Transformation of Siege into Feelings in the Palestinian Cinema

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ABSTRACT

The Oslo Accords were seen as a step forward towards the establishment of the independent Palestine. These accords put an end to the First Intifada and led to the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which generated a state of hopefulness among the Palestinians generally. Yet, under the ongoing Israeli siege, the PNA has been unable meet the expectations of its citizens. Things have gone from bad to worse, with the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000 followed by the bloody confrontations between the political factions Fatah and Hamas in 2007. In the light of such developments, the Palestinian identity has gone through significant transformations, always already in process.

This study deals with the complexity of the Palestinian identity. It examines how this identity is (re)constructed in response to the recent developments in Palestine as portrayed in filmic representations. It focuses on the films "The Salt of This Sea" by Annemarie Jacir (2008) and "Laila's Birthday" by Rashid Mashrawi (2008). The events of the first film take place in the West Bank and Israel while the second one is made in the West Bank. These films are analyzed in terms of Israeli-Palestinian relationships and in terms of Palestinian-Palestinian relationships.

The study showed the emergence of a nationalist ruling elite in Palestine. This class adopts a pragmatic position regarding the right of return, supporting the citizenship of refugees in the hosting countries. This means that the future Palestinian state will not include all the refugees. This study, also, showed that any experience of return involves a new displacement.

It is noticeable that the end of the internal conflict is a recent goal included on the national agenda. Today, the poor tend to affiliate to national factions to get economic aids. Remarkably, the shared experience of siege exposes the fractures that the "national unity" tries to suppress. Moreover, the state of insecurity also originates within the Palestinian society, and is not only caused by Israel.

ÖZ

Oslo Anlaşmaları bağımsız Filistin'in kurulmasına yönelik adımlar olarak görüldü. Bu anlaşmalar, Bu anlaşmalar, Filistinlilerin genelinde bir umut havası yarattı, ve Birinci İntifada'yı sona erdirerek Filistin Ulusal Yönetimi'nin yaratılmasının yolunu açtı. Ancak Filistin Ulusal Yönetimi, İsrail kuşatması devam ederken vatandaşlarının beklentilerini karşılamakta başarılı olamadı. İkinci İntifada'nın 2000 yılında patlak vermesi ve bunun akabinde, 2007 yılında, El Fetih ve Hamas arasındaki iç siyasi çatışmanın ortaya çıkmasıyla işler daha da kötüye gitti. Hemen her zaman zaten oluşum halinde olan Filistin kimliği de bu gelişmelerin ışığında önemli dönüşümler geçirdi.

Bu çalışma Filistin kimliğinin çetrefil doğası üzerinedir; bu kimliğin Filistin'deki son gelişmelerle beraber, film temsillerinde nasıl (yeniden) inşa edildiğini incelemektedir. Tez çalışması, şu filmler üzerine odaklanmaktadır: Annemarie Jacir'in 2008 yapımı "The Salt of This Sea" (Bu Denizin Tuzu) ve Rashid Mashrawi'nin 2008 yapımı "Laila's Birthday" (Laila'nın Doğum Günü) adlı filmleri. İlk filmdeki olaylar Batı Şeria ve İsrail'de, ikinci filmdeki olaylar ise sadece Batı Şeria'da geçmekte; ve bu filmler İsrail-Filistin ve Filistin-Filistin ilişkileri açısından analiz edilmektedir.

Çalışma, Filistin'de milliyetçi bir yönetici elit sınıfının ortaya çıktığını; bu sınıfın geri dönüş hakkı konusunda pragmatik bir pozisyonu benimsediğini göstermektedir. Bu yeni oluşan sınıf, mültecilerin yaşadıkları ülkelerin vatandaşı olmalarını desteklemektedir. Bu demektir ki gelecekteki Filistin Devleti tüm mültecileri

kapsamayacaktır. Bu çalışma ayrıca göstermektedir ki her geri dönüş deneyimi yeni bir yerinden edilmeyi içermektedir.

İç çatışmanın sona erdirilmesinin ulusal gündemde yer alan yeni bir hedef olduğu ortadadır. Günümüzde ulusal hiziplerle bağlantılar, hızla, grupların ya da kişilerin ekonomik çıkarlarının tatmin edilmesinin bir aracı haline gelmektedir. Ne ilginçtir ki, ulusun yaşadığı kuşatma, bütünleşme yerine toplumsal çözülmeye neden olmuştur. Ayrıca, yaşanan güvensizlik durumunun Filistin toplumunun içinden de kaynaklandığını ve nedeninin sadece İsrail olmadığını da not etmek gerekir.

Anahtar sözcükler: ulusal kimlik, hafıza, Nakba, İsrail işgali, Filistinliler, kuşatma, birlik, çatışma, hukuksuzluk, geri dönüş hakkı, anavatan, sürgün, ikinci intifada, Oslo Anlaşmaları.

To the Memory

of

Nelson Mandela: "*Our March to Freedom is Irreversible*"
   "*We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.*"

Mahmoud Darwish: "*There is on this land what is worth living.*"

Arna and her children: "*The Intifada for us and our children is struggle for freedom.*"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PLO   The Palestinian Liberation Organization

PNA   The Palestinian National Authority

OCHA   The United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNRWA   The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees

PFLP   The Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine

DFLP   The Democratic Front of the Liberation of Palestine

UNISPAL   United Nation Information System–Palestine

MOH   Palestinian Ministry of Health

WHO   World Health Organization

PCBS   The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

WW1   The First World War

IJMES   International Journal for Middle East Studies

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, the occupied Palestinian territories have witnessed many developments that have influenced the national identity of their people.

The Oslo Accords, signed in 1993 -1995 by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, were a transformational point in the history of the Palestinian question. Such accords led to the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) as an internationally recognized political body, having the right of self-governance. Actually, the Oslo Accords redrew the map of the Palestinian territories, dividing them into fragmented areas, as follows: The Gaza Strip and Area A (18.2%) of the West Bank are under the control of the PNA. Area B (21.8%) of West Bank is under a joint Israeli-Palestinian control, with no Israeli settlements. Area C (60%) of West Bank includes Israeli settlements, so it is under Israeli control.

Not only did the Oslo Accords result in creating a new political and geographical reality, but they also led to demographic changes. Thousands of Palestinian refugees who were in Tunisia, Egypt, the Gulf countries, Lebanon and/or other places returned to their homeland. Most of these returnees were born in exile, so, for them, Palestine is only the stories of their parents or grandparents. They, with their own exilic experiences, contributed to the reconstruction of the Palestinian society and participated in the foundation of the PNA's institutions. Moreover, many Palestinians

who have foreign passports were able to visit the Gaza Strip and the West Bank easily. Generally, the establishment of the PNA in itself created an atmosphere of optimism among the Palestinians (except those who regard it as surrender) as it is considered to be the cornerstone for the future state. It was under the control of the PNA that the Palestinians, living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, started to practice their rights of citizenship: passports have been issued, ministries were established, external relations have been created, elections are held etc...

However, Israel did and continues to do its best to undermine the PNA. The Israeli occupation forces keep launching raids and invasions in areas (A) and (B), destroying Palestinian houses, imposing curfews, and so on. In this context, the Palestinians realized that the PNA is not able to protect its citizens from Israeli aggressions and to improve the living conditions of the people in the areas under its control as they wished and expected.

Yet, the period between 1993 and 2000 is characterized by calm and stability compared with the previous years of the First Intifada (1987-1993) and the following years when the Second Intifada started after the visit of Sharon to Al Aqsa Mosque in 2000. This intifada, which is still going on, is known as al-Aqsa Intifada.

With the outbreak of the Second Intifada, the occupied Palestinian territories have been placed under an unprecedentedly tightened siege that took many forms: colonies have been expanded, and more checkpoints have been installed in the West Bank. The people living in the Gaza Strip are isolated from those who live in the West Bank. Visit permits, for foreigners who seek to enter Ramallah or Gaza, are hardly issued; visit permits for the refugees who wish to meet their families in

Palestine are no longer available. Besides, Israel started to build a separation wall in the West Bank, destroying the Palestinians' agricultural land. Under the ongoing siege, the Palestinians who used to work in Israel lost their source of income, which increased the rate of unemployment and poverty in the Palestinian territories.

In the same context, Israel often delays the transfer of taxes, which are due the PNA to undermine its capacity to fulfill its obligations; it, also, restricts the movement of Palestinian official figures and ministers. In 2002, the Israeli occupation imposed siege on the head of the PNA, President Yasser Arafat who is a national symbol with strong popularity among the Palestinians, until he fell sick and then was transported to France where he died. His successor Mahmoud Abbas is treated similarly. The situation has been aggravated as the blockade has been intensified after the victory of the movement of Hamas in the legislative elections in 2006 and after the armed confrontations between the main political factions Fatah and Hamas in 2007[1].

Actually, the siege is one of the strategies adopted by Israel to uproot the Palestinians and weaken their attachment to their homeland. It affects all aspects of life in Palestine (economy, politics, culture, health…). As a collective punishment, the siege is a policy of exclusion and inclusion: on the one hand, it excludes and prevents the Palestinians who live abroad from entering their homeland, and on the other hand, it encloses and restricts the movements of the residents of the occupied Palestinian

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[1] Fatah is a national liberation movement, which was created by the former President Arafat in 1965. It has secular tendencies. This faction won the presidency elections in 2004, so its candidate Mahmoud Abbas is the head of the PNA currently. Hamas is another liberation movement established by Ahmed Yassin in 1987. It is an extension of the Muslim brotherhood movement. Hamas won the legislative elections in 2006. Because of their conflicting agendas and interests, these two rivals could not share the government of the PNA. Their conflict over the control of the PNA developed to armed confrontations, which ended by the separation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank administratively as Hamas has taken the power over the Gaza Strip since 2007, and created its government there.

territories in this limited space. The above-mentioned dramatic conditions under which the Palestinians are living have influenced their national identification, always-already in process.

Likewise, they extended to influence artwork, particularly the cinema. The Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman describes the changes that took place in the Palestinian society and its cinema during the period between the Oslo Accords and the Second Intifada as "the calm before the storm." leading to "total devastation and disintegration" (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 171). Taking this background as my reference, I seek, in this study, to find out how the Palestinian national identity is rewoven under the ongoing siege and Intifada through filmic representations.

1.1 Investigating the Construction of National Identity in the Palestinian Cinema

According to Louis Althusser, "the individual is always-already a subject" (Fleming & Cheung, 2009, p. 2). That is to say, even before our birth, we are given a particular identity as we are linked to a particular family and society. This identity aims to locate us in a particular position in this world vis-à-vis the other. In other words, we are the product of a culture of a particular community. This culture, including the memories of the past as well as the goals of the present and the future, is an essential element to develop our self-identification with that community.

The cinema, as an audio-visual mass medium, is an important cultural tool, which involves ideological power. It provides a space from which the filmmaker, the camera(wo)man, and/or the producer can speak. So, they may predicate our future somehow, or they may teach us a moral lesson. In this context, a film can effectively tell a particular story about an issue or an experience that took place in the world,

with the aim to generate certain impressions or reactions among the audiences. Therefore, filmic representations influence our self-other relationships as they (re)create our reality through articulation of signifiers in different ways to generate or re-generate different messages and experiences.

Having such power, the cinema is a useful apparatus for any nation to construct and document its history and define its goals. Furthermore, it is, always, used to feed or mobilize the sense of belonging to that nation. Besides, the cinematic representations can delineate any transformations in the nation's identity. Within the colonial context, as it is the case in Palestine, the cinema does not only perform the above-mentioned roles, but it also stands as a counter storytelling machine in the face of the colonizer's narrative.

Actually, the new Palestinian cinema, which has started in the 1980s, is unique in that it brought the films "back to the homeland" (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, pp. 8-70). The idea is that before 1980, the Palestinian films were made in exile, for example, in Lebanon, or in Jordan, and they took the humanitarian situation in the refugee camps as well as the national resistance as their main topics. Yet, the movies, which have been produced under the umbrella of the new Palestinian cinema, are filmed in the occupied Palestinian territories. They, also, address the situation of the Palestinians who live as a minority inside Israel. This cinema highlights the heterogeneity within the Palestinian society. It provides a close look on the everyday life of the Palestinians, their problems, their hopes, and their dreams, deconstructing the traditional image that reduces those people to either victims or heroes in the context of the Israeli- Palestinian conflict.

During the Second Intifada, many Palestinian filmmakers made films in the occupied territories. Some of these films won international awards. Thanks to them, the voice of Palestine is heard in spite of the blockade; they succeeded to screen the deteriorated situation there. Actually, the Palestinian cinema has managed to transform the siege into feelings through portraying its effects on the way the people think, feel, and act. It has also contributed to generate positive feelings towards the Palestinians and actions of solidarity with them around the world.

In the light of the above-mentioned, this study *aims to* examine the (re)construction of national identity of the Palestinians, including their sense of the self and the other, their belonging to the homeland, and their vision for the future, in the context of the dramatic developments, that I mentioned previously, as represented in films selected from the Palestinian cinema.

1.2 Research Question

How is the Palestinians' sense of national identity (re)constructed and reconfigured? i.e. how are their understanding of self-other relationships as well as their sense of belonging to the homeland and their vision for the future reshaped under and in response to the recent developments, particularly the tightened siege and the Intifada, as portrayed in the films selected for this research?

1.3 Scope of the Study

In this study, I look at the representation of the Palestinians' national identity in feature films. In fact, these fictions offer a wide space for storytelling possibilities that can strengthen the collective identity of a nation and, at the same time, show its otherness. Besides, I think that the collective experience of exile, trauma, struggle etc…, which dominates the features produced within the Palestinian cinema makes

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them interesting materials for tracking the (re)construction of the national identity. I focus on two films: "The Salt of This Sea" by Annemarie Jacir (2008) and "Laila's Birthday", by Rashid Mashrawi (2008). The events of the first film take place in the West Bank and Israel while the second one is made in the West Bank. My study seeks to read the Palestinian-Israeli relationships as well as Palestinian-Palestinian relationships. This covers many aspects such as national values, unity, siege, refugees, homeland, right of return etc…

While doing this, I shall recognize the active role of audiences in meaning production, which makes any text open to different interpretations.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is important as it shows how the Palestinians represent the developments that affect them and their society to other people all over the world through films. In fact, it helps to understand the complexity of the Palestinian identity, which is always in process of transformation, particularly, under the Israeli occupation.

In addition, it portrays the Palestinians' state of desperation, in the context of the continuity of Israeli occupation, which contradicts with principles of human rights and values of democratic society, including justice, freedom, the right of self-determination, as well as the ethical and political responsibilities. This study may be interesting for those who are concerned with the role of media in the promotion of peace as well as those who support democracy and human rights, particularly in the Middle East, as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a key cause for violence and instability in this region.

Chapter 2

PALESTINE: SOCIETY UNDER SIEGE, CINEMA AGAINST SIEGE

"I have faith that cinema is with us but only in the long run" Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman.

This chapter mainly provides an explanation of the state of siege under which the Palestinians live, as well as an overview of the Palestinian cinema.

2.1 The Occupied Palestinian Territories as a Big Prison

The year 1948 [known as the catastrophe or the *(Nakba)*] was a disastrous point in the history of the Palestinian people when Israel was established on 78% of historic Palestine, forcing thousands of Palestinians to leave their homes. After the *Nakba*, the West Bank was run by Jordan, while the Gaza Strip was attached to Egypt.

In 1967, Israel expanded its control, occupying the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Since then, it has placed the population of these territories under siege, considering the procedures of closure as essential for the protection of Israeli settlers. This closure was tightened during the First Intifada between 1987 and 1993. As I mentioned in the introduction, after the Oslo Accords signed in 1993-1995, the Palestinian territories were divided administratively into fragmented areas, as follows: The Gaza Strip and Area (A) of the West Bank is run by the PNA. Area (B) of the West Bank is under Israeli-Palestinian joint control, where there are no Israeli settlements. Area (C) of the West Bank, where Israeli settlements are located is fully controlled by Israel. In September 2000, the Second

intifada began, and it has continued up to present. Since that date, the population of the occupied Palestinian territories has endured hard living conditions under severe blockade. As Israel evacuated the Gaza Strip in 2005, there are no longer military checkpoints or settlements there, yet Israel still controls all the crossings, except Rafah terminal at the border with Egypt, and launches military attacks against the Gazans.

In the West Bank, the blockade manifests in different forms: many areas are classified as permanently closed military zones. Curfews are imposed during feasts and military operations. Cities and villages are divided into cantons. According to a report issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], at the end of June 2012, there were "542 obstacles blocking Palestinian movement within the West Bank. These include 61 permanently staffed checkpoints, 25 partial checkpoints (staffed on an ad-hoc basis) and 436 unstaffed physical obstacles, including roadblocks, road gates, road barriers, and trenches" (OCHA, 2012, p. 32).

The report adds that Israel has accomplished the construction of about 62% of the separation wall, which started in 2002. This resulted in isolating villagers from their farmland and relatives located behind the wall. Moreover, the Palestinians need Israeli permits to access some areas such as East Jerusalem, center of Hebron city, or the Jordan Valley. According to OCHA, "Non-Residents of Jordan Valley who seek to enter this area can pass as pedestrians or by transportation that is registered in the Israeli control point. If not registered, a Palestinian car needs prior coordination to enter the Valley" (OCHA, 2012, p. 23).

Actually, the military checkpoints are not just barriers that block movement, they are meaningful places where Palestinians either die or come to life. Many Palestinians were killed in cold blood at military checkpoints. For example, on 29 July 2012, Reuters reported the death of a Palestinian and the injury of two others when Israeli soldiers targeted a Palestinian car at a checkpoint near Jerusalem. Besides, according to a report published on the website of the United Nation Information System–Palestine (UNISPAL), between 2000 and 2006, 69 pregnant women had been blocked at checkpoints while they were at labor, so they had to give birth while they were waiting. Further, 35 newborn babies died at Israeli checkpoints due to lack of medical care at time of delivery (retrived from UNISPAL website on 12 March 2013).

When the Palestinians are made to wait at crossings or checkpoints, not only are their bodies restricted, but also their identity, their time, and their humanity. People are humiliated by Israeli soldiers; their ID cards may be taken, and their daily activities may be delayed or canceled. The Israeli journalist Amira Hass described the siege as the *"theft of time"* because the people, waiting at a checkpoint, can not know whether they will be allowed to pass or not, which puts them under stress for hours (Hass, 2002, pp. 5-20).

The siege has an awful impact on the quality of life in the Palestinian territories as people experience socioeconomic deprivations, including poverty, unemployment and inadequate health services. According to OCHA, the inhabitants of the occupied Palestinian territories face difficulty in accessing health services particularly in East Jerusalem, where medical staff cannot move freely, and medical supplies are restricted. It mentions that the patients who hold Palestinian IDs are forced to cross

military checkpoints on foot to reach hospitals in East Jerusalem. This is also applicable to people with disabilities (OCHA, 2011) . In relation to disability, recent statistics issued by the Palestinian Ministry Of Health (MOH) showed that 7.6% of mental health disabilities, 4.6% of physical disabilities, and 5.2% of learning disabilities in the occupied Palestinian territories were caused by the actions of settlers or Israeli forces (MOH, 2011).

Regarding poverty and unemployment rates, a report published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) revealed that more than one fifth of the labor force 23.9% was unemployed in the first quarter of 2012**.** Furthermore, the poverty rate among Palestinian individuals was 25.8% during the same period (PCBS, 2012, pp. 2-3). The above-mentioned conditions resulted in developing mental disorder among people. According to the UNISPAL's electronic website (2012),

> [t]he occupation of the West Bank, blockade and siege of the Gaza Strip, violence, poverty and unemployment contribute substantially to the burden of mental health illness in the occupied Palestinian territory, and disproportionately affect the most vulnerable population groups – women, children and older people – as well as young adult men. No reliable national data exist but WHO estimates that, globally, 25% of the population can be expected to develop common mental disorders at some point in their lives, and some may develop serious mental illness.

To sum up, the occupied Palestinian territories are a big prison where people are physically, socially, economically, and psychologically besieged by Israel, in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees to all human beings the right of free movement, as well as being in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention for the protection of civilians in time of war, which calls for respecting the humanity and dignity of civilians and protecting their life in conflict areas.

2.2 Overview of the Palestinian Cinema

In what follows, I discuss the Palestinian cinema within the framework of certain national cinema theories, and provide a summary of its history as well.

2.2.1 The Palestinian Films in the Context of National Cinema Theories

As nations are created through the (re)articulation of many variables, within the framework of the nationalistic discourse, the cinema is one of the cultural elements that are articulated to the national identity, with the aim to build and strengthen the unity of the nation as well as to show its difference from the other nations. In this context, the term "national cinema" refers to the films which are produced to serve the goals of a particular nation and to narrate its history. According to Benedict Anderson the mediated communications played a crucial role in building nations as imagined communities (1991, pp. 5-7).

Relatively little work has been done in the literature regarding the national cinema studies. Generally, until the 1980s, the concept of national cinema was used to refer to the films, which are produced within the borderlines of a particular nation and portray its people. This view draws a clear cut between the cinemas related to different nations and reduces their identities to the geographical spaces. In this case, the cinematic production is, fully, subordinate to the policies of the state and functions in conformity with its agenda. According to Philip Schlesinger, "Film functions as a cultural articulation of a nation… [it] textualizes the nation and subsequently constructs a series of relations around the concepts, first of state and citizen, then of state, citizen and other" (2000, p. 19). If we try to apply this argument on the Palestinian cinema, we notice that in Palestine there is no public institution for film production. The films produced within this cinema are made by independent

filmmakers who have to find their own way to secure the technical and human resources needed for their films. Yet, this cinema has contributed to conceptualize the relations between the Palestinians and their leadership (such as the PLO and the PNA) as well as the relations that define the Palestinians, their leadership, and the other.

For their part, the well-known film theorists, Paul Willemen and Andrew Higson argued against framing the national cinema within the limits of nationalism, which aims to conceal and/or dismiss the cultural hybridity within the nation. Willemen problematizes the nationalistic character of the cinema when it is shaped by the policies of the state, and is used to represent the many as one. He maintains that the national cinema should not be a means at the hands of the nationalist ruling group to extend their view and colonize their people. Rather the national cinema should represent the cultural differences inside the nation and deal with its complexity. In other words, this cinema should provide space for the internal other(s).

> A cinema addressing national specificity will be anti- or at least non-nationalistic since the more it is complicit with nationalism's homogenizing project the less it will be able to engage critically with the complex, multidimensional, and multidirectional tensions that characterize and shape a social formation's cultural configurations (Willemen,1995, p.28).

According to Higson, the national cinema should be thought as "processes." That is to say, one should look at the national cinema in terms of industry, exhibition, business, distribution, and consumption (Higson, 2000, pp. 63-74). He uses the term "transnational" to describe social, cultural and economic patterns that can not be restricted by national boundaries. He argues that there are always, cross-cultural movements, and this is applied to the filmmaking activities. Based on Higson's

argument, the cinemas created within the borderlines of nation-states are hardly autonomous cultural apparatuses. Under the globalization process, film production processes as well as their consumption have become transnational. For example, to produce his film "Paradise Now", the Palestinian director Hany Abu Asaad received funds from European donors, and one of the film's protagonists is the Moroccan actress Lubna Al Zabbal. Another example is "The Land of Peace" (1957). It was produced by the Egyptian cinema, but it was filmed in Palestine.

It is noteworthy that in the Palestinian cinema, which functions within an anti-colonial framework, the filmmakers who receive funds from Israeli contributors, like Elia Suleiman in his "The Chronicle of Disappearance", are attacked and considered as anti-nationalist by many Arabs and Palestinians (Tawil, 2005, p. 121). Those who argue against any cooperation between the Israelis and the Palestinians to protect the national characteristics of Palestinian cinema establish their argument based on a binary oppositional logic in which the good is always good and the bad is always bad. Accordingly, the image of the enemy is fixed and its otherness (such as the Israeli peace workers) vanishes.

Looking at the concept of "the national cinema" in the context of the massive immigrations, which mark our world nowadays, it is notable that this cinema is meant to give priority to the films, which aim to mobilize the sense of belonging to one's nation, allowing diasporic communities to preserve their loyalty to their homeland. This is seen obviously in the context of the Palestinian cinema. Since most of the Palestinians are living as refugees in different places of the world, the films produced within this cinema help them to revive their memories and preserve their self-identification with Palestine. According to Higson (2000) the so-called

national cinema should be regarded as a product of a "tension between home and away" (p. 67).

I conclude by drawing attention to the fact that as the cinematic production today is transnational and cross-cultural, the concept of "national cinema", like the national identity, is intertextual and always in process. It involves differences within the self. Such differences result in internal contradictions. Yet these contradictions are something that we have to accept and adapt to. Therefore, the so-called Palestinian film can be defined as the one which is made about Palestinian issues, by a Palestinian director, by a Palestinian- Israeli director, or by any foreign filmmaker. It can be filmed inside or outside Palestine with local or international funding and technical support.

In the light of this hybridity, it is difficult to draw the national boundaries of the Palestinian cinema, and yet we can not deny its existence. Of course, this is applied to all the nationally identified film industries in the world, because the term "national" can not stand in the face of the inevitably cultural interactions within and across the nations.

2.2.2 The Development of the Palestinian Cinema

In their book, "*Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma, and Memory*" (2008), the film scholars Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi divided the history of the Palestinian cinema into four periods as follows:

The First Period from 1935 to 1948:

The roots of the Palestinian cinema can be dated back to 1935, when Ibrahim Sirhan made a documentary film about a trip conducted by the Saudi Prince Saud Ben Abdel Aziz to Palestine, where he visited many places such as Tel Aviv, Lod, and

Jaffa, accompanied by the Mufti of Palestine Al-Haj Amin Al Husseiny (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 11). Later, Sirhan was joined by a film cinematographer named Jamal Al Asphar, with whom, he produced "Realized Dreams" which focused on orphans' issues in Palestine. They, also, produced a documentary about an official of the Arab Supreme Council who paid 300 Liras for it. In 1945, Sirhan announced the establishment of "Studio Palestine" and called for donations and technical assistance. At that time, the film director Ahmed Al Kilani answered his call, so they founded the "Arab Film Company". This company produced "Holiday Eve" and "A Storm at Home" (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 13).

Moreover, the film scholar Bashar Ibrahim reported that Sirhan established an advertisement company in partnership with the journalist Zuheir Al Saqqa in Jaffa (retrived from Al Jazeera Documentary website on 10 October 2013). Another important figure in this period is Muhammed Saleh Al Kayali, who studied filmography in Italy. Upon his return to Palestine, he established a photography studio, and he was assigned, by the representatives of the Arab League in Palestine the task of producing a movie about the situation there. But, the film was not accomplished because of the outbreak of the *Nakba* of 1948.

As a result of this *Nakba*, thousands of Palestinians, including filmmakers, were displaced from their homes and homeland. For instance, Sarhan was forced to Jordan then to Lebanon where he lived in Shatila refugee camp, and Al Asphar moved to Kuwait (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 14).

Actually, the cinematic production before 1948 was led by individual initiatives that soon vanished due to the lack of technical and financial resources and censorship by

British Mandate under a special mandatory law called as "The Moving Picture Act" (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, pp. 11-15).

The Second period from 1948 to 1967:

The second period extended between the war of 1948 and the war of 1967. This period is known historically as the "Epoch of Silence" as almost no Palestinian films had been made (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 19).

The third period from 1968 to 1982:

The year 1968 witnessed the launch of the Palestinian revolutionary cinema. It was associated with the Palestinian liberation movements against the Israeli occupation.

It was Sulafa Mirsal, the first female photographer in the Arab world, who started to capture and document snapshots of Palestinian martyrs in her house. Then, she met with the film director Mustafa Abu Ali and the photographer Hany Jawahriya with whom she discussed the need to document the photos of martyrs. As a result, a department of photography was created. In an article, the scholar Khadija Habashneh cited Jawahriya as summarizing the start of photography work:

> We started work even before we managed to find a place and equipment. At the beginning, we documented the pictures of martyrs and revolution-related activities, but following the al-Karamah (Dignity) Battle[2] in March 1968, in which Palestinian Fedayeen (fighters) fought bravely against the Israeli forces for more than 19 hours, the Palestinian revolution became the target of fierce international media reports and thus there was an increasing need for photos. Our first workplace was a kitchen (…) the kitchen became a spot for shooting and developing films. We worked with simple cameras and a primitive drying machine (2008, p 13).

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[2]On 21 March 1968, the Israeli Occupation forces attacked the Jordan Valley where Fatah members led by Yasser Arafat were located. The armed confrontations resulted in the death of 128 Palestinian fighters and 28 Israeli soldiers.

In 1968-1969, the department produced its first film "Say No to Peaceful Solution." which was a 20-minute documentary made in response to the Roger Plan[3] for conflict settlement. Later, the photography department would come to be known as the "Palestine Film Unit."

The year 1970 is a key date in the history of Palestinian revolution as well as the Palestinian cinema when the events of *Black September* took place. In that month armed confrontations started between Palestinian fighters, members of the PLO, and the Jordanian army. These confrontations ended in 1971 with the expulsion of the Palestinian refugees to Lebanon. So, the Film Unit was transferred to Beirut. Abu Ali was the only one who managed to join the PLO in Lebanon. Mirsal was severely injured in the head, and Jawahriya was not allowed to travel. In Beirut, Abu Ali re-established Palestine Film Unit, which became known as the Palestinian Cinema Institute. He separated photography and filmmaking departments. He, also, produced a film telling the story of *Black September*; this documentary is known as "With Blood, With Soul" (Habashneh, 2008, p. 25).

Being aware of the importance of filmmaking as a means for resistance, the Palestinian factions founded their own cinema departments in Lebanon. For example, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) created a cinema and photography department. It produced its first film in 1973. This documentary "The Road", by Rafik Al Hajjar, is about the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. He produced also "United Guns" in 1974. Moreover, the Art Committee

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[3] In 1986-1969, the US secretary of State, William Rogers launched a plan for peace in the Middle East, according to which Israel should withdraw from most of the territories occupied in 1967. The refugees were given the option to be compensated or to return to their homes in Israel, yet this plan was refused by the PLO, and the Arab countries.

attached to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was created in 1971. It produced many documentary films such as "An-Naher Al Bared" and "Ghassan, The Word, The Gun". Both were directed by Qassem Hawal (Ibrahim, 2001). Additionally, the department of Media and culture in the PLO produced its first documentary "Youth Camps" in 1972 directed by Ismail Shmout and "Barbed Wire Homeland" directed by Qais Al Zubeidi in 1980.

In 1972, Mustafa Abu Ali sought to unite the film departments, establishing the "Palestinian Film Group". This institution produced one film "Scenes From the Occupation of Gaza". It was shut down after one year, as each faction preferred to work independently. Samed foundation for film production was founded in 1975 and produced its first documentary "The Key" in 1976 by Ghalib Shaat. He, also, directed "The Land Day" in 1978. Generally, the cinema departments related to Palestinian factions produced more than sixty documentaries and one fiction known as "Return to Haifa" by Qassem Hawal in 1982. This film is based on a novel written by Ghassan Kanafani. It tells the story of a Palestinian couple who lose their baby during the violent events of 1948 and who return to Haifa to look for him. The son is brought up by a Jewish woman and becomes an Israeli soldier (Ibrahim, 2001).

All the movies produced by the Film Institute and other films donated by friendly countries were archived in a particular hall prepared technically for that function in the Institute under the supervision of Khadija Abu Ali. According to her, when the war of 1980-1981 took place between Israel and its allies against the Palestinian fighters with their allies in Lebanon, it was decided to protect the archive in a safe place, so it was moved to a basement of a building in Beirut. When the situation became very difficult, the Palestinian fighters left Beirut, entrusting the protection of

the archive to three staff members of the institute. Later, one of them had to leave, and the other two decided to move the archive to the Red Crescent's Acre hospital where it was stored in bad conditions. It was later reported to have been moved from the hospital to an unknown spot (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, pp. 28-29).

The 1970s Palestinian ciema was established in exile between Jordan and Lebanon. As it was led by the Palestinian factions, the images of fightings, martyrs, and destructions dominated the films. They focus on specific events such as the events of *Black September*, or the bombing of Tal Azaater refugee camp. According to Gertz & Khaleifi, the narrative structure of such films follows a fixed pattern that leads from images of tranquility to a sudden bombardment, then the scenes of destruction that appear after the bombardment and images of Palestinian fighters trainings. Or on a more detailed route, the films may proceed from tranquility to escape, exile, and struggle. An example of that structure is "Scenes from the Occupation in Gaza" which opens with images of tranquility and proceeds to show the Israeli attacks and scenes of destruction (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 60).

The Fourth Period from the 1980s to the Present:

From the 1980s up to now, a new Palestinian cinema has emerged. It has been known with different titles such as "Independent Cinema", "Individualistic Cinema", "New Palestinian Cinema" and "Post-revolution Cinema". This cinema is not associated with liberation movements or any public or private Palestinian institution. It is created as a result of individual initiatives led by a new generation of Palestinian filmmakers who lived in exile mostly. Therefore, the films they made are influenced by their personal experiences, their memories, and visions for a future divided between their homeland and their exile.

The founder of this new cinema is the well-known director Michel Khleifi who is from Nazareth and who lives in Belgium. His film "Fertile Memory" is considered to be the first one to be made in the fourth period. This film is a mix of documentary and fiction. It tells the story of two Palestinian women: one lives in Nazareth (the directors' maternal aunt) and the other is in the West Bank (the novelist Sahar Khalifah) (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 30-31). The director shows how his aunt struggled to survive after the Israeli forces took her land, and how the novelist Khalifah, as a divorced woman, challenges the patriarchy in the Palestinian society as well as the Israeli occupation in her writings. He made many films such as "Ma'aloul Celebrates its Destruction" (1984)[4], "Wedding in Galilee" (fiction 1987), which shows aspects of life in Galilee as an Arab Israeli town, and "Zendiq" (2009). Another important director in this period is May Massry. She is originally from Nablus, but she is in exile in Jordan. She studied filmography in the University of San Francisco. She made her first film "Beneath the Ruins" about the siege imposed on Beirut by Israel in 1982, as well as "The Suspended Dreams" (1992). A third well-known figure is the filmmaker Rashid Masharawi whose origin is Jaffa but he was brought up in a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. He made many films such as "Passport" (1986) and "Shelter" (1989). The latter won the first award of the international film festival in Jerusalem in 1990. In addition, he made "House-Houses" (1991), a 52-miniute film, which tells the story of a family composed of 13 members in Gaza. This family lives in miserable conditions as the father loses his job, so he goes to work in Tel Aviv. The film shows the conditions of life in the refugee camps and how Gaza and Tel Aviv are exile places for the protagonist.

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[4] "Ma'aloul Celebrates its Destruction" is a documentary about a village which was demolished by Israel in 1948.

Furthermore, the filmmaker Nizar Hassan made many films such as "Independence" (1994), "Yasmin" (1996) and "Invasion" (2003).

After 2000, a number of Palestinian filmmakers succeeded to win the Oscar. Hany Abu Asaad is a key Palestinian filmmaker, originally from Nazareth, whose works won international prizes. He directed many films such as "Nazareth 2000", "Ford Transit", "Rana's Wedding or Jerusalem in Another Day" (2002), and recently "Omar" (2013). "Rana's Wedding" won many awards such as "Best Actress award at the 2002 Marrakesh International Film Festival." Moreover, Abu Assad made "Paradise Now" (2005). It won many prizes such as the Best Foreign Language Film for the 63rd Golden Globe Awards. It was the first Palestinian film to be nominated for such an award. Worth mentioning also are the films of Elia Suleiman who is originally from Nazareth. He is an actor and director in some of his films such as "The Chronicle of a Disappearance" (1996), "Divine Intervention" (2002) and "The Time that Remains" (2009). His works are classified as black-comedy. He has a unique narrative style in which he invites the audience to be active and to question their current situation after more than 65 years of the catastrophe of 1948. Annemarie Jacir is a pioneer Palestinian female filmmaker who received her formal education in the USA. She made several documentaries such as "Post Oslo history" (1998), "The Satellite Shooter" (2001) and "Like Twenty Impossibles" (2003) (Philistine Films, 2008). There are other directors who have contributed to the new Palestinian cinema such as Najwa An-Najjar, Tawfik abu Wael, Hanna Elyass, and Abedul Salam Shhada (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, pp. 37-53).

According to Gertz & Khaleifi, the 1970s cinema (the third period) concentrates on the suffering of Palestinians in the refugee camps. In such a situation, the land

portrayed as "a paradise lost" became an integral part of the Palestinian traumatic memory, given the fact that many refugees were attached to the land as a source of living, and so as an essential part of their everyday life. In the new cinema, Michel Khaleifi and other directors started to depict the daily life in the homeland, Palestine, and revive its past (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, pp.70-74).

2.2.3 Hindrances in Front of the Growth of the Palestinian Cinema

The cinema in Palestine grows very slowly, particularly in relation to fictions. There are many reasons that stand behind this slow development. One reason can be the fact that the history of the Palestinian people is full of wars so the documentary films seem better fit to document and narrate its story. In addition, as the PNA has many priorities to address to improve the life conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; as a result, any financial support for cinematic production is marginalized by the Palestinian government (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 31).

Of course, the lack of financial and technical resources is a great hindrance. The filmmakers have to find their financial and human resources, therefore, they resort to private and non-governmental cultural institutions; they also depend on amateurs to reduce the cost of production as much as they can.

Moreover, movie theatres have, always, been targeted by the Israeli occupation. George Khleifi points out that " [E]ven if the cinemas have not been closed, it is reasonable to suppose that Israeli censorship bodies and the military government will create difficulties in order to impede the screening of Palestinian movies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" (Khleifi cited in Dickinson, 2005, p. 267)

Additionally, the state of insecurity in Palestine under the ongoing Israeli attacks, and restrictions of movement force people to stay at home rather than going to cinemas. Such factors have negatively affected the response of the Palestinians to films as part of their cultural environment. Besides, in Palestine, there are extremist religious groups, who consider films as immoral art. Al Nasser cinema theatre in Gaza was set into fire long time ago, and it has never been reestablished (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 37). Such people need to understand that films, as media texts, are part of the cultural heritage; they are full of messages that need to be delivered and received critically. Thus, for the development of the Palestinian cinema, the filmmakers should be given the chance to work and promote their films in a peaceful and stable environment, backed by the government and civil society.

2.3 Camera for Human Rights in Palestine

Before the creation of the revolutionary cinema under the umbrella of the Palestinian resistance factions in the 1970s, all the pictures and documentaries produced about Palestine were made from the point of view of the colonial powers either Britain or Israel. So, such media texts reinforce the claims of Israel that Palestine is a land without people. Even the foreign independent journalists or filmmakers were not allowed to record or film freely due to the strong censorship imposed on media works by the British Mandate (Hennebelle & Khayati, 1978, p. 122). The same policy has been adopted by Israel. Yet, the Palestinian cinema has succeeded to record and narrate many significant events in the Palestinian history. It has played a crucial role in upholding the Palestinian national identity, against efforts to erase the Palestinians from the history of Palestine.

As the Palestinians use the camera in their resistance against the Israeli occupation, the foreign peace activists use it to reveal the Israeli inhuman practices in the occupied Palestinian territories. That is why Israel may ban the peace workers' entry into the occupied Palestinian territories "under security reasons", break their cameras, or detain and transfer them to their countries. According to a report issued by the International Women Peace Services (IWPS), two peace workers were beside an Israeli soldier while he was restricting the passage of Palestinians through a checkpoint in the West Bank [the date and the city are not specified in the source]. Then the soldier closed the checkpoint and ordered the people to go back. A discussion took place between the soldier and one of the peace workers who was filming the checkpoint:

-The Soldier: "You're taking pictures and people are going to see and think it's bad."

-The activist: "But if you're just doing your job and using your authority properly, you should be proud to have people see it". In another situation recorded by the same report, two Israeli filmmakers were filming at the checkpoint of Hawwara at the entrance of Nablus in the morning hours. Taking that into consideration, the Israeli soldiers made people to pass smoothly through the checkpoint, even the peace workers were allowed to take pictures. This was not the case in the following days (Brown, 2004, pp. 515-516).

"Five Broken Cameras" a recent Palestinian documentary produced in 2011 by Emad Burnat, won the Oscar for the Best Documentary Feature (2013). This film shows how the Israeli forces broke five cameras, used by Burnat, to film peaceful demonstrations in the West Bank. The Israeli soldiers target the cameras' eye as they target the Palestinians' bodies.

2.4 The Palestinian Question in the Arab Cinema

The Palestinian struggle for liberation has been a central issue that concerns all Arabs, Muslims, and those who are interested in peace in the Middle East. Historically, the cinema has been one of the instruments used by Arabs to show solidarity with the Palestinians. In the 1970s, the first inter-Arab meeting to include the Palestinian cinema on its agenda was held in Jordan, where some Palestinian documentary films were shown. Later, in 1972, the international festival of the "Other Cinema" was held in Damascus, dedicating a special section to Palestine under the title "Palestine on the Screen" (Hennebelle & Khayati, 1978, p. 120). The festival granted the silver award to the Palestinian documentary "With Blood, With Soul" directed by Mustafa Abu Ali. One year later, an international film festival fully dedicated to Palestine was held in Iraq, screening many films, which took "Palestine" as their subject.

Below, I list names of some films made by Arab cinema(s) about the Palestinian question (Adabbas, 2008).

Established in 1927, the Egyptian cinema is the oldest cinema in the Arab world. It showed a deep concern in the Palestinian struggle since the *Nakba*. Between 1948 and 1957, many Egyptian fictions were produced about Palestine such as "A Lady from Palestine" (1948) directed by Mahmoud Thou Alfaqqar. It is about a young Palestinian woman who falls in love with an Egyptian pilot, whose plane falls on a Palestinian village. "The Land of Peace"(1957), which was the first Arab movie to be filmed inside the occupied Palestinian territories. It is about a group of Egyptian fighters who decided to carry out an attack against Israel. They are hosted by a

Palestinian family, and one of the group falls in love with the daughter of that family and gets married with her. "The Way of Conquerors", by Mahmoud Ismail (1962), "The Conflict of Giants" by Zuheir Bakeer (1963), and "Injured in the Quiet Neighborhood" by Hussam Mustafa (1966). There were also some documentaries about the Palestinian question: "Jerusalem" by Kamal Madkor (1955), "Refugee Camps in Gaza", by Hassan Hilmy (1955), "Who Are We? " by Tawfiq Saleh (1960), "Attack Base" by Mohammed Saleh (1964), and "The Bells of Peace" by Ramssis Najeeb (1965). After the war of 1967, in which Israel occupied the Gaza Strip, the West Bank including Jerusalem, as well as the Sinai, the Egyptian cinema produced "Song on the Bridge" by Ali Qabil (1972), "Shadow on the Other Side" by Ghalib Shaat (1973), "Al Usfur" by youssef Chahine (1973).

The Syrian Cinema Foundation produced several films about Palestine, such as "The Visit", by Qais Zubeidi (1970), "The Hand", by Qassem Hawal (1971), and "The Knife" by Khaled Hamda (1971). In 1972, the Syrian cinema produced one of the most important films about the Palestinian question, which is known as "The Dupes". This drama film is based on "Men in the Sun", a novel written by the Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani. The film tells the story of three Palestinians who want to travel to Kuwait to find a job, and as it is difficult to obtain a visa, they make an agreement with a person to transport them illegally in his water tank. At the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border, under the heat of Sun, they die, after being imprisoned inside the tank for long hours. The film depicts the political and social circumstances in which the Palestinians live. In relation to the Iraqi cinema, about (18) documentary films and (10) fiction films were made. Among those films are "Silence", by Tareq

Abed Alhakim (1973), "American Football", by Victor Haddad (1973) and "Winter" by Mohammed Jamil (1973).

In the same context, the Lebanese cinema produced about (10) documentaries and (5) fictions, such as "Jerusalem" by Vladimir Tamari (1968), "West Lebanon" by Samir Nassri (1970), "Jerusalem in Mind" by Antwan Rimi (1967) and "Lebanon in the Spiral" by Juslin Saab (1975). In the Jordanian cinema, (10) films were produced about the Palestinian question. Among those films are "The Exit" (1986) by Ali Siyyam, and "Twenty Minutes", by Adnan Al Ramahi (1968). Also, (2) fictions were made, which are "The Bells of Return", by Tyssir Aboud (1969) and "The Kifah" by Abdul Wahab Hindi (1969).

 The Kuwaiti cinema produced some films such as "Fatima Burnawi" by Nuri Al Saleh (1968), and "Yes-No" by Nijm Abedul Karim (1973). The Tunisian cinema produced few films such as "The Fighters" by Abedul Hady Sibasi (1975), "Land of Sacrifice" by Mohmmed Alhami (1975) and recently "Kingdom of Ants" by Shawqi Al Majiry (2012). The Algerian cinema produced one fiction known as "We Will Return" by Saleem Riyadh (1972).

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the fact that since film production activities can be transnational and so act as cross-cultural bridges, these films may have a hybrid identity. They can belong to multiple cinemas at the same time.

Chapter 3

SELECTED READINGS IN THE PALESTINIAN FILMS

> *"The camera was born as a tool for war but it could never be used as a gun in the way the revolutionaries intended it to" Elia Suleiman.*

Generally, few studies have been done in the area of the Palestinian cinema. In what follows, I review some of such studies that take Palestinian films as their subject. Actually, none of them tackles the issue of identity mainly, but they deal with the trauma, which is portrayed through this cinema in their own ways.

3.1 "Telling the Stories of Heim and Heimat, Home and Exile:

Recent Palestinian Films and the Iconic Parable of the Invisible Palestine"

This journal article is written, by Haim Bresheeth in 2002. It focuses on three films: "The Chronicle of Disappearance" by (Elia Suleiman, 1996) "Ustura" by (Nizar Hassan, 1998), and "1948" by (Mohammed Bakri, 1998), with the aim to identify their similarities and to look at the relationship between the stories told in them and the principle story in the background, the story of Palestine. It highlights the value of storytelling in helping the Palestinians who live as a minority in Israel after 1948 to revive their memories, which have been repressed. It, also, discusses the state of melancholia from witch the Palestinians suffer after the loss of their Heimat and home, based on Freud's "the Economy of pain."

According to Bresheeth, the three films use the mechanism of storytelling to represent the catastrophe of 1948. They give the chance to some families to tell their private experiences which can be read as personal and national stories at the same time. Moreover, the films are similar in that they deal with stories of people expelled from the town of Saffouri, in the north of the historic Palestine. In "Ustura" and "1948" the storytellers are from this town, and in "The Chronicle of Disappearance" appears a famous writer, Taha Mohammed Ali, whose origin is Saffouri. Therefore, this town represents Palestine in the films.

The film "1948" starts with scenes from a show based on Emil Habibi's novel, "The Optipessimist" which uses humor to describe the situation of invisible Palestinians in Israel. The film director, Bakri, is an actor in this show. Then, many Palestinians appear on the screen to tell their stories. The film, also, includes stories told by Israelis. One of the Israeli interviewees is Dov Yirmiya, an officer, who participated in the military attack on Saffouri in 1948. According to Bresheeth, his story confirms mostly those of the Palestinians.

In "Ustura", Nizar Hassan narrates the story of the expulsion of the Nigim clan from Saffouri in 1948. It is the story of Musa El-Khalil, and his wife, Amneh El-Qasem along with their son Mohammed and daughter Khadeeja. The son is married with a child named saleem. After the bombardment of their house by the Israeli forces, the father of the family, Musa, stayed at the house, while the grandmother, accompanied by her son and daughter escaped to Lebanon. Two years later, the grandmother decided to go back to Saffouri with her grandson Saleem and her daughter Khadeeja. She found that Saffouri is no longer there, and its name has been changed to Zippouri. She and her husband got Israeli IDs, and she registered Saleem, the

grandson, in her ID as her son. According to Bresheeth, the grandmother did not return to Saffouri, carrying the key of her house but carrying Saleem who is the key that will bring his parents to the homeland through the right of family unification. After 10 years of application for unification, Saleem's parents returned home. Yet, his brothers Mahmoud and Youssef who were born outside Suffouri were excluded from unification. In time, the family left Saffouri to Nazareth. Mahmoud went to Germany, and Youssef began living in Jordan. In the film, while Saleem's mother tells the story of the family, the director sits down among her grandsons, as if he is one of them, listening to her. Bresheeth considers that the presence of Hassan and his crew turns this private story into a public one, with national signification.

In the "The Chronicle of Disappearance" Elia Suleiman tells the story of the present absentee, the disappearance of Palestine. It shows how the Palestinians are marginalized while Israel expands. At the end of the film, Elia who is both actor and director disappears and goes in exile. But, his girlfriend, Aden, decides to stay in Jerusalem and resist the Israeli occupation. She uses an army radio to send messages to Israeli soldiers and to recite the Israeli national anthem in its original sense, which describes the oppressed, who have lost Jerusalem. So, she uses the techniques of the occupation to fight against it.

Besides, Bresheeth uses Freud's "economy of pain" to explain that what appears in these Palestinian films shows a state of melancholia. He explains that according to Freud, mourning is a "reaction to a loss of a loved person, or liberty, but it is a normal process that duly ends", while "melancholia [is] a pathology that may destroy the subject." Bresheeth maintains that in case of loss of country as it is the case in the films addressed by this article, "the country is still there, and thus the loss continues

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(…), and cannot be mourned and done with" (Bresheeth, 2002, p. 34). He indicates that in "Ustura", the Palestinians suffered from loss at four levels: the loss of Homeland, loss of town, loss of family, and loss of individuality. In the last part of his article, Bresheeth stresses the importance of storytelling as a strategy to defend the Palestinians' rights. He considers storytelling as a crucial factor to bridge the gap between the Israelis and the Palestinians, recalling the argument of Dr. Azmi Bshara, who maintains that sympathizing with the suffering of the Israelis from the Holocaust by the Palestinians and the recognition of the suffering of the Palestinians during the catastrophe of 1948 by Israelis, help to create a peaceful relationship between the two communities.

In fact, the directors of the three films fight for their right to tell their own story in their own way to affirm their history on their land, as the author says. I agree that storytelling is important, especially for the Palestinians living in Israel, in order to prove their existence. It, also, shows to what extent Israel, which claims "democracy and justice", respects the rights of the Palestinian minority and integrates them in the social system.

3.2 "The Palestinian Cinematic Wedding"

In this journal article published in 2007, Dr. Nadia Yaqub explores how Palestinian filmmakers employed the wedding as a cultural practice to show the interaction among culture, identity, politics, and space, particularly in "Wedding in Galilee" by Michel, Khleifi (1987) and "Rana's Wedding" by Hany Abu Asaad (2002). She, also, examines "Paradise Now", by Hany Abu Asaad (2005), explaining how this film is an anti-wedding one, which adopts a gloomy look for life, in contrast of the hopeful

message of "Rana's Wedding" although both are made by the same director, after the Second Intifada.

"Wedding in Galilee" tells the story of Abu Adil, the head of Galilee village, who wants to organize a wedding ceremony for his son, Adil, so he goes to the Israeli governor, asking him to lift the curfew imposed on the village. The governor accepts to do so, on condition that he and his staff attend the ceremony. Abu Adil, motivated by the traditions of hospitality, welcomes them and insists that they stay until the end of the wedding.

According to Yaqub, the governor demands to attend the wedding in order to enter the Palestinians' private space and to learn about them. She considers that Abu Adil is a man who still lives in the past, unable to adapt to the new situation in Galilee. The wedding for him is an occasion to restore his authority over his community and his family. His son tries to resist against his patriarchal dictatorship and his daughter, Sumaya, does not accept the gender code in the Palestinian community. For Yaqub, this film is about the failure of Israel to contain the Arabs who live as a minority since 1948, and the failure of this minority to prove themselves under the Israeli government. She adds that the wedding witnesses many failures, particularly the failure of Adil to consummate his marriage, so the bride deflowers herself to save the honor of the family. Adil's impotence symbolizes a failure at the individual and national levels. His infertility refers to the disconnection between the past, the present, and the future. At the end of the wedding, the attendees attack the governor and his staff. This film shows the interference between the public/private and political/cultural domains. The presence of the governor violates the privacy of the wedding as a Palestinian cultural domain.

However, Yaqub draws attention that the film shows aspects of the human relations between the Israeli and the Palestinian communities. For example, when Tali, a female soldier, faints, the Palestinian women take her inside and treat her kindly. There is disagreement among the Palestinians regarding the presence of the governor in the wedding. Some of them accept it, and others consider it as a shame. During the wedding, many problems and tensions are noticed. I agree with Dr. Yaqub that the presence of the Israeli governor contributes to disclose such problems rather than causing them as the disagreement between the young generation and the old one already exists in the Palestinian community. The film succeeds to show the colonizer-colonized relationship between Israel and the Palestinians living inside it. it, also, addresses cultural issues related to gender as Dr. Yaqub maintains.

“Rana's Wedding” tells the story of a young woman, Rana, whose father offers her a list of men to select one for marriage, or she has to travel with him to Egypt. Rana wants to remain in Jerusalem, so she decides to look for her lover Khalil. During her journey from Jerusalem to Ramallah to find her man, she faces many obstacles from the Israeli occupation. Rana finds Khalil and gets her father's approval about the marriage. Yet, the marriage registrar is blocked at an Israeli checkpoint, so all the people who are at the wedding have to move to the checkpoint, and the marriage ceremony is conducted there in front of the Israeli soldiers. As Dr. Yaqub mentions, in contrast to “Wedding in Galilee”, Rana transfers her wedding willingly from the private domain to the public one; she uses it to show her steadfastness in her homeland. Dr. Yaqub adds that Rana's father who wants to leave Jerusalem represents the failure of the old generation to remain in Palestine, in contrast to the young generation like Rana who struggles to stay there.

Unlike Adil who is not able to get rid of his father's authority, Rana takes a more balanced position as she manages to select her own man, to get her father's approval, and to organize the ceremony in accordance with the Palestinian traditions. According to Yaqub, the only contradiction with the traditions is the presence of the bride when the contract is written, but I think there is another contradiction, which is the absence of the groom's family; his mother is blocked in Gaza. With a close look at Rana's character, the audience can see the ambivalence between her strong will to challenge the occupation as well as the patriarchy of the society and her fears. Such ambivalence appears with intersection between the private and public spaces; for example, while she is inside her friend's house, she witnesses the demolition of a house by Israeli bulldozers, which provokes her worries about the future.

For, Yaqub, "Paradise Now" is an anti-wedding film. The film is about two young men who decide to commit suicide in Israel. One of them, Khalid, changes his opinion, but the other, Said, insists on performing this task. While these two men are prepared to commit suicide, their lives are juxtaposed against a background of weddings. For example, Said and Khalid are well-dressed to the extent that everyone who sees them ask if they will get married today or if they are going to attend a wedding party. In addition, in a shop where Said takes a portrait, a wedding video plays on the TV screen. Yet, when he goes to the same shop to get his watch repaired the wedding scene is replaced with a funeral. In the film, there are many broken cars, such cars represent the degradation in the daily life conditions in contrast to the role of the car in "Rana's Wedding" that enables the couple to achieve their goal and offers them some control over the space. Yaqub adds that Suha, a daughter of a respected fighter, loves Said and tries to establish a relationship with him, but unlike

Rana, she fails as her lover goes to commit suicide, forced by the pressures he sustains in the society, being a son of a collaborator. So, the optimist end of "Rana's Wedding" turns into pessimist one in "Paradise Now."

3.3 "The Palestinian Romeo"

This article, by Uri Avnery, concentrates on the film "Arna's Children" which is made by Juliano Mer-Khamis in 2004. The author started by introducing Arna who is the director's mother. She was born to a Jewish family, and she served in the Israeli army during the war of 1948. Later, she became a member of the Communist party in Israel, which calls for peace with the Palestinians. She got married to a Palestinian-Israeli member of that party. During the First Intifada, Arna joined Jenin refugee camp, to help its residents in their struggle against the siege imposed on the camp. When the education system collapsed at that time, Arna decided to find an alternative method to educate Jenin's children. With the assistance of her son Joliano, she established a theater to help the children to express their oppressed feelings. Arna was awarded the "Alternative Nobel Prize" for her project. When Joliano told by doctors that his mother, suffering from cancer, would die within one year, he started documenting her life as well as the life of four children who were heroes in her theater.

According to the article, what is unique in this film is the double filming of its heroes. The children whose stories are told by the movie, Youssef, Ashraf, Nidal, and Ala'a, are filmed during the first Intifada, when they are full of energy and hope. In the film, Ashraf says "I will be the Palestinian Romeo." I think that this sentence inspired Avnery about the tittle. Then after the invasion of Jenin by the Israeli army

during the Second Intifada, the director went there to meet those heroes who became young men not as they were in first part of the film.

 The film reveals that they were killed in confrontations with the Israeli army in Jenin in 2002. For Avnery, the film shows the great love, respect, and trust given to Joliano, by the children, although he is Jewish, which enables him to film them without restrictions and to be very close to them for long hours. He adds that the film expresses the miserable life in Jenin, under the Israeli occupation, and how the Israeli army provokes the fighters, in order to know where they hide. Joliano, who is half-Israeli, gave the Palestinians the chance to show their will to live in dignity and presented them as heroes who sacrifice for the freedom of their people. At the end of the film, a group of children, standing side-by-side, recites a song that commemorates martyrs.

Avnery, who served as a Knesset member, comments that the Israelis see the Palestinians as terrorists; they do not look at them as humans and ask themselves: why do the Palestinian young people commit suicide in Israel? He wonders if pacifist Israelis, like Arna, can help to achieve the reconciliation between the two peoples after the Palestinians obtain their independence. I think this film is interesting as it shakes the boundaries between "We/Us" and "They/Them." When Arna, who is Israeli, says, "the Intifada for us and our children is struggle for freedom", who is the self vs the other? The Jewish Arna was at home among the Palestinians. But, when we look at the Israeli side, the film tells us that Arna becomes an other, as only a kibbutz agreed to bury her corpse; this shows that the voices, calling for peace and human rights, in the "democratic" state of Israel are excluded.

3.4 "Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma, and Memory"

This book was, originally, written in Hebrew by Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi. It was published in 2005, and highly welcomed to be the first book, addressing the Palestinian cinema. In 2008, it was translated into English. The book starts with an introduction, followed by seven chapters and a conclusion. It highlights the role of the Palestinian cinema in serving the goals of the national struggle.

The first chapter of the book provides details about the history of this cinema. It focuses on the new Palestinian cinema, which started in the 1980s, its directors, financial resources, and films. The book concentrates on the works of Michel Khleifi, Rashid Masharawi, Ali Nassar, and Elia Suleiman. In addition, it discusses the "Roadblock movies" those whose events take place at checkpoints, showing how the directors try to reconstruct a harmonious national place and to overcome the geographical fragmentation under the siege.

According to the book, the films of Michel Khleifi revive the past, the pre-1948 trauma, and at the same time, depict the life here-and-now in the homeland. Khleifi, also, deconstructs the homogeneity of the Palestinian society through invoking different identities such as class and gender. The authors focus on his early films "Fertile Memories" (1980) and "Ma'aloul Celebrates its Destruction" (1984) as well as two of his later films : "Wedding in Galilee" (1987) and "The tale of the Three Jewels" (1994). They maintain that Khleifi managed, through the camera's eye, to redraw the national borders and to restore the Palestinian lands taken by Israel. His films, also, show the importance of the house as an integral part of the Palestinian identity, where everyday activities take place and where public and private occasions

are organized. He uses olives, orange trees, and folklore as symbols to revive the pre 1948 past.

The book, also, discusses films made by Rashid Masharawi. This director focuses on the situation here-and-now in the refugee camps. He is influenced by his childhood experience as he grew in a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. In this book, under review, the authors analyzed several films made by Masharawi such as, "House-Houses" (1991) "Curfew" (1993), and "Haifa" (1995). His cinema is full of hopelessness, and a miserable future. It shows how the space shrinks and how the house is isolated from the homeland, the national space, under the Israeli blockade. Further, the book studies the films of Ali Nassar. It mainly addresses "The milky way" (1997) and "In the Ninth Month" (2002). According to Gertz and Khleifi, Nassar's films depict two pasts. This is to say, Nassar depicts the pre 1948 past, as Michel Khleifi does, and he portrays its loss under the Israeli occupation, like Masharawi. Nassar adopts a socialist realism model, which is based on the idea of struggle between the positive and the negative forces in the society, leading to the triumph of the good characters.

The book also examines "The Chronicle of Disappearance" (1996) and "Divine Intervention" (2002) which are made by Elia Suleiman. Both films tell the story of marginalization and isolation of the Palestinians living as a minority in Israel; moreover, Suleiman focuses on the Israeli aggressions in Jerusalem.

This book is criticized by Terri Ginsberg, who disagrees with the authors on different points such as the following: the book considers that the Palestinian films have little international support; it underestimates women's role in the national resistance; it

does not mention that Sulafa Mirsal who participated in the creation of the first photography department with Abu Ali and Jawahriya, was the first female cinematographer in the Arab world, and it does not consider that the Palestinian society contained a bourgeois class during the pre- British Mandate period (Ginsberg, 2009). I agree with these criticisms, but I believe that the book is a great contribution in the field of Palestinian cinema in which there is lack in scholarly work.

Furthermore, I would like to comment on the statement in which Gertz and Khleifi (2008) maintain that Palestinians are a "nation struggling to crystalize its oneness in the face of the outside Other." p. (8). The Other is not exclusively outside the Palestinians; it is also inside. Recall, here, Arna Mer who is a Jewish woman married to Palestinian man and who struggled with the Palestinians. This shows that the other does not have a negative portrayal always nor is s/he situated outside. The other is even inside this book, which is written by Israeli and Palestinian co-authors.

Chapter 4

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I explain some key concepts in relation to national identity in general and the Palestinian identity in particular:

4.1 About National Identity

The notion of "national identity" can not be given one specific definition as it is a multidimensional concept that has something to do with culture, memory, society, politics, psychology etc…. To understand what this form of identity is about, it is necessary to discuss the concepts of "nationalism" and "nation" upon which it is founded. The root of these terms is the Latin word "natio" which refers to communal relationships based on birth, race, or other common variables.

Nationalism is a very dominant ideology in our world nowadays. It is only when a particular community assumes a national identity and becomes a member in the United Nations, that it counts internationally, so it has the right to run its own affairs independently in the name of the nation and to establish mutual relations with other nation-states.

This ideology involves an absolute and high loyalty to one's nation. It is based on the idea of the oneness of the self versus the other. According to the nationalist doctrine, any differences within the nation should be excluded or erased because they threaten the uniformity of the nation. So, nations are totalitarian systems in which people are

assigned a particular homogenous identity. This kind of reduction is justified under the slogan: "Protection of National Unity and Interests". In fact, nationalism may produce oppression and other dangerous consequences unless it is supported by pluralist democracy, to build a balance between the heterogeneity of the nation and its homogeneity.

In the literature, remarkable efforts have been made, by scholars, to explain the emergence of the so-called national identity. They adopted different paradigms to find out its origin. In what follows, I explain the emergence of nations from the point of view of primordialism, perennialism, ethno-symbolism, modernism, and postcolonialism.

For the primordialists, nations are natural phenomena and a primordial state of humanity. According to this paradigm, nations are forms of extended communal kinships, which change over history and across cultures. It interprets the premordiality of nations based on two approaches. The first one is sociobiological, developed by Pierre van den Berghe, who argues that nations and other ethnic communities are derived from individual genetic reproduction. The extension of such reproduction through marriage or other social relations results in wider social communities or networks such as the nation. In this case, the cultural ties support the biological ones. The second approach is cultural. According to Clifford Geertz, who differentiates between "primordial" and "civil" orientation of nations, the premordiality is rooted in what he calls the "cultural givens" such as language, religion, custom, and race, while the civil orientation of the nation advocates the secular order of the state (Smith, 2009, p. 8).

The perennialism paradigm argues that nations exist everywhere over the record of history. There are two kinds of perennialism: a continuous one, according to which some nations have existed for centuries like the Greek, so those nations are perennial. The other kind is about nations in general; it maintains that nations disappear and reappear over history. This is called the "recurrent perennialism" (Ethno-history and National Identity, p. 5).

While the ethno-symbolic theorists agree with the above-mentioned paradigms that nations existed long time ago; they maintain that the national identity is the product of socio-cultural factors. That is to say, such theorists consider that the ethno-symbolic resources, which are embodied in the cultural heritage, such as memories, traditions, customs, and myths motivate the nationalist ideology and lead to the creation of the nation (Smith, 2009, pp. 13-17). Antony Smith, a pioneer scholar in ethno-symbolism, defines nations as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (1991 p. 14).

The modernism school regards the nation as a new form of identity, that came to light in the eighteenth century. According to the modernists, nations are sociological communities, which are invented, in association with industrialization, capitalism, urbanization, as well as the development of media technology and social communications. For Ernest Gellner, the national identity is not something which is already there, and which is awakened to our consciousness in the present. Rather, nations are created. However, they need the cultural and historical references to provide a sense to their identity: "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-

consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist – but it does need some pre-existing differentiating marks to work on" (Gellner cited in Chatterjee, 1986, p. 8).

The modernist scholars believe that the social, psychological, cultural, and political variables are subordinate to the development of capitalism and industrialization, which has led to the foundation of nations. For example, Anderson argues that industrialism, capitalism, and social communications have resulted in changes in language and discursive practices and have contributed to create nations as imagined political communities (Anderson, 1991). He describes nations as imagined communities because, according to him, it is not possible to know all those people with whom we share the national identity, so we share an idea of what it is like.

As a modern invention, nationalism is performative discourse. This is to say, nations are not an empirical given; they are created performatively. In this process, the national past is selectively constructed and articulated in the present to serve the needs and aims of the nation (Gellner cited in Chatterjee, 1986, p 8). I do agree that nations have been shaped recently. So, the arguments developed by the primordialism, the perennialism, and the ethno-symbolism schools about the emergence of nationalism are untenable. They consider that the nations originated in the past. Nevertheless, the historical narrative, which they adopt about the emergence of nations, is developed in the present. That is to say, the nation is something that begins in the present, and then it is projected to the past. It is neither natural nor authentic. Moreover, the primordial argument about the biological origin of the nation is totally unacceptable because if the national identity were biological, this would mean that it is already fixed and determined by biological factors, whereas it is, like any other form of identity, always in process.

The postcolonial scholars agree with the modernism school that nationalism is a modern form of identity. For them, it is a Western creation associated with the idea of teleological progress which is a Western invention as well (Chatterjee, 1986, pp. 5-7). As a teleology, nationalism does not only create a national past, but also it claims that the nation must have a future, so that the teleological progress will continue, taking the West as its teleos. Therefore, from a postcolonial perspective, the modernist subject position, which supports the ideology of nationalism, is a colonizing position. It argues for one universal History, which has a teleological scheme towards Europe. So, every nation has to be reduced to the European grand narrative; every nation has to be located somewhere on the Western scheme. However, this teleological progress of the West is founded on the exploitation of the colonies abroad, which, after gaining "independence," make up today's Third World. In response, the people(s) of Third World do their best to follow the path of modernity drawn by the West. Nevertheless, even when the non-Western peoples define themselves in terms of nations and modernize their countries, they are still and always inferior in the West's eyes. According to Trinh Minh-ha, the Western's view is "Be like us. But Don't be us" (Minh-ha, 1989, p. 52)

For his part, Homi Bhabha, a key figure in the postcolonial school, deconstructs modernity, and the homogeneity of nations. In his work, *The location of Culture* (1994), he argues that nations can not exist outside the narration. He adds that the very act of narration involves two temporalities: on the one hand writing the nation as an advent of the epochal. This means writing the events, which the nation has witnessed since its emergence in the modern epochal time; on the other hand, writing the nation as the "event of everyday", i.e. the events that take place in everyday time

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through the actions of the heterogeneous people (Bhabha, 1994, p.142). Furthermore, Bhabha argues that the people must be thought in double-time. They are pedagogical objects who should be taught who they are as a nation through the national narrative that constructs the past and shapes the present and the future. At the same time, the people are performative subjects who create their own identity here-and now (Bhabha, 1994, p. 145). Within this framework, the people as pedagogical objects have to found their identities on the narrative of the epochal time, which excludes some events of the nation's history, while they are enacting their own identity and differences in everyday time.

Bhabha problematizes the homogeneity of the nation. The idea is that national narrative is based on the uniformity of the nation vs the other nations, but, for Bhabha, the nation is always heterogeneous. The cultural differences are inside as well as outside. He maintains that the representation of "the many as one" involves a despotic totalitarian identity, whereas the discourse of nationalism is associated with the idea of democracy, civilization, and modernity. So, according to Bhabha, when the nations think of themselves as one, the archaic system and despotism reappears in the modern time "[T]o write the story of the nation demands that we articulate that archaic ambivalence that informs the time of modernity" (Bhabha,1994, p. 142).

Once again, I recall that, in the postcolonial as well as the subaltern studies, nationalism is viewed as a language invented by the colonial powers (the West) and exported to the anti-colonial nationalists (Non-European natives). Ashis Nandy approached anti-colonial nationalism from a psychological perspective, arguing that colonialism affects both the colonizer's and the colonized's consciousness (Nandy cited in Young, 2000, p.340). For him, the colonization produces a culture in which

the ruled struggle against the ruler within limits defined by the latter (Young, 2000, p 342). So, nationalism in the colonial world is a derivative discourse and a kind of psychological resistance that contributed to create an alternative West.

In their very anti-colonial struggle, the colonized people assume the nationalist discourse of the colonizing power. Here lies the contradiction in the anti-colonial nationalism, when the colonized people use the same identity of the colonizer to claim their difference from it and, at the same time, to be equivalent to it within the framework of international laws. According to Nandy, when you adopt the same identity of the other against him/her, you are unlikely to win or to get your independence because your actions will be very predictable and comprehensible to him/her (Young, 2000, p 344).

In the same context, Robert Young and Gayatri Spivak argue against the elitism and the authoritarian ideology embodied in the anti-colonial nationalism. For Young, when the colonizers withdraw from the colonies, they transmit the authority over such colonies to an elite class, which claims a national identity and leads a national liberation movement. This form of anti-colonial nationalism is known as "bourgeois nationalism" because it includes the elites who are close to the colonizer, and who follow its modernist vision. After liberation, these elites practice the oppression at home against their people (Young, 2000, pp. 71-73).

In her writings about nationalism, Spivak, like Young, criticizes the elitism in the nationalist discourse. She argues that this discourse is based on the construction of the subaltern as a figure who can not represent itself. She adds that all nationalists introduce themselves as the only legitimate voice of people (Spivak, cited in Lazarus,

1999. p 123). The elites act as "native informants", in her terms, about the subaltern masses, in front of the West. She problematizes this role played by the elites because it involves reducing the otherness of the people, to what those elites or "native informants" think. Moreover, she argues that the elites in their privileged position are themselves subalterns who can not speak whether it is in colonial, anti-colonial, or postcolonial context, for they are, always, subservient to the colonizer's view (Spivak, cited in Lazarus, 1999. p 123) (Spivak, 1988, p. 308). Hence, even after the nations in the colonial world become independent politically, they are still subordinate to the Western dominance.

4.2 The Significance of the Others for the National Identity

Like other identities, the national identity is a relational network. It serves as a frame, which identifies those who belong to the nation based on cultural ties or political ones, or both, and at the same time, it draws the boundaries between the nation's members and other nations. In other words, the national identity delineates the position of a particular nation in the world, by defining the self (We/Us) and the other (They/Them).

The self within this identity is characterized by communality of religion, history, habits, culture, legal rights etc… According to Smith, the national identity in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries was established on the notion of "sameness" (1991 p.75). So, the members of the nation adopt the same identity markers like memories, economy, language while the outsiders have different language, history, lifestyles and so on. In this context, the nationalists focus on all the characteristics that reinforce the unity of the nation and ignore any differences.

Yet, the so-called others exist not only outside the nation but also inside it. This can be seen in the heterogeneity among the members of the nation who may have different ethnicities, languages, or religions as it is the case in Turkey, Belgium, Egypt, Canada, or any other nation. Actually, the interaction between the self and the external or internal others renders the national identity always under transformation.

One of the most influential factors that affect the national identity is its relation to what is called "the Significant Other", which may be internal or external.

The concept of "Significant Other" [5] can be defined as an ethnic group or another national community that may exist outside or inside a particular nation and threaten or considered to be a threat to its existence or independence. According to Anna Triandafyllidou, the internal significant other is a group that belongs to the nation, politically, socially or culturally, or it could be an immigrant community, while the external significant other for the nation is another outside nation/nation-state, that threatens its existence (1998, p. 600).

She divides the internal significant other into three main types as follows:
The first one is an ethnic minority which may take part in the constitution of the state in which the in-group community form a national majority, in this case such ethnic minority is seen by the majority as a significant other, i.e. a threat because this minority have a particular culture, religion, myth, and memories. So, if they claim their difference, this will influence the unity of the state, taking into consideration that the nation is designed as an indivisible whole. That is why "the different others

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[5] In the sociological literature, the significant other is not necessarily a threat. One's lover is also a significant other. Yet Triandafyllidou, here, uses it in a specific context to refer to a threat within the doctrine of nationalism.

inside" become a "problem." In the second case, an immigrant community can be considered as internal significant other if this community seeks to raise its difference such as its own language, religion, beliefs, so it threatens the unity and purity of the state. The third type of the internal significant other appears in multinational state, when a small nation considers the dominant nation, another small nation, or an immigrant community within the state, as a threat, and tries to stress its distinctive characteristics, or seek self-autonomy (Triandafyllidou, 1998, pp. 601-602).

On the other hand, Triandafyllidou distinguishes among three types of the external significant others, as follows:

Citing Gellner, she mentions that when a state is multinational, composed of a dominant nation and other small nations which fight for their right of self-determination, this multinational state becomes an external significant other for the ethnic group who succeeds to obtain independence and forms a new state. The Second type appears when a rival nation contests part of the homeland of anther nation or control land claimed by that nation as its own. This influences the national identity of both nations, as their conflict may lead to redefine the borders and the relations between them. In the third type, the external significant other is a neighbor state or an ethnic group that contests or claims some of the nation's myth, history, or any part of its cultural heritage. So, such external others threaten the uniqueness of the nation (Triandafyllidou, 1998, pp. 602-603).

To sum up, the external significant other threatens the very existence of the nation as one independent nation-state among the other nation-states in the world, so any conflict, that occurs between a nation-state and an external other, is dealt with as an international affair, while when a nation has a conflict with an internal significant

other, it deals with such a question as an internal issue, that threatens the internal unity, order and stability.

It is remarkable that what is different is excluded in all cases. The different does not belong because "the nation" is conceptualized as an indivisible unity, a total without a remainder. But, this is not natural; it is the result of socialization and acculturation. Recall how Bhabha problematizes the uniformity of the nation and places the difference inside, asserting the heterogeneity of the people as performative subjects who enact their identities (Bhabha, 1994, p. 145).

4.3 Towards Nationhood in Palestine

According to Zachary J. Foster (2007) the emergence of the Palestinian national identity is not a reaction to colonization. For him this identity has been created as a result of efforts led by Palestinian intellectuals. He applied the "vertical ethnies[6]" model of national identity, which is coined by Smith, on the Palestinians' movement towards nationhood. This model whose core is the ethnic intelligentsia involves five elements:

1 - Movement from passivity to a politically distinct body;

2 - Raise people's awareness by teaching them national values and myths;

3 - Identify the community's homeland;

4 - Create an economic unity within the community;

5 - Turn the community members into citizens through laws and political/civil order.

Foster used the above-mentioned elements to show the role of the Palestinian intellectuals in the emergence of the national identity among the Arabs of Palestine. Again, I highlight that this form of identity is imported from the West.

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[6] Ethnies is a French word [ethnic groups in English].

Tracking the history of the Palestinian people, he maintains that before the First World War (WW1), the Arabs who lived in the historic Palestine did not consider themselves a nation. They had a regional identity or defined themselves by city, village, or family identity. For example, the resident of Nablus city defines himself as Nabilsi, from Gaza, Gazawi etc… However, in legal documents dated to the 17th century, the Mufti Khayr al-Din al-Ramli mentions "Filastin" many times, which means that the Arab intellectuals were aware that they live in a distinct geographical region called "Palestine" which is a part of the "Greater Syria" (Foster, 2007, p. 4).

Under the control of the Ottoman Empire (1830-1840), Palestine was not a distinct administrative political unit, as there was a risk rising from the European interests in this holy region. Later in 1934, a revolt took place against Ibrahim Pasha, the governor of this region. The said revolt played a significant role in unifying the Arabs of Palestine (the farmers, the elites, the Bedouins, etc…). Their unity was reinforced with the start of the Zionist immigration to Palestine in 1882.

Foster adds that the movement towards the formation of a national identity in Palestine, through organized political activities, started in 1918, with the establishment of Muslim-Christian Association (MCA) followed by the Literary Club and the Arab Club. Those organizations founded the Palestinian congress. According to Yehoshua Porath, they sought to put a limit to the Zionist immigration, so they submitted to the British Mandate, which controlled Palestine after the WW1 "protest notes" in this regard (1974, pp. 44-46). When the USA and its allies declared that the world would be reorganized and divided into nations having the right of self-determination and that some of the communities which were under the Ottoman Empire deserve to be independent nations, the Palestinians presented a demand to the

British colonial administration, claiming their right of self-determination (Foster, 2007, p. 6).

In 1919, the First Palestinian Congress was held. The members of the congress supported unification with Syria where Prince Faisal founded the first Arab government. The Palestinians considered such unity as an opportunity to get rid of the British colonizer, (Porath, 1974, p. 101). In 1920, the French colonial power overthrew Faisal. Moreover, the Palestinian intellectuals realized that his government did not give priority to stopping the Zionist settlement in Palestine; on the contrary, they saw that Faisal was sympathetic with the Zionist movement, as he met with Weizman. In such circumstances, the Palestinians thought that they should deal with the British government and abandon the idea of unity with Syria, seeking their own right to be an independent nation. Nevertheless, some members of the Palestinian Congress continued to support the unification with Syria (Foster, 2007, p. 6).

In 1920, the Palestinian Congress was held over a week, and it was decided to establish a Palestinian national government, whose members are from the Arabs who lived in Palestine until the WW1. This Congress's sessions were fully dedicated to discuss Palestinian national affairs. Through this chronicle, Foster aims to show that the Palestinians moved from passivity before WW1 to politically and nationally active community. So, the establishment of a Palestinian congress and the decision to create a national government can be read as performative acts that sought to build the so-called Palestinian nation.

Furthermore, Foster pointed out that the Palestinian intellectuals employed the press, the literature, and the education in the formation of the national identity.

The first Arab newspaper in Palestine was "*Filastin*" which was shut down by the British Mandate. This paper was replaced by "Suriyya al-Janubiyya" newspaper (Khalidi cited in Foster, 2007, p. 8). It was reported that Al Haj Amin Al Husseiny who became later the Mufti of Jerusalem wrote articles, in that paper, in which he called on the Arabs to be attached to their homeland. He addressed all the Arabs, but the Palestinians, according to Foster, were his main target and favored ones (Foster, 2007, p. 9).

Besides, a nationally motivated literature, including novels, stories, and poems was produced by the Palestinians during the British Mandate. For instance, the novelist Mohammed Darwish wrote "*The Angel and the Land Broker*" and Ishaw Musa Al Husseiny wrote "*The Diaries of a Hen*". Both novels focus the value of the homeland. Besides, national poems were written to protest against the British Mandate. A well-known figure in this regard is Ibrahim Tuqan. He wrote "*The Red Tuesday*", commemorating three Palestinians from Hebron who were executed by the British government for participating in demonstrations (Abu Ghazalah, 1972, p. 49). Such a literature is articulated, by the intellectuals, to construct the Palestinian national identity.

Foster mentions two proposals for designing the Palestinian flag. According to "*Filastin*" newspaper, there was disagreement regarding the origin of the Palestinian flag. Some scholars say that it is proposed by the Arab Club, inspired by Arab poet, Safi a-Din al-Hili, who said "our graces are white, our battles are black, our meadows are green and our swords are red." Others believe that the flag was designed by the Young Arab Society in 1911, divided into colors, each one symbolizing a period of the Arab independence: "the Umayyad Empire (white), the

Abbasid Empire (black) and the Fatimid Dynasty (green). The red triangle was added in 1916, after the forces of Husain heaved a red flag upon defeating the Ottoman Empire in the Hejaz. This means that the flag was used by the Palestinians to articulate and symbolize the myths and the memories of the past" (Foster, 2007, p. 14). Moreover, the education system played a central part in the emergence of the Palestinian national identity, by raising national issues among students. About 20 elementary schools and 8 secondary ones have been reported in Palestine by 1948 (Abu Ghazalah, 1972, p. 39).

Foster indicates that the Arab elites of Palestine sought to create an economic unity in their community against the Jews. He mentions that the Palestinian intellectuals managed to convince the British Mandate to issue an order to stop the immigration of Jews because of the limited resources in Palestine. Also, those intellectuals called for economic solidarity among the Palestinian community and for breaking all commercial relations with the Zionist movement.

Finally, regarding the transition from an ethnic group to citizens with legal rights, Foster indicates that the Palestinian national government, which was decided in the Palestinian Congress, as mentioned above, was intended to be independent and responsible before a parliament that represents the Muslims, Christians, and Jews and that incorporates all the ethnic groups in Palestine. Such representative institutions were essential for setting up a citizenship law.

He reported that the Palestinian intellectuals used the term "right" when the MCA sent a letter to the British Mandate, demanding that Balfour Declaration should be

annulled and replaced with an agreement, which protects the rights of the Palestinian people (Lesch, 1979).

All the points, that Foster mentioned, in his article, show the active role of the intellectuals in the emergence of the Palestinian identity and how they made use of existing cultural factors in their very performance to serve that goal. After the war of 1948, such a role is supported by the armed resistance, which is led by national liberation movements such as Fatah, the Islamic Jihad, PFLP, and others. Remarkably, the Palestinian identity is reinforced and represented, officially at international level, after the establishment of political institutions such as the PLO and the PNA.

4.4 Between Home and Away

During the wars of 1948 and 1967, thousands of Palestinians fled their homes, seeking refuge in different places inside or outside Palestine. Many of them led unstable lives, moving between Arab or Western countries, or both. While some of those displaced people integrated in the host communities, others did not. But, in both cases, they preserved their national identity and showed strong attachment to their homeland. This collective experience of deportation and displacement, which continues up to the present, places the concepts of "Exile, Diaspora, Refugee, and the Right of Return to the homeland" at the very heart of the Palestinian identity. In what follows, I discuss the significance of these concepts in general and in relation to the situation of the Palestinian people in particular.

Let me start by the concepts of displacement: Exile, Diaspora, and Refugee. "Exile" is derived from the Latin word exilium, from exul, when one is forced to or

willingly decides to live outside one's homeland. "Diaspora" is another concept of displacement. This word is derived from Greek. It combines "Dia" which means over, and "speiro" which means (to sow) (Cohen cited in Hammer, 2005, p. 54). In history, this term is, especially, used to describe the displacement of Jewish people outside Judea. It was expanded later to describe other diasporas such as the Armenian diaspora, the African-American diaspora, and so on (Naficy, 2001, p. 13). Hamid Naficy maintains that diaspora is necessarily a collective experience, in which the diasporic community integrates into the hosting place, its culture and life, but at the same time, they keep their attachment to the homeland (2001, p. 14).

According to John Peters, "despite their close affinities, in recent usage, diaspora often lacks the pathos of exile, a term that is never without a deep sense of awe." He adds that "exile" suggests homesickness while "diaspora" does not have this burden. He gave the Jews as an example. Many of them continue to live in diaspora although there is no obstacle that prevents them from returning to Israel (Peters cited in Naficy, 1999, p. 20).

For me such a distinction between the two concepts is shaky. In fact, diaspora, like exile, involves nostalgia and a desire to return to the homeland. An example of that is the Armenian diaspora. The Armenian people still have a very strong yearning to Ararat in Turkey, and they look at it with longing from Armenia. Also, in context of the African-American diaspora, people like Edward Wilmot Blyden, returned from the USA to participate in establishing Liberia, in Africa. Moreover, in contrast to the above-mentioned classification, one may be at home in exile and vice versa. For example, the exiled Palestinian film director, Elia Suleiman considers "every place as both a homeland and an exile…. For me, Nazareth and New York are both

simultaneously exiles and homelands" (1999, p. 96). In the light of the mentioned examples, it is difficult to distinguish between "exile" and "diaspora."

When we come to the Palestinian experience of expulsion, Edward Said refuses to call it "Palestinian Diaspora" like the so-called "Jewish diaspora". In an interview with Salman Rushdie, he says: "the idea that there is a kind of redemptive homeland doesn't answer to my view of things" (Said cited in Rushdie, 1991, p. 173). Said established his argument on the fact that "diaspora" which is associated with the jews' experience of displacement is a very old concept about alienation. That is to say, you are at home first. This is where you belong and you find your self comfortable. However, when you are forced out of home due to any catastrophe, the self feels alienated, then it sets in motion an attempt to go back home.

For the jews, Israel is the Land of Promise and their own homeland, to which they must to be back, regardless of the concequences of this return. So, they returned and established their state in 1948. This resulted in forcing the Palestinians out of the historic Palestine and creating a conflict, which is still unresolved until now. In the ideology of diaspora, the people identify with a place as a redemptive homeland. Although this place is an other to the self, it is considered part of the self's authentic identity. Only in that particular space does the self become secure. Said stands against this idea of a redemptive homeland; therefore, he prefers to use the concept of "exile" instead of "diaspora". For him, the so-called "exile" involves a cosmopolitan experience in which "homecoming" is out of question (Said, 2002, p. 142).

In his essay *Reflections on Exile* (2002), Said argues that as we live in a cosmopolitan world, alienation and estrangement have become a wide and common experience nowadays. According to him, in the context of the current conflicts, wars, natural crises, or other circumstances of emergency, many people were forced to leave their homelands. Obvious examples of that experience are the Palestinians who have been in exile since the war of 1948, or the Syrians, who fled their land because of the ongoing internal conflict there.

Said maintains that exile can be a homecoming place where one finds one's self at home and leads a successful career (Said, 2002, p. 139). He recalls the well-known novelist Vladimir Nabokov who was originally from Russia, but who lived in exile between Europe and the USA until he died in Swaziland. In his exile, Nabokov wrote many distinguished novels and integrated actively in the societies where he lived.

Yet, when we look at the dark side of exile as banishment, we have to keep in mind the Palestinians who are reduced to a people depending on assistance provided by the UN agencies, while they can not return to their homeland. Also, we have to think of those people who are undocumented (sans papiers) and their miserable lives, as they have no proper labels, or proper identities in this world which defines people in terms of citizenship within nation-states (Said, 2002, p. 139).

 Said mentions the strong and at the same time tense relation between exile and nationalism. For him, nationalism stresses the essential belonging of a particular community to a place, in which the community members ground their own cultural, social, and governance system. So nationalism fights to ravage the exile, in which the exiled people act as if they were at home wherever they are. Exile is characterized by

diversity and hybridity, which nationalism tries to exclude (Said, 2002, p. 139). Again, I recall that, as Bhabha argues, hybridity and diversity exist within the nation (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 142-145).

Said goes on to explain that the relation between nationalism and exile is like the Hegelian master-slave relationship; each one is constitutive to the other (Said, 2002, pp. 139-141). The idea is that nationalism, in its early stages, is fed by, and developed from the experience of exile. According to him, the unification of Germany and the war of independence in Algeria were led by exiled leaders, who fought in order to establish a recognized nation-state, which would be their proper eternal homeland. Once such nation-state is established, the nationalist leaders construct its past selectively to justify its existence. Moreover, they draw the boundaries between "Us" and "Them." Beyond those boundaries, which separate the self from the other, is what Said calls the place of "not-belonging" where many exiled people stand (Said, 2002, p. 140). That is why Said describes exile as a solitary experience, in which the exiled people are cut from their roots and have to seek a new homeland, because those who are not members of a nation-state do not count (Said, 2002, p141).

Said mentions the hard life of the Palestinians because they are not yet an independent state. They face problems in crossing borders, applying for visa, and so on. Furthermore, their exile is a very complex experience. They have been subjected to several experiences of exile: in 1948 and in 1967 they were expelled from Palestine. In 1970, they were expelled from Jordan; in 1982 they were expelled from Lebanon, in 2006, thousands of Palestinian refugees were exiled from Lebanon due

to the war between Hizb Allah and Israel, and recently the Palestinians who live in Iraq and Syria have been expelled because of conflicts there.

Simone Weil who argues that "to be rooted is the most important need for human beings"; she believes that the remedies given to the experience of uprooting is as dangerous as uprooting itself; one of such remedies is statism (cited in Said, 2002, p. 147). She explains that the exiles are required to develop new loyalties to their new home(s). So, they may reduce their beliefs and ideologies to the ones claimed by the hosting state.

In response, those displaced people revive the memories of the past in their new home(s) and assert their belonging to their place of origin, which Said calls as the "defensive nationalism" of exiles (Said, 2002, p. 146). This means that they still have a sense of longing to their origin, yet they know that, in this modern age, homes are temporary (Said, 2002, p.147). Here, lies the ambivalence in the exilic identity, when the self stands in-between an original home and a contemporary one. In spite of such conflict within the self, the exiles realize that the return is not possible (Said, 2002, p142). This is the focal point, which Said emphasizes, resisting the idea of return to a redemptive homeland. Nevertheless, even if one returns to one's home, it is impossible to return to the same point of departure, because nothing stands still. The return can now become a new experience of exile.

In line with Said's criticism of the ideology of diaspora, as I mentioned earlier, Stuart Hall describes the essential identification of a displaced community with a particular place, to which they must return so that their identity can be redeemed, as a backward understanding of the daisporic identity. He recalls that this narrow view of

the concept of diaspora has generated negative effects on the Palestinians, who are still waiting to return. In his article "Cultural Identity and Difference", he argues that, in this age, diaspora should be understood in terms of hybridity and heterogeneity that give the people the opportunity to open themselves to mixed cultural hemispheres (Hall cited in Woodward, 1997, p 58).

In the above-mentioned article, Hall addresses the sense of return in the context of Afro-Caribbean identity. According to him, during his childhood in Jamaica, he has never heard an African talking about Africa as a homeland or refers to her/himself as African. It was only in the 1970s that the Afro-Caribbean identity was claimed (Hall cited in Woodward, 1997, p. 55). Yet, he argues that this identity is not a recovery of an original Africa. Rather, it is a return to a new Africa, which is constructed on the ground of the old one. This means that the Afro-Caribbean identity is (re)established in the present through the re-articulation of cultural markers. Therefore, its history should be read genealogically. The return to an old authentic Africa is not possible, as he emphasizes.

Noticeably, the African diaspora have enacted hybrid identities in the Western sphere. Their identities are a mixture of the African culture(s) and the Western ones. In his work "Diaspora and the Discourse of Identity", Paul Gilroy mentions that many Africans like Olaudah Equiano and Phillis Wheatley were taken to Europe as slaves. In their diaspora, they visited different places, and they were exposed to several cultures, traditions, and languages. Those slaves preserved their African identity, but at the same time, they were open to their new home(s), where they proved themselves as talented people. For example, Equiano and Wheatley were distinguished writers who contributed to the literature of African diaspora with a

collection of publications in which the cultural hybridity can be touched (Gilroy cited in Woodward, 1997 p 323). Today, the black dancers, musicians, painters have managed to spread the African arts all over Europe.

Thus, in diaspora as well as in exile, people have ambivalent identity, standing between their place of origins and their new home(s). In the light of Said's conceptualization of exile and the modern sense of diaspora adopted by Hall, I believe that diaspora and exile can be used interchangeably. In fact, what makes the sense of self-identification with a particular homeland so strong is the hegemonic discourse of nationalism and modernism. Therefore, the more we problematize the ideology of nationalism, the more we are able to adopt new understandings of exile and diaspora as Said and Hall did.

Some Palestinians, like Said and Suleiman, look at exile as an alternative home, as I mentioned earlier, while others still believe that they must return to their place of origin. Here, the question that one may ask: To which homeland would they return? To their land occupied in 1948, where they would be given the Israeli citizenship? Or to the future Palestinian state?

In addition to the notions of "exile" and "diaspora", very central to the Palestinian national identity is the concept of "refugee". It is a concept that is fully politicized and has a very specific scope within the Palestinian question. In general, we can define anyone who lives far from one's home as a refugee. But, within the Palestinian context, this notion refers to its use by the United Nations for Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA), which was established by the UN to serve the humanitarian needs of Palestinians who were expelled from their home in 1948, and which refers

to those who were normal residents of Palestine between 1 June 1946 and 15 May 1948, and who lost their homes and source of living because of the conflict of 1948 (UNRWA, 2009). In 1967, another wave of refugees was included in the UNRWA services. Up to now, it provides education, healthcare, food, and work opportunities to the refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank.

As Juliane Hammer mentioned in her book *Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the search for Homeland* (2005), the relationship between the Palestinian refugees and the host countries witnessed tensions from time to time. For example, the Palestinian refugees were expelled from Jordan after the events of *Black September*, when conflict occurred between the Palestinian fighters and the Jordanian leadership. Similar conflict took place between the Palestinian refugees and Lebanese political parties. Generally, the Palestinians refugees have faced hard living conditions and have suffered from exclusion from socio-economic life in the host countries, and in response, they did not open themselves to the new communities in which they lived, considering that such places are temporary and any integration into them would be at the expense of the Palestinian identity.

The Scholars who investigate the Palestinian identity stress the importance of the concept of "refugee" for the Palestinian question in terms of its political implications. For instance, Kodmani-Darwish argues that the term refugee should not be replaced by diaspora. They are significantly different: the term refugee implies that there is a problem related to the fate of the refugees, which needs to be solved, while the term diaspora lacks such implication or the need to deal with the situation of those expelled people. Moreover, Edward Said distinguished between the exile and the refugee. For him, the refugees are groups who are politically "disenfranchised", but

the exile is an individual state in which the person knows that, in this secular world, homes are no longer permanent (Kodmani-Darwish & Said cited in Hammer 2005, p. 59).

The right of return is very fundamental to the question of refugees within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In fact, it is one of the complex points in the process of negotiations between the two sides. The Palestinian leadership has always advocated that the question of refugees should be settled through a fair solution and that the right of return should be guaranteed to those who were expelled from their homeland in 1948 and 1967. According to the national charter issued by the PLO in 1968, the Arab Palestinians have the right to return to their homeland when it is liberated (article No 3). Moreover, the charter states that any child born to a Palestinian father inside or outside Palestine is, like his father, Palestinian (article No 5) (retrived from the Avalon Project: the Palestinian National Charter, 2008).

More than 60 years have passed and about three generations were born in exile since 1948. Many of those refugees have never been to the Palestinian territories. They did not leave Palestine so what does the term "return" mean to them? How can one "return" to a place to which one has never been? (Hammer, 2005, p. 5). This is to say that the concept of return has become symbolic. It is transmitted to the young generations from their ancestors.

From a legal perspective, the right of return is guaranteed to the Palestinian refugees by the international law. In December 1949, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution (No 194), which guarantees that the refugees, who seek to return to their homes and homeland, should be allowed to do so and should be compensated for the

loss or the damage they sustained. After the war of 1967, the UN General Assembly adopted another resolution (No 237), which stipulates that Israel is responsible for the protection and wellbeing of the residents of the areas under its military control, and it should facilitate the return of those who fled their homes during the military operations (Palestine Refugees: 60 Years of Injustice, 2008). In 1974, a third resolution, (No 338), was adopted by the UN General assembly. It stresses the right to self-determination as well as the inalienable right of the refugees to return to their homeland. Yet, all those resolutions are still dead letters. According to Susan Akram, the problem of the refugees and the weakness of their position are attributed not only to the improper interpretation of the law, but also to the weakness of the law. She argues that the UN does not assume its responsibility to protect the refugees, instead, it serves as a framework that helps the USA and Israel to dictate what they want (Akram, 2000, pp. 8-14).

I think that the question of refugees has become more and more a humanitarian issue, so the Arab and Western countries have concentrated on supporting the UN financially to meet its obligations towards those people and have considered such a role as sufficient to alleviate their sufferings, a role which has extended over six decades.

For the Israeli side, the return of refugees to their home is unacceptable, and they should be settled in their host countries. However, After the Oslo Accords, many Palestinians managed to return to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after long years of exile. Those people are known as "the returnees". Most of them occupied positions in the PNA. With their exilic multicultural background, those people brought about changes in the culture and the structure of the Palestinian society; they

have different lifestyles, and they speak the Palestinian dialect with different accents. Also, the Palestinians who hold Western nationalities were able to visit the Palestinian territories easily, but such facilities have been frozen with the outbreak of the Second Intifada.

Between home and away, the Palestinian national identity is always in motion. For some of the refugees, the longer they stay outside, the stronger is their belief in the dream of homecoming, while for others, the longer they are away from their homeland, the more they believe that this dream is difficult to be achieved.

4.5 National Memories and Trauma

One of the key issues that help an ethnic group to exist as a nation is their shared memories and myths, which give that nation a sense of continuity, leading from the past to the present and to the future.

Edward Said argues that memories are invented and manipulated. They are selectively constructed in a way that solidifies the notion of "We" in front of "They". So, the national memories are functional as they serve to create a shared sense of belonging among the nation's members (2000, pp. 177-179). He adds that these memories and myths are open to deconstruction and reconstruction in accordance with the development of the identity and the goals of the nation. They must be employed to assert the authenticity of that nation and transmitted to the new generations. Therefore, he maintains that the representation of memory is a question of power and authority. It is not a neutral practice (Said, 2000, p. 167).

Said cites the Israeli journalist Tom Segev who talked about the intentional employment of the Holocaust by the Israeli government to reinforce the Israeli

national identity as well as to create unity among the Jews who came from different places and how the collective trauma of the Holocaust then served as a national memory (2000, p. 167).

Besides, Maurice Halbwachs maintains that the construction of memories is influenced by the group to which the individuals belong and is shaped in response to their needs. So, the national memory is filtered in accordance with such needs which determine what memories to transmit and what memories to forget. This filtering process helps to develop a shared meaning about the past (1925, p. 358). Supporting this argument, Ernest Renan argues that the national identity involves an obligation to forget the black memories such as the massacres, the civil wars, or any shameful act committed at home or against other nations (Renan cited in Bhabha, 1994, p 160).

For his part, Pierre Nora considers that the modernity and technology have contributed to the creation of manufactured or artificial "sites of memory" or "lieux de memoire." Such sites, like museums, memorials, or any commemoration activity, contribute to make memories unforgettable. They involve a "will to remember" that provides reference for the past (1989, p. 19).

Furthermore, Bhabha argues that the very act of "re-membering" the nation creates a unity through the articulation of the dismembered past to represent the trauma of the present (Bhabha,1994, p 63). For instance, the dismembered events of the *Nakba* are re-membered to unify the Palestinians and to make a sense of their ongoing suffering. It is possible to say that the establishment of the nation is based on the process of re-membering in which the members of the nations are dismembered and then re-membered or rearticulated.

It is needless to say that the memories of the *Nakba* of 1948 form an essential part of the Palestinian national identity. According to Michael Milshtein, the concept of "Nakba" was first used by Qustantin Zuraq in his book *The Meaning of the Nakba* in which he talks about the failure of Arabs in 1948 (cited in Litvak, 2009, p. 49). This failure was a very traumatic experience for the Palestinians. Their identity and existence were uprooted and replaced by Israel which was established in the same year. This trauma is still alive, as Meir Litvak argues, because of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the complex question of refugees who look at their homeland as a "paradise lost". Besides, most of the refugees who reside in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, or Lebanon live near their cities or villages of origin, which were destroyed and rebuilt by Israel, so they can not forget their loss (2009, pp. 14-22).

The shared memories of this trauma have influenced the Palestinians' past, present, and their view for the future. According to Freud, trauma remains in the person's mind as a repressed memory, which is, after some period, revived and affects the ability to adapt to the situation in the present time. So, recalling the traumatic events for the person is not a return to something that occurred in the past, rather, it is a substitute for it. This means that the lost object appears in his/her consciousness as if it exists here and now. Therefore, the time stops, and the past occupies the present while the future is looked at as a return to the past (cited in Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, p. 3).

Many scholars pointed out the absence of a Palestinian official narrative for the events of the catastrophe of 1948. They give different reasons to justify such lack. Among those reasons are the unstable conditions experienced by the Palestinians in exile, and the feelings of shame after the defeat of Arabs against Israel (Gertz &

Khleifi, 2008, pp. 1-4). Added to these reasons is the fact that the Palestinians are stateless people, so there was no official narrative for the events of the wars of 1948 and 1967 until the PLO was founded in 1964.

In their exile, the Palestinians depended on the personal memories to narrate the defeats of 1948 and 1967 and to transmit them to the next generations through storytelling. So, fathers and grandfathers linked the new generations, who did not experience the wars and who grew up in exile, to Palestine through memories, in which the lost homeland is represented as a paradise to which one day they would return. According to Marianne Hirsch, "the post memory (or, the memory after the memory) is the strongest form of memory, precisely because its connection to the object, or the origin, is not mediated by memories but by investment and imagination". She maintains that such type of memory exists among the people, whose life is influenced by narratives about traumatic events that they did not experience directly, and "can be neither fully understood nor re-created" (1996, p. 659).

With the establishment of the PNA, the *Nakba* was commemorated for the first time in 1998. Moreover, the Palestinian leadership declared the 15th of May to be the national day for the commemoration of this trauma.

In the same context, a lot of work has been done by Palestinian scholars and artists to commemorate this event and other traumatic events in the Palestinian national history. Such a literature includes the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al Qasem, and others, as well as many novels, films, and songs produced by exiled and non-exiled Palestinians. This cultural heritage helps to create "sites of memory" for

the Palestinian people. With the outbreak of the Second intifada, the memories of the *Nakba* are promoted and intensified to mobilize the national fighters to struggle against the Israeli occupation. Since the *Nakba*, the life of the Palestinians has become a series of losses starting with the homeland, houses, relatives, security, freedom, stability, human/national rights, etc….

4.6 Double Oppression

If the Palestinians who are denied the right of return suffer from the trauma of exile, the loss of homeland, and the unstable life conditions in the hosting communities, those who live in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have experienced the trauma of oppression under the Israeli Occupation.

Before going into more details with regard to this question, it is worth mentioning that the notion of "oppression" is multifaceted and multidimensional; it is involved in any kind of communication in which one side dominates the other(s) and exploits them to serve its interests. In most cases, oppression is associated with power, which functions in favor of a privileged group in a particular community. It is embedded in all aspects of our life generally.

The term "oppression" is derived from the Latin verb "oppressus", the past participle of opprimere, which means to press down. It has been defined in the literature in different ways and from different perspectives. One of the best and comprehensive definitions of this term, I think, is the one given by David Gil. For him, "Oppression refers to relations of domination and exploitation—economic, social and psychological—between social groups and classes within and beyond societies; and, globally, between entire societies" (Gil, 1994, p. 233). He adds that in the context of

oppression, the resources, and the productivity of others are, disproportionately, used by the oppressors, in a way that ensures a good life for them at the expense of the oppressed who sustain unfair living conditions.

The ideology of oppression manifests clearly and profoundly in colonial contexts, where the colonizer uses power to dominate the colonized people and exploit them. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, like any other colonizer-colonized relationship, the Palestinians have been abstracted from the rank of humanity. When Israel was declared in 1948, the Israeli leadership considered the Palestinians as a non-entity. In a statement given to the Sunday Times on 15 June 1969 Golda Meir, who was the Prime Minister of Israel from 1969 to 1974, said: "There is no such thing as a Palestinian people... They didn't exist."

Later, Yitzhak Rabin recognized the PLO as the unique legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and signed the Oslo Accords with President Arafat. In spite of the official recognition of the Palestinian people as a partner in the peace process, Israel established its relationship with the Palestinians based on the logic of colonial appropriation. According to this logic, the colonized people are classified as a domesticated other. Here, I recall Helene Cixous who summarizes this relationship when she talks about "some annihilating dialectical magic" whereby the self establishes its selfhood "by expelling what was strange; excluding it but not dismissing it; enslaving it" (cited in Young, 2004, p. 32). In this context, she describes her experience as an Algerian female in France, who was oppressed and exploited by the colonial power. By "strange" she meant the colonized who is othered through an "inclusion" that does not include or an exclusion that does not "exclude." The colonized is considered as an opposite other, but it is, at the same

time, known and included in the self to serve it. In this colonial appropriation, the otherness of the colonized people is destroyed; their identity is fixed and defined by the colonizer.

According to such a reductive relationship, the Israelis identify themselves as civilized, modern democratic, and so on, while the Palestinian other comes to be identified as the opposite, simply by being other to the Israeli self. So, the Palestinians are an uncivilized, aggressive, barbarian, terroristic, and savage people. There is no need for the Israeli people to deal with the Palestinians to know these characteristics attributed to them; it is enough to know that they are "the other" to reduce them to such an image. This involves an epistemic violence committed in the very act of knowing the other. According to Spivak (1988), the other in this context is responded to "through assimilation"(p.292). That is to say, the so-called other is reduced to a fixed identity projected to it, without taking its very otherness into account. Then the information produced in this process of othering is dealt with as absolute facts/truth about the other.

Yet, the epistemic violence helps the Israeli occupation to justify any act of physical violence or any oppression against the Palestinians. For example, the terrorization of the population during invasions, air raids, the killings, the destruction of lands, and other forms of violence are committed, by Israel, under the pretext of fighting terrorism and ensuring the security of the Israeli people. Moreover, for the Israeli army, the oppression practiced against the Palestinians, the restrictions of movement, and the humiliation at checkpoints aim to "civilize them and teach them to respect law and order." In addition, Israel always intimidates the PNA and instigates a state of insecurity in area (A), accusing the Palestinian leadership of

supporting terrorism. Under the slogan: "Protection of the Israeli people from the Palestinian terrorism", Israel has succeeded to gain the sympathy and support of other countries, particularly the USA.

The oppression to which the Palestinians are subjected by Israel is duplicated by the oppression, which is embodied in the interaction among the Palestinians themselves in the everyday life. This type of oppression is known as "the civilized oppression" as it is cultivated by the media, culture, politics and other rules or institutions (Harvey, 1999). Like other societies, this kind of oppression is practiced in the Palestinian society against the vulnerable or unprivileged social groups, based on gender, class, disability, age, political affiliation etc….

I focus here on the oppression which is based on social class, i.e. the oppression that is reproduced as a result of the interaction between the privileged class (the ruling class, the elites, the rich) and the unprivileged one(s). I agree with Herbert Kelman that identity is influenced by any change that may occur in the social structure, such as the evolution of a new class; "identities are commonly reconstructed, sometimes gradually and sometimes radically, as historical circumstances change (…) or new elites come to the fore" (1997 b. p. 338). I think that in a very closed society, like Palestine, which has very limited resources to serve the needs of its people, the interaction among the social classes affects, to a great extent, the national identity. Generally, the Palestinian society is divided into three classes: the elites, [those who occupy leading positions in the PNA and the UNRWA, as well as the important businesspersons], the middle class [people who run small businesses] and the poor. Today, the possibility to work in the institutions of the PNA is difficult due to the economic siege and lack of funds to pay salaries. Most of the people depend on

social aids offered by the PNA, the UNRWA, the European Union, or any relief institution. Under such conditions, the poor people, including children and women have to submit to the oppression of the elites to survive. Of course, such oppression exists elsewhere in the world, but in Palestine, it is more prominent, and it affects the national identity/unity in the face of the Israeli occupation.

In fact, the bad quality of life that the majority of the Palestinians experience due the double oppression, which originates within their society and is exercised by the colonizer, generates mental disorders, depression, and melancholia. This may force them to be aggressive in their behaviors. Therefore, the sociologists and the psychologists, working in the occupied Palestinian territories, warn against the increase in the rate of violence and crimes there and call for social and political justice to alleviate the Palestinians' sufferings and strengthen their attachment to their homeland (Maan News Agency 2012).

Chapter 5

THE PASSAGEWAY TO NATIONAL IDENTITY

This chapter includes the research methodological approach and the samples, which are used to conduct this study.

5.1 Methodological Approach

To achieve the aim of his/her study, every researcher has to employ one or more research methods. Such methods are the process through which the researcher goes on to investigate a problem or an issue so that he/she can reach new information or make deep interpretations.

This thesis is a qualitative research in the field of communication and media studies. It is very interesting in this field that it is interdisciplinary. That is to say, it interrelates with other fields such as sociology, psychology, cultural studies, public relations, and so on. Such intersection between media studies and other disciplines, gives the experts and researchers in this field the opportunity to benefit from different theories or methods, which are used by other scholars in other fields. Actually, media texts, like films, or TV programs, can be approached from different perspectives such as cultural studies, psychology, or political economy.

As this study focuses on the (re) construction of the Palestinian national identity in films, I conduct textual analysis of these texts. Yet, it should be taken into consideration that the messages involved in films, like any other text, are

representations, i.e. what we learn through them is not already there as a static fact. The idea is that since the signs signify inter-textually, the message of a text is the product of disarticulation and re-articulation of signifiers. Such re-articulation aims to fix and organize signs in a particular way that produces a meaningful message. However, the reading of this message is always open-ended because signs are polysemic and intertexual so they can not be reduced to one specific research method that leads to one static truth.

In order to understand how the Palestinian identity is constructed in the films selected for this study, I applied deconstruction as a strategy for my textual analysis. According to Derrida, "deconstruction" is a way to read texts. He argues that

> [A] text is no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far (not submerging or drowning them in an undifferentiated homogeneity (Derrida, 1979, p. 84).

So, deconstruction is a helpful approach in this study as well as in other studies, to comprehend how meaning is constructed. Derrida indicates that each text leads to another text and the meaning production is an unfinished process; therefore, no one specific methodological approach can be fixed as a standard procedure to judge a text. Hence, "deconstruction is inventive or it is nothing at all; it does not settle for methodical procedures, it opens up a passageway" (Derrida, 1989, p. 42). Remarkably, this statement involves a reference to the root of the word "method" which comes from the Greek "Meta-Hodos."; the latter means "way or path".

Textual analysis in itself is a popular and useful method in qualitative studies, including media studies. Silverman (2005) considers that textual analysis helps

scholars, in qualitative researches, to carryout investigations and find out so much information. He adds that through textual analysis the researcher can juxtapose the content or ideas that contribute to make generalizations about a particular society or issue.

I think that applying deconstructive textual analysis will be a good passageway to examine the representation of the Palestinian national identity in films and how it is reshaped, in response of the recent developments in Palestine. I seek to be a "writerly" reader, in Barthes's terms, who negotiates with the text and so participate in the construction of the meaning, and not to be a "readerly" reader who merely consumes a message given by others (Barthes, 1974 p 4-5).

5.2 Context and Sample of Study

Two films are selected as samples to conduct this study. They are "The Salt of This Sea" by Annemarie Jacir and "Laila's Birthday", by Rashid Mashrawi. Both films are produced in 2008. The events of Jacir's film take place between Ramallah in the West Bank and Israel or as she calls it the land occupied in 1948, while Mashrawi's "Laila's Birthday" is filmed entirely in Ramallah.

Generally, there are few drama films in the Palestinian cinema, so I have had to select my samples from a limited list of films and to ensure that they have English subtitles to be understandable by my supervisor, the jury members, and any person who is interested in reading this research.

When I came to decide the films to be analyzed, I selected them according to the following criteria:

-The films should be, recently, made in the history of the Palestinian cinema;

-The films should be awarded international prizes;

-The films should be written and directed by a Palestinian filmmaker and filmed in the occupied Palestinian territories. The above-mentioned films met those criteria. They are written and directed by Palestinian filmmaker, and they received critical attention and awards internationally, as I will mention in more details in the next chapter.

5.3 Analysis Dimensions

This study looks at the reconstruction of Palestinian national Identity in terms of self-other relationships. So, the analysis covers two dimensions:

1- The Palestinians' relationship to the External Other i.e. Israel. This includes the colonial manifestations that appear throughout the films.

2- The Internal national identity i.e. the Palestinian-Palestinian relationships; this includes the structure of the Palestinian society and the national values involved in that structure, within the context of interaction among people in the everyday life.

In addition, the analysis will address the films' narrative, characters, and the cinematic elements, particularly the camerawork and the sound to show how such aspects contribute to the meaning of the Palestinian identity in the films.

Chapter 6

IN SEARCH FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY

> *"The further we get from the Palestine of our past, the more precarious our status, the more disrupted our being"* Edward Said.

This chapter is dedicated to examine the representation of the Palestinian identity in "The Salt of this Sea" and "Laila's Birthday." Being two of the most recent works in the Palestinian cinema, these films can represent the deteriorated situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and how the identity of their people is reshaped in response. In other words, each one creates a particular experience about how the feelings and the actions of those people are influenced by the inhuman circumstances under which they live.

6.1 The Salt of This Sea

6.1.1 Film Context

"The Salt of this Sea" is the first feature film to be made by the Palestinian-American filmmaker Annemarie Jacir. As I mentioned in the second chapter, she is one of the key figures in the Palestinian cinema, and she made many distinguished documentaries about Palestinian issues, such as "The Satellite Shooters" and "Until When." Her "Like Twenty Impossibles" was the first Palestinian film to be selected officially in Cannes international festival 2003; it won more than 15 awards (Philistine Films, 2008).

The film under discussion was released in 2008, in memory of the 60th anniversary of the *Nakba* and the Dawayma massacre in 1948. It is, also, dedicated to national figures in the Palestinian history such as Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Edward Said, and Ibrahim Hurani. So, it serves as a "site of memory" for the Palestinian nation.

About the context of production of the film, the director said in an interview that it was the hardest project she has ever made. According to her, it took her more than five years to raise fund for the film. Then she made it with a limited budget in which there is no Israeli contribution (Jacir, GRIT TV, 2009). She mentioned that she worked with more than (67) actors most of whom were Palestinians, and that she was interested in working with talented Palestinian youth as they are more able to contribute to the meaning of the film than the foreign actors. Also, she believes that working with young Palestinian artists or amateurs is necessary for the development of the Palestinian cinema (Jacir, 2008, p. 16). Regarding the conditions of filming, Jacir said that as the film events take place between Ramallah and the land occupied in 1948, "with the help of the French consulate, we applied for permits for the West Bank crew to work on the film inside the 1948 borders. Not surprisingly, not one single member was granted a permit. Again we applied, and again we were rejected" (Jacir, 2008, p. 16). So, the staff had to find their own way to move between the two sides, particularly, the Palestinian protagonist Saleh Bakri who holds the Israeli ID.

Although it was filmed and produced in very difficult conditions, the film came to light and received critical attention and many awards such as:

-Best First Film in Traverse City Film Festival, 2009

-Best of Fest Select in Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival 2009

-Special Jury Prize in Oran International Festival of Arab Cinema, 2009

-Best Screenplay in Dubai International Film Festival, 2008

-Randa Chahal Prize in Journées cinématographiques de Carthage, 2008

6.1.2 Film Narrative

The film main theme is the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland. It tells the story of a Palestinian-American young woman (Soraya) who "returns" to her homeland, Palestine, to restore the savings of her grandfather and to restart her life there, as she dreams. In Ramallah, she fails to restore her grandfather's money and to get the right of residence. She falls in love with a young man (ʿImad), who is, like her, a refugee. Yet, unlike her, ʿImad dreams of leaving the Palestinian territories but he cannot. The lovers and a friend of theirs (Marwan) decide to rob the bank to recover Soraya's rightful inheritance money and then hide inside Israel. They succeed to get the money and to enter Israel where Soraya visits her grandfather's house in Jaffa, and ʿImad visits his village of origin, Al Dawayma. At the end of the film, the protagonists meet their inescapable fate: Soraya is expelled, and ʿImad is arrested by the Israeli forces.

The narrative of the film is organized by the plot starting from Soraya's arrival in Israel, then in Ramallah, her failure to recover her grandfather's savings, her love relation, the bank robbery, the escape to Israel, and finally her arrest and expulsion. Moreover, I think that Soraya's arguments about her national rights are essential for the organization and the progress of the narrative - the right to return, the right to her grandfather's savings, the right to citizenship, and the right to her family's home.

6.1.3 Main Characters

There are three protagonists in the film: Suheir Hammad (Soraya[7]), Saleh Bakri
(ʿImad[8]), Riyad Ideis (Marwan[9]).

Below, I introduce their personal characteristics, generally, before discussing the
national identity through their actions and reactions in the film:

- **Soraya** is a young woman who was born and raised in Brooklyn to a Palestinian
family that was forced to flee to Lebanon during the war of 1948, and then moved to
the USA. Although she has the American nationality, she considers herself in exile,
which should come to an end by her homecoming journey to Palestine. It is
remarkable that she has a strong nostalgia to the homeland although she has never
been to any place there. What has shaped her national identity and linked her to
Palestine are the memories that were transmitted to her by her parents and
grandparents.

She is strong, determined and a decision-maker "my family's money is in that bank,
and I am here to get them back and I will". She is brave, and she manages to some
extent to restore some of her rights. She is, also, romantic and emotional; she is full
of love for the homeland, for the sea, and for her boyfriend, as we witness in the film.

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[7] Suheir Hammad' s name in the film is (ثريا) in standard Arabic, which is transliterated into English as (Thurayya) according to transliteration system adopted by the International Journal for Middle East Studies (IJMES). But in colloquial Arabic particularly the Palestinian dialect which is spoken in the film, this name is pronounced and transliterated as (Soraya). It is written in the film English transcript in the same way. So, in this research, I wrote Hammad's name as it is pronounced in the film (Soraya).

[8] Saleh Bakri's name in the film is (عماد) which is transliterated into English as (ʿImad), according to IJMES system.

[9] Riyad Ideis's name in the film is (مروان) which is transliterated into English as (Marwan)   , according to IJMES system.

Moreover, Soraya is argumentative, throughout the film, she argues with the Israeli soldiers and with the Palestinian officials as well. Yet, she is unrealistic, that is why she is criticized by the people around her. For example, the bank manager responds to her demand to recover her grandfather's savings, saying: "There's really no need for stunts and dramatic stories."

- ʿ**Imad** is a young man who lives as a refugee in his homeland. He was born to a Palestinian family that moved to a refugee camp in Ramallah after 1948. He suffers from socioeconomic deprivations as he belongs to the working class, in addition to the restrictions of movement and the inhuman treatment to which he is exposed by Israeli occupation "I have not been to the sea in 17 years".

He is like Soraya angry about the situation, but he is more realistic and unlike her, he seeks a home outside Palestine. ʿImad symbolizes the Palestinian youth who suffer from the trauma of siege and the lifeless situation under occupation. Yet, he is romantic and open to the future. He dreams of free and stable life in Canada where he got a scholarship, and later he dreams of a happy family life with Soraya.

- **Marwan** is ʿImad's and Soraya's friend. He is an ex-prisoner in the Israeli jails. Like ʿImad, he is marginalized in the Palestinian society and lives the trauma of the Israeli siege, so he wishes to join ʿImad in Canada in the future. He has artistic tendencies; he is interested in filmmaking. In this way, he challenges the harsh reality around him. Marwan has a sense of humor, which hides his deep depression, particularly, when he realizes that the homeland for which he was jailed has shrunk and become so difficult to achieve with the passing of time.

Generally, the three protagonists are peaceful, but the double oppression to which they are subjected forces them to risk their lives. Throughout the film, the audiences are invited to identify with their sufferings and aspirations under the siege. In an interview published by Al Mustqbal newspaper Jacir said that the three characters are close to her. Soraya is like her Palestinian-American self who has great loyalty to her homeland and who returns to it with high expectations. ʿImad represents the hard situation discovered by Jacir and Soraya later, and Marwan is similar to her in that he is interested in filmmaking as a way to express his feelings (Jacir & Al Musmar, 2008, p. 20).

6.1.4 Reading the "The Salt of This Sea"

In what follows, I trace the (re)construction of the Palestinian national identity under the Israeli occupation, as represented through the characters' interaction and reactions to the situations they face as well as through the cinematic elements, particularly the symbols, the camerawork and the music that contribute to the sense of national identity in the film under discussion. Once again, I would like to mention that the analysis targets two aspects: The Israeli-Palestinian relationships and the Palestinian-Palestinian relationships.

To better understand the representation of national identity, the film analysis is divided into themes that correspond to the film narrative as follows:

The Film Opening:

"The Salt of This Sea" concentrates on the right of the Palestinian refugees to return. It starts by recalling the origin of the refugees' problem as the opening scenes take us back to the catastrophe of 1948. They show the demolition of houses and many Palestinians fleeing their homeland. Then, we see Soraya arriving in Israel, and

standing face to face in front of the Israeli officers. At this moment, the sequence of events begins. In this way, the film constructs the past that justifies the present, affirming the Palestinian historical narrative of the *Nakba*, which is always denied by Israel. It is noteworthy that the opening music is taken from Marsil Khleifi's song "Bahriya", one of the famous songs that call for national resistance and steadfastness.

Also, it is remarkable that the colors in *Nakba* scenes are white and black unlike the rest of the film. This is to emphasize the distance in time between the past and the present; such techniques contribute to the meaning of national identity in the film.

Figure 1: Image of the catastrophe of 1948

Welcome to Israel !

Being a US citizen, Soraya is given a two-week visa to Israel. Yet, in the airport, her American nationality does not facilitate her trip or provide her immunity from the arrogant Israeli treatment. The Israeli officers welcome her in their own way! Of course, with a lot of questions and tough face expressions.

Figure 2: Soraya at Israeli Aerport (Bust shot)

Soraya's Arab and Palestinian origins are the central point of reference in responding to her as an other. In normal cases, the foreigners are given three months visa, but she gets only two weeks. Even her access is considered as an extraordinary matter, as she is heading for the PNA areas, to which Israel restricts severely the foreigners' access "you are lucky that they let you enter," says Soraya's friend. This is a facet of the siege imposed on the Palestinians with foreign passports as well as peace workers after the Second Intifada. Furthermore, she is made to take off some of her clothes and is questioned for a relatively long time. It is notable that the questions concentrate on the purpose of the visit and on her roots. No question is asked about her US citizenship or life there. In fact, her ethnic identity as a Palestinian dominates her American one in the eyes of the Israeli forces.

They provoke her by detailed questions like "What is your religion? Who purchased your ticket? How did you get the money? " and by repeatedly asking some questions like "What is the purpose of your visit?" "Where was your father born?" "Where was your grandfather born?" As if everything can be justifiable for the self, the Israeli officers use their usual pretext to justify their arrogance towards Soraya: "it is for your security."

In response, Soraya shows considerable self-control vis-à-vis the Israeli provocative treatment. While talking with the Israeli soldiers, the trauma of exile can be felt in her voice and seen in her eyes. Form her answers, it is clear that she considers Israel as an external other and responds to it by negating its identity. That is to say, although she can not ignore Israel's power on the ground, she excludes it from her dictionary. This is obvious when she answers about her grandfather's birthplace by saying: "Here, he was born here….in Jaffa." She answers this question twice, making

Jaffa stand for the historic Palestine. Throughout the film, Soraya never uses the word "Israel". Yet she later admits that "they can deny me entry, or turn me back." This shows that she lives in conflict, between her beliefs and the reality. In fact, this young woman represents those who refuse to share with the Israeli other any part of their national identity, specifically the territory, and who criticize the Oslo Accords because the latter failed to bring peace.

Among the significant questions directed to Soraya by the Israeli soldiers are the following:

The Israeli Officer: "Do you have another passport?"

Soraya: "No"

Officer: "Do not you have a Lebanese passport?"

Soraya: "No"

Officer: "Why? "

Soraya: "Because I was born in Brooklyn"

The Officer's questions refer to the Israeli position regarding the right of refugees to return. They involve that the problem of refugees should be solved by offering them citizenship in the host countries, which is not a new argument.

However, Soraya's answer "Because I was born in Brooklyn" is problematic. This answer implies that she could have the Lebanese passport if she were born in Lebanon. Yet, so far, Lebanon has not given the right of citizenship to the Palestinian refugees who were born or live there. Of course, Soraya may have given this answer to avoid further argumentation with the officer.

Yet, her answer draws attention to a remarkable change in the position of the PNA towards the question of refugees, after the Second Intifada when the President Mahmoud Abbas overtly called on the Arab countries, that host Palestinian refugees, to give them the right of citizenship (Ghazal, 2005). This is a clear convergence between the Israelis and the Palestinians in relation to the right of return, one of the most problematic points in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations process.

Apart from her answers throughout the interrogation scenes, the audience can see many symbols that emphasize the protagonist's belonging to Palestine: When the Israeli officers open her luggage, they find pictures of her family. Such pictures symbolize the past denied by Israel. It is possible to say that Soraya, carrying these pictures, succeeds to some extent to bring her family back to their homeland after more than 60 years of exile. Another symbol is the image of the Palestinian flag which appears on the cover of Soraya's notebook that she gives to the Israeli officer to register the phone number of her hosting friend in Ramallah. Even the color of her blouse can be read as a national symbol. The orange color symbolizes the orange of Jaffa[10].Noticeably, the orange appears in many scenes throughout the film as a national symbol.

When we examine the interrogation scenes, we find that the camera is close to the faces. The characters are filmed with close up shots that show their faces, or bust shots, which show their bodies from the mid-chest area up, with focus on the face. According to Jacir, she took close shots to express the restrictions and the pressures from which the characters suffer (Jacir, 2008).

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[10] Historically, Jaffa has been known for its orange. In 1911, Jaffa was exporting 870,000 cases of orange, which accounts for one-third of the port's export revenues (Sorek, 2004, p. 278).

Figure 3: Soraya (close up shot)

I elaborate that such pressures are remarked in the faces and the body language of the Israeli officers as well as Soraya. Of course, Soraya is under the pressure of the Israeli mistreatment, while the Israelis, as oppressors, are besieged by their security concerns, which force them to give a little space to their humanity in responding to the other. According to Paulo Freire, "dehumanization marks not only the oppressed "those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it" (2005, p. 44).

Figure: 4 Soraya and an israeli officer (narrow camera angle- bust shot)

Welcome to Ramallah!

After Soraya crosses the Israeli checkpoint and makes her way to areas controlled by the PNA, all the stressful face expressions change into great happiness. She looks at everything around her with remarkable enthusiasm.

When she enters into Ramallah, the film shows a contradictory picture of life in this city. On the one hand, we see markers of "national authority" such as the Palestinian flag, and a Palestinian policeman directing the traffic. Moreover, we see an energetic

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city in which the streets are crowded with cars and people. On the other hand, we see many pictures of martyrs, which remind the people that this authority is incomplete: "the Israeli occupation is always there." Also, we see some young men who stand by the street, near the memorial pictures of martyrs, doing nothing. This signifies that the past is always present in Palestine. In addition, I maintain that when we see such young men, who symbolize the future standing motionless near the martyrs' pictures, this means that the progress of time is a regression, so those young men are in slow death under the Israeli blockade, or they are, like the ones in the pictures, martyrs, but on the waiting list, in the context of the ongoing Israeli attacks.

Actually, the use of the word "return" to describe Soraya's journey to Ramallah carries a symbolic signification, as it is the first time for her to visit this place and not a return to it. She symbolizes the return of her ancestors as well as other Palestinian refugees. Soraya expects to be welcomed in her homeland by her national fellows, and she plans to restart her life in Ramallah, yet surprisingly she is looked at as an "other" who needs to justify her visit or "return" to the Palestinians as she did to the Israelis. This puts her in a position of self-defense all the time.

Through Soraya's interaction with the people, the film reveals many aspects of the Palestinian identity and how it has been (re)configured after the Oslo Accords. It shows the emergence of new elites in the society with the establishment of the PNA. This privileged class includes those who occupy leading positions in the PNA [the ruling class] as well as those who occupy high positions in the private sector that has developed in the area (A) under the auspices of the PNA. This change in the social structure coincides with a change in the national values as the ruling class and the elites have the power, due to their authoritative positions, to impose their own views.

I recall Kelman's argument that "identities are commonly reconstructed, sometimes gradually and sometimes radically, as historical circumstances change (…) or new elites come to the fore" (Kelman, 1997 b). With the ongoing siege, the gap between this privileged class and the working class has widened in terms of economic well-being as well as national values.

For example, the two men, who invite Soraya for dinner and who belong to the privileged class in the society, question her "return." Instead of welcoming such a decision, they find it illogic and ask for justifications:

-"What brings a pretty girl like you back to Palestine?"

- "What are you here for?" Then, when she argues in favor of "the right of return", her argument seems meaningless to them. In fact, we are, here, in front of two opposite and equally misguided visions: those who live outside Palestine believe that they can lead a better life inside it, while those who are inside it look at the exiles as privileged people. Further, both men support a two-state solution; this means that Soraya and her like may return to the future Palestinian state but not to their original homes occupied in 1948, as they say: "Jaffa was lost long ago." This solution is rejected by Soraya, who considers it as surrender.

Additionally, Soraya enters in direct confrontation with the elites at an institutional level when she claims her right to recover her grandfather's money from *the British-Palestinian Bank*. In the bank, she hears the same discourse from the manager "after the war, everything was lost… Here you are coming from America for a few Palestinian pounds; they do not even exist anymore." Actually, the savings, that she seeks, symbolize the recovery of historic Palestine. For this manager and his like, this old Palestine and everything related to it are no longer valid. Furthermore, I

think that the name of the bank is not an arbitrary choice; it involves political signification. It refers to the complicity of Britain in the loss of the protagonist's homeland in 1948, and it blames the Palestinians for signing the Oslo Accords, which conformed such loss.

In another endeavor to approve her national identity, Soraya claims her right of citizenship under the auspices of the PNA. But, again she fails to get this right. It is remarkable that the official responsible encourages her to keep her US passport as a better option for her. He admits that she is Palestinian nationally, but without nationality, in conformity with the obligations of the Oslo Accords. This situation means that after these accords, the Palestinian state, which is under negotiations, is not designed to be a state that includes all the refugees. So, not all the Palestinian ethnos can be legal citizens as we infer from Soraya's experience and the response of the official: "You can not get a passport, nor a residence ID….You have a US passport, what's better than that." As he explains to her that the PNA has to respect its agreements with Israel, behind him appears the picture of the former President Arafat, in reference to his responsibility for such a development in the Palestinian identity. I recall that, according to the national charter issued by the PLO in 1968, any child born to a Palestinian father inside or outside Palestine after 1947 is a Palestinian citizen. But, after 1994, the political indicators on the ground show more flexibility in this regard. It is clear from the above-mentioned exchanges that the historic Palestine and the heritage that existed before 1948 disappeared from the Palestinian official discourse.

Of course, all those people who contest Soraya's claims and criticize her decision to "return" are considered more realistic and flexible as they accept to share with Israel

the land to reach peace. This may be because they live under occupation and internalize its power on the ground while she did not.

The first time Soraya is welcomed in her homeland and does not need to provide arguments for her "return" is at ʿImad's house. "Welcome to your country", ʿImad's mother says. This is a refugee family, which belongs to the working class. The mother describes Jaffa, the origin of Soraya as "the bride of the sea," in reference to the cultural and historical importance of this city for the Palestinians. This shows that the historic Palestine and its cultural features are still part of the discourse of the ordinary people.

From another perspective, the film depicts the moral values involved in the Palestinian identity nowadays. It shows how the elites, who internalize the oppression of the colonizer, tend to practice it against the poor people, particularly the working class. This is clear in the way the man, who invites Soraya for dinner, talks to the waiter (ʿImad) in the restaurant.

The film, also, shows a remarkable social disintegration in the everyday life. For example, the working class is excluded from participation in the social and cultural life. Only can privileged society members enjoy theater shows, with special invitations. No one can buy a ticket, at the entrance, as we see in the film. This means that there is a sharp division among the social classes; even if one has money, one is not allowed to join the elites unless s/he belongs to them. It is a very radical class differentiation.

Besides, the film shows the exploitation and selfishness in the Palestinian society. A house owner says to Soraya: "because I like you, only 800$," in reference to the rent. This woman knows that Soraya is a newcomer in Ramallah, and so she wants to get the maximum price from her, even though Soraya informs her that she is jobless so far. In the same context, the restaurant owner where Soraya and ʿImad work does not pay them their wages using the siege as a pretext to justify this unfair situation. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the siege, which is generally seen as a signifier of national suffering, is very functional and beneficial for some privileged groups in the Palestinian society, for it helps them to maximize their profits and to justify the exploitation of the other(s).

Love in Exile:

From the first moment that Soraya meets ʿImad in the restaurant, she identifies with him. Later, they fall in love. What brings them together is the double oppression from which they suffer: from one side the Israeli occupation and from the other side the marginalization in the Palestinian society. Both of them are refugees, yet they have a very different experience of exile: ʿImad's exile is inside Palestine, while hers is external. "[A]ll my life, I have dreamed of coming back," she says. Yet, one may wonder how is it possible that she has developed such a strong sense of nostalgia for a place she has never visited! In fact, Soraya's attitude demonstrates that national identity is based on an invented and an imaginary identification with a place, which is an other to the self. In addition, as shown in the film, she has fertile memories or post-memories about Jaffa. Soraya recalls names and describes places, based on the memories of her grandparents "My grandfather swam in this sea every morning, then he would walk on Al Nuzha Street." I recall Hirsch's argument that, "the

postmemory is the strongest form of memory, precisely because its connection to the object, or the origin, is not mediated by memories but by investment and imagination" (1996, p. 659).

However, in spite of her struggle to integrate into the Palestinian society and enjoy her national rights, Soraya can not define herself as a purely Palestinian. She introduces herself in the bank as "I am a Palestinian from New York", or as "the girl of American camps". Even on one of her blouses, the word "Brooklyn" is written in Arabic, as shown in the image below. This reflects the hybridity of her identity. According to Said, "exiles are eccentrics who feel their difference" (Said, 2002, p. 182).

Figure 5: "Brooklyn" is written on Soraya's blouse in Arabic

ʿImad, his lover, is originally from Al Dawayma village, which is known now as Hamatzya. We see his family members gathered in a very limited space in an old house. They represent different generations of the Palestinian refugees.

Moreover, we see the UNRWA banner on his brother's school, which is a marker of the refugee identity. Actually, UNRWA's education system, which separates the refugees from the non-refugees has contributed to reinforce their sense of not belonging to the place where they live.

So, although ʿImad is inside his homeland, he stands on the "territory of not-belonging" in Said's terms (Said, 2002, p. 140). This is clear when he introduces himself to Soraya as "I grew up in Al Amaari, and I live now in Ramallah but I am originally from Al Dawayma". As a refugee, he does not have a strong sense of belonging to where he is. Therefore, his dream, unlike Soraya, is to go in external exile to escape from the pressures of the occupation. He has no post-memories about the historic Palestine. This is because he grew up under the Israeli siege, and aggressions. So, for him, there is neither a past to remember or to return to nor a future to dream of in Palestine.

The two lovers resist the blockage by their imagination. Sitting on a hill that overlooks the Israeli colonies, ʿImad points at the sea, as if he can see it "that is the sea over there", and when she asks if she can see Jaffa, he tells her that Jaffa is "over there." I maintain that in this scene, the protagonists are looking at the past. The places that they are trying to see signify the historic Palestine, i.e., their past, their ancestors' origin. As shown below, the film director uses a wide long shot. This is to show the long distance between "there and here", between the past and the present.

Figure 6: Soraya & ʿImad look at the past

Moreover, Jacir maintains that, through the camera's eye, she sought to show that while the Palestinians are restricted in a very limited space, Palestine is wide and open. Therefore, this scene and other scenes filmed inside the land occupied in 1948

are made with wide camera shots to give the impression of openness of which the Palestinians are deprived (Jacir & Al Musmar, 2008).

The film shows a remarkable shift in ʿImad's character, particularly after he falls in love with Soraya. In the beginning, he criticizes Soraya's "return", saying "why you really came back, life is better in other places." He appears more realistic than her "wake up. They won." Then, he apologizes to her, by sending a case of oranges. Here, the orange is not just a color, as I previously mentioned regarding the Soraya's clothes, but a fruit employed again as national symbol, to contribute to the meaning of identity in the film.

After his dream to travel to Canada is broken when his visa application is rejected for the fourth time, ʿImad surrenders to Soraya's logic, and legitimizes the robbery of the bank to recover her money, though he was against the idea, when she first suggested it.

Transformation of Feelings into Actions:

ʿImad agrees to help Soraya in her plan to rob the bank. Their friend Marwan welcomes the idea from the first moment and shows enthusiasm for it; "it is a great idea, the experience I have been after." Actually, all of them suffer from the oppression imposed by Israel as well as the oppression of the Palestinian society as part of the working class. We see how ʿImad is made to take off his clothes, when they are stopped by an Israeli security patrol. Moreover, we see how Soraya and others suffer at checkpoints in addition to the barbed wires, the separation wall, and the closed military areas. In the film, we see the streets of Jerusalem full of foreigners and religious Jews. According to Marwan, "I have not been to [Jerusalem]

in 8 years." Actually, this young man has a special experience of oppression, being an ex-prisoner in the Israeli jails. He lives a crisis of identity after his liberation. As shown in the film, he accepts the robbery of the bank as an easy matter "I will do anything you ask," he says to Soraya, although this is supposed to be in contradiction with his beliefs as an ex-national fighter. His attitude shows a deviation in his moral principles and reflects his depression because a person like him is supposed to be treated as a national hero, not to be marginalized.

From another angle, he seems disappointed because he sees the national values for which he spent years in prison are degrading. He says: "we were never allowed to carry guns." Here, he refers to the "Wye agreement" signed in 1998 by Arafat and Benjamin Nethanyahu , which prohibits the use of weapons in the areas under the control of the PNA (Isseroff, 2002). Marwan continues "now that we shoot each other, they are flooding in, American made, Israeli approved", in reference to the most recent and dangerous development in the Palestinian identity which is the bloody internal conflict between the two rivals Fatah and Hamas which led to the separation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank administratively.

After 2007, Hamas is classified by the PNA and other political factions as an internal significant other because it took control over the Gaza Strip and put in danger the Palestinian identity and unity. Similarly, for Hamas, Fatah is a threat. In the media, we often hear each party accusing the other of working against the national unity (Shorouk Newspaper, 2013).

From Marwan's speech, we infer that, in the conflict with the external other (Israel), the use of weapons is illegal by official agreement and classified as terrorism, but in

the internal conflict, weapons are available and allowed. The film mentions the two indirect parties in the conflict, the USA and Israel, who always feed the tensions between Fatah and Hamas.

In this atmosphere full of conflicts and depression, the three protagonists realize that they have nothing to lose, so they decide to change the situation, regardless of the consequences. In their reaction, they identify with their oppressor as a tactic. That is to say, Soraya in robbing the bank acts like the Israeli army. "[T]he Israeli army robbed banks several times already," as Marwan tells her. But, she rejects his argument, saying: "It is my family's money." In order to differentiate herself from the Israeli forces, she executes the plan without bullets; also, during the robbery, ʿImad's face is covered with the Kuffia, an important national symbol, which is used by Palestinian fighters during their operations to recover their land. With the Kuffia, the robbery is legitimized as an act to recover the lost right.

Figure 7: ʿImad during the robbery

Generally, most of the camera shots related to the scenes filmed in Ramallah are between close and medium to give the impression of lack of freedom. Moreover, the director uses a song of a well-known Palestinian musician, Marwan Abado who sings for Palestine in exile.

So Close, Yet So Far:

After the robbery, the three heroes head to Israel to hide. Again, they identify with their oppressors as a tactic. They disguise as Israelis to cross the checkpoint. Here, I recall that they use the same trick employed by the Israeli occupation in 1948, when the Jews were disguised as Arabs to facilitate their access into the Palestinian villages, (Jewish/Israeli Massacres and Terrorism, 2013). Moreover, what is written on ʿImad's t-shirt "America Do not Worry" is a further identification with the oppressor as such words refer to the strategic ally of Israel, the USA.

Figure 8: Soraya, ʿImad and Marwan disguise as Israelis

Arriving in Israel, ʿImad, Soraya, and Marwan drive along the separation wall. Regardless of the labels given to it either by the Israeli side or the Palestinian one, this wall redrew the map of the occupied Palestinian territories as well as of Israel after 2002. It can be read as a borderline between Israel and the other. Even, its trace is on the agenda of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Yet, this border is impassable; it does not allow any communication between the communities that it separates.

ʿImad along with Marwan decides not to go back to Ramallah, where they have the feeling of "not belonging". He assures Soraya that "the lines are down, there is no connection" [between the Israelis and the Palestinians]. Beyond the disrupted electronic communications, ʿImad's words refer to the deadlock in the negotiation

process between the two sides after the Second intifada, compared with the years of 1990s.

Now, the three are in a homecoming journey, and the dream of return has become a reality. As Jacir uses her camera to show the incomplete "authority" of the PNA, with the presence of occupation in Ramallah, she uses it to represent and document the Palestinian history of the territories occupied in 1948. For example, we see a banner dated to 1924, with names of Arab mayors of Jerusalem and Jaffa. It is possible to say that through the camera's eye and with the three protagonists strolling in Tel Aviv and Jaffa, eating oranges, and looking at Jerusalem, particularly, at the Dome of the Rock, the most significant national symbol in the film, the historic Palestine is brought back to the Palestinians to some extent.

Figure 9: The petagonists look at the Dome of the Rock

It is worth mentioning that in the events filmed inside Israel, Jacir is inspired by other key filmmakers. She uses the camera to redraw the map of Palestine as Michel Khleifi did in "Fertile Memories" and other films (please refer to the 3rd chapter in Gertz & Khleifi, 2008 pp 74-97). Moreover, like Elia Suleiman in "The Chronicle of Disappearance", she uses Arab music (Asmahan song) to assert and restore the Arabic and Palestinian identity of what is known as Israel today (please refer to the 7th chapter in Gertz & Khleifi, 2008 p 176). Again, I draw attention that the director

took long and wide shots in these places to give the impression that the Palestinians can enjoy the open historic Palestine, yet they should be invisible to the Israeli forces (Jacir & Al Musmar, 2008).

It is interesting in this film that it provides a heterogeneous image of the Israeli other; it does not reduce it to the violent image of soldiers. Rather, it gives a voice to those who want peace. This is shown in the friendly behavior of the Israeli young woman who now owns Soraya's grandfather's home. She welcomes them to stay as long as they want. According to her, "I think everyone wants peace except for the leaders." She has mugs on which "End the Occupation" is written.

Yet, it is noticeable that this Israeli pacifist woman finds strange that there are filmmakers in Ramallah "there are filmmakers in Ramallah! I never imagined." Her reaction illustrates a reductive image of the Palestinian other who is seen as underdeveloped, or primitive. Of course, such a stereotypical image is communicated through the colonial discourse included in education or media. As Homi Bhabha (1994) argues, within the colonial context, the stereotype is not merely a (false) representation. It produces a normalizing judgment for the represented subject (p. 75). The conventional norm is that the identity of people who live in a particular place is defined nationally. However, within the colonial context, the identity of the colonized people is defined deficient by the regime of truth established by the colonizer. Then, it becomes something normal and natural due to the familiarizing effects of repetition.

However, in the light of her friendly reaction towards Soraya and her friends, the woman's astonishment can be read as an admiration for the Palestinians in the

occupied territories. She does not expect them to include talented or professional filmmakers in the context of the restrictions imposed on them.

For me, her comment, even if it is given with good intentions, involves a kind of stereotyping, because she remarkably excludes the possibility to find a filmmaker in Ramallah, "I **never** imagined." Yet it is worth mentioning that a number of Palestinian directors who live there are well-known already as they won international prizes such as Mashrawi and Burnat. I think that Jacir aims, from the exchange between Marwan, as a filmmaker, and the Israeli woman, in the film, to break the traditional belief that there are no film directors nor filmmaking activities in the Palestinian territories.

When we come to Soraya's reaction as a guest in her family's home, she enters into a heated argument with the Israeli woman, asking her to recognize the historical responsibility for the expulsion of the refugees, while for that woman, the Palestinians left their homes willingly. This is a key difference between the Israeli narrative and the Palestinian one, "this is my home, it was stolen from my family...This is not your home", says Soraya. In response, the Israeli woman argues: "I can say, this is the home they left…you won't speak about history, the past." Accordingly, to progress towards peace, the Palestinians are required to rewrite their history and identity and forget their past.

Actually, the two women are negotiating about the national existence on the land. Soraya claims an exclusive right of ownership of the home. So, she thinks that she is the one who decides if the Israeli woman can stay or not. The situation is different with Marwan. He acknowledges that this home originally belongs to Soraya's family,

but at the same time, he does not deny that it is owned by the Israeli woman now, so he invites Soraya to get the acceptance of the current owner in order to stay at "her home." In other words, Marwan looks at the woman as a partner with whom he can share the land, while Soraya looks at her as an aggressor. As a result, he remains, and she leaves.

Figure 10: Soraya in her family's home in Jaffa

Noticeably, in the above scene, it is the Israeli woman who wears an orange T-shirt and squeezes Jaffa oranges, which means that the Israelis and the Palestinians share the same claims over the territory and authenticity.

After they leave, Soraya's grandfather's home, the two lovers go to look for ʿImad's "Al Dawayma". The name of the village has been changed to Hamatzya. As we see in the film, they are strangers who need guides in their "homeland." They reach the place and start to dream of a happy family life. But, still for ʿImad, the American passport is the key for a hopeful future, while for Soraya, it is the Palestinian ID and steadfastness at the homeland. They discover that Al Dawayma has been transformed into a national park as an Israeli historian tells them. In this scene, two national pasts are claimed at the same time: the past of Soraya and the past of the Israeli other. Yet, as the history is dictated by the powerful side, Soraya and ʿImad withdraw.

At the end of the film, ʿImad is arrested and Soraya is expelled. But, before her expulsion, she reaffirms that her identity has nothing to do with the documents she carries as she says to an Israeli officer: "I was born here.. Jaffa. Al Nuzha Street…I have been here all my life", and she adds: "I have a Palestinian passport", referring to her American one. The film ends as it starts with scenes of forced expulsion from the historic Palestine, as if it asserts the inescapable fate of exile for the Palestinians. It shows how the "return" is a hard experience for Soraya. According to Said, "the further we get from the Palestine of our past, the more precarious our status, the more disrupted our being, the more intermittent our presence" (cited in Hammer, 2005, p. 23).

Soraya's homecoming journey can not put an end to her self-alienation, instead, it reproduces alienation. According to Derrida every de-tour is a re-turn. That is to say, every return leads inevitably to a new experience of exile (cited in Ilter & Alankus, 2010). She is in exile not only in the USA, or Israel, but also in the PNA areas, where she is hardly welcomed and where she has to face a new reality and redefine her identity. She can not return the redemptive homeland with which she authentically identifies because this place is transformed into a new one. Thus, homecoming is out of question in Said's terms.

6.2 Laila's Birthday

6.2.1 Film Context

"Laila's Birthday" is one of the recent films made by the well-known director Rashid Mashrawi. It was shot entirely in Ramallah in 2008. This film, like his other films, describes the here-and-now daily struggle for survival in the occupied territories. In fact, Mashrawi is influenced by his childhood as his family is originally from Jaffa,

but he grew up in the Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. So, in his films, he does not revive the past of 1948 directly, but, at the same time he does not completely dismiss it. He invokes its loss. This is felt and seen through the images of the refugee camps, the Israeli soldiers, and the like (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008, pp.101-102). He produced many distinguished films such as "Here is the Voice of Palestine", "Upside-down", "Long Days in Gaza", and "Curfew".

"Laila's Birthday" was produced with Netherland-Tunisia-Palestine cooperation. It is highly welcomed internationally, and it received many awards such as the Best Asian Feature Film in the Singapore International Film Festival in 2009.

6.2.2 Film Narrative

"Laila's Birthday's" focuses on the internal Palestinian situation and how it is influenced by the Israeli occupation to which it has been subjected for more than six decades. It narrates the events of a workday of a taxi driver "Abu Laila" in the West Bank city of Ramallah. This day is his daughter's birthday, and he should be back home at 8 o'clock to celebrate it. Abu Laila was an ex-judge in an Arab country who returned to the West Bank to work in the Ministry of Justice, but until his appointment is processed, he has to work as a taxi driver to survive. During his working hours, he is exposed to many difficult and sometimes absurd situations and deals with people from different ages, classes, and gender. So, through Abu Laila's taxi-driver experience, the audience is invited to take a journey in Ramallah and get an idea about how things are going on in the PNA areas, which are dominated by the continuing Israeli occupation. This film is thus a road movie. There is no plot to follow; instead, the narrative is organized by the movement from one place to another and with the sequence of time from the morning up to 8 o'clock PM.

6.2.3 Main character

In this film, the leading character is the taxi driver "Abu Laila". This role is played by the well- known actor/director Mohammed Bakri.

Abu Lalia can be classified as a returnee. He does not come back to the West Bank at the time of the establishment of the PNA in 1994, but he has been back after the Second Intifada to occupy a position in the Ministry of Justice and to reestablish his home in Ramallah. It seems that he was in exile for economic reasons in an Arab country, where he has worked as a judge, for ten years. He has a calm and balanced character. He is patient and flexible as he accepts to work as a taxi driver to survive. Yet, even when he takes on the role of a taxi driver, he is dominated by his experience as judge, so he respects rules and laws in every aspect in his life and enforces them on his customers. The taxi is the only place in which he can apply laws. Actually, Abu Laila lives in conflict between his past as judge who had a respectful position and an authority to impose order and his present as a taxi driver who has low social status and no accessibility to the rule of law.

He is well dressed, and he carries his briefcase, as if he is still a judge. