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## Steven Salaita's Scholarly Record and the Problem of His Appointment<sup>1</sup>

Cary Nelson

### Abstract

Despite several published essays about two of Steven Salaita's books, there has so far been no comprehensive scholarly review of his published work or about how it bears on his appointment in the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Salaita's first book—and the book that was the main justification for his appointment at Illinois—asserts that Palestinians are the one truly indigenous people of the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. Although Salaita does not give serious attention to the scholarship that would dispute such a claim, he is not alone in staking out that polemical ground. His more distinctive argument is that Israelis were a European colonialist power who actually modeled their nation building on the strategies used to suppress the Indian peoples of North America. For that claim there is no persuasive evidence. And yet it underlies his effort to treat Native Americans and Palestinians within a framework of “comparative indigeneity.” Support for the Palestinian people and unremitting hostility toward the Jewish state are the paired commitments that underlie most of Salaita's published work. This paper attempts to show that sympathy with Salaita's politics, rather than appropriate expertise about Middle East history, was the determining factor behind the effort to appoint him at Illinois. In doing so it makes a negative judgment about most of his publications and about whether he should have been offered a position at a major research university.

*Please note that, also in Volume 6, Robert Warrior refutes some of the claims of this article. View the article "[A Response to Cary Nelson](#)."*

The most theoretically problematic aspect of academic freedom is extramural expression. This dimension of academic freedom does not concern communications that are connected to faculty expertise, for such expression is encompassed within freedom of research, a principle that includes both the freedom to inquire and the freedom to disseminate the results of inquiry. Nor does extramural expression concern communications made by faculty in their role as officers of institutions of higher education. Freedom of extramural expression refers instead to speech made by faculty in their capacity as citizens, speech that is typically about matters of public concern and that is unrelated to either scholarly expertise or institutional affiliation.

—Matthew Finkin & Robert Post<sup>2</sup>

### I. Finding What Is Not There

It was over a decade ago that a graduate student in Oklahoma apparently had a career-defining eureka moment. Long opposed to the very existence of the state of Israel and repulsed by Zionism—he would later say that the word *hate* sufficiently defined his anti-Zionism—he was working in Native American studies when he thought he had found a way to combine the two hemispheres of his intellectual life. He found one casual reference to American Indians in a little known Israeli text. Having perhaps limited grounding in historical research and its standards for evidence in judging a historical thesis, he felt he had established what could become the core of a dissertation. His doctoral committee, which included Robert Warrior, an enrolled member of the Osage Nation, apparently did not see the student's references as less than convincing either. They approved the dissertation grounded in his claims, which later became its author's second book, *The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan*, issued by Syracuse University Press in 2006.

Steven Salaita's dissertation was completed in 2003, the book published three years later. In 2013, now teaching at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, he would be offered a tenured faculty position in the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Warrior, by then at Illinois and the director of the program, was not on the search committee, but the committee was nonetheless aware that Warrior and the prospective faculty member had a long relationship. The candidate's application letter made a point of emphasizing that.<sup>3</sup> In recommending that Salaita be hired, however, the search committee members were unlikely to have been seeking to please their unit head. In what follows, although I am not a faculty member in the program, I will try to show that the evidence suggests the

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committee members were acting out of political solidarity and intellectual conformity with the candidate's views. That doesn't mean they were conspiring to do so; it means they and Salaita share convictions about the world. They consider their shared views and values, including their take on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to be accurate, to be on the right side of history. As Warrior would later say to a reporter from *Indian Country*, "What became compelling about his work is the comparative analysis of the experiences of American Indian people and Palestinian people, which is at the heart of his work."<sup>4</sup>

My investment in the Salaita case reflects my twenty-year history in the elected national leadership of the AAUP. I served as its president from 2006 to 2012 and am the coauthor of a number of its official reports and statements of principle. I differ with the current leadership over the definition of extramural speech and the role academic freedom plays in the case. But the understanding of extramural freedom I endorse, offered in the epigraph above, comes from two of the most distinguished veterans of the national organization's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure. I have been on that committee for nine years. Its statement is a valid disagreement about principle, not a simple matter of who is right and who is wrong. As a faculty member in the English department on the campus at the center of the Salaita controversy, I am also invested in and familiar with campus hiring standards and procedures. Though I never communicated with the administration about the appointment, I did publicly support the August 2014 decision not to proceed with it once that decision was announced.

In what follows I will not focus on the widely debated issues about the final phase of the Illinois hiring process, issues that I have written about in other venues.<sup>5</sup> That said, many faculty members and students at Illinois and elsewhere have proclaimed Salaita a world-class scholar without actually knowing his work. It was time someone tested that claim, and thus whether he is a good fit for a major R-1 institution, by examining his accomplishments. I will discuss the major arguments of his books, the kinds of evidence he does or does not provide, the validity of his historical claims, and the relationship of his tweets to his books and essays. I will also explore the character of the original search process at Illinois, asking whether appropriate expertise was brought to bear on Salaita's publications and whether appropriate academic judgment was compromised by political convictions.

In 1989, Robert Warrior published his influential essay "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians" in *Christianity and Crisis*.<sup>6</sup> No specialist in ancient history, Warrior nonetheless tried to walk the unstable line between fact and myth in the Old Testament. His first point is to underline an irony: liberated from slavery in Egypt, the Jews were directed to follow Yahweh's commands "to defeat the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan" and thus became a dominant power like the one they had fled. "The obvious characters in the story for Native

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Americans to identify with are the Canaanites,” he writes, “the people who already lived in the Promised Land. As a member of the Osage Nation of American Indians, American Indians who stand in solidarity with other tribal people around the world, I read the Exodus stories with Canaanite eyes.” Warrior acknowledges that the Canaanites were not actually systematically annihilated, but that the biblical narrative remained influential. On that he is certainly correct. But he seems to accept that the Exodus story of the Jews’ liberation from Egypt is true, something in which scholars are not ready to concur. More important, he suggests in the end that it is not just ancient Israelites he has in mind. “Perhaps,” he muses, “people will be able to achieve what Yahweh’s chosen people in the past have not: a society of people delivered from oppression who are not so afraid of becoming victims again that they become oppressors themselves.” Perhaps Warrior is on even less secure ground in delivering messages about the Holocaust, which is the modern allusion in his reference to oppression and a Jewish fear of reoccurrence, than he is about Canaan. In any case, his comparison between Native Americans and “the indigenous people of Canaan” was not lost on his graduate student, Steven Salaita. It is an essay and a comparison Salaita repeatedly cites.

By 2013, Warrior’s attitude toward Israel was no longer a matter of allusion. That year the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) endorsed a boycott of Israeli universities. Warrior was the Association’s founding president, serving from 2009 to 2010. Indeed, Warrior and other UIUC faculty members played key roles in the drive to promote the Association’s boycott resolution. It reads in part: “As the elected council of an international community of Indigenous and allied non-Indigenous scholars, students, and public intellectuals who have studied and resisted the colonization and domination of Indigenous lands via settler state structures throughout the world, we strongly protest the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands and the legal structures of the Israeli state that systematically discriminate against Palestinians and other Indigenous peoples.”<sup>77</sup> Salaita supported the decision and has been a vocal supporter of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement. Indeed he was one of the leaders of the successful American Studies Association boycott initiative that preceded the NAISA decision.

Illinois’s American Indian Studies (AIS) Program has been seeking to expand its mission to include indigenous studies, indeed has considered seeking approval to drop “American Indian” from its title and become the “Indigenous Studies Program.” Characterizing Salaita as a scholar working in “comparative indigeneity”—despite the fact that only his first book (out of six), a later essay, and his Illinois job talk embodied that focus—made him a priority candidate. Like the AIS faculty members themselves, moreover, he regarded Palestinians as indigenous and Israelis as European colonialists. I do not believe that either Salaita himself or the AIS faculty was qualified to evaluate those unsubstantiated claims, claims based on politics and prejudice, not scholarship or verifiable evidence. Perhaps to the AIS faculty members the two claims were

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self-evident, articles of faith. Their identification with Palestinians as the native peoples of the area, as Warrior admits, was part of their own political identity. Comparative indigeneity is an interesting recent field. One might compare the historical status of American Indians with Australian Aborigines or New Zealand Maoris and thus expand the reach of the American Indian Studies Program in a way verified by evidence about indigeneity, but comparisons between American Indians and Palestinians have no basis in responsible scholarship because there is no convincing evidence that Palestinians are an indigenous people. Nonetheless, that was the “indigenous” comparison Salaita was to be hired to teach. AIS was unwittingly seeking to perpetrate a fraud on the campus. The competition to see whether Jews or Palestinians have historical primacy in Israel/Palestine is ultimately a political struggle, not a scholarly debate. Salaita's appointment never was simply academic. It was political from the outset.<sup>8</sup>

Salaita moves from an argument that all oppressed peoples are symbolically Canaanites, which was Warrior's point, to a claim that Palestinians are their genetic descendants. The effort to promote a Canaanite biological past for Palestinians and make them the one true indigenous people of Palestine was part of the political struggle of the 1990s. It is notable that Rashid Khalidi in *Palestinian Identity* dismisses the search for Canaanite roots of Palestinian identity as characteristic of the bad history favored by “extreme advocates” of Palestinian nationalism.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, Harry Ostrer at NYU, who is one of the leading figures in genetics research on Jews, maintains that both Jews and Palestinians have roots in the area.<sup>10</sup> But modern genetics essentially disproves any one-to-one link between genetics and peoplehood, though there can be overlap, as there apparently is with Jews and Palestinians. Given that Palestinians and Jews (including Ashkenazim) share a number of genetic markers, the only supportable biologically based argument one could make would be for what we might call coindigeneity for Jews and Palestinians, but Salaita is not interested in the objective evidence.

