family members as a result of the Nakba. This simplistic understanding of terrorism led to the creation of rhetorical binaries needed for identity construction with respect to *us* (Israel, the US, and other countries with Western-held values) and *them* (terrorists who attack these values), and graffiti on the wall often uses the Nakba as a central theme highlighting the Palestinian rights to the Jewish Promised Land. The Nakba, however, positions the Israelis as terrorists who stole Palestinian land and cleansed the land of Arab Palestinian people and culture. This cleansing, according to Palestinians, is still ongoing. This rhetorical positioning posits *us* (the Palestinians with Palestinian-Arab values) against *them* (Israelis constructed as militaristic colonial occupiers) (Graffiti Data, 2012; Interview Data, 2012).

Usher (2006) agreed with Falah’s (1996) assessment of Israel’s religiously

informed war tactics deployed during the 1948 declaration of the Israeli State and the Nakba. Settler immigrants must achieve military hegemony over their neighboring countries, and they must resolve the problem of the native inhabitants—or the “native problem,” to use Usher’s terminology. The solutions to the newly established Israeli State’s native problem, as discussed by Usher, include annexation, withdrawal, and ethnic cleansing of Arabs from the territories conquered by Jewish militia. Chomsky (2006), Chomsky and Pappé (2015), Darwish (2008), Kadman (2015), Khaled (1971), and Yiftachel (2009, 2010) extensively discussed the expulsion of native Palestinian Arabs from historic Palestine during the establishment of the State of Israel. Pappé (2006), Darwish, and Kadman recorded and discussed extensively the ethnic cleansing of Palestine during the establishment of the newly formed Israeli state by charting the destruction of Arab Palestinian villages. The establishment of the State of Israel displaced 800,000 native Palestinian Arabs and destroyed 531 Palestinian Arab villages. Jewish militias also emptied eleven urban neighborhoods, including Arab neighborhoods in Haifa, of their native Palestinian residents (Pappé, p. xiii, 295).

Sand (2009) discussed the historical and theological ideologies of Jewish Israelis that inform many of the rhetorical practices that contribute to and construct the rhetorics of Promised Land and Palestinian Other. Critiquing extensively the Jewish myth of exile, Sand argued that this myth proves central to Jewish identity and ethnos. Most Jews subscribe to a rhetoric that largely constructs exile as a unifying event that binds global Jews together, regardless of their geographic location or their location across time (pp. 21–22). Modern Jewish liturgy references exile and the exilic narratives that unify the

Jewish people who have subscribed to them. Historical corroborations are dependent on either an overt or hidden ideology, and the State of Israel is no exception (p. 69). Falah (1996) and Usher (2006) agreed that these ideological constructions, rooted in a Promised Land rhetoric, inform the Israeli colonial agenda, resulting in Israeli expansion into internationally recognized Palestinian land using both physical and ideological tools such as Israeli Jewish settlements, the wall, checkpoints located within the West Bank, and the ID card and permit systems. Ironically, many Palestinian refugees from the 1948 Arab/Israeli war also evoke the myth of exile to rhetorically frame *Palestinian* rights to return to *their* historic homeland. This rhetoric largely manifests in a Palestinian refugee's right to return to their historic homeland lost to the formation of the State of Israel and a campaign of ethnic cleansing aimed at Palestinian Arabs (Graffiti Data, 2012).

### *Defining Discourse, Rhetoric, and Identity*

The exilic rhetoric evident in Jewish discourse proves valuable to understanding why religiously pious Jews want to return to historic Palestine (Sand, 2009; Zerubavel, 1995). The Western Wall located in East Jerusalem and even Jerusalem itself take on symbolic and mythological communicative functions that shape discourse, rhetoric, and even visual rhetoric with respect to the conflict. Scholars often debate and discuss the definitions of *discourse*, *rhetoric*, and *visual rhetoric* (Foss, 2004; Blair, 2004; Herrick, 2009). Some scholars use discourse and rhetoric synonymously. Herrick argued that

rhetoric connects to personal, psychological, and political power. Ideology shapes, informs, and constructs it. Rhetoric can shape ideologies that impact other rhetorics, and rhetoric often becomes hidden or embedded in ideologies not immediately evident to the unconscious subscriber (pp. 21–22). Herrick defined rhetoric as “the study or practice of effective symbolic expression” (p. 24), meaning that rhetoric is a type of discursive practice that adapts to an audience and seeks to persuade an audience. Rhetoric is also planned and responsive (p. 24). The present study uses the term *rhetoric* as defined by Herrick.

Foss (2004) defined visual rhetoric as “the actual image or object rhetors use when they use visual images for the purpose of communicating” (p. 304). Three characteristics define artifacts as visual rhetoric: they must be symbolic, involve human interaction, and serve a communicative function. Foss argued, “Visual rhetoric is symbolic action in that the relationship it designates between images and referent is arbitrary, in contrast to sign, where a natural relationship exists between the sign and the object to which it is connected” (p. 305). The artifact must be represented to an audience for the purpose of communicating (pp. 304–305). This study uses the definition of visual rhetoric offered by Foss and pays particular attention to the three characteristics of visual rhetoric offered by Foss.

This study also uses Gee’s (1999) definition of *discourse* as “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, and ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (p. 29). Discourses involve what Gee called “props,” such as

books, classrooms, laboratories, technologies, words, and symbols (e.g., basketballs for basketball players). Words, action, beliefs, emotions, values, and interactions constitute “being and doing in X,” in which recognition of these words, beliefs, actions, and so forth create a discourse (p. 37). Gee explained, “In the end a discourse is a ‘dance’ that exists in the abstract as a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, time, and place, and in the here and now as a performance that is recognizable as just such coordination” (p. 36). This research study uses Gee’s vivid definition of discourse.

*Defining Palestine, Israel, West Bank, Judea and Samaria,*

*Territories, Occupied Territories*

Rhetorical practices surrounding Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall illustrate the inherent problems associated with naming the geographic spaces located near the wall. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu named the West Bank “Judea and Samaria,” biblical names for the West Bank. This evokes Promised Land rhetoric and thus rhetorically frames Israel’s biblical *rights* to *all* the land, including the West Bank (Netanyahu, 2011).

Palestinians engage in a similar rhetorical strategy. Palestinians often name the same place *Palestine* or *Filistin* to demarcate a specific geographic space that often includes the State of Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Bethlehem is located on the east side of the wall in a geographic space known in Palestinian, Israeli, and international

sources as the West Bank. This study refers to the east side of the wall as the Bethlehem side and West Bank, and to the west side of the wall as the Jerusalem side and Israel proper. This study uses West Bank to designate the geographic area east of the Green Line to the Jordan River, and State of Israel or Israel proper to designate the area west of the Green Line to the Mediterranean Sea.

The naming of Palestinians and Israelis further complicates rhetorical practices and discourses. Over two hundred thousand Palestinians live on the west side of the wall in Israel proper, yet they do not hold Israeli citizenship (Interview Data, 2012).

Demographics and rhetorical positioning of the land by Israelis further complicate the simple binary names of *Israel/Israeli* and *Palestine/Palestinian*. This study refers to Palestinian Arabs living on the east side of the wall as West Bankers, and to Palestinian Arabs living on the west side of the wall as Jerusalemites. Palestinians living in Israel proper are identified as Arab Israelis.

The term *Israeli*, equally vague and non-descript, might or might not include secular and religious Jews with Israeli citizenship, Mizrahi, Ashkenazi, or Sephardi Jews with Israeli citizenship. This study primarily distinguishes between Israeli citizens with Israeli citizenship who live in Israel proper west of the Green Line and Israelis living in settlements east of the Green Line. The study refers to Israelis who live east of the Green Line as Jewish Israeli settlers. Israelis who live west of the Green Line are called simply Israelis. Palestinian Jews also represent a subset of Israeli citizenship that includes practicing Jews, secular Jews, Samaritans, Jewish proselytes, and other Palestinians who claim a Jewish lineage. In an effort to distinguish Palestinian Jews from Palestinian

Arabs, this study will use the term “Palestinian Arabs” or “Palestinians” to designate both Muslim and Christian Palestinians.

### *Overview*

The discursive practices surrounding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict prove difficult to unravel and understand, and scholars have discussed the implications of the wall and checkpoints extensively. Amir (2011) said that the wall in East Jerusalem not only served as a comprehensive border or mere barrier, but also was being constructed to reinstate “sovereign power” through a process of racialization that prevented Palestinian residents of Jerusalem from becoming full members of Israeli society and fully integrated into Jerusalem municipality services. Bushbridge (2013) agreed with Amir and said, “It is not surprising, and then, that the wall is most often read as the ultimate demonstration of Israeli sovereign power” (p. 659).

The wall separates West Bank Palestinians from Israelis who live in Israel proper and from most Jewish Israeli settlements in the West Bank. It prevents Palestinians on the Bethlehem side of the wall from accessing important educational, health, and religious services and spaces on the Jerusalem side of the wall. Checkpoints like Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 are often located deep inside the West Bank. Kotef and Amir (2011) argued that checkpoints in the West Bank “prevent the establishment of a viable, independent Palestinian entity, and they prevent maintenance of a political and continuity” (p. 57).

The location of the wall also points to Israeli ideologies about the land and Palestinians. Tamimi (2011) argued that Israel chose this location for the wall not for security reasons, as the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs argues, but rather to secure and control the largest source of water in historic Palestine after the Jordan River. Controlling water points to an ideology reflected in Zionist rhetoric that would claim that Zionist immigrants came to Palestine to “make the desert bloom” and make the “Promised Land fertile.” These scholars did not explore how the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall was constructed in discourse, which is what this study seeks to do.

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical perspectives and concepts offered by critical discourse analysis and visual rhetoric scholars. I review the literature relative to the research questions and discourse/critical discourse analysis, a theoretical perspective and method for analyzing discursive practices. I chose the concepts discussed in Chapter 2 because Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall are visual symbols that Israelis, Palestinians, and internationals view as such. These concepts emphasize looking and “the construction of the other” as specific to discourse, ideologies, identities, and power.

Chapter 3 discusses the methods of analysis applied to the interview data and images of graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall. I discuss the research setting and context of data collection. I situate the wall with regard to the people, activities, and structures surrounding the wall, including a discussion of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. Data, data collection methods, and methods of organizing and analyzing the data are discussed.

Chapter 4 analyzes the interview data collected in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall, and images and descriptions of the wall located on the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. The data reveal discourse specific to the wall and how the visual rhetorics and operational procedures at the wall and Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 shape Palestinian identity and discourse about the wall. The graffiti data analyzed further reveals additional discourses and rhetorics specific to Israeli security policies aimed at West Bank Palestinians.

Chapter 5 discusses the discourses and rhetorics evident in the interview, wall, checkpoint, and graffiti data, and how Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall as symbols are constructed in discourse. I discuss ideologies that inform the discursive practices and rhetorical strategies, specifically the act of naming, with examples of how discursive props such as the wall, checkpoint, and ID further frame Israelis and Palestinians, creating myths and meta-signs that contribute to furthering conflict and destructive discourse. Finally, I analyze graffiti located near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 in relation to its contribution to and construction of specific rhetorics.

## CHAPTER 2: LOOKING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

In the introduction, I set the context for the investigation of discourses, both verbal and visual, that shape the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Scholars have used various theoretical lenses to better understand how discourses and the use of language shape contexts and, particularly in this case, conflicts.

Central to this research study is the act of looking and *Othering*. Israelis, Palestinians, and internationals *look* at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall, and these respective groups each *create* the other. In this chapter, I discuss theoretical concepts relative to looking and Othering. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and visual rhetoric scholars use these concepts to explore the relationship between symbolic meaning, discourse, identity, and ideology. Many of the concepts discussed in this chapter overlap and intersect.

### *Theoretical Perspectives from Critical Discourse Analysis*

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) frameworks offer concepts that, when applied to the discursive practices surrounding the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, provide a means of understanding power inequities relative to the stakeholders involved in the conflict. These concepts provide insights into symbolic texts about Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall, and into the discursive practices related to fundamental issues that divide Palestinians and Israelis. Discursive practices often construct power

inequities between discursive communities. The discourse of Israeli “rights” to the “Promised Land” often manifests in Jewish Israeli settlement development in the West Bank and the construction of Israeli structures on land internationally recognized as Palestinian. A discourse of Israeli “security” often manifests in security policies aimed at West Bank Palestinians. As both a theoretical lens and analytical method, CDA provides a tool to explore these discourses and their manifestations. Fairclough (2001) defined discourse as the whole process of a social interaction in which the text is just a part. Discourse is determined by social structures and thus contributes to social continuity and change (p. 14). Fairclough defined text as “what is said in a piece of spoken discourse” (p. 20). Fairclough critiqued a positivist approach to texts, which sees language texts as objects whose properties can be mechanically described without any interpretation (p. 20).

Gee (1999) argued that CDA exposes power in the language use surrounding social practices. Gee stated that CDA “argues that language-in-use is always a part and parcel and partially constitutive of, specific social practices that social practices always have implications for inherently political things status, solidarity, and distribution of goods and power” (p. 68). The examination of communication and rhetorical practices of particular groups through the critical examination of discourse, using CDA as an analytical tool, reveals accurate reproductions of power relationships and inequality structures. CDA also offers insights into how discourse shapes the identity of others.

I use Fairclough’s (2001) definition of text specific to the process of social interaction. Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall are texts, and Bethlehem Checkpoint

300 is also a social space in which Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals socially interact. The following questions are not the research questions, but answering them should provide insights into how the symbolic construction of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall are constructed in discourse:

- How do Palestinians, internationals, and Israelis talk about the social interaction at the checkpoints?
- How do they “look” at the visual design of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300?
- How does the visual design of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall reflect Palestinian, Israeli, and international identities relative to the construction of the other?
- How do this looking and Othering at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 contribute to the discourse about Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall?

### *Identity*

Gee (1999) defined identity as “ways of being in the world at different times and places for different purposes; for example, ways of being a ‘good student,’ an ‘avid bird watcher’” (p. 3). Gee also argued that different people have access to different identities and practices, and these identities and practices connect to different sorts of status, social goods, and social practices (p. 30). Gee’s concepts raise an additional sub-question: How does the social practice of *showing* your ID when passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 construct the ID holder’s identity?

Ainsworth and Hardy (2004) further discussed the implication of discourse on identity construction, stating that “rather than autonomous subjects using discourse to construct identities, it is discourse that produces power-knowledge relations within which subjects are positioned, identities are constructed and bodies disciplined” (p. 238). This point by Ainsworth and Hardy is difficult to overstate. Discourse shapes identity. Identity does not shape discourse, according to Ainsworth and Hardy. CDA’s use of a systematic and detailed form of textual analysis is derived from conversational analysis, institutional dialogue, and pragmatics to reveal power inequities and identity constructions accomplished through discourse and rhetorical practices. Ainsworth and Hardy argued that CDA can reveal reproductions of power relationships and inequality structures. The critical examination of texts provides insights into the practice of looking and the construction of the Other. Ainsworth and Hardy claimed that discourses embody prejudices and racisms that manifest in racist views, practices, and behaviors. As Ainsworth and Hardy further explained, “In the context of identity, texts are seen as ‘empirical materials that articulate complex arguments’ about social identities of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc.” (p. 238).

Cohen (2006) explained that walls have long been used as defensive mechanisms and means of separation. China’s Great Wall is known for its size, length, and age. The Roman Emperor Hadrian’s Wall, separating Scotland from England, remains visible almost 1,900 years after its construction. These ancient walls remind modern viewers that people in antiquity were deeply concerned with security and separation, and they invested huge efforts in the construction of walls. In more recent times, the Maginot Line,

constructed in 1930, deflected an advance of Germany on France. The Berlin Wall divided West Berlin from East Berlin for 45 kilometers. Shaul alluded to the symbolic meaning of the Berlin Wall: “The Berlin Wall became an emblem for repression, denial of human rights, and state violence. Indeed, the wall acted as a lengthening rod for the accumulated tension and hostility that characterized the bipolar world of the Soviet Union” (p. 683). The Berlin Wall, like the wall in the West Bank, created a visual and rhetorical binary constructing an *us* and *them*. Fences and walls, along with their respective ideological myths of security and separation, require, if not construct, an ideological, symbolic, and mythological opposite present in that, which is separated. Viewers transform fences/walls into myths and meta-signs that communicate separation, otherness, and distinctiveness. The Berlin Wall not only physically separated East from West Germany, but it also symbolically communicated the difference between the east and west side of the Berlin Wall.

This study focused on a section of the wall in the West Bank at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, yet innumerable symbolic and mythological constructs create similar communicative myths regarding separation and the opposite. These include visual structures such as walls, fences, boundaries, and lines. These symbols are evident in neighborhoods, villages, cities, towns, and institutions of all sorts. Separation of people, places, and spaces is a means of control and an instrument of power, even if the control is symbolic and mythological. Neighborhoods in the U.S. and abroad often contain invisible lines demarcating one piece of property from another piece of property and one person from another person. Visuals often define *this* separate space, and by defining *this* space,

visuals separate it from *another* space. For example, the construction of a 700-kilometer-long barrier separating Israelis from Palestinians suggests that keeping Israelis separate from Palestinians is a top priority, not only for the safety and security of ordinary Israeli citizens, but also for the construction of the distinct and separate Israeli Jewish identity. Formed millennia ago, this religiously informed Jewish identity is rooted in an ancient theological, ideological, and mythological symbol of separateness. Zionists referred to this ancient identity as a “suppressed historical past.” (*Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel*, 1948; Exodus 19:3–6; Leviticus 15:21; Ezra 6:21, 10:11; Zerubavel, 1995, p. 54).

Because this particular wall falls within a global context of walls, I chose to focus on the discourse created by *this* wall, and how the symbolic meaning of *this* wall manifests in discourse. I use Gee’s (1999) concept of identity and his application of CDA to explore how the discourse about Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall shapes the identities of Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals. I explore how the visual data on the wall, primarily graffiti, and the visual layout and bureaucratic procedures at the checkpoint shape the identity of others.

### *Ideology*

Fairclough (2001) defined ideology as “‘ideas which arise from a given set of material interests in the course of the struggle for power” (p. 78). Ideologies are institutional practices that individuals draw upon without even realizing it. For

Fairclough, ideologies encompass assumptions that legitimize power relations, either directly or indirectly, primarily through the means of coercion and consent. Fairclough said ideology embeds in discourse, and the struggle for power over language is often rooted in ideologies. Those in power keep and exercise their power through coercion and consent. They must maintain a constant struggle with others in the exercise of power through language (pp. 28–29). Fairclough said ideology shapes rhetorical practices and the maintenance of power structures through the use of language. Ideologies closely link to power because ideological assumptions embed in conventions, i.e., the conventions themselves become a mechanism for legitimizing power through ordinary and familiar ways of behaving, which take for granted their relationship to power (p. 2). Ideologies influence the production of texts, and texts influence the production of ideologies.

Amer (2012) used CDA to analyze the themes of a Palestinian homeland evident in Palestinian discourse. Pointing to van Dijk, Amer said that most of these ideological battles between Palestinian factions take place discursively and through discursive acts in which “ideologically motivated meanings are produced, inculcated, legitimized, or contested” (p. 118). Using a largely thematic approach, Amer discussed the similarities and differences between the secular and Islamic discourses by examining official texts from each respective group. He concluded that secular and religious discourses share common elements that define the Palestinian political entity within East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza, and that have a direct impact on the ongoing conflict with Israel (p. 128). Israelis and Palestinians share a common territorial history, mainly involving attachment to the land and the desire for statehood.

I used Amer's model of applying CDA to texts to explore what themes shape and inform the discourse surrounding the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall. Like Amer, I analyzed "official" perspectives on Bethlehem Checkpoint and the wall from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. These analyses raised additional sub-questions:

- What themes manifest in these official sources?
- What ideologies shape the discourse surrounding the practice of passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 relative to these texts?
- How do those ideologies shape the discourse surrounding the checkpoint and the wall?

### *Looking, Othering, Binaries, and Imperialism*

Central to this study are the concepts of looking and construction of the Other. As Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals look at the wall, this process of looking shapes their discourse and the construction of identities evident in their discourse. Looking also creates Othering and binaries that often position *us* on one side of the wall and *them* on the other side. This section on the theoretical perspectives discusses concepts associated with looking and the concepts of Othering, binary rhetorics, ideologies, naming, and defining.

Visual rhetoric scholars, particularly Sturken and Cartwright (2009), prove helpful with understanding looking. They assert that looking or gazing establishes power,

establishes the other, and creates a *me* and *other* binary. Those who look have more power than those who are looked upon (pp. 111–114). Gazing and looking, concepts that I use interchangeably, involve a process of Othering, whether intentional or unintentional, individual or institutional. Sturken and Cartwright said this process of Othering involves power because when we look, we construct our own identity by contrasting it with the *other* that receives our look. Looking assigns the one who is looking as normative (or unmarked) and the one looked upon as marked or other (p. 106, 111).

Sturken and Cartwright (2009) examined a wide range of theories about how we engage in looking, specifically examining visual culture, which they defined as “the shared practices of a group, community, or society through which meanings are made out of the visual, aura, and textual world of representations and the ways that looking practices are engaged in symbolic and communicative activities” (p. 3). Sturken and Cartwright said that just as humans give meanings to objects, objects give meaning to humans and the social networks and processes in which we engage. They claimed, “This means that artifacts such as images and imaging technologies have politics and agency” (p. 3). Texts are produced through the act of reading and performed according to the cultural and political perspectives of the reader, rather than the intentions of the author (pp. 52–53). Sturken and Cartwright said, “It is the job of the critical reading not to simply point out dominant meanings for others to see but to show how these meanings are made. The text is also open to meanings and interpretations that exist alongside and even against these more obvious meanings” (p. 52). Producers have an intended meaning, but context of meaning and meaning interpretation is not in the full control of the

producer (pp. 53–55). Sturken and Cartwright offered an example of an Othering binary that clearly illustrates their concepts of looking, Othering, and binaries within Western and Eastern cultures. The wall itself creates a binary because it has largely constructed Israelis on one side and West Bank Palestinians on the other.

Said's (1978) concept of orientalism focused on how Western scholarship constructs East and West binaries. This construction was central to Said's concept of imperialism. Said (1994) defined imperialism as “thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others” (p. 7). Said argued that land is central to imperialism. Culture connects to imperialism and the acquisition of land, and Said pointed to the American cultural attitudes toward greatness, hierarchies of race, and American exceptionalism as manifestations of imperialism. Said further argued that empire depends upon ideological support of itself; in other words, empire depends upon the idea of empire (p. 11). The West has positioned itself as “saviors” of the barbaric savages who have required domination. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of imperialism on an unprecedented scale, as British, French, and U.S. empires flourished. Profit drove the expansion of Western empires, and the ideology of imperialism must have support from ordinary or “decent” men and women who “accept the notion that distant territories and their native peoples *should* be subjugated” (p. 10).

Said's (1978) concept of imperialism is rooted in the ideological construction of the binaries of occident and orient. The orient is anything or anyone other than the occident; thus it is both an Othering and a binary. Said argued that the relationship between the occident and the orient is one of power and dominance. The West assigns the

identity of orient, thus forming a constructed grid by which the West views others in opposition to the Westerner identity construct (pp. 5–6). Said said that the Western identity construct posited itself as dominant and superior and, consequently, non-Western culture as dominated and inferior. Cultural artifacts such as film, books, language, and movies have become catalysts for perpetuating a hidden imperialistic ideological agenda for the West, which moved from movies to wars and from books to domination of people on foreign lands.

Smith (1993) agreed with Said (1978) and stated that an imperialistic ideology justified the conquest of Palestine by European Zionism. Palestinians point to European Zionism, dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East as examples of this imperialistic rhetoric that authorizes, if not *requires*, one culture to dominate another. I argue that an imperialistic ideology discussed by Said influences the naming of West Bank Palestinians as others. The acts of looking and Othering, as discussed by Sturken and Cartwright (2009), posit West Bank Palestinians as others from whom Israelis, normative and unmarked, needed separation and security. I use the concept of imperialism to explore how this ideology manifests in discourse specifically related to Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall.

Bushbridge (2013) offered a perspective that overlaps with the concepts of looking and Othering. He said that the wall performs not only the exclusion of the Palestinian Other, but that it also expresses the anxiety directed toward the construction of a Palestinian Other “out there” on the other side of the wall (p. 661). Bushbridge argued that the line where civilization ends and violence may be freely exercised against

the uncivilized for the fact of their incivility is demarcated and represented by the wall (p. 661). The wall draws a line and constructs a “civilized in here” contrasted with an “uncivilized out there,” thus forming the double function of creating a perceived bounded, protected national territory enclosure, while buttressing control of territory outside that same enclosure. The “dangerous” other is only present in the various manifestations of the wall: a fence, barbed wire, watchtowers, concrete slabs, and checkpoints. As Bushbridge explained, “Security technologies ‘wipe out’ and obscure the presence of undesirable populations, just as the separation wall obscures and writes out over the presence of Palestinians, replacing them with, quite simply, a wall” (pp. 660–661).

The wall, however, fails to defend completely against the Other “out there” because of Jewish Israeli settlers living on the West Bank side of the wall, thus highlighting the complex relationship, between settler and state, of theology and politics in Israel that has materialized in the wall. This ideological dialectic threatens to undermine State because of the large number of Jewish settlers on the West Bank side of the wall (p. 658). Settlers existed before the wall, and the State of Israel encourages settlement in the West Bank. The justification for the continued settlement of the West Bank east of the Green Line is framed as “security” by Israeli leadership. In other words, settlement construction in the West Bank provides structural buffers between the State of Israel and its Arab neighbors to the east, including Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank. Palestinians argue that the continued settlement and occupation of the West Bank east of the Green Line functions to further confiscate Palestinian land.

Settlements built in the West Bank further contribute to an *us versus them* binary. Crowley (2006) provided additional insights into *us* and *them* binary rhetoric that positions Israelis on one side of the “Anti-Terrorism Fence” and Palestinians on the other side of the “wall.” Both discursive communities construct an *us versus them* rhetorical binary operationalizing in and around Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall. This rhetorical move results in friend versus enemy relation as well as a collective versus individual identity formation (p. 20). Quoting Mouffe (2000), Crowley stated, “This can happen when the other, who was until then considered only under the mode of difference, begins to be perceived as negating our identity” (p. 20). Typically, the hegemonic discourse posits the *us* as right/good and the *other* as wrong/bad, thus discursively solidifying the identities of both constructs.

I use Bushbridge’s (2013) concept of the other, as represented in the wall, to further explore the symbolic meaning of wall evident in discourse. The graffiti on the wall further speaks to the wall’s symbolic meaning, the concepts of looking and Othering, and the concept of binaries. Bushbridge provided insights into the symbolic meaning of the wall: “It is not surprising, then, that the wall is most often read as the ultimate demonstration of Israeli sovereign power” (p. 659). Bushbridge, however, did not connect the symbolic meaning of the wall to discourse about the wall.

Crowley’s (2006) perspective on binary rhetoric proves helpful in understanding the simplistic bifurcation of *Israelis* and *Palestinians*, as employed in language use, but Crowley’s perspective applied to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict represents an idealistic viewpoint on the issues that divide Palestinian and Israeli leadership. A wall both

physically and symbolically divides West Bank Palestinians from most Israelis living in Israel proper. Simplistic language binaries reflecting the binary separation of *us* on one side of the wall and *other* on the other side fail to capture the complexities of the stakeholders involved in the conflict: Israeli settlers, secular Israelis, religious Jews, Palestinian Jews, West Bank Palestinians, Arab Israelis, and Palestinian Jerusalemites, not to mention international stakeholders.

I use the concepts of looking, Othering, binaries, and imperialism offered by Sturken and Cartwright (2009), Said (1978), Bushbridge (2013), Usher (2006), and Shurky (2013) as a lens to explore the interview data. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is largely a conflict of looking, Othering, and the creation of binaries. The interview and visual data speak to these concepts and the discourses they have created. The symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall constructed in discourse involves a process of looking, Othering, and binaries, further shaped by Said's concept of imperialism. Israelis from Jerusalem and other parts of Israel proper "look" at the wall. I use Usher's (2006) "native problem" to further explore how Israelis construct West Bank Palestinians in discourse, and what ideologies evident in discourse shape this framing.

When applied to the data, these theoretical perspectives began to raise sub-questions:

- How does Usher's (2006) concept shape discourse about Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall?
- How does the concept of "native problem" intersect with the concepts of looking, Othering, and binaries?

- How has imperialism shaped this gaze?
- When Israeli security personnel “look” at Palestinians and internationals crossing the checkpoint, what do they see?
- How do the visual space and the bureaucracy created by passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 create rhetorical binaries, and what ideologies have shaped these binaries?
- When Palestinians “look” at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and wall, what do they see?
- What do Palestinians see when they pass through the checkpoint?
- What do Israelis and internationals see when they look the graffiti on the wall?
- How do *they* construct the *other*?
- How do the checkpoint and wall construct the other from the Palestinian perspective?
- How do these symbols construct other from the Israeli perspective?

The concepts discussed here help answer these important questions relative to the discourse surrounding the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall.

### *The Power of Naming and Defining*

The power of naming and defining relate to the concepts of CDA, looking, Othering, binaries, and imperialism. Bourdieu (1982) said that language and the power to name represent an institutional authority to delegate the power of words/language/naming

to an authorized spokesperson. The ability to name illustrates a struggle over *who* and *what* has the power to name and classify. Bourdieu said the power of naming and speech is nothing more than delegated power. Language itself has no authority; at best, it *represents* authority (pp. 107–109). Institutions grant language authority; therefore, authority comes from the outside. The power of words resides not in the individual, but rests on the “accumulated symbolic capital” of the institution that delegate’s power to speak to an authorized individual authority (pp. 110–111). In other words, *who* or *what* defines *who* is classified as a particular ethnic group or race? *Who* defines *what* is named “Israel” and what is named “Palestine?” Who or what institution has the power to name a structure a “fence” or a “wall?” Where and how did they receive this power to name? How does naming shape the discourse surrounding Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall? Bourdieu assumed that all social agents have “aspired” to have the ability to name.

I use Bourdieu’s (1982) concepts of naming and defining to explore how the act of naming has shaped the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall in discourse. The act of naming and defining demonstrates a characteristic of ideological power, a concept introduced by Fairclough (2001). Within the context of Israeli/Palestinian discourse, ideological power shapes looking, Othering, and often constructed binaries. Israeli discourse, as demonstrated in the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, names the land as “ours,” the Israelis’, because our Israeli God gave the land to us millennia ago. Many Palestinians, on the other hand, name the same land “Palestine” and point to Christian and Muslim religious structures on the land to justify their respective land claims and historical and theological claims to the land. Both

communities claim a historical connection to the land, grounded in their respective religious traditions. Both Israelis and Palestinians use naming in discourse to evoke rhetoric of historical precedence, arguing that each respective community has historic and even religious claims to the land. For Palestinians and Israelis, naming and renaming becomes central to their claims to contested land and consequently to accepting or denying the *other* community's historical and religious narrative.

#### *Theoretical Perspectives from Visual Rhetoric*

Visual rhetoric scholars provide concepts helpful to understanding, looking, and Othering as they relate to the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall. Their perspectives also prove valuable for analyzing the wall as a visual artifact, and for how the visual design of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall shapes discourse about the wall. Foss (2004) said the “function” of visual artifacts focuses on the communicative effects of the visual rhetoric on audiences. Function is not synonymous with purpose, which involves the intended or desired effect by the creator of the image. Function persuades, using symbols designed to change audience members’ perception in specific ways (p. 309). In Foss’s article, conception of the audience was a major feature of the rhetorical response to a particular visual artifact (p. 306).

I apply Foss’s (2004) concepts of function to Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall. EAPPI’s diagram of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall located at this checkpoint receive analysis relative to the presented and suggested elements. A diagram

of the “security fence” located on the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website also receives analysis relative to Foss’s concepts of function.

### *Heteroglossia*

Graddol (2006) discussed the concept of heteroglossia, defined by the meanings conveyed by the various modes and the multiple contradictions found in the semiotic modal constructs. Graddol applied this concept to a wine label, arguing that the bar code, a code of numbers, nibbles around the label indicating the batch and time of bottling, graphic design of rules, words organized in space, and typography visually code language (pp. 195–196). The various semiotic resources of text speak to the multiple audiences in particular ways, and these audiences recognize social and economic relationships that the producer wants to construct. The bar code addresses the retailer and laws requiring information about the dangers of alcohol consumption; therefore this text also addresses the consumer (pp. 196–197). Also, the design of the wine label addresses multiple readerships in complex and contradictory ways associated with the consumption of wine.

I use Graddol’s (2006) concept of heteroglossia as a lens to examine the graffiti on the wall. The graffiti includes a hodgepodge of vandalism, images of landscapes and symbols, and words in various languages, and it addresses different audiences in contradictory ways. Graffiti on the wall reflects multiple discourses, often constructing West Bank Palestinian identity as both peace seekers and warriors against Israeli colonial expansion and Israel’s expulsion of Palestinian Arabs. Internationally known graffiti

artists, such as Banksy, Blu, Sam 3, and Ron English, have created large works of graffiti on the wall, which are often located near more simplistic graffiti tags and vandalism. One restaurant owner in Bethlehem, Joseph Hasboun, hung the menu for his restaurant, Bahamas Seafood, on the wall (Parry, 2010, p. 20). Some of the graffiti analyzed evokes Picasso's *Guernica* and, at the same time, provides a message of hope to Palestinian residents of Aida refugee camp located near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. Graffiti on the wall constructs Palestinians both as victims with no power and as victors with power. It evokes the contradictory rhetorics of Palestinians' right to return to their homes in historic Palestine, and of the denial of Israeli rights to return to arguably *their* historic homeland. Graddol's (2006) concept of heteroglossia helps explain the message, audience, and semiotic meaning of the images relative to their location on the wall.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, discusses the research setting and context of data collection. I situate the wall with regard to the people, activities, and structures surrounding it, including a discussion of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, data, data collection methods, and methods of organizing and analyzing the data.

## CHAPTER 3: SITUATING BETHLEHEM CHECKPOINT 300 AND THE WALL

To answer the research question of how the symbolic meanings of Bethlehem Checkpoint and the wall are constructed in discourse, I employ several methods including interviews and analysis of texts, images, and structures. I collected three types of data: (1) interview data, (2) graffiti data from the Bethlehem side of the wall, (3) textual artifacts including a diagram that illustrates the visual design and bureaucratic mechanisms at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, and (4) material from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. In this chapter, I describe the context in which the data was collected, the types of data collected, and the methods used for organizing and analyzing the data.

### *Context of Data Collection*

Five visits I made to the State of Israel and the West Bank between 2006 and 2012 provided much of the context for this study. Three of these trips were part of a study tour program with Chowan University, where I served as Vice President of Enrollment Management and adjunct faculty in the Department of Religion from 2005 until 2012. These study tours to Israel and the West Bank primarily focused on visiting religious and archaeological sites. During my first visit, Dr. Chris White, President of Chowan University and leader of the trip, organized dinner with a Palestinian student's family at their home in Beit Sahour, West Bank. A Palestinian man picked us up at our hotel in Jerusalem, and we proceeded to drive on a road that paralleled the wall on our way to

pass through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 into Bethlehem.

My wife and I engaged with this Palestinian family at dinner and discussed the conflict and U.S. perceptions of Palestinians and the West Bank. My perceptions of Palestinians changed dramatically as I heard stories of how the wall impacts their daily lives and has ruined the Palestinian economy in Bethlehem, which relies heavily on tourism. According to a Palestinian businessman who joined us at the dinner, most tourists would not pass through the checkpoint because they were afraid of what was on the other side of the wall. He discussed how he perceived that Israelis and Americans, in general, constructed the identity of Palestinians—as dangerous terrorists. The man told us to go back to the U.S. and tell other Americans that we had dinner with “good Palestinian terrorists,” and then he laughed.

Dinner with this family resulted in a deep reflection on how I had constructed Palestinian identity prior to this dinner and what had caused that construction. My interaction with this particular Palestinian family challenged and confronted my own unexamined ideologies with respect to Palestinians and Israelis. Questions immediately arose—mainly, why was I fearful of entering the West Bank? From where did my ideological constructions of Palestinian come? What visual rhetorics contributed to these ideological and mythological constructions?

The perspective of the researcher played an important part in what data I collected, how I collected it, and how I interpreted it. My experience with Palestinians in the West Bank and at Chowan University inevitably impacted my perspective on this research study, the data, and its conclusions. Moreover, my identity as a college-educated

American from the southern United States further shapes how I interpreted the data and offered conclusions.

My experience in the West Bank serendipitously aligned with Chowan University admitting Palestinian students, one of whom I had met during my first trip to Israel and the West Bank in 2006. From 2006 until 2012, I interacted with Palestinian students at Chowan on a daily basis. Our relationships were mutually beneficial: I taught them about the United States and provided logistical, academic, and social support, and they taught me about Palestinian culture, language, social norms, West Bank geography, and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Experiencing the historical, religious, and cultural environment of Israel and the West Bank in 2006, followed by daily conversations with these students about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, resulted in my commitment to further study this area from the perspective of identity construction and discourse. I began asking questions about what shaped the identity of Palestinians, and how and why concepts about Palestinians were constructed in a particular way. These experiences led to a Palestinian-influenced perspective on Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, the wall, and the Israeli/Palestine conflict. I do not take the position of an unbiased observer and researcher.

Even a non-astute international traveler cannot miss the visible signs and symbols of conflict evident in Israel proper and the West Bank: abandoned tanks near major highways, missile launchers posited on hilltops, armed military personnel standing on street corners, checkpoints,—and, of course, the wall. Highway/Route 60 approaching Bethlehem from East Jerusalem gives the viewer a long and protracted view of the wall,

which runs parallel to this major highway. On that first trip to Israel and the West Bank in 2006, nothing affected me more than the visual impact of this wall and how I interpreted it. I thought, “Whoever or whatever is behind this wall must be contained. *Someone* or *something* behind this wall is dangerous.”

My desire to learn more about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the wall, and Palestinian ways of life resulted in two solo trips to Israel and the West Bank in 2010 and 2012. The first trip allowed time to visit places seen in the previous trips and opportunities to explore other areas with local Palestinian Jerusalemites and Palestinian West Bankers. In 2010, I spent extensive time in East Jerusalem, the Bethlehem area, and Ramallah, learning more about the mundane aspects of Palestinian daily life and the impact of the wall and checkpoints on the daily lives of Palestinians. The primary purpose of my trip in 2012 was to collect data for this dissertation, which I discuss in this chapter. During that trip, I also visited the contested areas of the Silwan neighborhood in East Jerusalem and downtown Hebron near al-Shahuda Street, which is home to Jewish settlers in the center of a large Palestinian city.

#### *Situating Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the Wall*

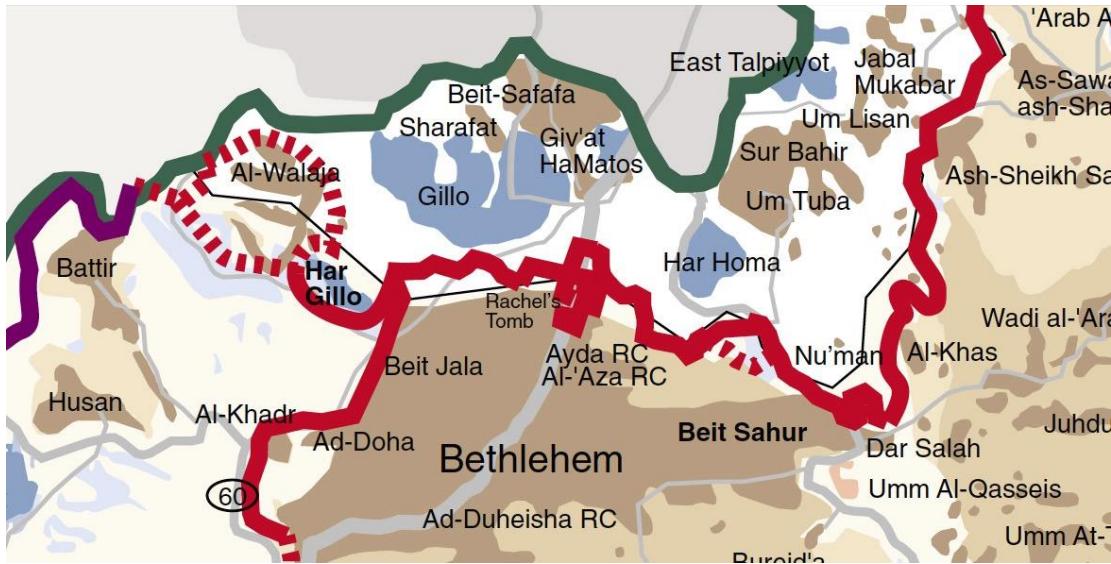
The people, activities, structures, and signs around Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall exemplify conflict. The people around the wall include both armed Israeli security personnel stationed at the checkpoint and religious pilgrims visiting Rachel’s Tomb as well as other religious and archaeological sites in Bethlehem. Copious amounts

of graffiti and vandalism on the Bethlehem side of the wall also symbolize the conflict. The wall and its checkpoints have chopped up the West Bank and created distinctive, non-contiguous Palestinian enclaves. Chomsky (2006) asserted that the wall will eventually encompass all Israeli Jewish settlement blocs in the West Bank, creating three separate Palestinian cantons or “Bantustans.” The three cantons/Bantustans created by the wall, according to Chomsky, are Jenin-Nablus, Bethlehem-Hebron, and Ramallah (p. 190).

Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 allows Palestinians and internationals to pass through the wall using either a pedestrian terminal or a car lane. Palestinian West Bankers with Israeli-issued permits use the pedestrian terminal because vehicles with Palestinian license plates cannot enter Israel through the car lane (EAPPI, 2011, p. 6). Internationals and Palestinians who hold an Israeli ID can use the car lane. Checkpoints are common in the West Bank and do not solely operate along the wall. Kotef and Amir (2011) argued that most of the checkpoints are located *in* the West Bank, not between Israel and the West Bank as represented by the Green Line. Checkpoints are located at the entrance to Palestinian villages, towns, and cities, thus restricting freedom of movement for vehicles and people entering or leaving these areas. Restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement provide security to the approximately 300,000 Israeli Jewish settlers living east of the Green Line (Heffez, 2012, p. 95).

I chose this particular section of the wall to research because it is located near other prominent symbols of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, including Israeli Jewish settlements, Palestinian refugee camps, Jerusalem, and contested religious sites such as

the Harem Al Sharif/Temple Mount complex in East Jerusalem. I also have had personal experience passing through this checkpoint. Figure 3 represents the location of this research study.



*Figure 3. Map of the area surrounding Bethlehem Checkpoint 300*  
Source: B'Tselem, [http://www.btselem.org/download/201411\\_btselem\\_map\\_of\\_wb\\_eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/download/201411_btselem_map_of_wb_eng.pdf)

The red line in Figure 3 represents the current location of the wall relative to the geographic area around Bethlehem and East Jerusalem. The red line in the center of Figure 3 that forms a rectangle is Rachel's Tomb, which is completely surrounded by the wall. Rachel's Tomb is a site of religious pilgrimage for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Adjacent to Rachel's Tomb and the Aida (Ayda) Refugee Camp is Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. Israeli Jewish settlements are light blue in color, whereas Palestinian areas are tan and a medium-brown color.

The 1949 armistice or “Green Line” (indicated by the green line in Figure 3)

represents the armistice line between Israel and the Arab countries of Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan. The United Nations established the Green Line in 1949, after the 1948 Israeli/Arab war and the declaration of the State of Israel (The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007). In the 1967 war, the Israelis conquered the area from the Green Line east to the Jordan River (the area known as East Jerusalem and the West Bank) from Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Israeli has since removed its military occupation from the Sinai and returned that land to Egypt. Israel annexed East Jerusalem and unified it with West Jerusalem, thus rhetorically establishing a “unified Jerusalem,” and the Golan Heights still remains under Israeli occupation. Israeli occupying forces left Gaza in 2005, yet Israel still controls everything around and above Gaza. Israel also controls electricity to Gaza, which is separated from the Israeli-occupied West Bank (Heffez, 2012, p. 54). EAPPI (2007) has reported that Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 is located 2 kilometers east of the Green Line. Note in Figure 3 that the Israeli Jewish settlements of Gilo, Har Gilo, Har Homa, and Giv’at HaMatos are located east of the Green Line and west/northwest of the wall.

People using this checkpoint also include Palestinian West Bankers, Palestinian Jerusalemites, and internationals that seek to access East Jerusalem or Bethlehem via Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. EAPPI (2011) reported that between 4,000 and 6,000 Palestinian West Bankers with Israeli-issued permits pass through this checkpoint every day between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m. (p. 1). This volume of Palestinians encourages other groups of people to gather at this space, such as vendors selling food and coffee and taxi drivers. The discourse of the conflict and the identities that are of most concern in this

dissertation are Palestinians in general and Palestinian West Bankers specifically. Palestinians are typically divided into three subgroups: Jerusalemites, West Bankers, and Arab Israelis.

#### *Data and Data Collection Methods*

Because the research questions focus on discourse, looking, identity, and the construction of the Other relative to the checkpoint and the wall, I collected interview data about Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall, but also about how Palestinians and internationals talk about the checkpoint and wall. During my five trips to Israel and the West Bank, Palestinian West Bankers and Palestinian Jerusalemites talked with me consistently about the conflict relative to the wall. This experience shaped my appreciation of how the wall both symbolizes the conflict and impacts the lives of Palestinians, and how looking at the wall results in discourse that leads directly to identity constructions of Israelis, Palestinians, and internationals.

#### *Data from Interviews*

The interview data consists of 19 interviews, including 13 interviews with Palestinians who live near or pass through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. Two of the Palestinian participants held the Israeli ID and were from East Jerusalem, and 11

Palestinian participants held the Palestinian ID and were from Beit Jala and Bethlehem, West Bank. Other interviewees included five internationals (three from the US, one from Korea, and one from the United Kingdom) and one Israeli from Jerusalem. The individual interviews ranged from approximately 5 minutes to 43 minutes in length. I conducted the interviews in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in May 2012. Interview participants were selected based on both a convenience sample and the snowball effect leading to additional interviews. All interview participants spoke English fluently. Interview questions were prepared in advance, and the interviews were allowed to flow in a natural, conversational way (see Appendix B). East Carolina's University Center and Medical Institutional Review Board (UCMIRB) reviewed and approved the study prior to my collecting the data (see Appendix A).<sup>1</sup>

Through the interview questions, I attempted to gather information from participants regarding their experiences with Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall, including how the participants have used the checkpoint, how often they have used it, how they would describe the checkpoint and their experiences with it, what advantages/challenges it has presented, and how the checkpoint has impacted their daily lives. Most of the conversations migrated to other topics relative to the conflict, including the role of the ID and the process of obtaining permission to pass through the checkpoint.

After a few interviews, consistent themes began to emerge: ID, security, Israeli identity, Palestinian identity, and how the Palestinians feel when they pass through the checkpoint. Because the checkpoint is located on the wall, I also asked questions about

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<sup>1</sup> UMCIRB 12-000855

the wall. The questions were simple: How do you feel about the wall? What are the benefits of the wall? My goal before the interviews was to segment and analyze the interview responses based on ID type, religion, place of residence, and gender. Reviewing the data revealed remarkable connections among these demographic markers, and thus I decided to analyze themes, which I discuss later in this chapter.

My conversations with Palestinians at Chowan University and during visits to the West Bank strongly suggested that Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall assumed a symbolic meaning, which led to further exploration of how Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall as symbols have been constructed in discourse.

#### *Data from the Wall*

My time spent in and around the wall revealed that Palestinians and internationals also use graffiti to comment on the wall, so collecting samples of graffiti became appropriate for answering the research question. I collected images of graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall because these graffiti represented a variety of discourses and audiences, and because it was easier than collecting images of graffiti on the Jerusalem side of the wall. I collected images based on both their proximity to Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the legibility of the graffiti itself. A large portion of the graffiti on the wall is a hodgepodge of tags, vandalism, words, phrases, and images, which made deciphering some graffiti extremely difficult.

The graffiti in a large part represents opposition to the construction and symbolic

meaning of the wall from the perspective of Palestinians and internationals. Heffez (2012) said, “Graffiti on the Barrier tends to support the Palestinian view that Israeli security is a pretext for imprisoning Palestinians” (p. 90). Other images selected for analysis include images of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall from the *EAPPI Special Report: The Bethlehem Checkpoint, Key Findings Based on EAPPI Checkpoint Monitoring* (EAPPI 2011). I analyzed 22 images of the wall, including images from the EAPPI report.

#### *Data from Textual Artifacts*

A diagram of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 from the *EAPPI Special Report* provided a helpful analysis of the checkpoint’s visual design and layout. This diagram adds additional context relative to understanding how the interview participants construct the process of passing through the checkpoint. It also provides a visual understanding of the checkpoint and further helps contextualize what the users of the checkpoint see when they talk about passing through the checkpoint in the interviews. This diagram also illustrates how the wall physically and symbolically relates to the checkpoint, allowing further contextualization and intersection of the interview data, the graffiti, and the diagram of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300.

The EAPPI diagram and images of the wall located near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 contrast sharply with the visual presentation of the “Anti-Terrorism Fence” found on the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. I analyzed the visual presentation of the

fence/wall on this website by focusing on the images used to construct the fence, its purpose, and its design. I chose this website because I felt that it offers an “official” perspective on the checkpoint and wall from an Israeli point of view. Content on the website related to the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall was also analyzed, because the verbal and visual content on the Israeli website offers further insight into how official Israeli sources talk about the checkpoint and wall and how this talk constructs to symbolic meaning.

#### *Methods for Organizing and Analyzing the Data*

The interview data collected in this research study represents a variety of rhetorical practices, rhetorical strategies, and narratives used to talk about and describe the discourse surrounding the wall and Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, including the visual discourse. During the interviews, I asked permission to record the participants, and I used a battery-powered voice recorder when conducting the interviews. Upon returning to the US, I saved this recorded data in an external hard drive and on my personal computer, while also keeping copies of the data on the voice recorder. I listened to the recorded interview data saved on my computer and transcribed the interviews into Microsoft Word, identifying the interview participants according to the order in which I collected the data. To protect the identity of the participants, I did not collect names during the data collection process. On the transcript, I designated participants with a “P” for “participant” and designated the order in which the data was collected with a number resulting in a

“P1, P2, P3” and so on designation. These codes—P1, P2, P3, etc.—became a method for organizing the data.

The process of closely listening to and transcribing the recorded data revealed clear and consistent themes. This process of transcribing also revealed data relative to policies and symbols that I had not previously considered. The question to interview participants regarding their ID type (Palestinian, Israeli, or international) suggested another prominent symbol of the conflict that constructs identity and impacts discourse: the ID and ID type. This symbolic construct, the ID, contains immense power, and the respective Palestinian groups understood that one Palestinian with one ID had more (or less) power than a Palestinian holding another ID. The participants were also fully aware of the power of an international ID, such as a U.S. passport. Noting that the ID/ID type was a theme that reverberated throughout all the interviews, I further organized the data according to themes by identifying key words and phrases like “ID.” The transcript data in Microsoft Word was uploaded into Invivo, and I identified themes by searching for key words and phrases. The key words and phrases included “Palestinian,” “Israeli,” “wall,” “Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 or 300,” “ID,” “checkpoint,” “security,” “permit,” “permissions,” “Muslim,” and “Christian.” I further analyze the interview data using the theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter 2.

Interview participants’ discussions about the experiences with Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall overlapped with the analysis of diagram of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 created by EAPPI. I analyzed the diagram relative to this visual layout and operational procedures evident in that layout focusing on how the checkpoint’s visual

and operational layout contributed to and helped construct the identity of the users of the checkpoint. This analysis and correlation with the interview data raised sub-questions.

What did these visuals and bureaucratic procedures communicate? How did they construct, intentionally or unintentionally the identity of Palestinians? How did these visuals and procedures construct, intentionally or unintentionally the identity of Israelis?

The context of this specific section of the wall at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 provides an easy avenue for Palestinians, tourists, and activists to have a voice and to express their interpretation of the wall through the use of graffiti, vandalism, and even projection screens. The graffiti often demonstrates solidarity with Palestinians and provides communication with viewers through images and text. The wall shows black soot from fires, splashes of paint from paint cans hurled at the wall, and messages to leaders and citizens of the United States and Israel. Graffiti near Rachel's Tomb stated, "Question your leaders" and "Freedom has no cost." Nazi swastikas are painted alongside of the Star of David, a prominent symbol displayed on the Israeli flag. Other iconic images on the wall include a young, Palestinian freedom fighter Leila Khalid, a Palestinian member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestinian and hijacker of two passenger planes in 1969 and 1970, respectively. Both the defacing of and extensive graffiti on the wall suggests that Palestinians and internationals sought to distance themselves not only from the Israelis, but also from symbols relative to the Israelis. These symbols include the wall, checkpoint, ID, and Israeli Jewish settlements. The graffiti speaks to multiple discourses surrounding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict including Palestinian refugees' *right* to return to their historic homeland. The graffiti includes

prominent Palestinian cultural symbols like the Palestinian Flag and the Dome of the Rock located in East Jerusalem.

In Chapter 4, I present analyses of the interviews, a diagram of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, graffiti, and Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website data using the methods discussed here and theoretical concepts discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 5, I discuss the implications of the data analysis and draw conclusions from the data analyzed specific to the research question.

## CHAPTER 4: RHETORICS CREATED, IDENTITIES CONSTRUCTED

This chapter presents the data analysis results using the theoretical perspectives from visual rhetoric scholars and CDA scholars discussed in Chapter 2. Extending these theoretical perspectives to analyze the data I collected, I examine the visual discourse and visual rhetoric of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study defines rhetoric as “the study or practice of effective symbolic expression” (Herrick, 2005, p. 24). The act of persuasion is a key component of the effectiveness of symbolic communication. Rhetoric is a type of discourse that is planned and responsive, adjusting and adapting to audiences. It connects to personal, psychological, and political power, and it is shaped, informed, and constructed by ideologies. Rhetoric can also shape ideologies. The persuasive function of rhetoric often hides or embeds in ideologies not immediately evident to the unconscious subscriber (Herrick, 2005, pp. 21–22).

The persuasive component of rhetoric differentiates it from discourse. This study defines discourse as “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, and ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (Gee, 1999, p. 29). Discourse is a recognized “dance” of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, time, and place (p. 36). Discourse involves the use of props including books, classrooms, laboratories, technologies, words, and symbols. Words, action, beliefs, emotions, values, and interactions constitute “being and doing in X,” in which recognition of these words,

beliefs, actions and so forth create a discourse (p. 37).

Visual rhetoric functions to persuade viewers and also adapts and adjusts. Visual rhetoric is symbolic, involves human interaction, and serves a communicative function (Foss, 2004). Like rhetoric, ideology shapes visual rhetoric. Visual discourse, by contrast, involves objects, tools, symbols, and social interaction that are recognized as a type of *who* (identity) engaged in *what* (activity) (Gee, 1999, p. 35). When visual discourse shifts to a persuasive function specific to *who* engaged in *what*, then the visual discourse becomes visual rhetoric.

### *Visual Rhetoric*

Visual rhetoric examines associations with emotional response, image, and abstract values related to visual symbols (Hill, 2004). The visual rhetoric scholars discussed in Chapter 2 investigated how visual designers used images to evoke a desired response from viewers, create specific rhetorics, or construct identities using visual images. One strategy used by creators of visual rhetoric is to associate a visual artifact with abstract values and mythological symbols. These values and symbols help construct meaning and identity and persuade audiences.

Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall serve as persuasive visual rhetoric exploiting cultural values laden with emotional weight—specifically the cultural value of security and safety from others on the other side of the wall, from a Israeli perspective. From a Palestinian perspective, the wall persuades Palestinian and international

audiences that the State of Israel is a colonial enterprise. Regardless of their perspective, viewers transform these visual rhetorics into myths and meta-signs that serve as a communicative function to shape identity.

*Visual Rhetoric of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the Wall*

The physical and visual layouts, as well as the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall, shape several rhetorics and discourses evident in the interview and visual data, including the rhetoric of security and a discourse of Promised Land. The interaction of these rhetorics, discourses, and symbols contribute to and construct myths about Palestinian and Israeli identity. In 2011, EAPPI reported on Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and published a diagram of the checkpoint and adjacent sections of the wall. Note the various ID booths, security booths, metal detectors, and other bureaucratic mechanisms and the layout of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. Also note the checkpoint's location relative to the wall.

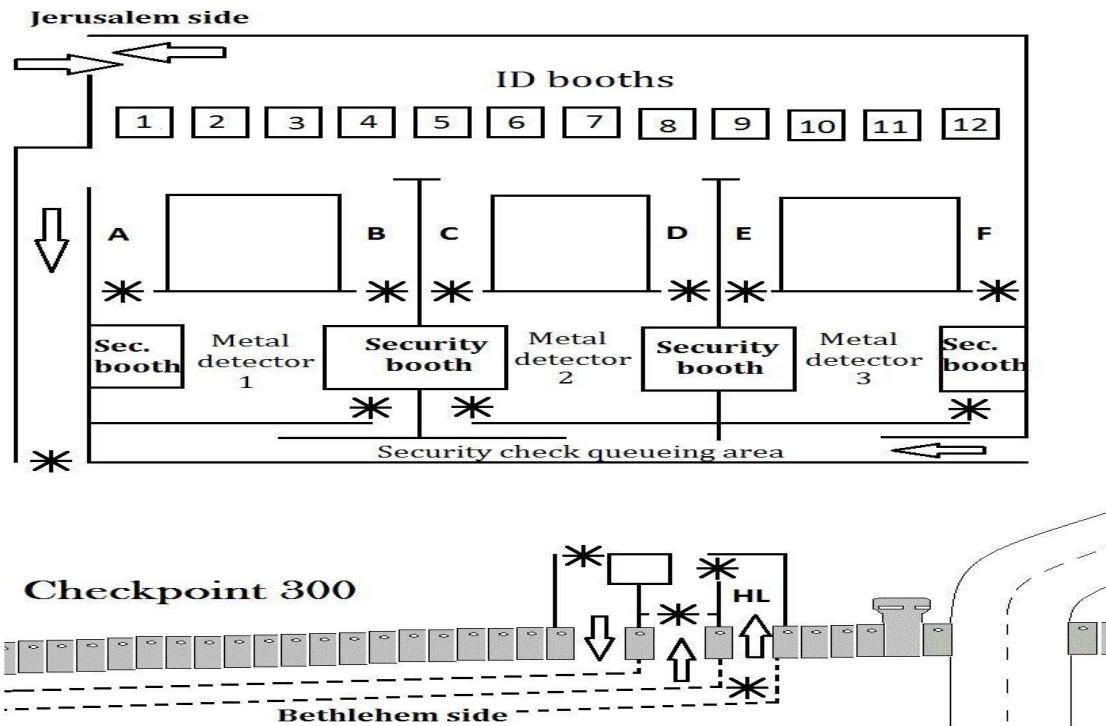


Figure 4. Diagram of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300

Source: EAPPI Special Report: The Bethlehem Checkpoint in 2011, p. 7

The four security booths, three metal detectors, five enclosed spaces housing Israeli security personnel, and 12 ID booths on this diagram are located inside a metal building on the Jerusalem side of the wall (Figure 4). The series of bureaucratic security controls and security personnel located at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 visually communicate security—that the wall and the related security apparatuses and bureaucracies located at the checkpoint secure *something, some place, and somebody*. Symbolically, these visual elements communicate that those individuals who wish to pass through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall *must* receive intense scrutiny in the form of multiple security screenings and multiple ID checks.

The wall itself—with its physical characteristics including innumerable 8-meter

high concrete slabs, metal cage-like structures around the initial queuing lanes, and redundancy of ID checks—suggests that Israeli security personnel do not trust West Bank Palestinians who pass through the checkpoint. Their ID, or lack thereof, largely determines their identity and the level of bureaucratic security screening to which they will be subjected. The wall must keep them contained, and the only way they can pass through the wall into Israel proper and East Jerusalem is to undergo extensive security screenings.

The audience for the visual rhetorics inside the checkpoint terminal is Palestinians and internationals. The visual rhetorics outside and inside the checkpoint persuade by constructing the identity of Palestinians as potential security threats who demand redundant security screenings. As the Palestinian users of the checkpoint look upon the various queuing lines, metal turnstiles, metal detectors, and ID booths, these visual rhetorics further communicate what the Bethlehem side of the wall outside the terminal communicates rhetorically. That is, Palestinian identity equates to being an exotic, dangerous other and a potential terrorist (Said, 1978).

The wall also communicates, visually and rhetorically, that Israel is sovereign—even on Palestinian land east of the Green Line. Thus the wall is a visual rhetoric that persuades Israeli, international, and Palestinian audiences. The wall’s location, near the historic cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, makes the wall a particularly effective tool at communicating Israel’s sovereignty and, in a sense, Israel’s construction of West Bank Palestinians on the other side of the wall. Israelis and internationals in Jerusalem cannot miss seeing the wall; thus it becomes an effective visual and communicative tool to these

audiences. Palestinian Jerusalemites and Palestinian West Bankers also see the wall. The rhetorical presence of the wall makes it an effective visual rhetoric. Its size and length persuade Israeli, Palestinian, and international audiences that the other side of the wall poses a danger to those on Jerusalem side of the wall.

The visual rhetoric of the wall impacts discourse significantly when Palestinians describe passing through the checkpoint. Marina, a Palestinian with an Palestinian ID, explained that she used to “see” Jerusalem often. Now, however, the process of getting to Jerusalem, which used to take ten minutes, is a bureaucratic quagmire that makes Palestinian travel to Jerusalem “miserable.” Marina said, “For twenty years, I used to go easily. Ten minutes, I was in Jerusalem. You know, but since they came here, why should I go? Why should I go through all this to see Jerusalem? You feel miserable there” (Interview Data, 2012). Marina’s words “since they came here” are rhetorically significant. “They” refers to Jewish migration into historic Palestine and the expansion of Israeli Jewish settlements, many of which locate just outside the wall on the Jerusalem side. “They” is rhetorically positioned as the reason why Marina does not go to Jerusalem. This blame rhetoric was evident through the interview data, as Palestinian participants pointed to Israelis as “they/them” who have caused the hardships of many West Bank Palestinians. “They” also suggests a binary rhetoric that constructs the opposing identity of “I.”

Moreover, Marina’s refusal to “go through all this to see Jerusalem” reflects how she felt about the bureaucracies and intense security screenings that go with passing through the checkpoint (Interview Data, 2012). Because Marina is a Palestinian Christian,

Jerusalem holds religious and mythological significance for her. Prominent Christian churches and other sites important to Palestinian Christians are located in Jerusalem. But seeing the city, which was once important to Marina, is now not worth it (Interview Data, 2012). In other words, the process of passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 *supersedes* the importance of seeing the holy city and its related religious sites.

This perspective is repeated throughout the data. Christian Palestinians with Palestinian IDs received permission to enter Jerusalem, but they refused to do so because of their treatment by Israel security personnel at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the security screenings required to pass from Bethlehem into East Jerusalem. Graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall often uses Christian symbols to communicate the difficulties of Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and the inaccessibility of Jerusalem. The audience for this graffiti is likely Christian internationals visiting Bethlehem, a site of religious pilgrimage for Christians worldwide.

Marina's comment suggests that the wall's purpose extends beyond security. The wall serves as an ideological apparatus that refuses access of Palestinians, Christians, and Muslims to prominent religious sites in East Jerusalem. In a sense, the wall is a mechanism for restricting worship for both Palestinian Christians and Muslims (Interview Data, 2012; Graffiti Data, 2012). These religious sites are located east of the Green Line, which is rhetorically framed as internationally recognized Palestinian land, thus further frustrating West Bank Palestinian who aren't being allowed to access important religious sites on *their* Palestinian land.

Jewish Israelis living in Jerusalem, and even in settlements deep in the West

Bank, can access these religious sites, many of which hold significant meaning for Jewish Israelis as well. Access from settlements in the West Bank to Israel proper primarily occurs on settler-only roads that further bisect the West Bank. Symbolically, Israeli Jewish settler access to religious sites via settler-only roads rhetorically communicates to West Bank Palestinian audiences that Jewish Israelis *can* access these sites, whereas Palestinian West Bankers cannot. This lack of access to religious sites shapes a discourse of restriction of Palestinian moment (Interview Data, 2012; Graffiti Data, 2012).

Bushbridge (2013) argued that the wall fails at achieving its intended purpose of security for two reasons: (1) because obvious gaps in its structure fail in buttressing against the other “out there,” and (2) because Israeli Jewish settlers live on the Bethlehem side of the wall. Israeli Jewish settlements highlight the complex relationship between settlers and the State and a complex relationship of theology and politics in Israel that has materialized in the wall. This ideological dialectic has threatened to undermine the State because of the large number of Jewish settlers on the West Bank side of the wall (p. 658). Settlements such as Gilo, Har Gilo, and Har Homa are visible from many parts of the West Bank near the research site, including Abu Dis, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, and Bethlehem. Also, these settlements become significant components of visual rhetoric because they seek to persuade the Palestinian audience that the land belongs to the Israeli Jews. Israeli leadership frames settlements as “security,” thus attempting to convince international and Israeli audiences that “grabbing” additional Palestinian land does not determine the location of settlements, but *security* determines location of settlements. Gilo, Har Gilo, and Har Homa are located on mountaintops and maintain a visual

presence from both Israeli and Palestinian audiences. Thus the settlements are a significant component of visual rhetoric that constructs Israelis as rightful owners of the land, regardless of their location relative to the Green Line.

The creators of the wall symbolically connect it to two positive cultural values evident on the Jerusalem side of the wall—safety and security from West Bank Palestinians, and Israeli land rights. The rhetorics of security and Israeli land rights manifest discursively and symbolically. The wall, checkpoints, ID, and Israeli Jewish settlements communicate to Israeli, international, and Palestinian audiences that Israel is the ultimate, sovereign power, even in and on “Palestinian” land. Central to interpreting this symbolism is the way in which Israelis and Palestinians frame each other’s and their own identities. As Shurky (2013) explained, “The *positive self-presentation* and *negative other presentation* are employed in discourse” (p. 174). The discursive space of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 clearly illustrates Shurky’s assertion: the visual discourse of security apparatuses and structures operating at the checkpoint constructs a positive identity for Israeli security personnel and a negative identity for Palestinians. This identity construction further illustrates the binary of positive self and negative other. The Israelis must protect themselves and the Israeli homeland from the dangerous, West Bank Palestinian *other*, and that protection requires physical separation and distinction from Palestinian West Bankers.

Conversely, the restriction on Palestinian freedom of movement constructs a negative identity for Israeli security personnel at the checkpoint and Israelis in general and a positive identity for Palestinians, from the perspective of many West Bank

Palestinians and internationals (Interview Data, 2012; Graffiti Data, 2012). In other words, the same discursive space—Bethlehem Checkpoint 300—constructs people differently depending on what discourse and rhetoric are operating and when they are operating. The rhetorical audience also plays a major factor in the positive self or negative other identity construct. As Leila explained,

They're [Israeli security personnel] gonna be asking me questions and making me go through all these ... um ... machines to make sure that I don't have anything on me, and just asking me ridiculous questions like why I wanna go there, and who am I gonna be hanging out with, and stuff like that. So it's a really hard time for me to go there. That's why even though I have the permit, I don't really use it, but I have it most of the times. (Interview Data, 2012)

Leila's comment about the difficulty of passing through the checkpoint and the scrutiny she endures suggest that Israeli security personnel frame her identity as a negative other. From their perspective, she is unsafe and requires further questioning while passing through the checkpoint, even though she has a permit, issued by a branch of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) that allows her to do so. Leila's discourse is similar to that of Marina; Leila did not use her Israeli-issued permit because of the difficult of passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. This discourse constructs an identity of negative other with respect to Israeli Security personnel stationed at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. Israeli security personnel issue permits to cross the checkpoint and enter East Jerusalem and Israel proper, while they simultaneously make it extremely difficult for Palestinians who have these permits to actually use them for that purpose (Interview Data, 2012).

The checkpoints are a focal point for interaction between Palestinians and Israelis and a space for discursive exchange. Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 locates about two kilometers east of the Green Line, but most checkpoints are deep inside the West Bank, often between Palestinian cities. Kotef and Amir (2011) explained that most checkpoints are at the entrances to villages, towns, and cities, thus restricting the movement of vehicles and people entering or leaving those areas. Checkpoints enclose the cities, thus separating them from surrounding villages that depend upon them. This impedes many of the mundane aspects of everyday life such as traveling to work or school, to the doctor or the market. Checkpoints restrict or altogether prohibit visits with family members. Checkpoints restrict the flow of goods and labor, thus negatively impacting various economies, including Bethlehem's tourism industry (pp. 56–57).

Kotef and Amir (2011) argued that the checkpoints entail a disciplinary approach. They "discipline" Palestinians for "bad" behavior, thus constructing Palestinians as subjects in need of disciplining. As Kotef and Amir argue, this is designed to fail, thus enabling a construction of Palestinians as national-less and subjected to a foreign, sovereign, and omnipotent power of whom they are the enemy. The checkpoint produces them as occupied subjects (p. 64).

This perspective offered by Kotef and Amir (2011) parallels Shurky's (2013) concepts of negative other presentation and positive self-representation. Evident in the discourse created by the interaction between Palestinians and Israelis at the checkpoints is that both groups construct each other's identity in similar negative ways (Interview Data, 2012). For Palestinians using the checkpoint, Israel security personnel have a negative

other identity. Palestinians construct themselves in a positive self-representation that posits the Israelis as a brutal, occupying power seeking to confine, restrict, and oppress—if not entirely erase—Palestinians and Palestinian ways of life in the West Bank. The Palestinians are “victims” of the Israeli occupation. This victim rhetoric is evident from both Palestinian and Israeli perspectives, as each group rhetorically constructs their own identity as victims of occupation (Palestinians) or victims of Palestinian and/or general terrorism (Israelis) (Interview Data, 2012; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007).

The checkpoints, like the wall and settlements, further communicate to Palestinians that Israel has power over them, visually symbolized in the checkpoints, wall, IDs, and settlements. These symbols remind Palestinians of how Israel constructs their identity. In a sense, Palestinians become mythological, communicating to many Israelis that they are indeed dangerous others whose goal is to kill Israeli citizens.

Said (1979) argued that each Palestinian community must struggle to maintain its identity on two fundamental levels. First, as Palestinians facing Zionism and the reality of the loss of the Palestinian homeland, and second, existentially, as Palestinians living day-to-day with the pressures of being Palestinian *without* a Palestine, resulting in hostility almost everywhere both inside and outside Israel and the West Bank. Said explained further the complexity of Palestinian identity:

Their [the Palestinians’] relationship to Zionism, and ultimately with political and even spiritual Judaism, gives them a formidable burden as interlocutors of the Jews. The imperialistic struggle, to the Christian world (with its unique historical and cultural attachment to Palestine), to Marxist, to the socialist world, all these

put upon the Palestinian a burden of interpretation and a multiplication of selves that are virtually unparalleled in modern political or cultural history—a fact made more impressively onerous in that it is all filtered through negation and qualifications. (p. 122)

The interview data attest that Palestinians face daily encounters with rhetorical signs and symbols of the Israeli occupying power and Zionism—the ID, wall, checkpoints, Israeli military bases inside the West Bank, Israeli military patrols, Israeli Jewish settlements, settler-only roads, and Israeli flags flying over prominent historical and archeological sites located in the West Bank (Interview Data, 2012). Said (1979) argued that many of these symbols remain an unchecked domination over Palestinians living both inside and outside the West Bank, including Israeli Arabs with Israeli passports whose identity is neither particularly Israeli nor Arab. Other Arab countries often view Arab Israelis as neither Arab nor Israeli (pp. 126–130). Graffiti on the wall often calls on world leaders outside of Israel and the West Bank to voice their opposition to Israeli aggression toward Palestinians, if not to seek to stop Israeli aggression altogether (Graffiti Data, 2012). The graffiti thus becomes transnational in the way that it speaks to multiple international audiences in multiple languages on one specific medium: the wall (Toenjes, n.d.).

The wall is perhaps the most visible sign of Israeli domination over Palestinians, yet the graffiti and defacing of the wall suggest that Palestinians and internationals contest this domination through graffiti and vandalism. The wall is part of a long-term persuasive strategy involving other physical structures and communicative modes that work together to form a cohesive message. The settlements, the wall, and other structures

are persuasive in the ways that they act on viewers' perceptions, and in that sense they are significant aspects of visual discourse. However, they are also—and maybe primarily—features of a built environment that serves other purposes as well. I propose that these rhetorics are the communicative actions that capture how positions are expressed about these structures (graffiti, written materials, arguments, etc.). These visual rhetorics are intended to persuade Palestinian, Israeli, and international audiences and viewers that the West Bank and West Bank Palestinians are not safe, and that the State of Israel is sovereign even *in* and *on* the West Bank.

West Bank Palestinians with special Israeli permits issued by a branch of the IDF must use the pedestrian terminal at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 if they want to access East Jerusalem and Israel proper. The process of passing through the pedestrian terminal is much more extensive and bureaucratic than passing through the car lane. Only Palestinians with Israeli IDs and internationals use the car lane (Figure 4). This process normally includes an ID check and a search of the Palestinian's car and possessions held within that car. Sometimes these searches are cursory, but at other times, the search and scrutiny of the individual, the car, and its contents are extensive. The degree of security screenings, either cursory or extensive, largely depends on the security personnel stationed at the checkpoint. Security personnel often use their own discretion when determining the extent of security screenings (Interview Data, 2012).

The pedestrian terminal begins with two queuing lanes adjacent to the wall that forms a narrow corridor with an uphill incline (Figures 5–7).



*Figure 5.* The initial queuing line at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300  
Source: EAPPI Special Report, Photo by J. Schilder



*Figure 6.* Initial queuing lanes at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300  
Source: EAPPI Special Report. Photo by Oliver Wnuck.

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the main queuing lane for Palestinians who hold Israeli-issued permits. Internationals can bypass the initial queuing lane by using the humanitarian/international lane, designated “HL” on Figure 4. The queuing lane consists of a concrete floor surrounded by square bars on both sides and on top, covered by a metal roof (Figures 5 and 6). This built environment functions rhetorically not only to construct Palestinians as potential security threats, but also to construct Israel as dominant and all-powerful. After all, Israel can build the wall and settlements on internationally recognized Palestinian land east of the Green Line and ignore U.N. sanctions because of the US, Israel’s imperial ally who consistently vetoes U.N. Resolutions against Israel (Lynch, 2011).

The checkpoint and wall communicate to Palestinians that they are not wanted in Israel. As Marina explained,

And they, uh ... built it [the wall] to make it, uh ... harder for Palestinians in order to give up. So they're trying to, uhm ... close every window, every door you can go through so you will gi-give up. And then you will leave all the lands, all the rights, all the things you are defending, uh ... about in order to, to get all the lands, and they build their state and so on. (Interview Data, 2012)

The wall, according to Marina, was simply another manifestation of colonialism and a tool for colonizing more land for the Israeli state. Israel wants “all the lands,” not just the land west of the Green Line. The wall symbolizes Israeli colonialism to many Palestinians and internationals, and it functions both physically and rhetorically to keep Palestinians contained to the West Bank and not allow them to enter the Jerusalem

municipality (Interview Data, 2012). The goal of the wall is to persuade Palestinians to “give up,” and thus its persuasive function, according to Marina, is for Palestinians to acquiesce to Israel’s colonial agenda relative to land.

EAPPI reported that thousands of Palestinians pass through the checkpoint every day, with Ramadan Fridays seeing the highest number. An average of 2,359 Palestinians form a line to pass through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300’s pedestrian terminal every morning (Figures 5 and 6; EAPPI, 2011, p. 11).



*Figure 7. Palestinian West Bankers on Fridays of Ramadan*  
Source: EAPPI Special Report, Photo by Oliver Wnuck

The interview data offer further insights into how the checkpoint works operationally and how the operational procedures affect discourse. When describing passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, research participants consistently used the words *security, soldiers, and gates*. Christina, a Palestinian West Banker with a

Palestinian ID, described going through doors and gates, and being required to remove her earrings and shoes. For Christina, passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 was “very humiliating.” According to Christina, the process of passing through the checkpoint also included annoying redundancies. As she explained, “They take away your ID and your permission, umm … maybe three times while getting through the gates.” Seeking clarification on the number of times Christina showed her ID to Israeli authorities at the checkpoint, I asked, “So you show it three times?” Christina responded with the following explanation,

Yes, at the first gate and the second gate. No, the second gate is like, um, um … wearing the earrings and stuff, and then you have to show it at the third gate … and they wouldn’t let you. There’s, um … that metal thing that’s … with it open on one side. They put something, and they keep you waiting while they’re [Israeli security personnel] talking on the phone or sometimes they’re, um … yelling at you. It’s a very, very bad experience. (Interview Data, 2012)

Christina described a multi-layered security apparatus involving a three-step process. ID checks, gates, and metal detectors managed and controlled Christina’s passage through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 on her way to East Jerusalem (Figure 4). These security checks only occurred *after* she had gone through a long bureaucratic process that granted her permission to pass through the checkpoint into East Jerusalem. In their interactions with West Bank Palestinians passing through the checkpoint, Israeli security personnel employ various technologies and controls, including an intercom through which they “yell” at West Bank Palestinians who used the checkpoint (Interview Data, 2012).

The long lines at the checkpoint further communicate, visually and persuasively, that the Israelis are in control. They control passage through the checkpoint, and they are even in control of Palestinians' time spent in queue. By controlling the checkpoint, the Israelis have power to allow—or disallow—worship at religious sites in East Jerusalem. The security checks described by Christina are part of the built, visual environment. They shape the discourse about passing through the checkpoint, and they also function as visual rhetorics persuading Christina that Israel, including Israeli security personnel at the checkpoint, has power over her. They determine the level of security screenings, and they control her passage through the checkpoint. They also control Christina's experience as she passes through the checkpoint, and they can make the experience positive or negative, depending on the level of questioning and security screening to which she is subjected.

In contrast to Christina's experience as a Palestinian West Banker passing through the checkpoint, Beth, an international, discussed Bethlehem Checkpoint 300's physical features. She described security measures common at major border crossings: armed security personnel, terminals, ID checks, metal detectors, x-ray machines, taxis, buses, local pedestrians, vendors, and tourists. She also described the security apparatuses located inside the checkpoint—gates, soldiers, and metal detectors—and then she commented, "They try to make it nice." The security apparatuses at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 were juxtaposed with potted plants, benches, and a sign that reads, "Welcome to Israel," which Beth called "ridiculous" (Interview Data, 2012). An entrance sign, written in Hebrew, Arabic, and English, is juxtaposed against a tight corridor

surrounded by metal bars and a metal roof (Figures 5–7).

The welcome and entrance signs, potted plants, and benches visually and rhetorically conflict with the metal, cage-like structure surrounding the initial queuing line at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall adjacent to the queuing line (Figures 5 and 6). These visual rhetorics create contradictory messages. People who pass through the checkpoint are both welcomed and *not* welcomed by the visual rhetorics created by the queuing line itself, the adjacent wall, and the cage-like structure surrounding the initial queuing lane.

This visually mixed rhetorical message illustrates Graddol's (2006) concept of heteroglossia. As discussed in Chapter 2, Graddol defined heteroglossia as the meanings conveyed by the various modes and the multiple contradictions found in the semiotic modal constructs. Just as the contradicting visual rhetorics located inside the checkpoint likely address different audiences, so do the various semiotic modes. Signs written in English that read "Welcome to Jerusalem" probably address an international audience, just as the potted plants and benches likely communicate to internationals crossing from the West Bank into East Jerusalem and Israel proper.

The treatment that internationals receive when they cross the checkpoint further suggests that the potted plants and benches, both aspects of the visual environment, rhetorically communicate to an international audience, as opposed to a Palestinian audience. The interview data revealed that the constructed relationship between Palestinians and Israeli security personnel at the checkpoint differs greatly from the relationship between internationals and those same Israeli personnel (Interview Data,

2012). Internationals received less scrutiny than did Palestinians who passed through the checkpoint (Interview Data, 2012). Internationals, particularly U.S. passport holders, passed freely through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 into Israel proper and the Jerusalem municipality (Interview Data, 2012). International travelers often bypassed intense scrutiny from Israeli personnel stationed at the checkpoints because their international passports framed *them* in a different way.

The lack of security screening and scrutiny aimed at internationals suggested that Israeli security personnel constructed them as *less* of a security threat than West Bank Palestinians and Jerusalemite Palestinians (Interview Data, 2012). Judith, an international, described her experience passing through the checkpoint:

Yeah, um ... I don't like it [passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300]. I mean, for me it's not so bad, because it just takes like 10 minutes, but, uh ... Yeah, just, it just feels ... Yeah, I don't like it. I feel like they treat us with suspicion going through, but I went there once at three in the morning to see how it is for workers going through there, and it ... Yeah, and I ... How I feel going through there doesn't compare to how they would, like, have to be there for four hours in queue to go four miles away. It's ridiculous. (Interview Data, 2012)

Judith describes how an international and a Palestinian passing through the checkpoint have different experiences. Internationals pass relatively easy, whereas Palestinian workers often wait for hours (Interview Data, 2012; Figures 6 and 7). As Judith describes, it can take a Palestinian four hours in queue to go four miles away (Interview Data, 2012).

The lengthy process of passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 further communicates to Palestinians and internationals rhetorically. Specifically, Palestinians are potential security threats and are not welcome in the Jerusalem municipality and Israel proper, while internationals *are* welcome in Israel proper and East Jerusalem. West Bank Palestinians need to meet strict security requirements before they are *allowed* by Israeli security personnel to enter Israel proper. Israeli power clearly manifests in their ability to control a group of people, both within and outside Israel's internationally recognized borders. Israeli institutional structures support Israeli security personnel and authorize it to control the movement of Palestinians using IDs, permissions, the wall, and checkpoints.

Expressive words used in the interview data illustrate an important point made by Fairclough (2001). Ideological struggles take linguistic form and certain ideologies “struggle” with other ideologies. This ideological struggle determines dominance relations between competing ideologies (Fairclough, 2001, p. 89).

### *Looking and the Construction of the Other*

Palestinians used a number of words to express their negative experience of passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 (Interview Data, 2012). Christina and Beth described their experience as “humiliating” and “very, very bad,” and Leila offered similar negative comments. She used “very hectic” and “very devastating” when describing the “whole process to get into Jerusalem,” which was “emotionally and

mentally disturbing” for her. Leila described the process of passing through the checkpoints, including going through gates “and stuff like that.” Soldiers stationed at the checkpoint also gave her “hard times to get into Jerusalem,” and she described the questions that the Israeli security personnel asked her as “ridiculous” (Interview Data, 2012). Internationals also used the term “ridiculous” when describing the process of passing through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 en route to East Jerusalem.

The word *animal* was repeated in the interview data. Muna, a Palestinian with a Palestinian ID, referenced the act of looking and construction of “the Other” with respect to the visual and technical layout of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 (Figures 5–7). Muna stated, “They [Israeli security personnel at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300] see us as the image for them like animal” (Interview Data, 2012). Chomsky and Pappé (2015) said that when an Israeli soldier sees a Palestinian, he does not see a human being—he sees the enemy (p. 31).

George, a Palestinian with a Palestinian ID, echoed Muna’s statement with regard to how West Bank Palestinians feel when they pass through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. George’s comment is similar to Judith’s with regard to the queuing lines at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300:

If you go around 6 o’clock or 6:30 or 7, you’ll find several thousand people there, and not human, like goats. They go there. They go, and it’s very, very, very hard to cross … They [Israeli security personnel] drive you. They drive goats to slaughter. That’s a big problem here. It’s not easy. (Interview Data, 2012)

Figures 5 and 6 contextualize Judith, Muna, and George’s comments regarding looking

and Othering. These images illustrate a narrow passage that runs uphill alongside the wall at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. Square bars surround the narrow passage on both sides, and metal turnstiles control access through the wall into the security terminal (Figures 5 and 6). These physical structures regulate bodies and control movement, like farmers who use moveable fences to regulate the bodies and control the movement of animals.

Najaal, a Palestinian Christian holding the Palestinian ID, also referenced “animals.” Najaal agreed with Muna and explained,

It’s hard for us … We can’t move as a Palestinian people, according to this checkpoint 300. I hate it very much because, eh … I feel like, eh … that they are treating us like animals. We are going to go through iron bars, eh … and, eh … communicating with the, eh … with the sound only. You can’t see people. Okay, you can just hear sound and the soldiers up there. (Interview Data, 2012)

Najaal evoked a discourse of restriction of movement with a visual imagery of “treating us like animals.” The iron bars in Figures 5 and 6 perpetuate the feeling of being contained like an animal, and the narrow space for the initial queuing lane restricts movement on a small scale.

Many of the controlling technical apparatuses evident in Najaal’s description serve to minimize talk between Israeli security personnel, Palestinians, and internationals that pass through the checkpoint. Israeli security personnel were “up there” on catwalks inside the pedestrian terminal, thus impeding Najaal’s ability to look upon them (Interview Data, 2012). Israeli security personnel looked down on Palestinians and internationals in queues and passing through the security procedures (Interview Data,

2012).

Mohammed, speaking about how Israeli security personnel treat Palestinian Christians better than Palestinian Muslims, agreed with Muna's understanding of the process of looking and the construction of the other. "They [Israeli security personnel] treat the Christians better than the Muslims, because, you know, the Christians and the Jews ... basically the same religion, so they get the better treatment. But they still treat us like animals, both of us" (Interview Data, 2012). Mohammed concluded that Israeli security personnel treated Palestinian Christians better than Palestinian Muslims because Palestinian Christians have "the same religion" as the Israeli Jews. Religious affiliation, according to Mohammed, determined the level of treatment and security screenings from Israeli security personnel. However, Mohammed conceded that they treat both Christians and Muslims "like animals" (Interview Data, 2012).

The bias and preferential treatment for West Bank Christians discussed by Mohammed further manifested in other interview data. Palestinian Christian West Bankers often received permits and permission from Israeli security personnel to visit holy sites in East Jerusalem, whereas Palestinian West Bank Muslims did not receive permission to enter East Jerusalem for religious reasons. Najaah, a Palestinian Muslim with an Israeli ID, said,

Christians, uh ... They [Israeli security personnel] give them the permissions to go through the checkpoint for every, uh ... holiday or every religious holiday. But, uhm ... Muslims, they don't give them the permission to go, uh ... through the checkpoints, and uh ... even in their religious holidays, uhm ... But, uhm ...

they're trying to, to make discriminations between, uhm ... Muslims and Christians, and uh .. sometimes they, uh ... actually they, they do it, but, uhm ... to—if you're aware of that, you would understand that their—this is their game, so they're playing it well. (Interview Data, 2012)

This Israeli bias and preferential treatment for West Bank Christians, observed by the interview participants, suggested that Israeli security personnel framed West Bank Christians as *less* of a security threat than West Bank Palestinian Muslims.

West Bank Palestinian Christians and West Bank Muslims remain aware of this bias toward Christians, and the bias creates tensions between them (Interview Data, 2012). Both Palestinian Christians and Palestinian Muslims seek to visit Jerusalem because of holy sites, for both religious traditions are located there. Additionally, Jerusalem provides access to entertainment, healthcare, recreation, and education. Many West Bank Palestinians have relatives who live in East Jerusalem, but they cannot visit them because of the difficulty passing through the checkpoint. Israeli security personnel are unwilling to issue permits to Palestinian West Bankers to allow them to pass through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and enter the Jerusalem municipality and Israel proper (Interview Data, 2012).

Lisa, an international with an American passport, further confirmed the construction of identity informed by physical structures located at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the discourses and rhetorics these physical structures create (Figures 5 and 6). Lisa said, “I remember walking up through the stalls and pretty much feeling like I was an animal” (Interview Data, 2012). The feeling like an “animal” transcended religion,

gender, and ID type. Muslims, Christians, internationals, men and women all used this word to describe how they felt going through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. The wall and checkpoint, intentionally or unintentional, persuaded Palestinians and internationals that their identity was no better than that of an animal (Interview Data, 2012).

Palestinians who possess an Israeli ID and internationals do not require special Israeli-issued permits like Palestinian ID holders, if they travel to the Jerusalem municipality from Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. An Israeli ID allows its holder to enter the Jerusalem municipality (Interview Data, 2012). The ID *marks* West Bank Palestinians for additional bureaucratic procedures needed to obtain permission to pass through the checkpoint, and it *marks* Palestinian Jerusalemites as potential security threats, even though the Jerusalem ID allows them to pass through with a special permit issued by the IDF. Internationals, however, did not undergo the same bureaucratic procedures when passing through the checkpoint on their way to the Jerusalem municipality (Interview Data, 2012).

### *The Rhetorics of Land and Land Grab*

The location of the wall at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, approximately two kilometers east of the Green Line, helps to create a rhetoric of land grab evident in Palestinian and international discourse. Ann, an international from the US, offered her explanation for the wall:

If you talk to Israelis, they say it's for security purposes, to prevent terrorist

attacks, uh ... If you talk to an American, same thing. If you talk to Palestinians, the wall is there for a land grab for Israel, and it's there basically to, uh ... keep Palestinians and Israelis away from each other. (Interview Data, 2012)

Ann suggests that both Israelis and Americans construct the wall in the same way—to prevent terrorist attacks. Israelis and Americans share a common enemy and an ideological construct of that common enemy that discursively justifies the creation of the wall. The common enemy is terrorists, in general, and Islamic terrorists more specifically. As discussed previously, the perceived Israeli bias suggests that they perceive Palestinian Christians as less of a security threat than their Palestinian Muslim counterparts. Palestinians refute this construction on common enemy and argue that the wall is a land grab and a means of separating Palestinians from Israelis (Interview Data, 2012; Cohen, 2006). In other words, the wall and its location relative to the Green Line have persuaded Palestinians and internationals that the wall is a mechanism for “grabbing” Palestinian land.

Judith, an international, agreed with Ann and added, “But we all know the wall is half land grab and half a tool of oppression for the Palestinians“ (Interview Data, 2012). “A tool of oppression” discourse manifests further in Palestinian interview data as West Bank Palestinians discuss the wall’s impact on the Palestinian economy and ways of life. Not only does the wall construct Palestinians in a particular way (e.g., others, terrorists, or animals), but it also oppresses them. Evident in the data were the creations of several discourses about the meaning or purpose of the wall. It functions as a security apparatus that both separates and oppresses. It further constructs Palestinian identity in a negative

way, and this identity construction adds to the oppressive nature of the wall, ideologically and symbolically.

The rhetorical meaning of the wall evident in the interview data also functions mythologically: the wall *becomes* security, separation, oppression, and the constructor of a negative Palestinian identity. These abstract values function psychologically to impact the respective viewers' perspective of the wall. The visual presence of the wall, or the extent to which an object is the foremost consciousness of audience members, creates an unconscious, visceral response from the viewer (Hill, 2004, p. 28) As Hill explained, "Images, like verbal text, can be used to prompt an immediate visceral response, to develop cognitive (though largely unconscious) connections over a sustained period of time, or prompt conscious analytical thought" (p. 37). The data support Hill's concept of presence and the impact visual images have on viewers. One interviewee asked, "Why did they have to make it [the wall] so big?" (Interview Data, 2012)

Palestinians and internationals alike argue that the wall is a means of confiscating land in the West Bank for future Israeli settlement development and for positioning important natural resources, such as water, on the Jerusalem side of the wall. Figure 8 illustrates an image of the wall approaching Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 from East Jerusalem along Highway 60.



*Figure 8.* The wall approaching Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 on Highway 60  
Photo by R. Chad Holt

Figure 8 shows the erratic path of the wall as it curves and carves through the West Bank along Highway 60. Walls demarcate territory and mark boundaries, and the path of the wall as seen in Figure 8 appears arbitrary and random.

The wall at this location also separates Palestinian villages from the main highway connecting Jerusalem to Bethlehem and the southern West Bank. West Bank Palestinians argue that the wall has devastated the local economy (Interview Data, 2012). Sally, a Palestinian Christian with a West Bank ID, offered further insights into the wall's impact on Palestinians living in the West Bank:

It's like they're [the Israelis] controlling us with the wall. It's like they're building the wall around us so we can be stuck inside the wall. Make it, like, uh ... smaller and smaller each time so they can benefit from the whole land, and then we'll have this tiny area. We cannot move it. We can't do anything. (Interview Data, 2012)

The discourse of restriction on Palestinian movement is evident in Sally's comments, other interview data, and graffiti data. For Sally, the wall is a mechanism for constricting the movement of Palestinians to small areas that get "smaller and smaller each time so they can benefit from the whole land" (Interview Data, 2012). Restriction on Palestinian movement is understood as a means for Israel to "benefit from the whole land."

This perception of Sally's discourse contextualizes the naming of the wall as *apartheid*. The wall, as Chomsky (2006) and Usher (2006) argued, was designed to create three non-contiguous Bantustans that separate and segregate Palestinians from Israelis. The name *Bantustans* immediately evokes South African apartheid, in which whites separated themselves from native South African blacks. The native South Africans, comprising eight ethnic groups, lived in small enclaves or Bantustans that at some point would have been self-governing (Regan, 2008, p. 204) In 2003, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon named the wall and its consequential separating of Palestinians from Israelis as the "Bantustan plan," thus further evoking South African apartheid policies (Usher, 2006, pp. 20–21). The wall's goal, from the very beginning of its construction, was to concentrate Palestinians into three distinct, non-contiguous Bantustans separate from Israelis.

Tamimi (2011) argued that access to water resources, including wells, rivers, lakes, and natural aquifers, determined the path of the wall, reflecting Israel's goal of complete control over all resources in the West Bank and Israel. Increase of this control over water will undoubtedly further Palestine's impoverishment and compromise its nationhood ambitions. Controlling water points connects to an ideology reflected in

Zionist rhetoric that claimed that the influx of European Jews to historic Palestine came to “make the desert bloom” and to make the “Promised Land fertile.” Tamimi argued that Israel uses the wall to create facts *about* the wall. The result of the wall’s location with respect to water resources is that the land becomes inaccessible to Palestinian Arab farmers, who therefore lose the inability to irrigate and cultivate their land. Israel leadership then confiscates this “uncultivated” land. In Tamimi’s words, “Israeli policy, rhetoric by politicians, water experts, and implementation at various levels: all point out to the planned total Israeli control over the Western Aquifer. This is a fact made possible by Israel’s construction of the Wall” (p. 560). Zureik (2001) agreed with Tamimi’s argument and discussed the impact of the wall, concluding that, “Examining the impact the fence is having on Palestinian water management allows us to decipher the intricate fashion in which Palestinian power structures are affected” (p. 105).

### *The Green Line*

As stated earlier, the rhetoric of land grab connects to the location of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 relative to the 1949 Armistice Line or “Green Line.” The wall is located approximately two kilometers east of the Green Line, on what many Palestinians and internationals call the “West Bank” and “Palestinian land.” Israeli leadership denies Palestinian rights to the contested land, both east and west of the Green Line, by using the wall as a physical barrier to prevent Palestinians from accessing the land. Rhetorically, Israeli leadership denies the Palestinians Arab’s historical narrative that Palestinian Arabs

have indeed resided in the contested land, both east and west of the Green Line, for millennia. This rhetorical move by Israeli leadership helps to justify Israeli construction of settlements east of the Green Line by pointing to their own historical claims to the land.

The symbolic meaning of the Green Line manifests differently depending on the audience. For Palestinians and many internationals, the Green Line symbolically represents a border between the State of Israel and Palestinian land, or a future Palestinian state, thus shaping discourse regarding Palestinian land rights. For Israeli leadership, the Green Line holds no symbolic value. Israeli leadership consistently refutes international law and U.N. sanctions regarding the Green Line, settlements, and the wall. The State of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website rhetorically frames *all* of historic Palestine, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, including the West Bank and the State of Israel, as belonging to the Jewish Israelis alone. “Israel is a land and a people,” the website argues. “The history of the Jewish people, and its roots in the Land of Israel, spans some 35 centuries. In this land, its cultural, national, and religious identity was formed” (The State of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007).

Interview participants also interrogated the purpose of the wall and argued that the wall was a mode of confiscating more land for future Israeli settlement development and expansion (Interview Data, 2012). According to the interview participants, Israeli leadership uses a rhetoric of security and discourse of Promised Land as a pretext to confiscate Palestinian land and redefine the potential borders of a future Palestinian state (Interview Data, 2012).

The rhetoric of Israeli land grab repeats in the interview data. From the perspective of West Bank Palestinians, Palestinians cross Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall built on Palestinian land to enter *another* part of Palestinian land including East Jerusalem, a “Palestinian city.” Roni, a Palestinian Christian with a Palestinian ID, explains:

So the checkpoint that you have here, Checkpoint 300, it is also still a checkpoint between a Palestinian city and another Palestinian city. At least the east side of Jerusalem is Palestinian. If you go to the east side of Jerusalem, there's only Palestinians who live there. (Interview Data, 2012)

Roni explained that Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 was not a checkpoint or access point from a Palestinian City (Bethlehem) to an Israeli city (Jerusalem). It is not a border crossing, in other words, but a checkpoint from one Palestinian city to another Palestinian city. He explained that Israel has a right to keep him from entering Israel:

I think it's okay if Israel doesn't want me to go to Israel. It's their right not to let me go to Tel Aviv. I can understand. If I believe it's a two-state solution, it's their state, and they have the right that I'm not allowed to go there. My problem is with not going to East Jerusalem since 1993. (Interview Data, 2012)

Roni affirms that “that's their right” to keep him, a Palestinian, from entering Tel Aviv. The two-state solution discourse informs Roni's statement that Israel, as a state, can keep him from going to Tel Aviv, an Israeli city.

What Roni wanted to make clear was that the wall and the checkpoint restrict access from one Palestinian space to another Palestinian space. It is not a border crossing

between Israel and Palestine or the West Bank, but a restriction on Palestinian access and movement between two Palestinian cities, Bethlehem and East Jerusalem (Interview Data, 2012). Implicit in Roni's comment is that East Jerusalem resides in a Palestinian State, thus his restriction to enter a city in a Palestinian State did not make sense to Roni. The two-state solution discourse informs Roni's rhetorical positioning of East Jerusalem as a Palestinian city in a Palestinian state. East Jerusalem is located east of the Green Line, and this location further illustrates the symbolic meaning of the Green Line relative to the two-state solution discourse. For many Palestinians, the Green Line is indeed a border between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine.

The discourse of restriction on Palestinian movement also manifests in Roni's statement. This phenomenon of checkpoints restricting movement of Palestinians from one part of the West Bank to another contributes to and informs a discourse of restriction of movement evident in the interview and graffiti data. Evident in the data is how Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall impacts West Bankers with respect to Jerusalem. As Issa explained,

For 20 years I used to go easily. Ten minutes I was in Jerusalem. You know, but since they came here, why should I go? Why should I go through all this to see Jerusalem? You feel miserable there. The economics in Palestine, when this fence, uh ... wall come here. They're killing the economics. Everybody is looking for work.

Issa connected the construction of the wall with the complicated process of passing through the wall and its impact on jobs in the West Bank, where tourism is a major

economic driver. Because of the wall, countless tourist-related industries have closed, including retail souvenir shops, hotels, and restaurants that were once booming with tourists. Central to this impact is the mythological meaning the wall conveys. Eight-to-ten-meter concrete walls, turret-style watchtowers, barbed wire, and armed security personnel communicate that the West Bank and West Bank Palestinians are unsafe and must be contained, secured, and monitored by these security apparatuses. Tourists are simply scared away by these visual rhetorics and the messages they create.

The wall's location relative to the Green Line proves controversial when demarcating "Palestinian" space from "Israeli" space. Central to interview participant Roni's argument was the recognition of the Green Line as a de facto border between Israeli-controlled "Israel" and the Israeli-occupied Palestinian West Bank (Interview Data, 2012). Jerusalem, a Palestinian city according to Roni, is inaccessible to Palestinians. The inability to access Jerusalem from the West Bank influences graffiti rhetorics and contributes to the rhetoric of restriction of Palestinian freedom of movement. Jerusalem holds significant religious significance for Palestinian Christians and Muslims, as well as for Israeli Jews. The holy city also provides jobs, healthcare, recreation, and religious opportunities for those who can access it.

### *Palestinians as a Nationless Other*

The words *Palestine* and *Palestinian* are repeated throughout the interview data. An examination of a recent global map, however, does not name any country or

geographic space “Palestine.” Israeli security personnel, using the ID as a discursive prop, name and define Palestinians as non-native others and nationless. Mohammed explained, “Uh … there’s no citizens for their [Palestinians’] ID. The nationality, it’s just, uh … stars. There’s no nationality. There’s no nothing” (Interview Data, 2012). Mohammed’s mother, who was born in Israel, does not have “Israeli” on her ID, but instead she has stars marking her as an Arab *without* a nationality (Interview Data, 2012). The nationality of Palestinians on the Israeli ID as “just stars” indicates that the Palestinians are not citizens of the State of Israel, but Palestinians are also not citizens of *any* nation. Their ID constructs them as nationless. Israeli security personnel erase Palestinian national identity, rhetorically, by using the ID as a visual rhetorical prop. The words “there’s nothing,” and the melancholy tone in which Mohammed delivered this phrase, conveyed the hopelessness of this particular Palestinian Arab relative to the discourse of a Palestinian state, hence a Palestinian nationality and identity, and Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank free of Israeli occupation.

The ideology of a nationless Palestinian further manifests in the bureaucratic process of obtaining permission from Israelis to pass through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. The discourse surrounding this process creates sets of rights: rights for Israelis in Israel, rights for Palestinian Arabs in Israel proper, and rights for Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank. Israeli security personnel often issue Palestinians different types of IDs, depending on where they live. To get an Israeli ID, and thus greater freedom of movement, Palestinians must prove to Israeli officials that they have a permanent residence on the Jerusalem side of the wall. Palestinians born in the West Bank, by contrast, hold a

Palestinian ID and cannot access Jerusalem and Israel proper without special permission—or “permission to receive permission,” as one interview participant described it. Mohammed and his mother were both born in Jerusalem, but she had an Israeli ID while Mohammed was issued a Palestinian ID—thus illustrating the confusing requirements of receiving an Israeli ID. Mohammed explicitly named his mother “an Israeli” because of her ID (Interview Data, 2012).

The interview data further suggest that West Bank Palestinians often covet the Israeli ID, because it grants them access to the Jerusalem municipality and Israel proper. Roni explained, “Uh, those Jerusalem Palestinians, they have a nice life here in the country, because they’re allowed to come here, and they’re allowed to go there” (Interview Data, 2012). Roni argued that Palestinians Jerusalemites have more freedom of movement than their West Bank Palestinian counterparts, which equates to “a nice life here in the country” (Interview Data, 2012). Compared to the West Bank, Jerusalem offers Israeli ID holders more education, employment, religious, and cultural opportunities.

Even though Israeli ID holders can access Jerusalem and Israel proper, Palestinians with Israeli IDs “didn’t have all the rights” that Israeli Jews have (Interview Data, 2012). Mohammed explained, “Even if you have the Israeli written in your ID, and you’re Arabian or Christian or Muslim, you don’t get your full rights. Just for the Jews” (Interview Data, 2012). Mohammed’s comment specifically references Israeli citizenship and the power of that citizenship as represented in “rights.” One specific right is the ability to move more freely in Israel without needing to obtain permission. The wall has a

severe impact on West Bank Palestinians' right to movement, common in West Bank Palestinian discourse. Specific to this right is the inability of West Bank Palestinians to access holy places in East Jerusalem. The power to access these places in Jerusalem and Israel proper connects to the identity of the cardholder, which is evident in the visual design of the ID itself: West Bank Palestinians held green IDs and Palestinian Jerusalemites held blue IDs. Palestinians Arabs who held an Israeli ID and internationals with passports, another acceptable form of ID, moved more easily through the checkpoint.

Yiftachel (2009) argued that the Israeli state is engaging in a “creeping apartheid” that segments the colonized West Bank, occupied East Jerusalem, and the military lockdown of Gaza into three distinct groups of people with different identity and status. Israeli leadership divides each Palestinian group—Palestinian, Jerusalemites, and West Bankers—into distinct categories with distinct sets of rules and rights. These distinctions, according to Yiftachel, are merging into one regime system controlled by the Israelis (p. 7). Other scholars have contextualized the wall as part of a “separation” strategy resembling South African apartheid (Al-Rimmawi, 2009; Hasan, 2008; Regan, 2008).

Leila, a Palestinian Christian with a Palestinian ID, describes how the wall impacts Palestinians in the West Bank:

It's limiting our movement, like we don't have the free movement to go anywhere across the cities in our country. Like I ... I hear about so many cities and places where I really want to go, but I've never had the chance to go to. And like many tourists and internationals have the privilege to go to these countries, and to these

cities in my own country that I've never heard about or like, never visited before.

So just the freedom of movement is ... is gone.

The lack of freedom of movement, concretized and symbolized by the wall, is an omnipresent reminder of how Israelis construct Palestinian identity—as unsafe, potential terrorists who must be contained. Moreover, Palestinian ID checks conducted by Israeli security personnel become constant and consistent reminders of Israel's power to define Palestinian identity. The daily activity of Palestinians showing their IDs—at checkpoints when going to school, traveling to work, or even opening a bank account in the West Bank—reminds Palestinians that they are nationless and under the full control of Israeli security personnel. Israel, as both a state and a theological institution, is sovereign over Palestinians regardless of their geographic location, inside and outside Israeli proper. The ID further reminds Palestinian Jerusalemites and Palestinian West Bankers of how Israeli security personnel frame them—as dangerous *others* not incorporated into Israeli Jewish society and social structures, and as *others* from whom Israelis need security and separation.

#### *The Rhetoric of Security*

Leila, a Palestinian with a Palestinian ID, evoked a rhetoric of security when describing the wall. Leila stated, “For them [the Israelis] I believe it’s [the wall] for what they say is for secure, security reasons because they’re afraid of the Palestinians” (Interview Data, 2012). The interview participants who used Bethlehem Checkpoint 300

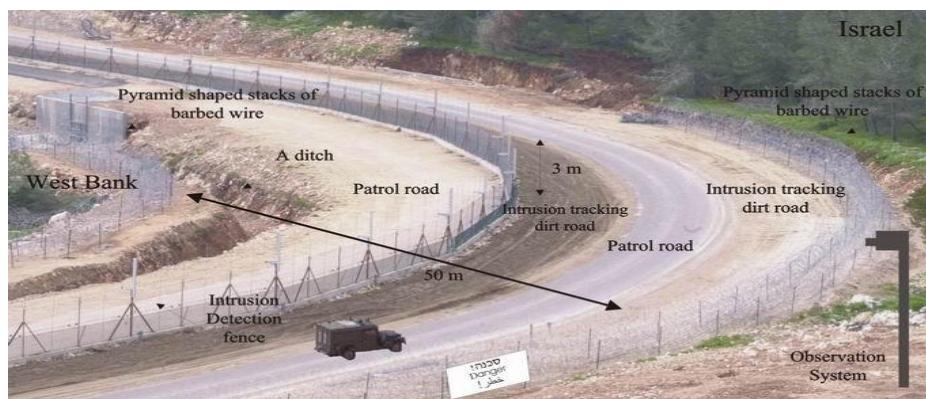
consistently used, referred to, and drew upon this particular rhetoric. George illustrated a perceived meaning and purpose of the wall: “For their security, maybe? Okay. They tell us we are terrorists, maybe? Okay. Not maybe. Surely! They can do everything to be safe” (Interview Data, 2012). The words *security*, *terrorist*, and *safe* evoke a rhetoric of security, and George’s comment that “they can do everything to be safe” illustrates the power of the rhetoric of security specific to Israeli security policies aimed at West Bank Palestinians who are potential “terrorists.” The interview and graffiti data suggest that the rhetoric of security, integrated with the Palestinian identity construction of “terrorists” by Israeli leadership and security personnel, grants Israelis the power to implement any policies they deem necessary to keep them secure, regardless of how those policies impact Palestinians and Palestinian ways of life (Interview Data, 2012).

The ID, wall, and Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 as symbolic constructions all contribute to and construct the rhetoric of security. These visual props further construct West Bank Palestinians as *the* instigators and perpetuators of violence against Israelis. According to the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, the Palestinians are the reasons why Israelis and Palestinians have not achieved peace. The Palestinians are the reason why the Israelis constructed an anti-terrorism fence (Israel Ministry of Defense, 2007). This rhetorical positioning of Palestinians lays the foundation for Israeli leadership to label Israeli settlement development, the construction of the wall, military occupation of the West Bank, and frequent military excursion into Gaza as “security measures.” As long as Palestinians resist, sometimes violently, the occupation and colonization of the West Bank by Israeli leadership and citizens of the State of Israel, Israeli leadership will

have a reason to justify their “security measures” because their security is at stake.

Not only do the visual rhetorics of the ID, wall, and checkpoint symbolize this Israeli rhetorical strategy, but the wall also serves as a physical manifestation of the operationalization of the rhetoric of security. The “Security Fence” has reduced terrorist attacks in the West Bank by more than 90% (Bard, 2007). Specifically, the website argues that the “Security Fence” serves to prevent “suicide bombers who entry into Israel with the sole intention of killing innocent people.” The website explicitly labels security measures enacted with the fence, including an image that identified pyramid-shaped stacks of barbed wire, a ditch, patrol road, intrusion tracking dirt road, intrusion detection device, and observation system. These security measures, according to the website, have greatly reduced the number of Palestinian terror attacks aimed at Israeli targets.

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website further perpetuates the rhetoric of security and the construction of Palestinians as terrorists by including multiple images of the aftermath of “Palestinian terrorist attacks” in the early 2000s. This webpage provides a link to a video called “Fence against Terror” and repeats arguments for the path of the fence and its legality, including repeated use of the word *security*. Note the images of the “Security Fence” used on the Israeli website:



*Figure 9.* The “Security Fence”  
Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2007)



*Figure 10.* The “Anti-Terrorism Fence”  
Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2007)

These images of the fence above contrast sharply with images of a wall located near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 (Figures 5–8). The further importance of these images on the Israeli website is what they do *not* show—an 8-meter-high concrete wall that surrounds not only the Palestinian cities of Bethlehem and Beit Jala, but also Jenin, Beit Hannia, Qalindya, Abu Dis, and other Palestinian villages and cities located in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website contextualizes the security fence firmly within a rhetoric of Palestinian terrorism and security from that terrorism. The website not only uses visual images to show the aftermath of terrorists attacks in several Israeli cities, but it also paints the clear picture that Palestinians in the West Bank are indeed terrorists whose mission is to attack Israeli citizens and targets. In Figure 11, note the depiction of Palestinian children, located on the Israeli website:



*Figure 11.* Image of Palestinian children  
Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2007)

The caption under this image reads, “Brandishing toy guns at a Palestinian kindergarten graduation ceremony.” The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website uses this specific visual rhetoric not only to construct the symbolic meaning of the wall intentionally, but also to intentionally construct West Bank Palestinians as potential terrorists.

The rhetoric of security and construction of terrorists manifest in other ways. Me’ha, an Israeli resident of Jerusalem and former Israeli soldier, used a rhetoric of security to construct Israeli Jewish settlers as unsafe and a potential security threat. Me’ha explained,

What makes me feel unsafe is the fact the, uh ... settlers and the Israeli government and the Jerusalem municipality are doing everything in their power to be sure that, that ... that Palestine can’t be a capital and that there won’t be a two state there and won’t be any kind of peace solution. Forget one state or two state.

They're making sure there is no peace solution. (Interview Data, 2012)

The status quo, according to Me'ha, favors the powerful Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The discourse of Israeli/Palestinian peace, then, becomes an obstacle for Israel leadership, relative to their goals of confiscating more Palestinian land and expanding the State of Israel into the West Bank. In other words, the discourse of a two-state solution—two states for two people, Israelis and Palestinians—and the discourse of peace are obstacles for Israeli leadership's colonial agenda (Interview Data, 2012). Palestinian terrorism perpetuates, if not condones, Israeli colonial policies largely manifesting in settlements.

Conflict with the Palestinians helps rhetorically justify Israeli leadership's colonial practices in the West Bank, which are often named "security measures." Me'ha said that settlers, not Palestinians, made him feel "unsafe." Israeli leadership and the Jerusalem municipality were doing "everything in their power" to *prevent* two states (Interview Data, 2012). Me'ha described the impact of Israeli Jewish settlement development on Palestinians,

The only thing, the only places it's possible for Palestinians to live now are the small cantons, similar to Native American reservations in the United States. Uh, Bantustans, if you will, similar to South Africa ... Palestinians are clustered into cages, uhm ... and, and, uh, uh, uh ... are divided and controlled and, uh ... that doesn't make me feel safe one bit. (Interview Data, 2012)

Me'ha's statement parallels statements from other interview participants about Palestinians clustered into cages that are then divided and controlled (Interview Data,

2012). *Bantustans* immediately connects Me'ha's discourse to South African apartheid-like strategies aimed at Palestinians. Me'ha also used the word *cages*, which further supports the Palestinians' construction as animals. He also explained that the Israelis "export" the occupation of the West Bank. He pointed to the Olympic Games in China and Brazil, and argued that Israeli soldiers trained police and military personnel in Beijing and Rio de Janeiro on cleansing neighbors near Olympic venues by expelling particular citizens constructed by Olympic officials as potential security threats to Olympic participants and spectators alike (Interview Data, 2012).

Evident in the data is a Palestinian understanding of Israel's colonial agenda aimed at the West Bank and Israeli Jewish settlement of the West Bank east of the Green Line. Israeli settlement activities are not covert, but highly visible. Sally offered an explanation of why Israel continues to grab land from Palestinians:

They're trying to get as many land from the Palestinians as possible because they're, um ... bringing people, like immigrating people and like giving them, um ... free homes, free houses, and full coverage, like insurance and health insurance and work and stuff like that. And just come you have your own house, you can live here in and be an Israel citizen if you are a Jew or something. So they're trying to get as much land as possible for them for, like, the other people from outside to come in here and, like, take the land and live in it. (Interview Data, 2012)

Sally pointed to Israel's encouragement of settlement of Palestinian land by Jews from outside Israel. These migrant Jews receive significant benefits for settling in the land:

Israeli citizenship, free homes, free insurance, and work. These benefits are not offered to Palestinians born in Israel proper, but to migrant Jews only (Interview Data, 2012). For Sally, these initiatives and benefits offered to immigrant Jews from the “outside” is an attempt to take the land from Palestinians (Interview Data, 2012). The goal of Israel settlement and Jewish migration is clear: “Come in here and take the land and live in it” (Interview Data, 2012).

### *Promised Land Discourse and Construction of the Other*

The discourse of Promised Land fits seamlessly with the rhetoric of security. Subscribers to the Promised Land discourse often argue that the Hebrew God gave the contested land to the ancestors of modern Jewish Israelis. Biblical texts support this discourse (Falah, 1996; Numbers 21:23–24; Deuteronomy 2:30–35, 7:2–6, 20:10–18; Joshua 6:17, 21, 8:24–29, 10:28, 30–32, 37, 39–40). This God “promise” historic Palestine to the descendants of Abraham. When Abraham, the nomadic shepherd from Ur in southern Mesopotamia, traveled to Canaan at the Hebrew God’s request, Abraham received a promise:

Abram (Abraham) traveled through the land as far as the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time, the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring, I will give this land.’ (Genesis 12:6–7)

This affirmation that the Hebrew God *gave* the decedents of Abraham the land repeats throughout the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 13:15, 15:7, 18, 17:8, 26:2–5, 50:24; Exodus 6:8; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 6:10, 31:20; Joshua 5:6; Judges 2:1).

Falah (1996) argued that Jewish militias deployed a “total war” strategy during the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, which resembles the biblical mandate of total war instituted by their Hebrew ancestors. Total war “produces large scale devastation” in which all buildings and structures, regardless of their historical or cultural significance or importance, are destroyed. Densely populated cities become targets for destruction because total war includes ethnic cleansing that involves the expulsion of the native people from contested land, echoing the biblical mandate outlined in Numbers 21:2–3. In the 1948 war, Jewish militias destroyed Arab buildings, homes, and significant places of culture, worship, and art, as part of the Israeli total war campaign (Falah, 1996, p. 257).

#### *Graffiti and Challenging the Promise Land Discourse*

The graffiti on the Palestinian side of the wall contests the Promise Land discourse and rhetoric of security by constructing discourses and rhetorics very similar to those in evidence on the Israeli website. Palestinian graffiti often reconstructs the identity of Palestinian from terrorists to oppressed freedom fighters and martyrs who fought against an aggressive, violent, and colonial Israeli empire. This colonial empire, supported by a Zionist and imperialistic rhetoric, sought to conquer land inhabited by

Palestinian Arabs for millennia. Central to the Zionist colonial agenda was the establishment of a Jewish homeland in historic Palestine. This land, however, also held religious significance for these native Palestinian Arabs. Palestinian Christian and Muslim Arabs alike point to ancient sites of religious pilgrimage as historical and religious justification for their respective claims to the contested land. In other words, graffiti on the wall often constructs Israelis as non-native others in need of removal from land that is ours, the Palestinians'.

Through graffiti on the wall, West Bank Palestinians often celebrate and commemorate fellow Palestinians who fought and often violently resisted Israeli colonial practices. Figure 12 illustrates a picture of a young Yasser Arafat, the former Palestinian president. Arafat is shown wearing the *kufiyah* or *hatah*, the traditional Palestinian headdress and symbol of Palestine and Palestinians. The kufiyah is a prominent symbol of Palestine and Palestinians and is prevalent in graffiti.

Surrounding the image of Arafat are texts that read “Free Palestine” and “From Palestine with Love,” in a font and graphic design that resembles a postcard. Rhetorically, the image of a postcard is important. People send other people postcards typically of places they have visited, and this postcard evokes that same imagery. It is sent to someone “from Palestine” and “with love.” Images of postcards on the wall often symbolize Palestinians in diaspora, mostly refugees from the 1947 war, who seek to return to their native Palestinian homeland. The various textual fonts, colors, and images in Figure 12 strongly suggest that several artists created the graffiti. Rhetorically, Arafat’s images evoke a symbol of hope of a future Palestinian state and defiance of Israeli

occupation. For the West, including Israel, Arafat's identity is synonymous with terrorism. This contrasting identity construction is evident in other examples of graffiti. Palestinians name Palestinian soldiers and prisoners as "martyrs," and graffiti on the wall commemorates them. Conversely, Israelis often name these same Palestinians as terrorists.

The location of the graffiti, near the busy Qalindya checkpoint between Beit Hannia, on the Jerusalem side of the wall, and Ramallah, on the West Bank side of the wall, provides an opportunity for thousands of viewers each day passing through the Qalindya checkpoint. Travelers use this checkpoint to access Ramallah, the political center of the West Bank. The audience is Palestinians with Israeli-issued IDs, Israelis with work permits who are authorized by Israeli security personnel, and Palestinians who live near the checkpoint. Qalindya, a Palestinian refugee camp, is located near this checkpoint. Skirmishes between Palestinian residents of the refugee camp and Israeli security personnel stationed at this checkpoint happen frequently, and vandalism on the wall is clearly evident. Figure 12 shows graffiti located just before travelers pass through the checkpoint.



Figure 12. Graffiti of a young Yasser Arafat  
Photo by R. Chad Holt

Other images on Figure 12 include a hodgepodge of graffiti including what appears to be a hand grenade wearing a wig and several images that resembled keys, which represent Palestinians in diaspora who still held the keys to their homes lost in the Nakba. The key has come to symbolize not only the Nakba, but also the *right* of Palestinian refugees, both inside and outside Israel and the West Bank, to return to their homes lost in the Nakba. The key symbol is particular prevalent in graffiti located near refugee camps.

The graffiti below depict another personification of Palestinian resistance to Israeli colonial policies and a symbol of Palestinian hope. Like Arafat, the West and Israel associate Leila Khaled with terrorism. Palestinians, on the other hand, argue that Khaled is a brave freedom fighter that not only resisted Israeli occupation of historic Palestine, but also fought against the imperialistic impulse that fueled, and continues to fuel, the expansion of Israel deeper into the West Bank. Notice the image of the young Leila Khaled on the left side of Figure 13:



*Figure 13.* Graffiti of Leila Khaled on the Bethlehem side of the wall  
Photo by Linda Myers-Reed

Graffiti depicting a young Leila Khaled is prominent on the Bethlehem side of the wall.

In Figure 13, Khaled's smile and youthful appearance are depicted. Her smile rhetorically conflicts with the West's construction of her identity as a terrorist, and, at the same time, supports her construction as a proud Palestinian freedom fighter. In this graffiti, Khaled wears the traditional Palestinian headscarf, the *hatah*, and holds a machine gun.

The images of Khaled and Arafat symbolize Palestinian resistance to Israeli colonialism and occupation, as well as resistance to Western imperialism. These images challenge the rhetoric of security and attempt to reconstruct both identities, from a Western perspective of terrorists to an identity as freedom fighters and political figures who rebelled and fought against the colonial agenda of Israeli leadership aimed at historic Palestine. Often painted next to Khaled's image in graffiti on the wall are the words, "I am not a terrorist," which confronts her Western-constructed identity and further attempts to redefine her as a Palestinian fighting for Palestinian land rights. Khaled (1971) pointed to the partition of Palestine in 1936 and 1939 as the "losing of Palestine" to the influx of

Jewish immigrants. Western imperialism drove the Zionist colonial project, and Khaled identified imperialism as the primary tool used by European Zionism to “take” Palestine from Palestinians (p. 10). These visual rhetorics seek to persuade audiences that Palestinians should celebrate and commemorate the resistance of Arafat and Khaled.

Next to the image of Khaled in Figure 13 is an image of the wall surrounding what appears to be a Christmas tree. Bethlehem, surrounded by the wall on three sides, often symbolizes Christmas because it is the traditional location of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, Christianity’s central figure. Most Christians celebrate this event as Christmas, an event symbolized by a decorated evergreen tree. Evoking religious imagery becomes a rhetorical tool for graffiti artists who aim their visual rhetorics at specific audiences—in this case, Christians visiting Bethlehem. The wall around the Christmas tree symbolizes the inaccessibility of Christmas, a mythological symbol of the inaccessibility of Bethlehem, as well as the restriction on Palestinian freedom of movement. The wall surrounds and prohibits access to the symbolic Christmas tree, while also prohibiting egress *from* the Christmas tree. The area surrounding the tree, relatively small and confined, visually communicates the discourse evident in the interview data: Palestinians are confined to small spaces enclosed by a wall. The location of this graffiti, just after a traveler passes through Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 to enter Bethlehem, makes it an ideal place to visually communicate the rhetorics of restriction of Palestinian freedom of movement and the oppression of Palestinian Christians because of the wall (Interview Data, 2012; Graffiti Data, 2012).

The Christmas tree additionally symbolizes Palestinian Christian land claims.

These land claims, common in Palestinian Christian rhetoric, compete with the Israeli discourse of Promise Land and, in a sense, also with Palestinian Muslim claims to the land, which also manifest in graffiti (Figure 9). Palestinian Muslims and Palestinian Christians use religious symbols on the wall as visual rhetorics to rhetorically justify their historic and religious claims to the land and to communicate this land claim with Palestinians and internationals. The Christmas tree is more than a religious symbol; it is a historic symbol as well, positioning Palestinian Christians in the contested land for millennia. The Dome of the Rock in Figure 9 uses the same rhetorical strategy. As one of Islam's oldest structures, it visually communicates not only religious land claims, but historic land claims as well.

Ironically, Israelis point to their own religious and historical symbols to visually communicate their respective land claims. Many of these symbols also connect to symbols and myths for both Christianity and Islam. Jewish religious symbols seldom manifest in graffiti in the West Bank, but they manifest in cities west of the Green Line such as Tel Aviv, Haifa, and West Jerusalem (Heffez, 2012). Tourist discourse further promotes Israeli Jewish historic and religious sites, particularly in East Jerusalem where Christian and Muslim sites are located. These Jewish religious and historic sites include places such as the Western Wall, Temple Mount, and the City of David.

Israeli discursive power is demonstrated in how Israel connects these historical and religious sites to the discourse of Promise Land. For Israel, these sites offer proof of their historical narrative. Christianity and Islam often affirm the same religious texts that Jewish Israelis point to when rhetorically justifying their God-given rights to the land.

Many times, the Promise Land rhetoric is reduced to a simple historical fact: the Israelis were in the land first. This affirmation of Israeli rights to the land, rooted in religious scriptures and “proved” by ancient archeological and religious sites, creates a discursive dilemma for Palestinian Muslims and Palestinian Christians. How do they both affirm and dispute Israeli colonial practices rooted in Promise Land discourse and religious texts to which all three religious groups subscribe?

The graffiti on the wall seeks to recreate the historical narrative of the founding of the State of Israel by rhetorically connecting it to other historical events. Graffiti in

*Figure 14.* Graffiti symbolizing the Dome of the Rock  
Photo by R. Chad Holt



Figure 14 challenges the State of Israel and Zionist rhetoric about the “empty land” by equating the founding of the State of Israel and subsequent Palestinian Nakba with the horrific murdering of the indigenous habitants at Guernica by the Nazis.

Nazi symbols and other references to Nazi Germany are prevalent on the wall. Most of

these references equate the Nazi policy aimed at killing civilians to the killing of Palestinians. Figure 14 rhetorically accomplishes this comparison by positioning “Palestina 1948” just below “Gernica 193X,” thus visually equating the two events: the bombing and destruction of civilians at Guernica by Nazi forces equated to the destruction of Palestine and Palestinians by Jewish militias in 1948. The date after “Palestina” is also significant. The establishment of the State of Israel took place in 1948, suggesting that the Palestinian Guernica occurred the year the State of Israel was established.

Guernica receives significant scholarly discussion focusing on the famous city’s symbolic meaning relative to the atrocities of war specific to civilians (Ray, 2006; Collins, 2008; Rhodes, 2013). Kopper (2014) specifically analyzed the rhetoric evoked by the use of Guernica in the context of protest. He argued that Guernica connected events of protest to a grand narrative. That is, the use of *Guernica* is linked to generalized discourses regarding abuse of power and injustices, including the intentional harming and killing of innocent others (p. 444). The Palestinian flag under the Gernica/Palestina graffiti further connects the two events. This graffiti is located near the Palestinian refugee camp of Al-Aida, suggesting that the audience for this particular visual rhetoric is Palestinian refugees. The graffiti seeks to persuade viewers that the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 resulted in the murder of indigenous peoples by a powerful and brutal regime.

The Dome of the Rock seen on the left side of Figure 14 commemorates the Islamic prophet Mohammed’s nighttime journey to heaven, an important religious event

for Muslims (*The Holy Quran*, Surah 17:1). But it also signifies Palestinian Muslims' religious and historical claims to the contested land in and around East Jerusalem, as a symbol of Palestinian nationhood and land rights specific to East Jerusalem and historic Palestine as a whole. The shrine, located in the Old City of East Jerusalem on internationally disputed land east of the Green Line, holds eschatological significance for Palestinians, but particularly for Palestinian Muslims. Images of the Dome of the Rock are prominent in the West Bank, while this religious, eschatological shrine remains inaccessible to most West Bank Palestinians because of the wall (Interview Data, 2012; Graffiti Data, 2012). The Dome of the Rock, visible through cracks in the wall, allows Palestinian audiences to "see" the Dome of the Rock without having to pass through the security protocol at nearby Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 (Figure 14; Interview Data, 2012). The concept of seeing Jerusalem manifested in interview data when a Palestinian Christian referenced seeing the Holy City. The graffiti rhetorically reminds Palestinians that the Dome of the Rock is still located in East Jerusalem. The image of this iconic structure is synonymous with Jerusalem. It evokes both Palestinian Christian and Palestinian Muslim rights to Jerusalem and the violation of those rights because of security procedures aimed at Palestinians, including Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, the ID, and the wall.

The graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall strengthens the rhetoric of Israeli colonial practices aimed at contested Palestinian land on both sides of the Green Line. It challenges the rhetoric of security offered by the Israeli website and often labels Israel as an imperial project supported by Western imperial powers such as the US. The Dome of

the Rock and the Christmas tree symbolize Palestinian Christian and Palestinian Muslim land claims and reposition the land as belonging to them, not to the Israelis. The graffiti further challenges the identity construction of Palestinians by Western powers and Israel by commemorating Palestinian icons such as Arafat and Khaled, who are called terrorists in the West and Israel.

The graffiti further positions the migration of world Jewry to historic Palestinian as an imperial project with a colonial agenda. The colonization and occupation of historic Palestine resulted in expulsion of native Palestinians from the contested land, to make room for the influx of world Jewry to the Promise Land. The wall thus becomes a concrete symbol of this occupation and a target for Palestinian and international voice against the occupation. The graffiti transforms the wall into a rhetorical space for persuading audiences that Palestinians have power and hope, even in the face of Western-backed Israeli occupation.

The visual design of the wall literally removes West Bank Palestinians from the sight of viewers on the Jerusalem side of the wall. In a sense, the wall visually hides West Bank Palestinians, thus also hiding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and erasing the reality of the Israeli colonial project. The wall visually and literally hides the social, cultural, and economic plight of West Bank Palestinians, which was largely a result of the establishment of the State of Israel and Jewish migration to the contested land. The graffiti reminds Palestinians and internationals that Palestinians, by contrast, see the wall and recognize its purpose as a tool of separation and security from Israelis living on the Jerusalem side of the wall.

*The Rhetoric of Security and Discourse of Promise Land**Evident in Official Israeli Discourse*

The rhetoric of security found in the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website overlap and intersect with Promise Land discourse. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (2011) affirmed Israel's God-ordained rights to the Promise Land in a speech to the United Nations. Like the Palestinians who pointed to the Dome of the Rock to rhetorically justify their historic and religious land claims, Netanyahu pointed to another physical, historical, and symbolic structure—the Western Wall. Located in Palestinian East Jerusalem, the Western Wall conveys the mythological meaning that the State of Israel is indeed the Promise Land for modern Jewish Israelis. The Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site, resides only a few hundred meters from the Dome of the Rock, Islam's third holiest site, and a few blocks from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Christianity's holiest site. Netanyahu evoked mythological meaning that transformed the physical structure of the Western Wall into mythological symbol and meta-sign that "proved" Israeli land claims. In Netanyahu's words,

So here in the United Nations, automatic majorities can decide anything. They can decide that the sun sets in the east or rises in the west. I think the first has already been pre-ordained. But they can also decide—they have decided that the Western Wall in Jerusalem, Judaism's holiest place, is occupied Palestinian territory.

(Murphy, 2012)

The discourse of Promise Land evident in Netanyahu's speech connects to the mythological meaning of the Western Wall. He challenged the affirmation by the United Nations that the Western Wall is located in "occupied Palestinian territory," rather than in the Jewish State of Israel. According to Netanyahu, the United Nations decided that the Western Wall, "Judaism holiest space," indeed was located in an area *other* than Israel. The implied message is clear: How can Israel's holiest site be located in an area other than Israel? Netanyahu used the Western Wall as a religious symbol to challenge the naming of the area around the Western Wall and Jerusalem as "occupied Palestinian territory." The symbolic meaning of the Western Wall proves that God gave the Israelis the contested land, and that the land surrounding the Western Wall is Israel, not the "occupied Palestinian territory." Undergirding the United Nations's naming the area around the Western Wall is the recognition of the areas east of the Green Line as "occupied Palestinian territory." As stated earlier, Israeli sources refute the Green Line as a border between Israel and Palestinian territory.

### *Hegemonic Discourse and Ideology*

In Chapter 2, Fairclough (2001) defined hegemony as "the power over society as a whole of one of the fundamental economic-defined classes in alliance with other social forces, but it is never achieved more than partially and temporarily" (p. 92). Hegemonies thus become a locus for struggle (p. 92). The Israeli permit system, wall, and Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 all provide examples of material social practices in which collective

ideologies manifest. The ideology of Israeli land rights, ownership, and security emerge through the use of visual symbols and bureaucracies such as the wall, Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, and Israeli Jewish settlements. Even the symbolic meaning of the Western Wall communicates Israeli land claims. For most audiences in the West, Israeli hegemony over discourse surrounding land rights dominates the discourse and narrative informed by the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Like Jewish Israelis, the Palestinians evoke symbolic meaning and claims to contested land by pointing to the symbolic meaning and location of the Dome of the Rock.

The interview and graffiti data suggest, however, that the visual and bureaucratic measures instituted by Israeli leadership and security personnel become hegemonic tools used to control Palestinians and Palestinian discourse, and ensure Israeli dominance and power that often manifests in the Israeli control of discourse surrounding the conflict, particularly with Western audiences. Graffiti rhetorics become a way that Palestinians and internationals can confront, interrogate, and challenge the Israeli hegemonic discourse and control of narratives.

The interview data speak to this hegemonic relationship and ideology: Israeli security and rights to the land supersede Palestinian rights to the same land, even though both groups have provided evidence of their historical and theological connections to the land (Interview Data, 2012; Graffiti Data, 2012). Israeli Jewish settler power was particularly clothed in legitimacy, thus making the Promise Land rhetoric “the most potent weapon” and particularly effective at erasing Palestinian history (Ellis, 2014, p. 477). The religious settlers construct and reinvent themselves as authentic natives and

consequently construct the Palestinians as dangerous, non-native others from whom Israelis need to be protected. Ellis stated,

The religious Zionist settlers have no conflict with individual Arabs, as long as he or she is not seeking rights or interfering with the general settlement project.

Nevertheless, this sense of protectiveness can turn quickly when there is a violent incident and the local “primitives” will be described as murderous and compared to Cossack hordes. (p. 482)

Ellis concluded that the “security argument” has become the pragmatic argument used when Israeli Jewish settlers refrain from using their theological rhetoric and accept secular legal language as a “weapon” to settle the contested land (p. 479). This security argument used by Israeli Jewish settlers is the same argument used by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. The website rhetorically constructs Israelis as authentic natives and further position the native Palestinian Arab population as inauthentic others. Israeli Jews “reinvent themselves as its native population,” to use Pappé’s words (2006, p. 18).

The international community, specifically the United Nations and the United States, insert themselves into the Palestinian/Israeli conflict in an attempt to resolve it. The international community’s insertion into the conflict has shaped specific discursive practices and rhetorical strategies. The United Nations instituted several resolutions aimed at Israel condemning settlement development, and reaffirming Palestinian Arabs’ rights to return to their historic homeland land (U.N. Resolution 446). The United Nations also contested the legality/illegality of the wall and argued that settlements, the

wall, and the refusal to grant Palestinians the ability to return to their homes lost during the establishment of the State of Israel, are illegal under international law (United Nations, “U.N. Resolution 446,” 1979).

Graffiti data speaks to the Palestinian refugees’ right to return to historic Palestine and Israel leadership’s refusal to allow them to do so, despite U.N. resolutions and international law. The 1948 Arab/Israeli war resulted in the uprooting of approximately 800,000 Palestinians and the destruction of 531 Palestinian villages. Eleven urban cities saw the removal of their native Palestinian inhabitants (Pappé, 2006, p. xiii). The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) serves about 1.6 million registered Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza, plus 4.3 million registered Palestinian refugees in surrounding countries (<http://www.unrwa.usa.org/who-are-palestine-refugees/>). Palestinians and internationals argue that Palestinian refugees displaced or expelled because of the 1947 Arab/Israeli war have the right to return to *their* Palestinian homeland (U.N. Resolution 194; Graffiti Data, 2012).

Palestinians have sought to create an identity in the United Nations. Their bid for recognition at the United Nations received fierce criticism from Israel and its international and powerful ally, the US. In a speech to the U.N. General Assembly, U.S. President Barak Obama (2011) downplayed the bid for Palestinian statehood and sovereignty. Obama illustrated the discourse of Palestinian/Israeli peace and argued that *only* Israelis and Palestinians can reach peace agreements:

Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations—if it were that easy, it would have been accomplished by now. Ultimately, it is the

Israelis and the Palestinians who must live side by side. Ultimately, it is the Israelis and the Palestinians—not the US—who must reach agreement on the issues that divide them: on borders and on security, on refugees and Jerusalem. (Obama, 2011)

Obama’s “it’s up to the Palestinians and Israelis” rhetoric seemed odd in the context of consistent U.S. vetoes of U.N. resolutions against Israel and the US’s financial support of Israel. According to the Jewish Virtual Library, the United States has vetoed 38 U.N. resolutions against Israel since 1983

(<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/U.S.vetoes.html>). The United States withdrew funding from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) immediately following UNESCO’s granting membership to Palestine (Lobe, 2011). These actions by U.S. leadership suggest that the United States plays a significant role in the “issues that divide” Palestinians and Israelis (Obama, 2011). In other words, the US’s consistent vetoes of U.N. resolutions against Israel, and its financial support of Israel, suggest that the United States indeed shaped the issues that divided Palestinians and Israelis. U.S. actions at the United Nations and the US’s financial support of Israel further suggest that the United States authorized Israel’s colonial and “security” policies aimed at Palestinians, in spite of President Obama’s claim that “it is the Israelis and the Palestinians—not the US—who must reach agreement on the issues that divide them.” Recently, U.S. policy toward Israel took a drastic turn. Samantha Power, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, abstained from a recent U.N. Security Council resolution vote condemning Israeli settlements. As a result, the

resolution passed, marking a turn in U.S. policy toward Israel in the context of the United Nations (Morello & Egash, 2016).

### *Challenges to the Rhetoric of Security and Discourse of Promise Land*

The wall has attracted internationally known graffiti artists. Banksy's "Santa's Ghetto" project in 2006 brought 14 graffiti artists to the wall in an effort to both display their graffiti and offer commentary *on* the wall *about* the wall (Parry, 2010, p. 15). Banksy called the wall and the West Bank, "the world's largest open-air prison and the ultimate activity holiday destination for graffiti artists" (Banksy, 2006, p. 136). An image of one of Banksy's graffiti on the wall appears in Figure 15:



*Figure 15.* Banksy's living room scene on the wall  
Source: Parry, 2005; The Electronic Intifada, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/well-known-uk-graffiti-artist-banksy-hacks-wall/5733>

These graffiti depict a living room scene complete with the symmetry of two chairs on

either side of a centrally placed window. Curtains frame the window and the beautiful view of a mountain scene outside the window and on the other side of the wall. A table between the two chairs with a flowerpot helps to further frame the beautiful, idealistic view out the window. The symbolic meaning is clear: scenes of beauty, tranquility, and serenity are available to Palestinians only through a window in the wall. The graffiti seeks to persuade audiences that the *other* side of the wall is where they'll find idealistic beauty in an idealistic space.

Figure 16 depicts a similar image from Banksy, answering the question, “What’s on the other side of the wall that is hidden from our West Bank Palestinian Arab view?”



Figure 16. Banksy's beach scene on the wall

Source: Parry, 2005, The Electronic Intifada, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/well-known-uk-graffiti-artist-banksy-hacks-wall/5733>

Cracks and a hole in the wall reveal a beautiful beach. The scene depicts two children, with toy shovels and buckets, one yellow in color, playing in front of the idealistic beach scene visible through the wall. The boys are playing on the West Bank side of the wall, while the beautiful and idealistic scene is located on the other side of the wall. The other side of the wall is a mythological construct of beauty, opportunity, and serenity. The graffiti is persuasive in how it acts upon viewers' idealistic impressions of the other side of the wall, a side that is inaccessible to them both physically and symbolically. It further points to power structures manifested in the wall that prohibit them from accessing this beautiful and idealized space.

The audience for Banksy's graffiti is Palestinians and internationals. The context for the graffiti is on the wall near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. The purpose of the graffiti is to show what is on the *other* side of the wall. The idealization is that the other side of the wall contains beauty, serenity, peace, and prosperity. This idealization conflicts with the realization on the Bethlehem side of the wall that the Palestinians are without these mythological and ideological constructs. Banksy's graffiti further supports binaries. The *other* side of the wall is a beautiful place. This side of the wall, the other's binary, is a place of oppression and desolation.

Banksy's graffiti have become a source of tourism and economy for entrepreneurially minded West Bank Palestinians who offer a "Banksy Tour" to tourists (Murad Tours, n.d.). Graffiti on the wall, and even tours of graffiti on the wall, have normalized the wall. Banksy's book discusses a scene in which a local Palestinian man both praised Banksy's graffiti and denounced his process of making the wall "beautiful."

According to Banksy, the local Palestinian man said, “You paint the wall. You make it beautiful … We hate this wall. Go home” (Banksy, 2006, p. 143). In some ways, the graffiti on the wall has the opposite affect: it provides Palestinians and internationals a space to paint on or vandalize the wall. But that process normalizes the wall and changes it from a symbol of Israeli sovereignty and Palestinian oppression to that of a casual activity or source of entertainment. When visiting the West Bank in 2012, a Palestinian West Banker casually asked me, “Do you want to paint something on the wall?”

Graffiti thus becomes a communicative mode used primarily on the Bethlehem side of the wall, to contest the rhetoric of security and discourse of Promise Land offered on the Jerusalem side of the wall. The rhetorical struggle further separates the two sides as they seek to discursively define the purpose of the wall. This separation, demonstrated by the competing rhetorics that seek to define the purpose of the wall, symbolizes not only the physical separation of West Bank Palestinians from Israelis living on the Jerusalem side of the wall, but it also symbolizes the separation of Israeli and Palestinian leadership with respect to the issues that divide them. In a sense, the wall symbolizes these issues including the fate of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees’ right of return, Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, and the borders of the State of Israeli and the not-yet-materialized Palestinian state.

Graffiti as a communicative mode suggests a struggle for rhetorical power, particularly regarding the semiotic meaning of the wall. Figures 13 through 20 illustrate this re-construction through competing binary rhetorics—a rhetoric of security versus a rhetoric of apartheid, a rhetoric of security versus a rhetoric of restriction of movement, a

Promise Land discourse versus a rhetoric of Palestinian right of return, a Palestinian right of return versus a Jewish law of return, etc.

The prolific amount of graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall, in contrast to the lack of graffiti on the Jerusalem side of the wall, suggests that the wall speaks differently to different audiences with respect to their perspective. The visual contrast between the Jerusalem side of the wall and the West Bank side of the wall is stark and difficult not to notice. The side of the wall facing Jerusalem and Israel proper is a relatively clean and well-maintained concrete surface largely absent of graffiti, vandalism, or damage. When compared to the Palestinian side of the wall, which is loaded with text, graffiti, and vandalism, the Jerusalem side of the wall is silent.

Glenn (2004) argued that voice and silence, or no comment, are rhetorical arts. The written text and visuals on the Palestinian side of the wall demonstrate how Palestinians and the creators of graffiti signal their power of speech. Glenn said, “Containing everything in itself, silence is meaningful, even it is invisible. It can mean powerlessness or emptiness, but not always” (p. 4). The lack of graffiti and vandalism and the apparent lack of comment on the Israeli side of the wall do not suggest Israeli powerlessness or emptiness, but instead the meaning-making power of silence. Silence becomes a form of Israeli speech and a key component of the visual dialogue and discourse between Israelis on one side of the wall and Palestinians on the other side. Glenn explained, “Speaking and silence remain tied to our civilizing tendencies, which play out expressly in conversation” (p. 5). Glenn argued that who spoke and who remained silent always depended on the rhetorical situation. Figure 17 illustrates the

Jerusalem side of the wall just outside Bethlehem Checkpoint 300. Note the absence of graffiti, vandalism, and litter.



*Figure 17.* The wall, Jerusalem side, located at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300  
Photo by R. Chad Holt

The lack of graffiti and vandalism and the apparent silence on the Jerusalem side of the wall in Figure 17 do not represent powerlessness or emptiness. The wall *itself* speaks. It symbolizes and signals security to Israelis and internationals from unsafe, Palestinian “others” on the other side the wall. The absence of graffiti by Israelis suggests a willingness *not* to speak using text, graffiti, and vandalism. Instead, silence is indeed a form of speech and voice. The symbolic meaning created by the wall from this perspective is clear: security. Something or someone behind this wall is so dangerous that the Israelis must contain and secure it using an 8-meter-high concrete wall with built-in turret-style watchtowers and barbed wire fencing on top that faces toward the West Bank.

This visual silence suggests that the wall itself, rhetorical, discursively, and ideologically, silences the conflict with the Palestinians. It allows everyday Israelis to view the wall and construct a meaning that, as I stated earlier, erases the Palestinians in the West Bank and the conflict with them. The blank, grey concrete almost comforts the Israelis, because West Bank Palestinians and the threat that they pose to Israelis are not visible.

The graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall suggests Palestinians' willingness and ability to speak before others, including superiors. The wall offers Palestinians and internationals a visual space to challenge the idea of Israeli sovereign power, the performance of sovereignty discussed by Bushbridge (2013), and the rhetoric of security.

Figure 18 illustrates graffiti and vandalism to the wall near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300.



*Figure 18.* Graffiti on the wall located near Bethlehem Checkpoint 300  
Photo by R. Chad Holt

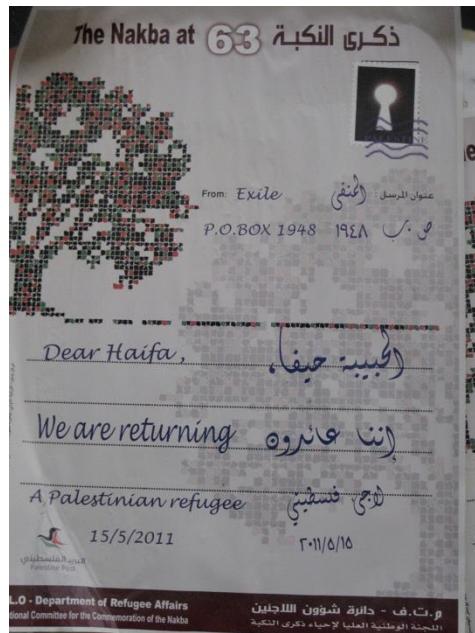
Figure 18 is typical of most graffiti on the wall: a hodgepodge mixture of political statements, cartoon-like characters, symbols, tags, and individual names. The context of the location of this section of the wall proves vital to interpreting the graffiti. The location of this example is adjacent to the Aida Refugee Camp, which covers 0.71 square kilometers with a population of 3,150 Palestinian refugees. Aida is one of 19 Palestinian refugee camps located in the West Bank served by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA, n.d.). Aida Refugee Camp is located near the Israeli Jewish settlements of Gilo and Har Gilo on the Jerusalem side of the wall. Figure 19 illustrates a close-up of Figure 18:



*Figure 19.* Graffiti on the wall with the names of Palestinian villages  
Photo by R. Chad Holt

The use of graffiti on the Palestinian side of the wall demonstrates that Palestinians and the creators of graffiti signaled their power of speech using graffiti as a communicative

mode. Figure 19 illustrates several seemingly unrelated graffiti: a boy on a cross throwing paper airplanes toward the top of the wall, and a bearded man resembling Western images of Jesus of Nazareth looking through a hole ripped in the wall. Various tags in Arabic and graffiti are also evident. Of particular interest is the Arabic script located at the bottom right of the image of the bearded man. The graffiti list three names of Arab cities located in historic Palestine: Akka, Haifa, and al-'Iraqiya al-Manshiya. During the establishment of the State of Israel, Israeli militias expelled—or “ethnically cleansed,” to use Pappé’s (2006) term—native Palestinian Arab residents and replaced by immigrating Jewish residents. Figure 20 further promotes a rhetoric of Palestinian return to historical



Palestine:

*Figure 20.* Letter from a Palestinian Refugee located on the wall  
Photo by R. Chad Holt

Figure 20 resembles the visual structure and format of a personal letter. A Palestinian

refugee who signed the letter wrote “Dear Haifa, We are returning,” which promotes a definitive declaration that Palestinians expelled from Haifa during the 1948 Nakba were indeed returning to Haifa. Pappé (2006) discussed the de-Arabization of Haifa. On April 21, 1948, Jewish speakers began urging Palestinian residents of Haifa to leave because of an impending attack on Arabs in Haifa by the Jewish militia group Hagana. Haifa’s Jewish mayor, Shabtai Levi, gave Palestinian Arabs an opposing message, asking Arab residents to stay. Mordechai Maklef, operational officer of the Camel Brigade, however, ordered the cleansing campaign. Pappé reported that Maklef’s orders to his troops were clear and concise: “Kill any Arab you encounter; torch all inflammable objects and force doors open with explosives” (p. 95). Pappé continued,

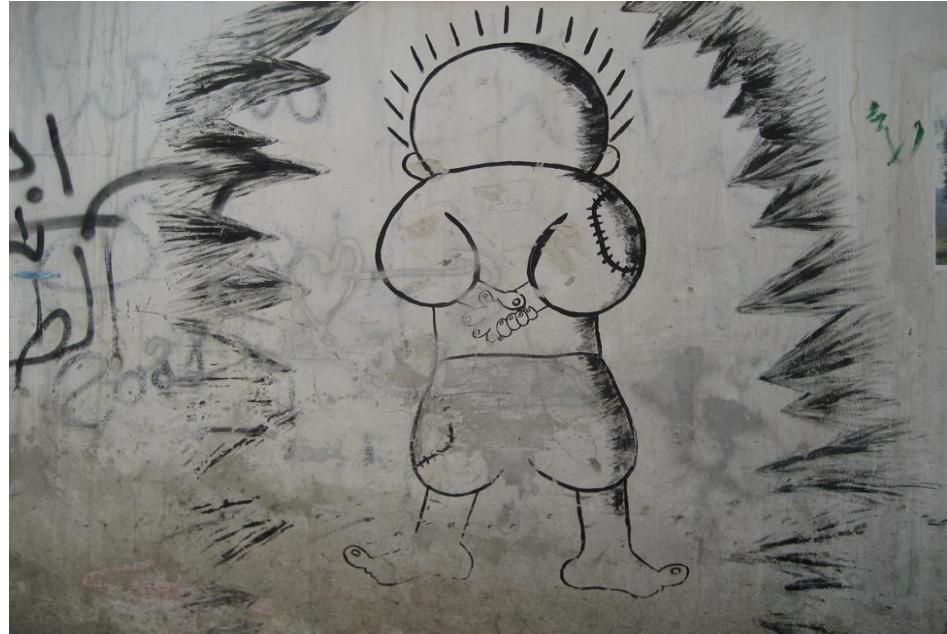
When these orders were executed promptly within the 1.5 square kilometers where thousands of Haifa’s defenseless Palestinians were still residing, the shock and terror were such that, without packing any of their belongings or even knowing what they were doing, people began leaving in masse. (p. 95)

The expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from Haifa was part of Plan Dalet, a plan designed to destroy Palestinian areas of historic Palestine. Plan Dalet resulted in the uprooting of half of Palestine’s native population: over 800,000 people were displaced and 531 villages destroyed.

The tree in the upper left corner of Figure 20 resembles a prominent symbol for Palestine, the olive tree. The top of the letter reads, “The Nakba at 63,” and the letter is dated “15/5/2011.” Sixty-three years had elapsed since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. A graphic resembling a keyhole is visible in the top right of the letter. Keyholes

and keys symbolize the Palestinians' right of return to historic Palestine. Many Palestinians who fled their homes during the Nakba still have the keys to their homes that were vacated when Jewish militias expelled the Palestinian Arabs (Sacco, 2009, p. 3). A Palestinian Christian who lives in East Jerusalem shared with me her journey from Jaffa, where she lived, to East Jerusalem, where she now lives and where Israeli militia forced her to march during the *Nakba*. She still has the keys to her former home in Jaffa.

The popular image of the Handala, or Hanthala, further symbolizes the *Nakba* and the Palestinian rhetoric of return to their native homeland. Ali Al-Naji, a Palestinian cartoonist, invented the Handala, an unattractive, bitter, and tough Palestinian refugee child who longs to return to his home lost during the Nakba and the founding of the State of Israel (Sacco, 2009, pp. vii–ix; Handala, n.d.):



*Figure 21. Graffiti of Handala located on the wall  
Photo by R. Chad Holt*

Handala always turns his back to the viewer, and his hair is always a mess. The prickly nature of his hair symbolizes the cactus, a prominent symbol in Palestine that represents the toughness of Palestinian refugee children. His clothes are torn, symbolizing his poverty. The Handala symbolizes a multitude of inter-related and entangled rhetorics, including the rhetorics of security, occupation, land rights, right of return, and restriction of movement (Sacco, 2009, p. 2). Al-Naji wrote, “At first he was a Palestinian child, but his consciousness developed to have a national then a global and human horizon” (Handala, n.d.). The Handala become a symbol of Palestine’s oppression by the Israelis, and their lack of political and ideological support from neighboring Arab countries, as well as the US’s unwavering support of Israel.

The myths created by the wall, combined with those created by the symbolic meaning of the Handala, create a meta-myth. The visual image of the Handala by itself symbolizes multiple myths: Palestinian right of return to historic Palestine, loss of Palestinian land via the establishment of the State of Israeli and the occupation of the West Bank by Israeli security personnel, and loss of Palestinian rights to self-govern. The location of this image of the Handala, on the wall in Aida Refugee Camp, is particularly significant. Palestinian refugees are the audience, and the context of the graffiti makes it easily viewable by Palestinians living in the refugee campus.

The Handala is also located on another section of the wall that separates Palestinians from Rachel’s Tomb, a site of religious pilgrimage and tourism for Christians, Muslims, and Jews alike. Various graffiti tags surround the iconic image, seen

in Figure 22:



*Figure 22.* The Handala  
Photo by R. Chad Holt

The Handala also symbolizes the lack of support for Palestinian rights, particularly from Israel's Arab neighbors and Israel's imperial ally, the US. Al-Naji frequently condemned the US's unwavering support of the State of Israel and the Arab world's inability to change the status quo regarding Palestinians' right of return to their native, historic Palestine (Sacco, 2009, pp. 3–21, 43–65). The audience for Figure 22 differs from that for Figure 21. The location of this graffiti specifically communicates to internationals seeking to visit the now inaccessible Rachel's Tomb. Note the image of graffiti, located near Figure 22, implicating the United States for its support of the State of Israel and its ideological, financial, and political support of the wall:



Figure 23. “Made in the USA” graffiti  
Photo by R. Chad Holt

The graffiti on the wall reads, “Israel have you become the evil you deplored?” and “Made in the USA” (Figure 23). Black underlines and black lines combined with red lines surround the “Israel have you become the evil you deplored?” written script. The “Made in the USA” graffiti resemble the size, font, and design of logos placed on manufactured goods produced in the US. This logo, written in black, is clearly visible on the bottom of approximately 20 sections of the wall. The symbolic message is clear: the United States *made* the wall. The symbolic meaning mythologized in this graffiti is also clear: the United States not only created the wall, but also created the conditions for the wall through its support of the State of Israel. The audience for this graffiti, located near the entrance to Bethlehem just past Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, is likely an English-speaking Christian pilgrim visiting religious sites in Bethlehem. This graffiti further represents transnational graffiti in the way it works in conjunction with other graffiti to

offer social commentary on how respective countries aid in the occupation of Palestine. It seeks to persuade audiences that the US, an important imperial ally to Israel, financially, politically, and ideologically supports the wall. Amy, an international from the United States volunteering in Ramallah, said,

Knowing that I have help funded the checkpoints and the walls, it's very frustrating because it something that I ... It is a burden on me every morning going to work, and I know that it's a huge burden on those families living here.

(Interview Data, 2012)

Amy alluded to the US's unwavering financial, political, and military support of the State of Israeli. The United States provided Israel with a "conservative estimate" of \$114 billion dollars in aid from 1949 to 2008. This amount of aid surpassed foreign aid to all other countries except Iraq. Additional Defense Department aid to Israel totals over \$10 billion dollars since 1949. The United States also provided loan guarantees to the Israelis, including \$600 million for housing between 1972 and 1990, \$9.2 billion for resettlement of Jews from the Soviet Union between 1992 and 1997, and \$14 billion for refinancing military loans (McArthur, 2011, pp. 10–11).

The "Made in the USA" graffiti also symbolizes U.S. defiance of the international community, including the United Nations, in support of Israel's policies aimed at Palestinians and historic Palestine. The *Washington Post* reported that the Obama administration cast its first-ever veto vote in the U.N. Security Council in February 2011. The veto blocked a Palestinian-backed resolution condemning the building of Israeli Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The other 13 members of the

U.N. Security Council supported the resolution, and the United States was the *only* member of the Security Council not to approve the resolution. Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, acknowledged Israeli Jewish settlement construction as illegal and as a major roadblock in peace negotiations. Nevertheless, Ambassador Rice and the United States sided with the Israelis, arguing that the adoption of the resolution would risk “hardening the positions of both sides” (Lynch, 2011). The position echoed similar positions by previous U.S. administrations. In 2004, the U.S. House of Representatives passed House Resolution 713, refuting the International Court of Justice’s ruling that the wall was illegal under international law (United States Congress, 2004).

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that a new rhetorical strategy now advocates for the Israeli state and supports their policies aimed at Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza: the war on terror. Israel has become the US’s key ally in the war on terror, with both the United States and Israel having the same ideologically constructed enemy: terrorists, and particularly Islamic terrorists (p. 61). The examples of graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall reject the construction of the wall as a mythological sign for security and Israel as sovereign over Palestinians and the West Bank. The graffiti further reject the discourse of Islamic terrorism and ideological construction of West Bank Palestinians as collective terrorists. Palestinian and international graffiti artists, local Palestinians, and tourists embrace the role of producers of knowledge, messages, and symbolic meanings, using graffiti as a communicative mode creating their own rhetorics and symbolic meanings of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall. These rhetorics challenge the war on terror

rhetoric and the symbolic meaning of the wall as a mechanism for Israeli security.

### *The Wall as Myth and Visual Rhetoric*

The graffiti depicting Leila Khaled (Figure 14) is an example of myth. According to Barthes (1972), myth is a type of signification—whether that signification is text, image, design, or spoken words—that has an implicit cultural significance for a particular group beyond the apparent meaning. Barthes theorizes myth as a system of second order signs that signify ideologies; first order signs are signifiers for particular things or ideas (signs). For example, the words “bald eagle,” or a picture of a bald eagle, is a first order signifier when the signified is large bird native to North America. The bald eagle is a second order sign when it appears on currency, documents, official seals, or patriotic images and signifies qualities the United States associates with itself: strength, courage, and freedom. The second order sign, the myth, is an ideology of U.S. exceptionalism.

The myth signified by the image of Khaled happily and violently resisting Israel’s colonization of historic Palestine communicates Palestinians’ duty to resist colonial occupation. In fact, that resistance as a key to happiness is part of an ideology. An exaggeration or distortion of reality is presented to communicate a specific message, which in this case is Palestinians’ obligation to resist violently the Israeli occupation. Barthes’ (1972) framework suggests that the communicative meaning of the Leila Khaled graffiti is rooted not in the graffiti itself, but in the graffiti’s symbolic meaning. Khaled’s image *becomes* mythological and functions as a *sign* of resistance, a myth, conveying an

ideology that constructs Palestinians in the West Bank as freedom fighters.

Often Israelis detain these Palestinian “freedom fighters” in Israeli prisons that are remarkably similar, visually, to the wall surrounding the West Bank at Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 (Figure 18). The visual, physical construction of the wall mirrors that of an Israeli prison, further persuading viewers that West Bank Palestinians are indeed prisoners confined to a prison. On a drive to Tel-Aviv from Beit Hannia near Northeast Jerusalem, I drove past an Ofer prison and noticed undeniable visual similarities between the wall surrounding this prison and the wall surrounding the West Bank. The size, type, and color of the concrete walls used to construct this prison are identical to the wall that encircles Palestinian areas in and around East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Note the visual design of Israel’s Ofer Prison in Figure 24:



*Figure 24. The Israeli Ofer Prison*  
Source: Levy and Levac, 2015

Rotbard (2013) asserted that every piece of Israeli architecture is an act of Zionism. Every building functions to support the Zionist colonial project in historic Palestine (p.

40). Buildings and structures have taken on a duplicitous, symbolic role. They function according to their purpose, but they also function to symbolize and persuade viewers of Israel's sovereign power. Like other Israeli structures that symbolize the building of Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) and Israeli sovereignty, Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall become communicative symbols and meta-signs. These structures signal that Israelis are in power because *they*, the Israelis, have the power to build these structures regardless of local Arab Palestinian land claims and historical narratives tying Arab Palestinians to the land. Chomsky and Pappé (2015) supported Rothbard's assertion and argued that Zionism as colonialism is central to explaining the Judization of historic Palestine, including settlement development in the West Bank. They argue that early Zionists proudly used Hebrew terms meaning "to colonize" or "to settle" to describe their takeover of historic Palestine (p. 21).

#### *Mythological Meaning of Religious Structures and Places*

Complicating the matter are religious sites sacred to Jews, Muslims, and



Christians located in East Jerusalem east of the Green Line. As stated previously, Palestinians engage in a similar rhetorical strategy that uses religious structures as meta-signs to construct the contested land as belonging to them, the Palestinians. Figure 25 illustrates graffiti on the Bethlehem side of the wall. Note the image of the Dome of the Rock located near the watchtower:

*Figure 25.* Graffiti showing hands, a ladder, the collapse of the wall, and Jerusalem  
Photo by Linda Myers-Reed

The graffiti add another layer of religious significance to the Dome of the Rock by adding visual rhetoric that evokes a religious, eschatological scene relative to the collapse of the wall. This image depicts a ladder coming through a cloud with two hands at the top. Sections of the wall are falling down like dominos as the ladder from heaven reaches the historic city of Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock, one of Jerusalem's most iconic structures, is located at the far left of the image, along with the historic 16th-century wall that surrounds the Old City of Jerusalem. This eschatological scene suggests that God in heaven will topple the wall and offer a ladder to heaven leading from East Jerusalem. The ladder is located on the Jerusalem side of the wall and is now accessible to West Bankers because the wall has fallen. The persuasive function of this example of graffiti is clear: God will topple the wall.

The next chapter will discuss the data and offer conclusions about how the symbolic meaning of Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall are constructed in discourse. The visual discourse created by the wall required opposite identity constructs. These opposites prove fundamental to understanding identity as it relates to both verbal

and visual discourse. Separateness and security, as synonymous ideological constructs mythologized in the visual rhetoric of the wall, also require an ideological opposite, an *other*. I will argue that the current Israeli/Palestinian discourse needs to evolve to reflect Israeli colonial expansion into the West Bank, as mythologized by the symbolic meaning of the wall. I will also argue that current Israeli leadership seeks to maintain the status quo and further to perpetuate violence against its own citizens, West Bank Palestinians, and Gaza Palestinians, so that it may continue to justify colonial and imperial expansion into the West Bank under the thinly veiled rhetoric of security. Undergirding this security is the construction of West Bank Palestinians as the inferior other who beseech domination.

## CHAPTER 5: MYTHS, NAMING, AND LESSONS LEARNED

My research findings, recent scholarship outlined in this dissertation, and information from Israeli sources, including the Israel Ministry of Affairs website, all demonstrate that Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 and the wall create symbolic meanings that construct the identity of both Palestinians and Israelis in intentional and unintentional ways.

Power in discourse is concerned with discourse as a lace wherein relations of power are exercised and enacted (Fairclough, 2001, p. 36) Power in discourse is the capacity to determine to what extent that power will be overtly expressed (p. 60). The conflicting images of graffiti and vandalism on the Bethlehem side of the wall, compared to the clean, well-maintained surface on the Jerusalem side, illustrate power in discourse. Palestinian and international graffiti artists exercise their power to use the wall as a medium for political messages and constructing/reconstructing narrative about Israeli colonial occupation of historic Palestine, which have now manifested into a 8-meter-high concrete wall. Power in discourse as lace includes their construction as terrorist; hence the need for security measures such as the wall and checkpoints.

Evident in the data is power in discourse. Amir (2011), the interview data, and the data from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website all concur that the wall persuades audiences that separating property and people (i.e., separating Israelis from West Bank Palestinians) results in Israeli security. As my findings illustrate, the intentional connection of the wall and Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 with security and separation create

a semiotic construct that transforms the wall and Bethlehem Checkpoint 300 into myths and meta-signs that construct ideologies held by Israelis living on the Jerusalem side of the wall and Palestinians living on the Bethlehem side. A rhetoric of security justifies the creation of the wall, according to Israeli sources. Palestinians, Israeli activists, and internationals recognize and refute the rhetoric of security, and they offer their own rhetorical responses of land grab, occupation, and denial of Palestinian rights, including a restriction on Palestinian movement (Interview Data, 2012; Graffiti Data, 2012; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007). For Israelis, the wall provides security from any West Bank Palestinians whose aim is to harm Israeli citizens.

In this chapter, I discuss the visual discourse created by the wall and its construction of symbolic myths, how the act of naming leads to the construction of these symbolic myths, how the wall constructs the identity of Palestinians and Israelis, what lessons were learned as a result of this research study, and how we can move forward with regard to Palestinian and Israeli peace.

### *Visual Discourse and the Construction of Symbolic Myths*

One important aspect of visual discourse that my investigation supports is the significance of both verbal and visual naming, and how the act of naming shapes discursive practices. Visual rhetorics such as the wall, graffiti, checkpoints, settlements, and other architectural structures seek to persuade audiences and have an impact on discourse. Language and the power to name represent an institutional authority to

delegate the power of words/language/naming to an authorized spokesperson. Social institutions grant the power of naming to individuals (Bourdieu, 1982, p. 107). An example of authorized authority to name can be found in a speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, who “legalized” three Jewish outposts in the West Bank (Murphy, 2012). Netanyahu’s performative utterance has power to legalize, because Israeli governmental institutions authorize him to name outposts as legal. Neither Jewish workers nor Israeli residents have power to name the outposts as legal, because no social institution has authorized them to do so.

As a tool for constructing both verbal and visual discourse, naming is a prerequisite to separation and the construction of rhetorics, specifically visual rhetorics. *Fence* evokes a very different meaning than *wall*. Naming marks visual rhetorics in specific, ideologically rooted ways. When something is named and marked, a signification occurs, which leads to the construction of mythologies (Barthes, 1972, p. 114). People and institutions create the world through naming, and social struggles locate with the ritualized strategies of naming (Bourdieu, 1982, p. 105). In a broader sense, those in power have the power to name and define words and symbols, and thus to shape discourse.

In the case of this research study about Bethlehem Checkpoint and the wall, mythologically and ideologically, separation and security are synonymous—to separate is to secure, and to secure is to separate. A security wall inevitably serves as a *separation* wall, and a separation wall serves as a *security* wall. A person or institution seeking to secure must also separate. Likewise, a person or institution seeking to separate must also

secure. Separation as a mythological construct is deeply connected to culturally held ideologies. Walls have protected spaces, places, and people for millennia, and walls have visually and discursively communicated to both the constructors of the wall and those being constructed by the wall that something or someone needs separating *and* securing. The ideology of the need for separation provides the lens through which viewers interpret symbols and construct mythological meanings surrounding the idea of separation. A fence or wall is a particular type of visual rhetoric because fences and walls, by their very nature, require a separate and opposite construct to create meaning. Fences and walls visually and ideologically distinguish and separate whomever or whatever on one side from a different whomever or whatever on the other side.

Separating Israelis and Palestinians equates to security for Israelis. Ideologically, this separation constructs a rhetoric of separation or “two states for two people” discourse that seeks to persuade Israeli, Palestinian, and international audiences that Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Arabs cannot peacefully cohabit. An insecure space and people creates a trope to justify the creation of a secure space and people. In other words, security requires a binary construct. To be separate and secure is not only to be distinct, but also to be clean of the symbolic other. As stated previously, Cohen (2006) pointed out that Israel leadership solved their “native problem” in the 1948 Arab/Israeli War with the removal, expulsion, and cleansing of Arab places west of the Green Line to the Mediterranean Sea. This campaign of cleansing Arab people, villages, and towns from the new State of Israel, as documented extensively by Pappé (2006), Chomsky and Pappé (2015), Darwish (2008), and Kadman (2015), resulted in a clean space for Israelis to

colonize, even though small numbers of Palestinians still lived among them. Then Israeli leadership recreated the problem of native others when it invaded and captured the West Bank from Jordan in the 1967 Arab/Israeli war. Israeli leadership continues to face a dilemma regarding the Palestinians from the area acquired after the 1967 war. The current solution to Israel's native problem is the containment and separation of Palestinian Arabs from Israelis, using apparatuses such as the wall.

Separation is a prerequisite for recognizing and constructing a mythological opposite. The binary between *us* and *them* defines identity by contrasting that identity with the construction of an opposite symbolic other. Without a contrasting opposite identity, singular or even collective identity remains nebulous and ambiguous. Identity is recognized only when contrasted and compared to a separate other. This binary of *us* requiring *them*, or *you* requiring *me*, proves fundamental to identity construction.

In other words, identity construction requires a separate construct by which to contrast. Sameness does not aid in identity formation or space distinction, because it makes visual markers, ideologies, and mythological symbols invisible. Sameness is only recognized when the opposite is introduced and contrasted. Said (1978) argued that the West often views native Arabs and Islam as backward, violent, and in need of civility (pp. 48–49). This construction further justifies the identity of distant lands and foreign peoples as exotic others in desperate need of the civilized West, who should rule these less advanced people and, for their benefit, introduce superior Western culture to their savage and inferior culture (Said, 1994, p. 9). The construction of the other requires an ideological and mythological opposite. These non-Westerners are *not* the same as

Westerners.

Said (1994) extensively discussed the construction of non-native others by colonial and imperial Western powers including Western Europe and the US. Said (1978) said, “The Arabs and Islam represent viciousness, veniality, degenerate vice, lechery, and stupidity in popular and scholarly discourse” (p. 26). This construction of Arab Other allows, if not *requires*, their domination by a superior knowledge and culture. The privileged role of culture, particularly Western culture, has largely been ignored in scholarly discussion of empire and the modern imperial experience, particularly given that the global reach of the early 19th- and 20th-century European imperialism “still casts a considerable shadow over our own times” (Said, 1978, p. 5).

The Western construction of Arabs, and the *Orient* in general, supports an ideological formation, framework, and discourse that posit Arabs and Orientals as a people who *require* domination by the West (Said, 1994, p. 9). Civilized peoples and nations are civilized only because of their construction of other peoples’ or nations’ incivility. A construction of civility requires a construction of incivility, its opposite. Israel and Western powers alike posit others’ incivility to determine and define their own identity as civil.

Conflict is no different with respect to mythological, separate, and opposite sides. In most cases, one side of the conflict symbolically represents one position, ideologically informed, and another side represents an opposing ideological position. The discourse of terrorism and the “war on terror” rhetoric neatly fits within this framework. Each side of the terrorism discourse/rhetoric opposes the other’s side. These opposing sides

symbolically and collectively represent civilizations that oppose one another, typically on ideological grounds. An ideological positioning of Israeli Jewish ethnos and culture as hierarchically superior to Palestinian Arab ethos and culture has allowed Israeli separation of Palestinian Arabs from Israeli citizens. The Israeli government's focus on the land, the Zionist agenda for building Eretz Yisrael, and the centrality of the land to Israeli identity and ethnos, at the expense of Palestinian natives, suggests that Israeli leadership and security personnel have adopted this imperialistic ideology that constructs Palestinians Arabs as other in need of a superior Israeli culture.

Wodak (2012) offered further insights into how identity construction requires an opposite. As Wodak explained, "Language (and other symbolic systems) is used to determine and define similarities and differences; to draw clear boundaries between 'us' and 'others'" (pp. 216–217). Differences are evaluated and an "ideological moment" is often implicitly and sometimes explicitly introduced through categorization (p. 217). The contextual nature of language shapes identities, which further shape language use. We manifest who we are partly through our language and linguistic behavior. Identities thus are contextual, constructed and re-constructed in interactive relationships, and identity construction always includes processes of inclusion and exclusion because it defines oneself and others. Individual and national identities are also produced, reproduced, and manifested symbolically (p. 216).

The orient/occident binary, an invention of Western scholarship according to Said (1978), is an example of Wodak's (2012) concept. This identity construction further perpetuates Western cultural civilization as superior to the primal and primitive nature of

non-Western cultures. A Palestinian other with an identity construction influenced by Western imperialism, as discussed by Said, *opposes* the civilized and peaceful Israeli who seeks to live side-by-side with Palestinian Arabs and Israel's other Arab neighbors. Western imperialism ideologically constructs the uncivilized, exotic, irrational, and erratic other who violently and destructively attacks the civilized, Western, rational, logical citizenry who, in turn, must defend themselves against this opposite, illogical and irrational other. Israelis and Westerners often transform these terrorists attacks into symbolic, mythological constructs: an attack on Israel and the West is an attack on Israeli and Western values, cultures, and ways of life. Freedom, democracy, human rights, and rule of law are under attack, symbolically and mythologically. The terrorist attack is transformed into the myth that cultural values and ideologies themselves are under attack.

An examination of official documents from Palestinian leadership reveals a similar construction of mythological other. The harkat al-muqawamah al-isamiyyah (HAMAS) charter specifically labels the State of Israel as colonial occupier, whereas HAMAS is ordained by the HAMAS God to eliminate Israel (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyyah, 1998). Similar to the Promise Land discourse, Palestinian discourse evident in the HAMAS charter evokes a religious rhetoric creating a religious lens through which HAMAS views the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The discursive battle between the respective religious rhetorics on both sides of the conflict often position the conflict as a religious war: Judaism versus Islam, Jews versus Muslims, or Jewish versus Arab Palestinian Muslim historical narrative. The rhetorical and discursive positioning of the conflict as a religious war further mythologizes the conflict, transforming it into a

simplistic, binary battle between good and evil. For the predominantly Christian West and the State of Israel, Judaism represents the good and Islam represents the evil. For the largely Islamic Middle East and North Africa, the binaries of good and evil are reversed—Islam is good, but the State of Israel and the predominantly Christian West are evil.

### *Naming and Ethnic Cleansing*

The naming of the wall as a security or anti-terrorism fence and the naming of the land as Eretz Yisrael, by the Israelis are rooted in the mythology of separateness and in an imperialistic ideology that has discursively approved an ethnic cleansing and expulsion campaign aimed at native Palestinian Arabs by Israeli militia and subsequent Israeli leadership. Likewise, the HAMAS document represents a verbal discourse supporting an ethnic cleansing of Israel and Israelis from the contested land.

Pappé (2006) defined ethnic cleansing as “expulsion by force to homogenize the ethnically mixed population of a particular region or territory” (p. 2). This definition includes the provision that ethnic cleansing also involves the erasure and eradication of a region’s history by any and all means available (p. 2). Those engaged in ethnic cleansing then supplement their collective history with the region’s history, often framing that history as unique. The historical supplementation of historic Palestine’s regional history is clearly evident in Jewish Israeli discourse that frames Jewish Israel as having *the* historical connection to the contested land, as ordained by an ancient Israeli God (e.g., the

Promise Land rhetoric). Thus ethnic cleansing of Palestinians is rhetorically justified because Israeli leadership is simply returning the contested land to its rightful owners, the Israelis, by expelling those who do not belong there, the Palestinian Arabs. Benny Morris argued that the viability of an Israeli state is contingent upon the “complete” ethnic cleansing of Palestinian Arabs. Peace will not occur in Israel until the remaining Palestinian Arabs—including West Bankers, Jerusalemites, and Arab Israelis—are removed or physically “transferred” (Abu-saad, 2004, p. 294; Chomsky, 2006, pp. 184–185).

HAMAS employs similar colonial rhetoric to justify its violent actions aimed at the State of Israel. Religious rhetoric frames historic Palestine as belonging to the Arabs alone, and Muslim Arabs also justify the HAMAS rhetoric in particular. HAMAS seeks to liberate historic Palestine from its colonial occupiers, the Israelis (HAMAS Charter, Part III, Article 11, 2008). In other words, HAMAS seeks to liberate historic Palestine and “cleanse” it of Israelis. According to the HAMAS charter, Islam provides the guiding principles for “liberation” activities aimed at Israel (HAMAS Charter, Part I, Article 1, 2008). The violent actions of HAMAS and those of religiously conservative Jews in Israel and Israeli security personnel, are rhetorically governed, sanctioned, and approved by each group’s respective God. In this sense, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is indeed a religious war being played out in and on a contested place called *Eretz Israel* by Israelis and *Filistin* by Palestinians. The conflict is further played out in religious discourse on both sides. *Eretz Yisrael* and *Filistin* have been given by God to two different, opposing groups; therefore, to some extent, violent actions aimed at one another are sanctioned and

endorsed by both the Israeli God and the HAMAS God.

The act of ethnic cleansing is rooted in an understanding of making a thing, place, or person clean by removing some other thing, place, or person that is not wanted or that proves harmful to the other thing, place, or person that *is* clean. To “clean” someone or something, individuals or institutions must create discursively and rhetorically something, someone, or some place that is *not* clean. Similar to identity construction, cleansing requires a mythological and symbolic opposite that is unclean.

Most scholars, however, fail to use the phrase “ethnic cleansing” in the context of Palestinian/Israeli discourse. Morris discussed the “transfer” of Palestinian Arabs from the State of Israel and the West Bank to surrounding Arab countries (Chomsky, 2006) Even though both Israeli and Palestinian sources implicitly or explicitly refer to the concept of ethnically cleansing the land of the other, the power to carry out a campaign of ethnic cleansing firmly rests in the hands of the Israelis, whose military and political power rivals that of any nation in the Middle East including HAMAS or other Palestinian factions.

Naming the founding of the State of Israel as ethnic cleansing undermines and confronts the prevailing Israeli narrative that world Jewry came to historic Palestine to “make the dessert bloom” and to populate “a land without people for people without a land” (Sand, 2009, p. 188). These two Zionist mantras, supported by an imperialistic ideology and construction of Palestinian Arab as inferior other, helped fuel the colonial expansion on native Palestinian land. Ethnic cleansing in this context is not the mass extermination of an ethnic group—in this case, Palestinian Arabs—but a systemic

expulsion and pushing out of one ethnic group by another, which is how Pappé (2006) defined the concept. The expulsion and pushing out of an ethnic group “cleans” the contested land for the other group to colonize. Sand (2009) agreed that European Zionists subscribed to an imperialist ideology that believed indigenous Arab Palestinians would benefit from the culture and intellect of European Zionists. The injection of Zionist “yeast” would produce a “cake” to be shared by Palestinian Arabs (p. 7).

Yiftachel (2010) offers a perspective on Zionism from the lens of geography, by pointing out that Zionism represented a different kind of colonialism. The need to provide a safe haven for world Jewry after the oppression of Jews worldwide, particularly in eastern Europe, provided Zionists with a humanitarian cause. They needed to provide a safe haven for world Jewry through the colonization of a “land without a people,” which just so happened to be the Jewish Promise Land. The result was a multifaceted and complex manifestation of colonialism (p. 75). Settling the land meant first *securing* the land for the establishment and expansion of the Israeli colonial project, and securing it from local Palestinian Arabs. Settling, however, was only one of many strategies for the colonization of the land. Other strategies included the seeking of new territories for settlement expansion and the replacement of local Palestinian Arab cultures and ways-of-life with European Jewish ways of life. This racialization included transferring Palestinians to segregated enclaves and a planning framework for the Judization of Israel and the West Bank (Yiftachel, 2009, p. 71, 77).

In other words, these immigrant Jews seeking to colonize their safe haven and Promise Land must also clear and cleanse the land from native Palestinian Arabs. The

Israeli colonial project, often entangled with the humanitarian cause of finding a safe haven for persecuted Jews, helped discursively hide the impact of Israel's colonial project on native Palestinian Arabs. Much of the discourse surrounding the founding of the State of Israel and its current colonial project fails to use the term "ethnic cleansing." The failure of naming the founding of the State of Israel as ethnic cleansing illustrates the power of naming.

The United States and other Western powers laud the State of Israel for its intellectual, technical, cultural, and military prowess in an often hostile and volatile Arab and Islamic part of the world. An ideological shift must occur if indeed the founding of the State of Israel and current colonial practices in the West Bank are to be named ethnic cleansing in both scholarly and U.S. leadership discourse. The concept of "ethnic cleansing of native Arab Palestinians" needs to be introduced to current discourse surrounding Israel and Palestine, to reflect accurately the methods used to colonize historic Palestine and to expel or contain native Palestinian Arabs for the benefit of immigrant Jews and the expansion of the State of Israel.

Palestinian discourse often uses the name *Nakba* (catastrophe) to refer to the founding of the State of Israel. Thus the Palestinian historical narrative, seldom heard in the West and Western scholarship, has already acknowledged and named the founding of the State of Israel and its current colonial expansion as catastrophic events that have resulted in the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs from their homes to provide a "safe haven" for world Jewry. The ongoing Nakba is the continual expulsion of native Arab Palestinians from their homes, using architectural structures such as the

wall, checkpoints, and settlements, as well as the ideological construction of Palestinians as collective terrorists who are intellectually and culturally inferior to Israelis. Supporting and strengthening this Palestinian identity construct is the current “war on terror” rhetoric, and the marking of Palestinians as “Muslims” further constructs their identity as a dangerous other determined to attack—perhaps destroy—the civilized, rational, and culturally superior Christian West, which includes the State of Israel.

Separation of Israelis from Palestinian Arabs is not new. Smith (1993) discussed an ideology and mythology of separation of Palestinians and Israelis during the British Mandate period from 1922-1948. The idea of a two-state solution goes back to at least that time. The United Nation Partition Plan of 1947 separated the contested land into two distinct parts: one part for the Jews and a separate part for the Palestinian Arabs. This plan gave the Jewish state approximately 5,500 square miles with a population of approximately 538,000 Jews and 387,000 Arabs. The Arab State, by contrast, covered approximately 4,500 square miles and a population of approximately 10,000 Jews and 804,000 Arabs (The Partition Plan, 2017). Separation of people groups also roots heavily in a Hebrew Bible understanding of the ancient Israelites, ancestors of modern-day Jewish Israelis, as being separate and distinct from their non-Israelite neighbors (Zerubavel, 1995). Leviticus 15:21 says, ““You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.”” This text makes a clear connection between separateness and cleanliness.

The wall and its symbolic rhetoric of security are strategies that attempt to hide

the Israeli leadership's systematic ethnic cleansing of Israeli proper and the West Bank from native Palestinians. Pappé's (2006) said, "In Israel since 1948, ethnic cleansing is not just a policy—it is a way of life, and its constant practice criminalizes the state, not just its policies" (p. 31). The rhetoric of security informs and shapes other discourses and other discursive symbols such as the ID, Israeli Jewish settlements, East Jerusalem, and holy sites located in East Jerusalem. A failure to understand this rhetoric is a failure to understand the discursive practices and rhetorical strategies that justify the construction of the wall, checkpoints, settlements, and other related symbols that work together to communicate a specific mythology about Palestinians and the West Bank. These physical constructions symbolize security, while constructing the West Bank and Palestinians as unsafe, potential terrorists, or even animals, for which complex security measures are needed (Interview Data, 2012). Pappé argued that Israeli security personnel also constructed Palestinians as the enemy:

Anyone who has been in Israel long enough, as I have, knows that the worst corruption of young Israelis is the indoctrination they receive that totally dehumanizes Palestinians. When an Israeli soldier sees a Palestinian baby, he does not see an infant—he sees the enemy. (p. 31)

Cleansing the West Bank from native Palestinian Arabs has primarily manifested in separation and expulsion, which are also acts of cleansing. The cleansing of Palestinians from the West Bank manifests in visual, physical, and symbolic structures, mainly the wall, checkpoints, IDs, settler-only roads, and Israeli Jewish settlements. These visual structures literally separate and visually and ideologically erase Palestinian

Arabs and their land claims. Settlements and the wall expel Palestinians because they prevent Palestinian expansion and growth into what is arguably Palestinian land east of the Green Line. The wall expels Palestinians farmers from their fields, divides Palestinian families, and secures Israelis by containing Palestinians to small enclaves surrounded by the wall and settlements. Israeli leadership justifies these structures rhetorically as security apparatuses and by invoking the Promise Land discourse positing all the contested land as belonging to the Israelis and the Israelis alone. Israeli security personnel have systemically removed, expelled, and “cleansed” Palestinian Arabs from the vast majority of historic Palestine and have contained native Palestinians Arabs to three distinct, non-contiguous Bantustans in the West Bank (Interview Data, 2012; Pappé, 2006; Chomsky, 2006; Chomsky & Pappé, 2015).

Israeli leadership continues to build settlements in the West Bank, despite international agreements including the Oslo Accords, the consistent condemnation of these settlements by the United Nations, and the rebuking of Israel’s settlement policies by Israeli allies such as the US. The occupation of the West Bank by Israeli security personnel is justified by the all-powerful rhetoric of security and consequential construction of a dangerous, inferior, uncivilized, erratic other.

Israeli leadership fails to comply with U.N. resolutions, thus demonstrating their own power to refute or even ignore those resolutions—and thus, in a sense, ignore the international community represented in the United Nations. U.N. Resolution 194 III clearly states that Palestinian Arab refugees “should be permitted” to return to their homes in historic Palestine lost during the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The phrase in the U.N. Resolution, “live at peace with their neighbors,” provides Israeli leadership with a pretext to refuse to allow Palestinian refugees to return to their historic homes in Israel proper, the West Bank, and Gaza. The rhetoric of security informs that pretext. As long as Israeli leadership constructs Palestinians as terrorists, symbolized and communicated by rhetorical props such as the ID, checkpoints, and wall, then they can refuse to comply with the U.N. Resolution 194—because these so-called “terrorists” refuse to live at peace with their Israeli neighbors per the requirement of U.N. Resolution 194.

*The Terrified Terrorists: Identity and Perspective*

Myths associated with terrorism and a rhetoric of security, as powerful as they can be, are a matter of perspective. Israel leadership was quick to name the car ramming of Israeli security personnel at Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank as “terrorism,” but they continue to strangle the West Bank Palestinian economy and way-of-life with separation policies, the wall, checkpoints, and settlements (Lonergan, 2004; Malkawi, 2009). Israeli news media named recent knife attacks against Israelis as “terrorism,” while Israeli military systematically and extensively destroyed the northern Gaza strip in 2014 using the rhetoric of “security threats from HAMAS-ruled Gaza” (Lieber, 2017). Why are some acts called terrorism, and other acts explained as defense in the name of security, as the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs argues? Was the destruction of the northern Gaza strip in 2014 actually terrorism on the part of Israelis? Were the recent knife attacks on

Israelis in Jerusalem actually security or defense on the part of Palestinians? Why isn't the military occupation of the West Bank by Israeli security personnel named terrorism? Why wasn't the expulsion of native Palestinian Arabs from historic Palestinian named as terrorism? Who or what has the power to name such actions?

Jewish militias committed violent terrorist acts during the British Mandate period. Heller (1999) discussed the bombing of the King David Hotel in 1948 by the Jewish militia group Irgun, the military wing of Revisionist Zionism. Other Jewish terrorist acts ensued, including the bombing of the British embassy in Rome (p. 5). Menachem Begin, Israel's seventh prime minister was the commander of the Irgun. Begin led the violent revolt against the British occupation of historic Palestine, which eventually resulted in the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 (Heller, 1999, p. 9). Said (1979) proclaimed, "Begin has been known as a terrorist, and has made no effort to hide that fact" (p. 44). Begin's book, *The Revolt: Story of the Irgun* (1952), describes his terrorists acts aimed at women and children. Other leaders of Israel, including Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion, often lauded by the West and Israel as promoters of democratic, Western-held values, also engaged in terrorist activities aimed at "liberation" (p. 44). Suarez (2017) said that the Zionist narrative does not frame these violent acts as terrorism because they were aimed at the ruling British establishment (p. 8).

In Israeli and Palestinian discourse, naming becomes important for creating symbolic meanings and verbal/visual rhetorics. Israelis and Palestinians discursively compete to name and subsequently construct mythologies that suit their particular agendas relative to land rights, sovereignty, and violent actions. Jerusalem, named

“Yerushalem” by Israeli Jews, symbolizes and creates a mythological meaning transforming the historic city into a myth that communicates Jewish Israeli ethnos and historic and theological connections to the contested land in and around the ancient city. Likewise, naming Jerusalem “Al-Quds” symbolizes and creates symbolic meaning for Arab Palestinians that transforms the city into a myth that communicates Palestinian Arab ethnos and historic and theological connections. Naming perpetuates power inequities between those who have the right to name and those who do not.

Naming carries immense power when constructing mythologies. This power dictates which discursive practices and related ideologies dominate, and hence codify, complex terms such as *security*, *terrorists*, and *terrorism*. The names “terrorist” and “terrorism” permit Israel to deploy its colonial practices and military occupation of the West Bank. Terrorism, after all, has come to unify Western powers and Israel against a common other enemy who is vile, dangerous, and represents the antithesis of Western-held values.

The symbols and rhetoric of the “war against terrorism” align perfectly with Israel’s symbols and rhetoric of sovereign power. Israeli leadership and security personnel name these structures “security,” thus transforming them into a myth that transcends the simply meaning of the structure itself. The myths created by these symbols are clear: (1) the State of Israel is sovereign; (2) Palestinians in general pose a threat to that sovereignty; and (3) the protracted conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has no end because Palestinians continue to resist the colonization of historic Palestine. Israeli leadership and news media name Palestinian resistance actions as terrorism, and this so-

called terrorism justifies and authorizes Israeli colonial practices aimed at West Bank Palestinians and the continual occupation of the West Bank by Israeli security personnel.

As Chomsky (2006) pointed out, the West, including Israel, often failed to adapt universality when labeling one act as terrorism and another as defense (p. 36). From the perspective of many West Bank and Gaza Palestinian Arabs, Israeli leadership and security personnel *are* the terrorists. Morris (2004), Pappé (2006), Chomsky and Pappé (2015), Darwish (2008), and Kadman (2015) extensively documented the systematic ethnic cleansing of Palestinian villages during the founding of the State of Israel. Chomsky and Pappé (2015) reinforced this point and reminded readers, “The Nakba took place where Israel is today, not the West Bank or the Gaza Strip” (p. 44). That is, the current boundaries of the State of Israel are a result of the ethnic cleansing and expulsion of native Palestinian Arabs. I argue that ethnic cleansing as defined by Pappé is indeed terrorism, and that naming the current Israeli separation and security policies aimed at the erasure of Arab Palestinian culture and way of life as ethnic cleansing is a first step toward naming and defining the State of Israel accurately, and even perhaps reaching peace agreements that acknowledge the rights of both Palestinian Arabs and Israelis.

### *The Israeli/Palestinian Conflict: Lessons Learned*

The violent and destructive attacks of September 11, 2001, on U.S. civilian targets have taken on mythological status for many residents of the US. The rhetorical meaning system now in place gives the name and identity of “terrorism” and “terrorist” a new

identity and context. The “war on terror” discourse surrounding the September 11 attacks and its frequent and consistent use in multiple contexts discursively authorized, if not required, the U.S. military, the good guys in this war, to embark on a global crusade to fight an evil terrorist other residing in a distant exotic land. The identity of this dangerous other was constructed using simplistic binary rhetoric that positioned the dangerous other as opposite to U.S. culture and civilization. The United States was good, and the terrorists were evil. The United States was a Christian nation fighting an evil, dangerous, Muslim other enemy. The United States was an innocent victim of vile terrorist acts.

In a joint session of Congress in September 2001, U.S. President George W. Bush constructed the September 11 tragedies using simplistic binary terms that evoked separate and opposite identity constructs, and that also alluded to the cleansing of the entire world of the unclean, terrorists. His congressional audience and world viewers saw the 9/11 tragedy unfold live on television. In President Bush’s words, “Either you’re with us or you’re with the terrorists” (Bush, 2001). The context of this speech provided President Bush with a meaning system that enabled him to make this clear binary distinction of identity between *us* and *terrorist*. These binary identity markers allowed the U.S. to separate *us* from *them* discursively, rhetorically, ideologically, and symbolically. September 11 became a mythological symbol for the US’s war on these dangerous, exotic others who were inferior to U.S. citizens and civilization.

The symbolic meaning of 9/11 further acknowledged Israel’s role in this global war on terror. Israel’s identity, as constructed by U.S. leadership, is that of a democratic and free country whose culturally held values and ideologies mirror those of the US.

Israel, too, found itself in a war against (Palestinian) terror. Like the US, Israel opposed terrorism and represented the *opposite* of terrorism. This event also brought the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy discourse, because terrorism, often relegated to distant lands in the Middle East, now impacted the U.S. homeland. The events on 9/11 solidified the ideology of a terrorist—an exotic, irrational, dangerous other “out there” whose intent was to attack the US, a mythological symbol of world power, capitalism, freedom, and democracy.

Constructing a separate, dangerous, binary opposite is not a new phenomenon. Empires have long used an ideological construction of binary opposites and separateness to construct both their own identity and the identity of an opposite other. In other words, empires have *required* their respective binaries to construct identity. In antiquity, the Greeks required the barbarians, and the Europeans required the Africans (Said, 1994, p. 10). The United States required the USSR during the Cold War, the Israelis require the Palestinians, and now the US, Israel, and Western countries all require terrorists. An empire’s respective binary opposite proves essential to constructing the empire’s identity, and thus justifying colonial and imperialistic practices often aimed at preventing “terrorism.” For the West, the constructed enemy is Islam (Lean and Esposito, 2012).

The ideological support of empire largely remains unquestioned and unexamined, resulting in little domestic resistance (Said, 1994, p. 11). In other words, citizens of an imperial regime are seldom aware of that empire’s imperial practices and how those practices impact citizenship within that empire. Citizens, regardless of their lack of awareness, often unconsciously subscribe to a set of beliefs and experiences that support

the idea of empire (Said, 1994, p. 11). Embedded ideological beliefs that certain peoples beseech domination by a superior culture supports this ideological construct (Said, 1994, p. 9, 11). Citizens of the empire unconsciously subscribe to this ideology of superior culture and benefit from it. An empire's focus on land and profit benefits its citizens economically and militarily, as ordinary citizens, often unknowingly, reap the rewards of imperialism and colonial expansion. Said (1994) stated, "We (the West) belong to the superior race and civilization" (p. 17). The resulting racialization inevitably leads to a separation of people based on race and other cultural criteria. The West, then, positions itself above other subject races, resulting in identity construction of other races as in *need* of Western culture and civilization. Thus, the empire justifies its colonial and imperial practices because others need Western culture and civilization.

Zionists point to this identity construction, and the United States frequently engages in evangelization of distant lands by seeking to spread the U.S. values of democracy, capitalism, and freedom. U.S. citizens often discursively justify this hierarchy and racialization by offering our "help" to these uncivilized others. The language found in a "global spread of democracy" rhetoric further illustrates a hidden, unexamined, imperialistic ideology evident in the Western discourse about non-Westerners. Adas (1998) makes an interesting point about the degree to which colonizing nations discriminate against subject peoples. The Qing Empire demarcated subject people based on their assimilation into Chinese cultural criteria, especially language and dress. European empires, however, demarcated based on race (pp. 386–387). As Adas explained, "In all of the European empires, race came to supplant culture as the dominant

marker of difference, of superiority and inferiority, and, by the late nineteenth century, as an intrinsic impediment to full assimilation into Western civilization” (p. 387).

The ideological positioning of Israeli Jewish ethnos and culture as hierarchically superior to Palestinian Arab ethos and culture allows, if not warrants, Israeli leadership and security personnel’s construction of the dangerous, Palestinian Arab other. Symbols such as the ID, Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, and the wall illustrate Israel’s imperialistic attitude toward Palestinian Arabs. Colonizers looked upon the Palestinian Arab natives and constructed their identity as an inferior other. Entangled with this identity construction are Israel’s God-ordained claims on the land and Israeli nationhood ambitions, in a land populated by millions of Palestinian Arabs with millions more living in diaspora outside historic Palestine. Palestinian nationhood ambitions, rooted in a similar construction of the Israeli other, are foiled because of Israel’s discursive, rhetorical, and military power. This power, coupled with unwavering rhetorical, political, and military support from an imperial, global superpower, the US, allows the Israeli narratives of Promise Land and security from terrorists to dominate Palestinian/Israeli discourse, particularly in the United States and Europe.

From my perspective, citizens of Western empires such as the United States must engage in discursive resistance to sustaining and maintaining an empire. Naming the United States as an “empire” is the first step. Naming the colonization of historic Palestine as ethnic cleansing rooted in imperialism is another step. Peace and conflict are manifestations of the ideological workings of language. Confronting the language that shapes an imperialistic ideology becomes a necessity for changing the current imperial

discourse and imperial policies that will follow. Confronting the ideology of empire through discourse further requires awareness that as citizens of that empire, we benefit immensely from that empire. Understanding that we benefit and how we benefit may shift ideologies to that of how, as an empire, we can engage the others in a constructive and mutually beneficial way that acknowledges them not as others, but as equally valuable citizens with equally valuable cultures, languages, viewpoints, and ways of life.

### *Where Do We Go From Here?*

I conclude, from everything examined in this research study, that separation, security, cleansing, and associated mythologies will not resolve the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. The two-state solution discourse, common among Israeli, Palestinian, and U.S. leadership, further supports a separation between Israelis and Palestinians. Each state is to be cleansed of the other people group. “Two states for two people” is how the saying goes. The Israelis and Palestinians both want the same thing: sovereignty, self-determination, and nationhood. These wants have manifested in a separation discourse and visual manifestations such as the wall, Bethlehem Checkpoint 300, settlements, and the ID. Separation and cleansing are requirements for sovereignty and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians.

The challenge with separation discourse and its relationship to sovereignty and self-determination is current Israeli policy aimed at the West Bank and areas east of the Green Line. Israeli Jewish settlements built in the West Bank and East Jerusalem adjacent

to Palestinian villages call into question the validity of a “two states for two people” discourse. Rhetorically, Israeli leadership navigates this apparent contradiction of building settlements among Palestinian villages and towns by constructing the settlements as “security apparatuses.” Settlements are often located on mountaintops, thus maintaining a visual presence that further evokes the mythology of security for Israelis and a mythology of stark, Western-influenced colonialism for Palestinians (Yiftachel, 2009, p. 34).

The status quo and current “two-state solution discourse” favors the powerful Israelis. The backing of the United States as an imperial superpower, the construction of a dangerous Palestinian other, the current “war on terror” discourse, Jewish ethnos and culture positioned as superior to Palestinian Arab ethnos and culture, and Israel’s God-given right to the contested land—these all converge to make a two-state solution, an Israeli State and a neighboring Palestinian State, impossible. The “two states for two people” discourse further perpetuates the status quo and makes a two-state solution impossible. This discourse hides Israeli colonial practices by constructing Israel as a seeker of peace, while depicting Palestinians and Palestinian leadership as seeking the destruction of the State of Israel.

Palestinian resistance to the Israeli colonial project, often named “terrorism” by Israeli news media, helps the Israel colonial project by “proving” that Israelis want peace and two states, while Palestinians want conflict. Israeli leadership employs this discourse while simultaneously constructing settlements in the West Bank east of the Green Line, in an area that would otherwise likely eventually become an autonomous Palestinian

state. The security rhetoric and Promise Land discourse authorizes settlement development, often deep inside the West Bank, thus eliminating any hopes of a Palestinian State because the settlements literally chop up the West Bank. The settlements, along with the wall that often encircles the settlement, and settler-only roads in the West Bank eliminate any hope of a contiguous, self-determining, and autonomous Palestinian state.

The idea of separation is embedded in imperialistic ideology, and Israelis will continue to view themselves as separate and distinct from their Palestinian counterparts. My conclusion is that Palestinian resistance to Israeli separation and “security” policies will continue. This Palestinian resistance will favor the status quo because the construction of this resistance as “terrorism” supports and warrants the current rhetoric of security, leading to more settlement development and more Israeli colonial activities named “security.” The status quo will continue indefinitely, which is the opposite of peace.

### *What Can We Learn?*

Separation and security, as evident in the Palestinian/Israeli discourse relative to resolving the conflict, remind us of the power of rhetorical binaries. Separation requires a binary—it requires some other person, place, or thing from which to be separate. The concept of security implies that some people, places, or things need securing from some *other* people, places, or things. These concepts, simply put, construct a binary *us* versus

*them, or here versus there.*

The idea of separation has manifested in current political discourse outside of Israel and the West Bank. This dissertation argues that separation and security are typically synonymous. Great Britain recently separated itself from the European Union (EU), and U.S. leadership has extensively discussed the need for a border wall that will separate the United States from Mexico. In both of these cases, separation is indeed synonymous with security. A rhetoric of immigration from those outside of Great Britain fueled the rhetoric of Great Britain's exit (Brexit) from the European Union. In other words, Great Britain's separation from the EU leads to security for Great Britain.

Indubitably or undoubtedly, like the West Bank wall, the US/Mexico wall's "securing" of the southern border with Mexico will become a symbol for U.S. leadership's policy toward immigration from Mexico. The symbolic meaning of *wall* along the Mexican border will symbolize how U.S. leadership views non-US citizens. The mythological meaning is clear: non-US citizen others who potentially threaten U.S. collective identity and U.S. interests are not welcome in the US. Mexico itself will also take on binary meaning materialized in the wall, primarily that Mexico and people beyond the Mexican border are separate and distinct from the United States and U.S. citizens, and Mexico is a dangerous place where dangerous others reside. The wall will attempt to cleanse the United States from further infiltration by the unclean, dangerous, Mexican other. Likewise, Brexit will rhetorically construct Great Britain's non-British other, who, like the Palestinian other or the Mexican other, poses a threat to British security and ways of life.

The rhetoric of “America First” evident in current U.S. political discourse posits the United States and the interest of citizens of the United States as “first” and all other’s interests as second, if not merely inconsequential. This binary clearly reveals an ideology that will further separate and isolate the United States with regard to its regional and international neighbors, similar to the mythological meaning of Brexit. This rhetoric perpetuates tribalism in which the US—the *us*—and even Great Britain, looks inward for protection and security of their own respective interests from threats from *them*, the US’s binary opposite construct. The mythological meaning is clear—others pose a threat. Ironically, separating and securing will result in isolation and tribalism, which eventually will threaten the interests of those who seek to literally circle the wagons and protect those of *us* within that circle from *them*, the others on the outside.

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## APPENDIX A: UMCIRB APPROVAL LETTER



**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office**  
1L-09 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682  
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834  
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 · [www.ecu.edu/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/irb)

### Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Ryan Holt](#)  
CC: [Kirk St Amant](#)  
Date: 5/3/2012  
Re: [UMCIRB 12-000855](#)  
Gate 300: A Comparative Analysis of Israeli, Palestinian, and Tourist Discourse

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 5/3/2012 to 5/2/2013. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

The approval includes the following items:

| Name  | Description                             |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">Focus Group Questions for Gate 300 study 4-13-12.docx</a>   History | Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions |
| <a href="#">Gate 300 Research Study Information Sheet.docx</a>   History        | Consent Forms                           |
| <a href="#">Interview Questions for Gate 300 study 4-13-12.docx</a>   History   | Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions |

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What category do you represent?
  - a. Israeli
    - i. Where do you live?
    - ii. How long have you lived in Israel?
  - b. Palestinian
    - i. Do you have a Jerusalem ID?
    - ii. Do/have you received permission or permit to pass through the gate 300?
      1. How often?
      2. For what reason?
      3. How do you feel about the permit process?
  - c. Tourist
    - i. What city and country do you live?
    - ii. How many times have you visited Jerusalem/Israel?
    - iii. How many times have you visited the West Bank?
    - iv. What/whom do you visit when in the West Bank?
2. What is your religious affiliation?
  - a. Christian
  - b. Jew
  - c. Muslim
3. Gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
4. Where do you live?
5. Do you use Gate 300? How often do you/have you pass/passed/use/used Gate 300?
6. How would you describe Gate 300? How would you describe your experiences with Gate 300?
7. How/what do you feel when you pass through Gate 300? Can you pass through Gate 300?

8. What advantages/challenges does Gate 300 represent to you?
9. How does/has Gate 300 impact/impacted your day-to-day activities?