That said, there is little evidence of a separate “Canaanite” people continuing to exist into the Hellenistic and Roman periods of ancient Judea; they seem by then to have largely blended with the people we now call Jews. The early Israelites as a whole were likely a tribal confederation with elements indigenous to parts of Canaan, Sinai, the Hijaz, and Transjordan.<sup>11</sup> Later Jewish populations picked up converts (and their genes) from across Europe, Asia, and Africa as well. The Jebusites, whom some Palestinians cite as their ancestors, are mentioned alongside the Israelites in Joshua 15:63, but they appear nowhere outside the Bible.<sup>12</sup> If we take the seventh-century biblical text as projecting its own historical circumstances onto the past, then the Jebusites may have existed, but they cease to appear after the fall of the First Temple in 587 BC, so were likely assimilated into the Jewish people, losing their separate identity. If Palestinians have a Jebusite ancestry,

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it is ironically through their own partial Jewish identity. Meanwhile, as the narratives toward the end of Rachel Havrelock's *River Jordan* demonstrate, many Palestinians have family stories by which their origins lie on the other side of the River Jordan, or in Lebanon.<sup>13</sup> And some people switched among Canaanite, Israelite, and Aramaean identities as the political situation demanded. The fluidity of ancient identification practices makes exclusive claims for unique indigenous status still more problematic. All this suggests we will all be better served by accepting the fact that "peoplehood" is a social, not a biological, construct.<sup>14</sup> Would Illinois students have been well served by having Salaita's unfounded convictions about indigeneity communicated to them as fact? Certainly the increasing racialization of campus debates about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a disturbing and destructive trend, one to which Salaita is contributing by conflating ethnicity or peoplehood and genetics.

Having asserted that there is an objective historical and biological case for claiming indigeneity for Palestinians alone, Salaita proceeds in *The Uncultured Wars: Arabs, Muslims, and the Poverty of Liberal Thought* (London, UK: Zed Books, 2008), to modify and considerably broaden the definition of indigeneity itself. One could argue that he implicitly disavows—or at least undermines—his earlier position. Indigeneity, he asserts, is "a practiced identity; it's not a political category that can be outfitted with manifest criteria" (113). "It can never be defined, even as a broad referent, using the logical convenience of Western scholarship" (113). Thus "an Indigenous community is one that identifies itself as such and one that is accepted as such by its brethren" (113). But ethnic self-identification and mutual recognition are not the same as awarding indigeneity legal and historical status. (One might recall in the case of Ward Churchill that personal self-identification was not accepted by all Indians as guaranteeing him a place in an indigenous community.<sup>15</sup> When his tenure was under assault in Colorado—on the basis of his writings, not his ethnicity—many Native Americans rejected Churchill's claim that he was an Indian. I defended him on academic freedom grounds, but I would not have endorsed hiring him.) Contrary to what Salaita says, he has turned indigeneity precisely into a political category. That effect is heightened still further when he offers a supplementary definition: "Indigenous peoples are the ones who most ardently and consistently reject corporate modernity" (115). We are now down to what one might call "strategic indigeneity," or a concept of indigeneity created and deployed for cultural and political effect. Neither here nor elsewhere, it is important to note, is Salaita much inclined to cite opposing scholarly views, though he surely must be aware of them. He appears to want readers who pursue his citations to enter a circular world of self-reinforcing opinion, not an academic debate.

The convictions about Israeli colonialism and Palestinian indigeneity that he and the AIS Program shared are simply commonplace leftwing political fictions. There was nothing original in Salaita's repetition of these beliefs in his dissertation. Salaita's claim to have broken new ground is based instead on a parallel comparison

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between the Europeans who colonized the Americas and the Israelis who founded the Jewish state. Any characterization of Israelis *tout court* as Europeans ignores the fact that half of Israel's current population descends from the 700,000 Jews who fled Arab countries in 1948. They came from Jewish communities with a very long history in Arab countries—in some cases a history of nearly two thousand years—and thus it is inaccurate to view them as nineteenth- or twentieth-century European colonialists.<sup>16</sup>

As Salaita writes in his introduction to *The Holy Land in Transit*, “When I discovered that Zionist leaders drew inspiration from American history in conceptualizing ways to rid Palestine of its Indigenes, the project became a reality” (3). And he writes, “Had I found only similarities, this project never would have been conceived” (3). What did he find? It is not until chapter 3, “Demystifying the Quest for Canaan,” that he tells us. What he found, most notably, was a series of contemporary writers—like Amos Kenan in a 1998 essay or Uri Avnery in a 2001 essay—who used analogies between Palestinians and Native Americans to criticize Israeli West Bank policy. Thus one might argue that Palestinians in refugee camps are like Indians in reservations, a comparison that helps people see how oppressive conditions in the camps in fact are. But that is a long way from demonstrating that Zionism is inspired by and grounded in colonialist strategies of Native American genocide.

Salaita's supposed smoking gun is a passage from a speech David Ben-Gurion gave on “earning a homeland” in New York in 1915. As Diana Muir Appelbaum points out in an important essay about Salaita's book, Ben-Gurion rejects in his speech the imperialist practice of seizing “land by force of arms,” instead arguing that it has to be earned “with the sweat of the brow.”<sup>17</sup> History would prove that gentle remonstrance naïve, but this was 1915 when Jews were buying land in Palestine, not engaged in a series of wars. Perhaps seeking to gain a sympathetic ear from his American audience, Ben-Gurion recalls “how fierce the fights they fought with wild nature and wilder Indians.”<sup>18</sup> I know of no evidence that this remark about Indians to an American audience was a serious part of Ben-Gurion's thinking or that it ever had any effect in Israel. Had Salaita limited himself to discussing examples of colonialist attitudes among Jewish settlers, he could have been on more solid ground. But then he could not have offered the dramatic, though seriously misleading, discovery of a connection between Israeli and North American settlers. His argument is also flawed by a tendency to read the current power dynamic between Israelis and Palestinians back into the early history of the Yishuv, the community of Jewish residents living in Palestine before the state of Israel was founded.

As he does far too often, Salaita finds his evidence for this conflation of US and Israeli history in the form of a brief quotation from a secondary source, in this case Naseer Aruri's preface to his edited collection

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*The Palestinian Resistance to Israeli Occupation* (1970). Salaita does not cite or give evidence that he read the speech in its entirety, though Appelbaum points out it can readily be found in Ben Gurion's *Rebirth and Destiny of Israel* (1954). Without knowledge of the context of Ben Gurion's remark, Salaita feels justified in *The Holy Land in Transit* in calling this example "crucial": "Ben-Gurion would conjure American conquest in order to inspire Near East colonization" (57). Zionism, he would say two years later, making an overstated universal claim, "always desired to cleanse the land of Palestinians" (121). Israel defends "its right to be institutionally racist by remaining legally ethnocentric" (122).

Salaita's next piece of evidence is a misrepresentation of what Appelbaum identifies as a eulogy by Moshe Dayan "given at the 1956 funeral of Ro'i Rotberg (or Ruttenberg) a member of Kibbutz Nahal Oz, ambushed and murdered by *fedayeen* who came across the Egyptian-Israeli border in peacetime." This time in *The Holy Land in Transit* Salaita quotes Avi Shlaim, an Iraqi-born British-Israeli historian and severe critic of Israeli policy, from his book *The Iron Wall* (2001): "His funeral oration epitomized the stark philosophy of the 'Arab fighter,' that is, the equivalent of what Americans used to call the Indian fighter, a type common in the second generation of settlers in a country where newcomers are forced to fight the native population" (56). Salaita leads the reader to assume the references to an "Arab fighter" and an "Indian fighter" come from Dayan, but they don't. Salaita fails to tell us that Shlaim credits the "Indian fighter" term to Uri Avnery, an Israeli writer and founder of the Gush Shalom peace movement.<sup>19</sup> Dayan himself makes no reference to the United States. As Appelbaum writes,

What Dayan actually said, in a eulogy still quoted by Israelis, was that Israel is "a nation of settlers," hated by Arabs who "sit in their refugee camps in Gaza and before their eyes we turn into our homestead the land and villages in which they and their forefathers have lived." Dayan urges Israelis to face this reality with the knowledge they must either defend themselves or be killed, like the young farmer who did not perceive danger because he "was blinded by the light in his heart and he did not see the flash of the sword. The yearning for peace deafened his ears and he did not hear the voice of murder waiting in ambush."<sup>20</sup>

Once again, Salaita does not quote from the speech directly or give evidence he has read it. In the absence of evidence, Salaita cites oblique allusions and what he takes to be comparable cases of settler colonialism, as in soldier, author, and Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky's oft-quoted observation in his famous 1923 essay "The Iron Wall" that "indigenous people will resist alien settlers as long as they see any hope of ridding themselves of the danger of foreign settlement." (55)<sup>21</sup> Jabotinsky's "iron wall" was the resolute military capacity settlers would need to defend their territory. Once again, Salaita quotes Jabotinsky from Avi Shlaim, who borrows the title of Jabotinsky's essay for the title of his own book. Has Salaita read



Jabotinsky's essay in its entirety? It's readily available online. Has Salaita made any effort to acquaint himself with the scholarly literature on Jabotinsky? He offers no citations to suggest he has done so.

Jabotinsky (1880–1940) was a hugely controversial figure in his own time.<sup>22</sup> He certainly had his followers, but he had still more detractors. So it is unacceptable to treat his thinking as the foundation of the Israeli state. He founded one wing of twentieth-century Zionism, very much in opposition to the early Labor Zionists who advocated peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs. Jabotinsky also supported Jewish sovereignty over all of Palestine, which has earned him the status of father of today's Israeli far right. But there is some evidence Jabotinsky expected Palestinian self-determination to be honored within defined geographical areas. In any case, simply quoting a couple of his sentences without considering either Zionist responses to his ideas or the full spectrum of his positions is not responsible scholarship.

Though Zionism was largely a secular movement, Salaita insists it has been pervasively messianic and grounded in biblical narratives, in a quest for a “new Canaan.” There is good reason to see that impulse among some of America's religious settlers, and Israelis regularly invoke their ancient cultural and historical lineage, but that in no way justifies the ahistorical claim central to Salaita's *The Holy Land in Transit*: “David Ben-Gurion and other prominent Zionist leaders looked to the Euro-American conquest of Native lands as a source of inspiration” (179). Indeed he claims they imitate it; it is an example of “institutionalized mimesis” (139). Two years later, in *The Uncultured Wars*, he will say that “comparisons should be precise” (104), but a few pages earlier he claimed that the “Natives and Palestinians, then, are victims of and actors in an identical mythology” (101). The demonic bond between the US and Israel is transhistorical: “America's record of ethnic cleansing has allowed it to maintain Israel's military occupation . . . . Were it not for the destruction of Native nations in North America, there would have been no destruction of Palestine” (179). Yes, without a past there would be no present, but is this claim for such an interdependent history credible? One needs to raise a question: Were the members of the UIUC search committee sufficiently qualified in Zionism and Israeli history to evaluate Salaita's core thesis? Or did they endorse his views out of shared political conviction? The cochair of the search committee automatically charges anyone who raises such questions with racism. I have been among his targets.<sup>23</sup>

The question of the search committee's competence to judge Salaita's work—even with this second book, which is the only one that engages with Native American studies—should arise repeatedly for those concerned with events at Illinois because *The Holy Land in Transit* regularly takes up matters not obviously within the American Indian Studies Program's areas of expertise. Salaita's fifth chapter opens with a critique of the “Kahan Commission Report” issued by the commission established by Israel to investigate the

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September 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre during the Lebanon War. The report accused Ariel Sharon and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) of indirect responsibility because they had to have known the Phalangists who committed the murders were bent on revenge. Thus the IDF bore responsibility for allowing the Phalangists into the camp. Salaita treats the report with contempt and makes it clear he believes the Israelis had greater involvement. But he presents no evidence of that. He simply joins those determined to doubt the commission's honor. Was the search committee knowledgeable enough to take Salaita's word on the matter, or did it simply share Salaita's distrust and disapproval of Israel? Was its academic judgment clouded by its political commitments?

## II. The Sad Machine: Salaita's Formulaic Poetics

Salaita discusses but two Native American novels in detail in *The Holy Land in Transit: Winona LaDuke's Last Standing Woman* (1997) and Gerald Vizenor's *The Trickster of Liberty* (1998). His analysis of those two novels occupies one and a half of the book's six chapters. He also published essays on Native American fiction in 2010 and another in 2011. So, rounding up to give credit for passing comments elsewhere in his book—not counting sections of his books published beforehand in journals, but adding the 2008 essay “The Ethics of Intercultural Approaches to Indigenous Studies”—Salaita has written a total of five essays or chapters on Native American literature. Despite his many other publications, that is not, in my view, a sufficient number of publications in the relevant field to justify a tenured appointment in the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It would be sufficient for an assistant professorship.<sup>24</sup>

In *The Holy Land in Transit*, Salaita opens his treatment of LaDuke's novel by warning us, “Because of the novel's heterogeneity and the limitations of this project's methodology, I will narrow my framework to the novel's historical, colonial, decolonial, and postcolonial aspects” (83). It is a career-defining moment. He concludes by acknowledging that he has “focused on the interplay between natives and whites at the expense of other textual elements” (108). When he turns to a Palestinian novel, he admits that “much of *A Balcony Over the Fakihani* I have not been able to cover” (136), and about Vizenor's novel he writes, “I have not concentrated on all the main aspects. . . . I have discussed textual elements that contribute to our understanding of settler colonialism” (166). There is nothing wrong with drawing out those elements, although his emphases give us no sense of the novels as literature. There is nothing aesthetic about them. He treats them as oblique political tracts. It is not an inspiring classroom agenda. And as a career plan—detailing the anticolonialist implications of novel after novel after novel—it is wearying.

Salaita's work is relentlessly thesis driven, with reassertions and variations on descriptions of settler colonialism on page after page. It is a postcolonial variation on one of the formulaic applications of literary theory that one began to see in the 1980s. A critic sets up an interpretive machine and then processes text after text through it with little variation.

Nearly a decade after writing his thesis, Salaita is in the same place. In "Humor and Resistance in Modern Native Nonfiction," a 2011 essay published in *Alii: Journal of Comparative Poetics* (no. 31, pp. 133–51)—one of the few essays on Native American literature that he has published apart from his 2006 book *The Holy Land in Transit*—he reviews three books to show how "each author employs humor and comedy as a mode of critiquing the colonial state (Canada and the United States)" (133). "I will assess these nuanced rhetorical techniques," he writes, "to show how each author ultimately produces a damning indictment of the continuing policies of Canadian and American colonization."

Unfortunately, though he quotes from the novels, he does not actually describe, assess, or analyze their "nuanced rhetorical techniques." After a nod to Robert Warrior's scholarship, Salaita opens a discussion of Jim Northrup's *Rez Road Follies: Canoes, Casinos, Computers, and Birch Bark Baskets* (1999), which "condemns the United States' voracious appetite for territorial expansion" and uses "humor as a way to condemn continued American colonization" (137). He emphasizes that Northrup's writing "illustrates the interconnectedness of modern forms of race hatred with their origin in colonialist and slaveholding discourses" (138). Indeed Northrup displays "a profoundly anti-colonial ethics"; "he links all topics back to the theme of Indigenous self-determination, and enters into decolonizing advocacy." To underline this point, Salaita observes that "he critiques the destructiveness of what one may call imperialism and colonization, the continued occupation of Indian Country, and the use of American military force around the world" (139). And he notes that "Northrup conceptualizes the RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] as a neocolonialist entity, one that represents the interests of colonialist America instead of those of the Anishinaabeg" (140), the latter being the name for Odawa, Ojibwa, and Algonquin First Nations.

Moving on to Thomas King's *The Truth About Stories: A Native American Narrative* (2005), Salaita makes it clear in "Humor and Resistance in Modern Native Nonfiction," that "King presents forcefully a politics of decolonization and a commitment to Native self-determination." Indeed all of King's techniques are "exquisitely intertwined to proffer a coherent and wide-ranging critique of colonial discourses" (141). Thus, in critiquing James Fenimore Cooper, "King excoriates Cooper's rationalizations for Euro-American colonization" (142) and thereby succeeds in "juxtaposing America's colonial past with its imperial present"

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(143), reminding us that “like colonization, racism is a comprehensive phenomenon.” In King’s writing, the treatment of representation is “intertwined with the issues of racism and colonization” (144).

Keeping to his theme, Salaita turns to Paul Chaat *Smith’s Everything You Know About Indians Is Wrong* (2009). It is a book in which “a major expression of anti-colonial politics occurs through a discussion of treaty rights” (145). “A particularly interesting aspect of Smith’s rhetoric is how he uses self-deprecating humor, not only for emotional levity, but also to set up a critique of colonial American society” (146). “His call to Native artists to present honest work is fundamentally decolonizing” (147).

All three books are “deeply committed to a broader movement for Native decolonization” (148). And the “greatest similarity of style and substance among the three books is the authors’ uses of humor and how that humor informs a Native politics of decolonization” (149). The point needs underlining: “their comic rhetoric shares an adamantly anti-colonial politics.” Their “humor often highlights the forms of injustice arising from the colonization of North America” and thus participates “in a broader movement of decolonization and self-determination in Native communities” (149). The essay concludes with another nod to Warrior.

Salaita would no doubt be able to find this pattern in other novels as well. Indeed the repetitive and formulaic character of his work does not lead one to expect an inventive intellectual life in his future. But at least in terms of Native American literature there is no reason to assume he will be doing more work in the field. The 2010 and 2011 essays suggest that he returned to the field mainly to burnish his Native American credentials for the job market.

The 2011 essay, “Humor and Resistance in Modern Native Nonfiction,” is not without interest, but the most interesting parts of the essay are the quotations from the Native American writers themselves. Although Salaita does not offer detailed analyses of their rhetoric—other than to link the quotes with his thesis—such work would be well worth doing. The culture-specific humor in the novels not only stands on its own but also enriches a long and varied general American history of political wit.

Comparing *The Holy Land in Transit* with this essay, one could well conclude he has become even more ideologically single-minded over the last decade. In any case, the arc that runs from his first essays in 2001 and 2002 to his 2014 tweets shows increasing bitterness and hostility. There are moments when one feels as if he tries to adopt the sardonic humor he learned from the writers he studied but cannot control its effects nearly so well as they.

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### III. Six Books in Pursuit of an Enemy

Two topics recur repeatedly in Salaita's books: advocacy for the Palestinian cause and unqualified opposition to the state of Israel. As he writes in the introduction to *The Holy Land in Transit*, "My entire life has thus been dedicated to Palestinian politics and activism, and nothing has occupied my thoughts more than Israeli brutality and the way it is described so euphemistically in the United States, if even it is mentioned at all" (2). His sixth book, *Israel's Dead Soul* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), is but the fullest expression of the obsession at the core of the other obsessions. Salaita's pursuit of his enemy is so relentless and hostile—and so much of a piece with his sometimes virulent social media presence—that Matthew Finkin, UIUC law professor and the most experienced member of the Campus Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, expressed his concern that there was no scholar of anti-Semitism on the search committee or otherwise involved in the search process. Finkin offered that challenge at the February 9, 2015, public meeting of the Champaign-Urbana Faculty Senate.<sup>25</sup>

In *The Holy Land in Transit*, Salaita defines Israel as "the final Garrison force in Asia" (21), "a modern instance of colonization initiated and administered mainly by Europeans with little familiarity with the land, and no connection with it beyond an abstract premise rooted in its own liturgical tradition" (42). As he tweeted on July 22, 2014, "Reminder: this is not a 'conflict.' It is a colonial power using disproportionate force to suppress an Indigenous insurrection." He thus objects to naming Palestinians "as terrorists for reacting violently to American and Israeli colonization" (99). "While some Jews are Indigenous to Palestine," he concedes, "most are not" (45). In contrast, there is a "biological continuity among Palestinians with the ancient tribes occupying the Holy Land during the initial arrival of Jews" (42). "Palestinians have been the majority, as well as its original inhabitants" (75). In a rhetorical move typical of his work, he then pretends to take back what he said. His argument "is not meant to delegitimize Jewish claims to residence in the Holy Land. . . . Rather it is to show that history and the ability to speak are tied to power" (75–76). But the status of the last assertion is really just additive, not qualifying. Salaita writes that whatever other rights Jews have, they have no right to a Jewish state. The conflict cannot be settled "until the goals of return and redress are realized in full" (80), a process that would replace Israel's Jewish majority with an Arab one.

The same year Salaita issued *The Holy Land in Transit*, he also published through Pluto Press, a leftist popular imprint, his *Anti-Arab Racism in the USA: Where It Comes from and What It Means for Politics Today* (2006). Despite its title, the book is also about advocacy for Israel in the United States and about Israel itself. It is one of several volumes of popular and generally polemical political commentary Salaita has written. There is nothing wrong with faculty members publishing nonscholarly work designed for the general reader, but such

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work does not typically count for tenure in a research university. I doubt that American Indian Studies based its case on those books, but they are very much a part of Salaita's intellectual profile and his reputation.

The two chapters of primary interest here are "Is Zionism Racism?" and "Why God Hates Me," the latter a critique of the evangelical Christian commitment to Israel. In a key passage in the first of these chapters, Salaita announces that "Zionism is diverse and multifaceted" and thus that "it is unfair to say 'Zionism is racism,' a blanket statement that leaves no room for group or individual nuance" (142). So far so good. We seem to be in the universe of a liberal enlightenment commitment to drawing critical distinctions. But then he immediately adds, "I believe without hesitation that the majority of worldviews that arise from Zionism are infused with anti-Arab racism, or directly purvey it. Some revel in it. Others helped create it." These are distinctions with little practical difference, and they offer what amounts to a comprehensive indictment. "Racism," Salaita emphasizes, "has always been fundamental to the majority of Zionist projects" (144). "Israel," he informs us falsely, "grants equal rights only to Jews" (160). "The new anti-Semitism," he adds, "has institutionalized anti-Arab racism even more firmly in mainstream Zionist thought" (143). No wonder he can infamously tweet, "Zionists: transforming 'anti-Semitism' from something horrible into something honorable since 1948"<sup>26</sup> or "By eagerly conflating Jewishness and Israel, Zionists are partly responsible when people say antisemitic shit in response to Israeli terror."<sup>27</sup> Despite such statements, his opposition to Israel, he guarantees us, "does not exist in overzealous isolation" (5).

These two tweets from July 2014 grow out of Salaita's rage at Israel's "apartheid system" (*Anti-Arab Racism in the USA*, 145), a system he claims is grounded in "an attitude of biological determinism" that "legitimizes Palestinian inferiority based on a racialized model of citizenship" (146). But most Jews see their land-based religion grounded in a cultural and historical, not biological, lineage. And there is no apartheid system in Israel proper, despite Salaita's unsupported and hyperbolic posturing. Many of Israel's Arab citizens face unacceptable discrimination, and IDF veterans and Orthodox Jews, among others, get special treatment under the law, but that does not justify Salaita asserting globally that "Arabs are inscribed in the Israeli legal system as second-class citizens and treated accordingly" or decrying "the meaningless rhetoric about equal rights for Arabs that Zionist leaders like to vocalize when Israel is criticized" (144). Salaita goes on to say "Israel grants equal rights only to Jews" (160) and even that Israel's Arab minority has no human rights (156), assertions that are false and professionally irresponsible. Israel's Arab citizens vote, serve in the Knesset, teach in universities, care for patients as physicians, and enjoy equal citizenship under the law. Arab communities in Israel proper need a better infrastructure and better employment opportunities, but that is a matter of greater government and private financial investment, not a question of a formal apartheid regime. Nothing inherent to Zionism prevents those inequities from being addressed.

There is certainly racist sentiment on the Israeli right, but that does not make Israel a fundamentally racist society, especially given the powerfully antiracist currents in Israeli culture. And Salaita's statements about the legal system in Israel proper are not accurate. Were the people who reviewed Salaita's file at Illinois and voted on his case at the program or college level qualified to judge whether his assertions were based in well-researched fact and exhibited appropriate professional care? Did they consider this vulgar fantasy from *Israel's Dead Soul* to be a statement of fact:

It is well known by Palestinians that anytime one of them enters or exits Israel, regardless of nationality, he or she will likely undergo an anal or vaginal probe. These probes, as in the American prison system and in police stations around the world, aren't intended to be pragmatic. They are acts of psychological domineering and political assertion. The agents of these coercive actions are rehearsing their own depravity through fulfillment of their Orientalist notions of Arab and Muslim sexuality. (110)

Writing in *History News Network*, historian Steve Hochstadt summarizes other notable misstatements and distortions, including those in Salaita's chapter on the Anti-Defamation League:

Salaita writes that cartoons which compare Israel and Nazi Germany are "ethically viable," because both nations engaged in "widely documented human rights abuses." He claims that "numerous cases of anti-Semitic vandalism in 2007 and 2008 were found actually to have been committed by Jews." He then offers four examples: in one he says that the NYT reported that the perpetrator "was trained by the Mossad," but the report was only that the perpetrator claimed he was trained by the Mossad; in a second, the perpetrator was "a German woman," not a Jew; in a third, Salaita says "numerous swastikas that turned up on the campus of George Washington University were ultimately attributed to a Jewish student," but does not mention that this student drew only a few of the many swastikas in question. He then argues that the ADL is culpable for anti-Semitism because it defends and promotes Israel. . . . Salaita repeatedly asserts that the ADL "maintains its denial" of the Armenian genocide, while quoting and then explaining away an ADL statement from 2007 which affirms that the murder of Armenians was genocide.<sup>28</sup>

As Liel Leibovitz points out in an article in *Tablet*, "according to Tel Aviv University's Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism, there have been 632 cases of violent anti-Semitic attacks during the time Salaita examines."<sup>29</sup> Salaita's examples do not justify assigning Jews responsibility for anti-Semitic incidents.

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When Salaita claims in *Anti-Arab Racism in the USA* that “messianic Zionism and each of its practitioners are racist to the degree of America’s Aryan militias” (147) he makes an indictment that is far too sweeping to be fair. There are certainly some religious West Bank settlers who merit being compared with members of Aryan militias, but Messianic Zionism as a whole does not. Messianic Zionism predates the founding of Israel and even includes Israelis who actually reject the legitimacy of the Israeli state. When Salaita writes, again in *Anti-Arab Racism in the USA*, that “Zionism, after all, has been responsible for innumerable atrocities” (151), however, he alludes not to Messianic Zionism, but to the mainstream Zionism that underwrites the notion that Jews deserve a nation in their ancient homeland. The Zionism that Salaita finds racist is the Zionism that led to the founding of the Jewish state and sustains the cultural rationale for its existence today.

Salaita opens *Israel’s Dead Soul* by consolidating his pronouncements on Zionism: “I conceptualize Zionism as deeply inhumane ethically, and as destructive politically for Jews and Arabs, and for humankind in general” (5). Wherever the Internet reaches, one might say, Israel is doing no good, for there is “an inherent inhumanity deep within Zionism” (10):

Zionism presents its advocates with irreconcilable contradictions. It promises liberation through colonization. It attempts to exemplify modernity but relies on a fundamentally tribal mentality. It glorifies democracy while practicing apartheid. There is no way to circumvent these realities; one cannot support Zionism without eventually encountering its ugly side. (3)

Further, in an assertion about its worldwide reach, Salaita claims that “Zionism has become a vital component of the liberal discourses of inclusiveness, coexistence, and multiculturalism . . . ethnic cleansing has come to be tacitly acceptable through lionization of Zionism and multiculturalism in liberal discourses of American modernism” (4). It would be very difficult to prove that liberal discourses of inclusiveness and coexistence worldwide are grounded in Zionism, or that American responses to ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia or Rwanda were underwritten by sympathy for Israel. In saying so, however, Salaita is not just condemning Israel and its influence; he is now standing against the enlightenment project as it plays out in the contemporary world. His political agenda trumps what he views as the tired old values of the West. “Assessment of Israel is central to global campaigns for economic, racial, sexual, and environmental justice” (7). This helps explain as well why he has expressed his reservations about academic freedom. No wonder Salaita would tweet in April and May 2014, months before the war in Gaza, that “I think of all the pain Israelis have caused, their smugness, their greed, their violence, and yet I smile, because it’s all only temporary,”<sup>30</sup> that “Even the most tepid overture to Palestinian humanity can result in Zionist histrionics,”<sup>31</sup> that “All life is sacred. Unless you’re a Zionist, for whom life is a mere inconvenience to ethnographic



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supremacy,”<sup>32</sup> and “Understand that whenever a Zionist frets about Palestinian violence, it is a projection of his own brute psyche.”<sup>33</sup> These tweeted sentiments are of a piece with his articles and the majority of his books. Both the manner and substance of the tweets and the publications coincide.

Then there is the title of *Israel's Dead Soul*. Salaita assures us, comically, that he has “chosen it not to be cheeky or provocative” (10), a contention that not even a boy's mother would believe. While sharing his doubt that countries actually have souls, he cannot resist delivering the book's most notorious tweet-worthy line: “Israel's soul died in the moment of its invention” (10). The epilogue rings changes on that sentence to generate a tweetable cluster: “Israel's soul needed to die if the many peoples of the Near East are to continue living” (141), “Israel's dead soul is the affirmation of life through its long overdue murder” (142), and “Do not mourn Israel's dead soul, then. Mourn instead those who suffer when Israel's soul is living” (142).

And plenty of other anti-Zionist and anti-Israel equivalents of his tweets are layered into the book: “Zionism underlines a state engaged in overt and covert violence of ferocious dimensions” (26–27), “Israel has put Zionists, both ardent and progressive, on the wrong side of nearly every issue of global import” (27), “when Israel misbehaves, all Jews, no matter where, become responsible” (28), “We need to kick Israel out of multiculturalism” (32), “Zionism represents an immoral form of ethnonationalism” (32), “If we want Jews to participate in multiculturalism, we should ask them to leave Israel behind” (33), “No ideology more than Zionism has the ability to make hypocrites of even the sincerest human beings” (35), “there is no way for Zionism and Palestinians to coexist” (36), “Zionists take tribalism to depraved levels of chauvinistic exclusion” (38), “Israel in fact generates anti-Semitism” (45), and “Israel is a settler colonial nation whose core state ideologies and jurisprudence are unavoidably racist” (70), among others. In addition to these ready-to-go tweets, there are incipient tweets, raw materials for tweeting, and tweets in the making in four of Salaita's books. Thus you can delete a phrase (while remaining true to his argument) to find a tweet: “the display of Israel's flag . . . shouldn't fall under the purview of a multicultural office (or any institution with moral decency)” (15). Horrific or not, these absolutist, often unprovable, claims occur as thesis statements or summaries of arguments that give opposing arguments no quarter. They are offered as statements of ironclad truth.

Do I think that *The Holy Land in Transit* and *Israel's Dead Soul* are anti-Semitic books? Yes. Not anti-Semitic in every sentence or in every argument, but in frequent passages and, overall, in their exceptionally passionate project of delegitimizing and ultimately eliminating the Jewish state. The tweets add to that picture passages of exceptional vulgarity and incipient violence. “You may be too refined to say it, but I'm not,” Salaita tweeted shortly after three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped and murdered by Palestinian terrorists, “I

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wish all the fucking West Bank settlers would go missing.”<sup>34</sup> Is Salaita himself anti-Semitic? I have no idea. Do I think he himself knows whether he is? I have my doubts. A colleague who has met him believes he is not. But my colleague is convinced Salaita knew the tweets would be perceived as anti-Semitic, knew that they would cause pain, and that he took pleasure in anticipating all that. In the 1971 UCLA case of Angela Davis, when the regents sought to prevent her from teaching, the AAUP’s investigative report stated that “the judgment to be made is how far the condemned polemics fall below a professionally tolerable norm, and about the gravity, the frequency, and other circumstances of the incidents, along with other evidence bearing on the speaker’s overall academic responsibility.”<sup>35</sup> I believe this paper speaks to all these issues and presents a grave case against Salaita’s overall fitness.

The claim that his passionately held convictions—convictions that dominate and substantially determine the character of his polemical books—would *not* shape his teaching of “comparative indigeneity” between Indians and Palestinians seems, to put it gently, rather speculative. In case we might have thought otherwise, by the way, he assures us in *Israel’s Dead Soul* that he is “not singling out Israel in this book” (6). Pursuit of his universal values simply brings him involuntarily to condemnation of the Jewish homeland. There is an obvious tension here between his own claim to uphold universal values and his repeated disavowals of enlightenment liberalism, but it is a tension he either does not recognize or is unwilling to address. One notes that radical Islam solves that problem by arguing that its values are distinctive and trump the Enlightenment. Salaita, however, is trying in part to reach a radical left US audience and cannot go that route, and of course he is a Christian, not a Muslim. He prefers to have his cake and eat it too, debunking enlightenment universalism while simultaneously embracing it.

He does, however, vehemently reject some components of enlightenment liberalism, among them tolerance. In *The Uncultured Wars* he calls it “a stupid concept and a pernicious goal . . . it does little more than reinforce whatever injustice it ostensibly sets out to eliminate” (19). It is infected with “the patronizing affections of liberal benevolence” (65). But tolerance is not designed to be a self-sufficient and all-encompassing ethic, but rather a precondition for elaborating one. He goes on to say it “merely consolidates the white superstructure” governing the United States (20). While it is useful to have his views on such matters, whatever persuasiveness he might muster is limited because he does not bother to engage other liberal philosophies in a considered way. It is not enough to castigate several liberal journalists. When he does briefly articulate his principles—as with “morality is engaging all others as moral equals” (32)—his practice does not routinely honor them. One can hardly say he treats Israelis as moral equals. Indeed his support for boycotting Israelis illustrates his day-to-day opposition to such a stance.

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That is not to say that every paragraph or every essay in *The Uncultured Wars* or *Israel's Dead Soul* is equally hate-filled. The books are basically collections of thematically and politically unified essays, and some are more acceptable than others. "The Heart of Darkness Redux, Again" is a review of three films. One can disagree with his readings, but the essay is a reasonable contribution to the debates about the films. On the other hand, "Is the Anti-Defamation League a Hate Group?"—a question he answers affirmatively—is an essay that reaches unwarranted conclusions. The essay is protected by academic freedom, but a search or tenure review committee would be free to decide whether it mounts a responsible argument.

#### IV. The Persistent Tweeter

A common defense of Salaita is that he was punished for his Gaza war tweets, in other words for what amounted to protected political speech. Of course I believe he was reevaluated, not punished. Part of what I suggested above is that Salaita's aggressive tweets about Israel and Zionism had long been very much in harmony with his books and essays, thus that the aggression did not begin with the war in Gaza, though that is when the tweets became notorious. Should the tweets nonetheless be considered protected extramural speech? The Campus Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (CAFT) considered the tweets protected political speech but held that they raised valid questions about his books and essays and thus about the soundness of his judgment and his fitness for a faculty position. The AAUP understandably declined to address or explore his scholarship, but it is doubtful his case can receive a fair national hearing unless faculty members address or explore Salaita's scholarship. In what follows I consider his publications, blog posts, tweets, and brief online books reviews as part of one professional package because they are topically uniform. As Salaita himself remarks here, "the distinction between something academic and nonacademic is not as trenchant as we might suppose" (90). If he were tweeting about global warming, given his areas of research, the tweets would be extramural, effectively just public opinion. All his writing is protected by academic freedom, which means he has the right to say things about both Israel and global warming, but that does not protect writing in his areas of teaching and research from evaluation in hiring, tenure, or promotion proceedings.

The problematic tweets go back at least to the beginning of 2014. They didn't begin in July 2014 when the most recent war in Gaza took place, but rather predated it. Many of the summer 2014 tweets are of a piece with his books, as with "Worry not, Zionist trolls! I'm awake and ready to once again provide the conscience you must suppress in order to support #Israel."<sup>36</sup> Others, specific to June and July 2014 events, represent opinions conforming to the political views in his books, but partially leading them. If he writes an

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essay about the summer war, I expect it may echo the more recent tweets as well. Some of the July tweets embody a principle Salaita enjoins us to observe in *Israel's Dead Soul*: "If Zionists are going to conceal Israel's ethnic cleansing behind quaint discourses of multicultural decorum, then we must confront that decorum with proud indecency" (93). I take tweets like "At this point, if Netanyahu appeared on TV with a necklace made from the teeth of Palestinian children, would anybody be surprised?"<sup>37</sup> and "Do you have to visit your physician for prolonged erections when you see pictures of 22 dead children in Gaza?"<sup>38</sup> as examples of Salaita practicing "proud indecency." "I have already lost the culture wars," he writes in 2008's *The Uncultured Wars*, asserting that anti-Arab sentiment dominates both on and off campus, "so with this collection I zestfully enter into the uncultured wars" (2).

In a minority of his tweets, as with the two cited just above, Salaita's manner of expression clearly differs from that of his books and essays. He does not indulge in profanity in his full-length publications. But in none of his tweets does the substance of his political, historical, personal, and emotional views differ from that of his books and essays. Moreover, the epigrammatic and intensely hostile style of the tweets is identical to comparable sentences throughout his work, though in his full-length writings Salaita is also capable of awkward, clotted sentences that would not make for effective tweets.

Some Salaita advocates have argued that all tweets must only be read as part of ongoing conversations, but that is overstated. Some tweets are sent in the midst of conversations, some initiate conversations, and some fall in the Internet forest unread and unheard, never becoming part of a conversation. Thousands of tweets are forwarded or quoted as self-contained statements. The point is that they have multiple discursive and social roles. There is no binding ethic of tweet circulation and evaluation. Moreover, it is inconsistent to assert that Salaita's anti-Israel tweets have to be read in the context of anti-Israel tweeting but not in the context of his other anti-Israel writings. Even if some contexts are more equal than others, none is prohibited.

Faculty members, of course, share with their fellow Americans the same First Amendment right to vent irrationally, apoplectically, and ignorantly through social media. The federal government cannot punish them for doing so, and, if their university honors academic freedom, they are protected from institutional sanctions as well. If faculty members act rhetorically before they think, and have second thoughts about the public effects of hostile or exaggerated remarks, they can apologize and delete the remarks. They may not entirely escape widespread disrespect, but they may be able to mitigate the consequences of rash speech.

But should they ever face professional consequences for what they say on social media? It is notable that many nonacademic employers are not tolerant of tweets or Facebook postings they find objectionable. The

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First Amendment to the US Constitution does not protect private employees from being sanctioned or fired for ill-advised public statements in social media or other forums. The fact that many Americans are confused about that fact gives them no cover. In 2006 the US Supreme Court in *Garcetti v. Ceballos* withdrew protections for job-related speech by state government employees as well. Private university employees have long been at risk. Now public university employees are also vulnerable. The possibility that academic freedom gives faculty any special legal protection hangs by a thread, specifically in a *Garcetti v. Ceballos* footnote by then-Justice Souter.

That is why well-known authorities have been warning faculty members that only academic freedom gives them protections from university sanctions for extramural speech. But that protection has limits. In a very broad—and I think misguided—interpretation of its guidelines on electronic communication, AAUP's current leaders suggest that all social media statements are protected from professional consequences because they are “opinion” rather than “scholarship.” It needs to be said bluntly: only faculty either not well versed in the norms of current academic work or willing to disregard them could argue that a bright line exists between scholarship and opinion. University presses publish volumes of opinion by faculty—by Salaita and others—and those volumes commonly reprint newspaper op-eds and play a role in hiring and promotion decisions and certainly in a faculty member's campus and public identities. Opinion once directed to scholarly audiences is now all over the Internet. Scholarly research often leads to expressions of opinion for a general audience. Faculty could not otherwise fulfill the public advisory role described in the AAUP's historic 1915 *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure*.

The AAUP has also long made an exception where public statements are clearly related to a faculty member's areas of teaching, research, and disciplinary expertise. As the quotation from Matthew Finkin and Robert Post that opens this essay argues, such statements are not properly considered extramural. And they are not protected from academic consequences because they are part of a faculty member's professional profile. In hiring and promotion decisions, activity in social media related to a candidate's teaching and research can be a component in decision making. The AAUP's *Statement on Extramural Utterances* insists that judgment “should take into account the faculty member's entire record.”<sup>39</sup> In reviewing Salaita's entire publication record, I am seeking to do so.

In jettisoning the long tradition of recognizing public statements based on academic expertise as part of a faculty member's profile, AAUP's current leaders are breaking with AAUP precedent. When, for example, statements issued through social media are manifestly at odds with the clear consensus of the faculty author's relevant discipline, the faculty member is responsible for the professional impact that follows. If, as current

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AAUP leaders disastrously urge, faculty members were held harmless for all “opinion” issued through social media, it would open the door to fundamentally irresponsible professional conduct.

The AAUP has long used the example of a historian who makes public statements that the Holocaust is a hoax. A belief like that goes to the question of disciplinary competence and could result in serious sanctions. An evolutionary biologist who uses social media to declare that the theory of evolution is fraudulent would be in similar difficulty, as would a paleontologist who claimed that God put fossils on earth recently to test our faith. If we hold faculty harmless for all social media posts, then a faculty member could safely use social media to promote ignorance in both students and the general public, while in articles and books be careful to follow the disciplinary consensus.

That said, given the possibility of impulsive or irrational tweets or online comments that the author later regrets—and the need to forgive them—I believe we might borrow a principle from the 1970 emendation to the AAUP’s 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* and apply it to the use of social media in faculty evaluations. The issue at stake then was the insertion by faculty of extraneous political material into classrooms. In its 1970 clarification of the 1940 statement, the AAUP stated that occasional intrusions should not be subject to disciplinary action. In my 2010 book, *No University Is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom*, I use the examples of a faculty member who taught a chemistry class discussing the assassination of Martin Luther King the day after it happened and a constitutional law professor leading a class discussion on 9/11 the day after the attacks. So the AAUP clarified its position by saying only “persistent” intrusion of extraneous political issues was subject to review. Some faculty members have gotten in trouble for one foolish tweet. That is inappropriate. So I would suggest that only **persistent** tweeting on a given subject be a matter of relevance and concern. As a campus principle, that could lend some rationality both to public frenzies over occasional e-mails and to campus disciplinary proceedings. Salaita, however, issued scores of vehement anti-Israel tweets that embodied continuing poor professional judgment over a period of months. Some of my colleagues complain that only a “few” tweets are problematic. That is not the case. Salaita was a very persistent tweeter in his chosen subject area.

## V. The Career and the Appointment

The year after issuing his first two books, both highly polemical and flawed by hyperbole and factual errors, Steven Salaita published a book written in a conventional scholarly style, *Arab American Literary Fictions, Cultures, and Politics* (2007). He returned to that topic in *Modern Arab Fiction: A Reader’s Guide* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011). It isn’t just that one could be forgiven for thinking these two books were

written by someone other than the author of the other four books bearing his name. It is that this conclusion would be the far easier and more plausible one to reach. Both books on Arab American fiction are written from a pro-Palestinian perspective; here and there I take issue with the way the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts are represented. Taking examples from the most recent of the two books, I would dispute the claim that the Sabra and Shatila massacres were “under the supervision of Israeli soldiers” (23), because that could be taken to mean the Israelis were physically present when the killings took place or even ordered them. But that is only a phrase, not the extended indictment Salaita offers in earlier books. When, in writing about Susan Abulhawa’s novel *The Scar of David*, he observes that the title, which refers at once to a scar on the title character’s face and to an emotional scar that haunts him, may also embody a pun “denoting the injustice inherent in Israel’s creation because the Israeli flag is adorned with a Star of David” (136), Salaita is invoking his strong conviction that the presence of a Jewish homeland in Palestine is fundamentally unjust. But in his four more political books it is not just an injustice; it is an obscenity to be excoriated and overturned. Here it is just a fully permissible expression of political opinion. His summary of the 1948 war on the previous page embodies an acceptable form of political inflection as well. I would disagree with his view, but it could lead to a reasoned conversation. No such expectation survives reading his other four books.

In discussing Laila Halaby’s novels, Salaita can even deploy resonances of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a reasoned and reflective way:

Aqaba occupies a small stretch of land bordered on the tip of the Red Sea by Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, all of which can be seen easily from Jordan. As Hala remembers, in a paddle boat a considerable distance from shore Sharif pulled her toward Palestine, at which point they were stopped by Jordanian officials, who laughingly informed them that the Israelis would not let them land in Eilat, the Israeli port/resort town on the Red Sea. The scene reinforces the inability to return “home,” a particularly hurtful realization for Palestinians, as Hala indicates, especially given the fact that even water, a more fluid topography than land, can be monitored and policed as if it has a fixed border. Palestine thus becomes symbolic of the characters’ liminality; it is a visible physical presence but one that cannot be accessed and one that takes on extraterritorial dimensions (that is, it becomes much larger than its physical borders). (85)

I quote this passage at length because it suggests a good deal of what established literary criticism sensitive to Palestinian culture, history, and politics can offer. It helps us not only understand the novel (*West of the Jordan*) but also the pressures, desires, and injustices that animate Palestinian life.

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Had I been on a search committee here reviewing all of Salaita's publications, I would have urged that his application be rejected. Had his vita consisted of only the two books on Arab American fiction, I doubt he would have advanced to the interview stage in my department. The two books are modest accomplishments, a series of relatively conventional close readings that are not as intellectually and conceptually powerful as the first books many of my colleagues have written. They do not compare in ambition or originality with Leon Chai's *The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance*, Michael Rothberg's *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*, or Trish Loughran's *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770–1870*, to name but a few. Nor, I believe, are Salaita's books on Arab American fiction destined to have nearly as much effect on literary studies. They do not present the powerfully original work I believe a search committee at a major R-1 institution should seek. But they offer insightful close readings. They fall within the range of accomplishments many schools would find attractive. With those two books he might well have earned tenure at another school.

But Salaita's publication profile is not limited to the two acceptable books. Nor was he hired to teach Arab American fiction. He was precisely hired to teach in one of the most problematic and incendiary areas of his publication history—comparing American Indian and Palestinian “indigeneity,” a subject that inescapably entails the whole Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I am told reliably that the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences dean initially objected to the American Indian Studies Program moving into this area and redefining its mission this way. But then the dean moved on and an interim dean came in. In judging the final results, it does not help that at least three of Salaita's outside referees (the three whose names were revealed in an administrator's letter released through a FOIA request) are, like Salaita himself, public supporters of the BDS Movement.<sup>40</sup> The three are Lila Abu-Lughod, Nikhil Pal Singh, and Chadwick Allen.<sup>41</sup> Outside referees ought to be selected because they are qualified to render sympathetic but disinterested academic judgments. Even though these referees are unquestionably accomplished scholars, their choice leaves us with the impression they may have been selected not only because their research interests overlap, to varying degrees, with Salaita's own but also because they share his politics.<sup>42</sup> Their support for Salaita's work is undermined by concern that their judgment may well have been compromised by their political sympathies.

The American Indian Studies Program was faced with a dilemma in preparing Salaita's appointment papers. The popular polemical books were not a good foundation for a position with tenure. His second book, *The Holy Land in Transit*, tried to meld a scholarly project and a hostile anti-Israeli polemic, but anyone without strong anti-Israel convictions could well decide that the combination did not work. The tenure case would have to be partly based on the two books on Arab American fiction, though that was not what he was hired to teach. Hoping to be helped by a college requirement that ethnic studies programs split faculty



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appointments, the American Indian Studies Program offered the English department 25 percent of Salaita's appointment; that way he could be hired in part to teach and do continuing research in Arab American fiction. Although most English faculty members, including the department head, are now incensed at the affront to shared governance represented by what became a combined chancellor/president/board of trustees decision not to approve Salaita's conditional offer, at the time the English department head exercised his authority to do so and declined to take a portion of his appointment. The department now opposes the failure to hire him on procedural grounds, but it is important to note that it did not earlier endorse his purportedly exceptional scholarly merit by agreeing to share his appointment. The department, notably, had one specialist in Arab literature and thus potentially had an opportunity to significantly strengthen the area by appointing Salaita.<sup>43</sup>

Some faculty members write both scholarly books and books aimed at a general audience. But that does not quite explain the vast rhetorical distance between the two sets of Salaita's publications. The four polemical books are not an effort to popularize the work done in the two books on Arab American fiction. When Robert Warrior spoke to the local newspaper, he made the distinction altogether benign, saying the books include some that are "more publicly oriented, some of them more rock hard scholarship."<sup>44</sup> But this vague statement, on inspection, doesn't help Salaita's case, for his appointment in American Indian Studies to do comparative indigeneity required placing *The Holy Land in Transit* in the "rock solid" category, an unsupportable claim, as I have tried to show.

Three of Salaita's books are nearly overwhelmed by malice. A fourth, *The Uncultured Wars*, is intermittently undermined by convictions, aims, and arguments that seriously limit its usefulness as a contribution to scholarly debate. In a critique of Michael Moore's films, Salaita identifies weaknesses that merit application to his own work, Moore, he complains, doesn't allow viewers "to weigh evidence carefully" (65). "He doesn't seem interested in offering a nuanced argument. He appears to prefer subsuming Others into subordinate relationships for rhetorical effect" (66). "He tempers hyperbole with personal profiles intended to coerce sympathy" (66). In Salaita's case, those personal profiles, notably, are often autobiographical. He then goes on to endorse "the necessity of analytical rigor" (73), a goal perhaps not entirely compatible with his declaration that "I would hate for my own work not to contribute somehow to the project of undermining Israel." He adds, "The ideal underlying my work, in other words, isn't the advancement of scholarly understanding but the advancement of our ability to understand scholarly complicity in racism and colonization" (106).

All this raises doubts about Salaita's capacity for disinterested reasoning, for rising above invective, for weighing alternative arguments and rebutting them, for making arguments that are persuasive and not just

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assertive. Along with his social media project, these statements suggest a faculty member whose campus role will increase the hostile character of campus interactions and relationships. They also establish a public presence that will not benefit the University of Illinois. All these considerations can be taken into consideration in a search process. Indeed, so can civility, though as I have repeatedly said, Salaita's three more polemical books and his tweets on Israel and Palestine go way beyond "civility" as a descriptive and operative category. Salaita's advocates typically claim that civility should play no role in faculty appointments. But in my experience, in fact, a candidate who, for example, becomes uncivil in a job interview will not get the job. So it is misleading to claim that civility can play no role in searches. That said, campus civility is a value to be promoted but not enforced. The AAUP's 1994 statement *On Freedom of Expression and Speech Codes* remarks that "civility is always fragile and can easily be destroyed" and adds, "The governing board and the administration have a special duty not only to set an outstanding example of tolerance, but also to challenge boldly and condemn immediately serious breaches of civility."<sup>45</sup> I believe that responsibility can in extraordinary cases extend to the review of job candidates. Salaita's case has been extraordinary from the outset.

The two books on Arab American fiction are not centered on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because the novels aren't either, so they do not provide a good test of Salaita's ability to teach or write about his obsessional topic in detail and at length. Moreover, that would not explain what seems to be such a divided personality structure in his identity as a writer. It is clear that Salaita was not content with producing politically committed but moderately written studies. Someone who publishes six books in six years is driven by something, and I do not think ambition alone accounts for this publication history. Any doubts about that are dispelled when the tweets are thrown into the mix; they do not answer to professional ambition but to compulsion. And one can add the brief, tweet-like Salaita book reviews that law professor David Bernstein found on the website *Goodreads*, among them this "review" of Israeli writer Amos Oz's 1983 *In the Land of Israel*: "Amos Oz is to incisive political writing what Leni Riefenstahl was to socially conscious filmmaking."<sup>46</sup> At the opening of *The Uncultured Wars*, Salaita observes that the political essay is his "favorite form." Writing these essays, he adds, is "stimulating and sometimes cathartic" (4). His work suggests that his need for catharsis is more than occasional and that the need underlies both his tweets and some of his other writings.

In any case the divided career is not just a puzzle, a curiosity, for some of what the anti-Semitic Salaita does is unforgivable. High on that list is the most primitive and retrograde of all of his assertions, as when he defines Zionism in *Israel's Dead Soul* as "the ideology of racialist access to citizenship and biologically determined ethics of communal belonging" (38). The right of all Jews to Israeli citizenship embodies a cultural and historical category, but Salaita, in a conviction reminiscent of the Nazis, insists that the Jewish

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state promotes a biological and racial group. Any reputable scholar by now knows that race is a culturally constructed category, not a biological one. Salaita is driven by deep passion and rage. He himself calls it hatred. That is not a profile that makes for an acceptable hire.

## VI. Conclusion

It is clear from everything above that I do not believe Salaita should have been offered a position at Illinois in the first place. In the light of the preceding analysis, moreover, I believe the main lessons to take away from this saga are not about high-handed administrators or boards of trustees, nor about academic freedom—issues that have occupied portions of the academy. There are three lessons: first, that bad outcomes will result when a program hires outside its areas of competence; second, that department, college, and campus levels of review can create huge problems when they fail to perform their oversight responsibilities adequately; third, that fundamentally politically based hires corrupt the entire process.

The last-minute aspect of the Illinois decision not to approve the appointment was obviously a disaster, though the problems with Salaita's profile did not arise until his longtime social media role received national attention in July 2014. It is likely his appointment papers made no mention of issues like the factual errors in his books, the unusually polemical nature of a substantial portion of his prose, or the possibility that many would find some of his work anti-Semitic, though the fact that only a small percentage of his work was based in Native American Studies is obvious from his vita and should have raised concerns.<sup>47</sup> A simple Google search on the names of Salaita's outside reviewers would have revealed their BDS activism and thus their expressly political affinities with Salaita.

Widespread panic among humanities faculty that upper level administrators or boards of trustees would start regularly interfering in faculty appointments or policing campus speech was unfounded. The AAUP has long maintained that trustees should accept faculty appointment decisions except in exceptional circumstances. This case was more than exceptional; it was extraordinary.

From an academic (as opposed to a legal) perspective, people may reasonably disagree about whether Salaita was or was not an employee, though my expectation is that the court will not treat his conditional contract as though it were an unconditional one. As I have written before, the last-minute nature of the Illinois decision means that the university has a moral responsibility to compensate him fairly. Meanwhile the university has announced publicly that trustees will henceforth review faculty appointments months before

the semester begins. And the board needs to repudiate the unacceptable implications of its statement on civility.

Finally, it is important to add that Illinois has many BDS supporters on the faculty and will no doubt appoint more. The issue at stake in the hiring process is not the nature of their politics but the quality of their work.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I want to thank Robert Jennings, Rachel S. Harris, Sharon Musher, David Greenberg, and Paula A. Treichler for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay. I also benefitted from information from Derek Penslar about Zionist history and from suggestions about indigeneity by Sam Fleischacker and others on the Alliance for Academic Freedom/Scholars for Israel and Palestine (AAF/SIP) listserv. This essay also includes information obtained from confidential interviews with several people involved in the search or review process for the Salaita appointment.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Finkin and Robert Post, *For the Common Good: Principles of Academic Freedom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 127.

<sup>3</sup> Salaita's October 22, 2012, letter of application includes the following statement: "My work is already in conversation with that of numerous faculty in American Indian Studies. Robert Warrior's scholarship has influenced mine tremendously, and his interest in Palestine as a site of understanding discourses of American colonization intersects with the majority of my research."

<sup>4</sup> Gale Courey Toensing, "Salaita's Background Is What the College Wanted, Not His Free Speech," *Indian Country*, August 21, 2014, <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/08/21/salaitas-background-what-college-wanted-not-his-free-speech-156496>.

<sup>5</sup> See my "An Appointment to Reject," *Inside Higher Education*, August 8, 2014, <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/08/08/essay-defends-university-illinois-decision-not-hire-steven-salaita>, and my "What Happened to Steven Salaita?," *Jerusalem Post*, December 25, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/What-happened-to-Steven-Salaita-385801>.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Warrior's "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians" is available online at <https://www.google.com/#q=WArrior+%2B+%22Canaanites%2C+Cowboys%2C+and+Indians%22>.

<sup>7</sup> See the "Declaration of Support for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions," available online at <http://www.naisa.org/declaration-of-support-for-the-boycott-of-israeli-academic-institutions.html>.

<sup>8</sup> The expectations for political conformity in a small program can be especially intense. The poet Joy Harjo, widely criticized by American Indian Studies faculty for giving a reading in Tel Aviv in 2012, successfully sought in 2015 to move her appointment from Illinois's American Indian Studies Program to the English Department. Differences of opinion over the Salaita appointment may have contributed to the move as well.

<sup>9</sup>. See Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). This view, he points out, emerges “from a relatively recent tradition which argues that Palestinian nationalism has deep historical roots. As with other national movements, extreme advocates of this view go further than this, and anachronistically read back into the history of Palestine over the past few centuries, and even millennia, a nationalist consciousness and identity that are in fact relatively modern” (149). As an example of the latter, he cites “a predilection for seeing in peoples such as the Canaanites, Jebusites, Amorites, and Philistines the lineal ancestors of the modern Palestinians” (253).

<sup>10</sup>. See Harry Ostrer, *Legacy: A Genetic History of the Jewish People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). The December 2013 (85, no. 6) issue of *Human Biology* offers a series of essays about Jews and genetics, including John M. Efron's historical overview, “Jewish Genetic Origins in the Context of Past Historical and Anthropological Inquiries,” pp. 901–18.

<sup>11</sup>. For a detailed account of Israelite and Judean tribal history see J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 2nd edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006).

<sup>12</sup>. On the dating of the geographic lists in Joshua, see Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001).

<sup>13</sup>. See Rachel Havrelock, *River Jordan: The Mythology of a Dividing Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

<sup>14</sup>. For a brief introduction to the debate about Palestinian identity, see Zachary J. Foster, “What Is a Palestinian?,” *Foreign Affairs*, March 12, 2015, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/143249/zachary-j-foster/whats-a-Palestinian>. The article includes this text: “The decades of debate all beg a central question: Is Palestinian identity an invention? The answer, however, is self-evident—of course it is. American, Chinese, German, and Israeli identities are inventions too. All national identities are invented. Nations do not exist in nature; they exist only in our minds.”

<sup>15</sup>. Despite finding much in Churchill's work reprehensible, I defended his right to say what he did because he was a full-time, tenured faculty member at the University of Colorado. I have repeatedly supported pro-Palestinian faculty members up for tenure as well. But Salaita, in my view, was not yet an Illinois employee and was thus subject to the broader criteria appropriate to a job candidate.

<sup>16</sup>. For concise summaries of the Jewish presence in Arab countries over time see Abdelwahab Meddeb and Benjamin Stora, eds., *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations: From the Origins to the Present Day*, trans. Jane Marie Todd and Michael B. Smith (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

<sup>17</sup>. Dana Muir Appelbaum, “Steven Salaita's Subpar Scholarship,” *The Tower Magazine*, November 2014, <http://www.thetower.org/article/steven-salaitas-subpar-scholarship/>.

<sup>18</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>. Born in 1923, Avnery fought in the Irgun as a young man. He is well known for crossing the lines during the Siege of Beirut to meet Yasser Arafat on July 3, 1982, the first time the Palestinian leader ever met with an Israeli.

<sup>20</sup> Dana Muir Appelbaum, “Steven Salaita's Subpar Scholarship,” *The Tower*, Issue 20, November 2014, available online at <http://www.thetower.org/article/steven-salaitas-subpar-scholarship/>.

<sup>21</sup> See Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall,” available online at <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/ironwall.html>.

<sup>22</sup>. See Hillel Halkin, *Jabotinsky: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

<sup>23</sup>. See Vicente M. Diaz, “The Salaita Case and Cary Nelson's Use of ‘Academic Freedom’ to Silence Dissent,” *The Electronic Intifada*, August 14, 2014, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/salaita-case-and-cary-nelsons-use-academic-freedom-silence-dissent/13756>. The article includes this text: “Sloppy and contorted to the point of nonsense, Nelson's thinking would also be comical were it not predicated on racist, calloused and morally reprehensible views toward Palestinians and toward other indigenous peoples and the political and analytic claims on which they stake their existence and survival.” Diaz's views gained some local publicity as well. See Jim Dey, “UI Professor Takes on BDS Movement in New Book,” *News Gazette*, October 26, 2014, <http://www.newsgazette.com/opinion/columns/2014-10-26/jim-dey-ui-professor-takes-bds-movement-new-book.html>. The column includes this sentence: “UI Indian Studies faculty member Vicente Diaz characterized Nelson's stance as

‘predicated on racist, calloused and morally reprehensible views.’” My *No University Is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) summarizes my previous work defending pro-Palestinian faculty members. My essay “The Last Indian Standing: Shared Governance in the Shadow of History,” *Journal of Academic Freedom* 1 (2010), is an extensively researched effort to come to the aid of Native American faculty in Oklahoma. It is available online at <http://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/files/JAF/2010%20JAF/Nelson.pdf>. My *Anthology of Modern American Poetry* and *Anthology of Cotemporary American Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), first published in 1999, includes far more Native American and African American poets and poems than any other comprehensive collections. Readers may decide for themselves whether the present essay is grounded in racism.

<sup>24</sup>. Standards, of course, have changed over time. At Illinois in the 1960s, five essays could earn you tenure in a humanities department. In some cases that could still happen in the early 1970s. At many teaching-intensive institutions, five essays would still count as an entirely satisfactory record.

<sup>25</sup>. Prior to Finkin’s presentation, I informed the Faculty Senate that Finkin had written a detailed letter about the CAFT report to Anita Levy in the AAUP national office. The letter, which was not marked as confidential, was shared with senior members of the AAUP staff and distributed to Committee A and to Chancellor Wise, who shared it with members of the upper administration. Finkin approved its distribution to the twenty-four members of the local AAUP leadership. It was also distributed to a number of present and past senate leaders, as well as the members of the CAFT committee. In that letter Finkin revealed that a portion of the CAFT report was deleted at a CAFT meeting he was unable to attend. The deleted section detailed the reasons for investigating whether Salaita’s contributions in social media revealed problems in his scholarship. Finkin reported that he would have objected to those deletions had he been present at the meeting.

<sup>26</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, July 19, 2014, 5:15 pm., Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>27</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, July 18, 2014, 10:19 am., Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>28</sup>. Steve Hochstadt, “Why I Wouldn’t Want Steven Salaita as a Colleague,” *History News Network*, September 28, 2014, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/157026>.

<sup>29</sup>. Liel Leibovitz, “Steven Salaita’s Academic Work Is Just as Hateful as His Tweets,” *Tablet*, September 5, 2014, <http://tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/183813/steven-salaita-academic-work>.

<sup>30</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, April 25, 2014, 8:57 am, Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>31</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, May 21, 2014., 5:46 pm, Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>32</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, May 20, 2014., 6:52 pm. Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>33</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, May 20, 2014., 6:12 am, Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>34</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, June 19, 2014, 6:59 pm., Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>35</sup>. “Academic Freedom and Tenure: The University of California at Davis,” *AAUP Bulletin* 57 (1971), 382–420.

<sup>36</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, July 31, 5:45 am., Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>37</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, July 19, 2014. 7:40 pm., Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>38</sup> Steven Salaita, Twitter Post, July 16, 2014, 9:07 pm., Steven Salaita @stevesalaita.

<sup>39</sup> “Statement on Extramural Utterances,” *Policy Documents and Reports*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition (Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Professors / Johns Hopkins University Press: 2015), p. 31.

<sup>40</sup>. Here is the relevant passage from a September 27, 2013, e-mail from Andrea Mae Fain to Phyllis A. Mischo—both members of the University of Illinois administrative staff—submitting a view of Salaita’s appointment on behalf of Associate Chancellor Reginald J. Alston: “Dr. Salaita has been a prolific writer as an early-to-mid career academic, publishing six books and twelve journal articles. One of his books, *Anti-Arab Racism in the USA*, won the 2007 Myers Center Outstanding Book Award. Dr. Lila Abu-Lughod of Columbia University referred to Dr. Salaita as ‘an extraordinarily creative and productive scholar who shows no signs of slowing down.’ Dr. Nikhil Pal Singh at New York University praised Dr. Salaita for his ‘substantive scholarly interventions’ and noted his ‘profile as an important public intellectual writing on some of the most urgent and challenging issues of our period.’” The public appeal of Dr. Salaita’s work was also mentioned by Dr. Chadwick Allen from The Ohio State University, who commented about Salaita’s numerous appearances on public radio and how “scholars aspire to cultivating a mixed readership that includes audiences both inside and outside the academy.” Alston was one of several

administrators who were asked to review Salaita's appointment file, which had been posted to a secure website. His review was obviously intended for internal use only, but it was FOIAed and is now a public document.

<sup>41</sup> Abu-Lughod and Singh have both signed the BDS petition at [www.usacbi.org/endorsers/](http://www.usacbi.org/endorsers/). Allen was president of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association when it passed a BDS resolution in 2013. One can do a Google search of their names to find other examples of their BDS activism.

<sup>42</sup> Chadwick Allen is the author of *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002) and is thus specifically in the field of comparative indigeneity, the area in which Salaita was hired. Nikhil Pal Singh is an accomplished scholar who studies race in the twentieth-century United States and is thus well qualified to address Salaita's work on anti-Arab racism in the United States. How well versed he is in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unclear. Lila Abu-Lughod is an anthropologist who has written widely about the Arab world.

<sup>43</sup> In addition to Arab American fiction, Salaita could also have taught any of the other courses he had offered in Virginia or Wisconsin, among them Postcolonial Cultural Studies, Introduction to Critical Reading, Native American Literature, Ethnic American Literatures, and various American Literature surveys.

<sup>44</sup> Christine Des Garennes, "Background on the UI Faculty Search that Led to Salaita," *News-Gazette*, September 9, 2014, <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2014-09-07/background-ui-faculty-search-led-salaita.html>.

<sup>45</sup> AAUP, *Policy Documents and Reports*, 10th edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 37–38. See pages 361–62 in the eleventh edition (2015).

<sup>46</sup> See David Bernstein, "Steven Salaita, More than Just an Obnoxious Tweeter (Update: Site Scrubbed?)," *Washington Post*, September 3, 2014, at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/09/03/steven-salaita-more-than-just-an-obnoxious-tweeter/>. Bernstein reports that Salaita had placed a thousand book reviews on the Goodreads website, ranging in length from a sentence to a paragraph. Many were written in the same style as the tweets. Are online book reviews not part of a faculty member's professional history? Salaita removed his reviews after Bernstein's piece was posted. Among the Salaita reviews Bernstein cites is one of Abe Foxman's *The Deadliest Lies: The Israel Lobby and the Myth of Jewish Control*: "This is sheer accidental brilliance. It has to be one of the few books ever published in which the author's body of work so adeptly undermines his thesis." As Bernstein remarks, "It's hard to understand this as something other than Salaita endorsing the 'myth' that Jews do control things. (Here's how *Publisher's Weekly* sums up the book's thesis: "a rebuttal of a pernicious theory about a mythically powerful Jewish lobby." Foxman is of course attacked in Salaita's ADL chapter in *Israel's Dead Soul*. This represents another clear commonality between book and social media.

<sup>47</sup> The 2012 advertisement for the position states: "The successful candidate will have a record of research excellence and publication in American Indian or Indigenous studies."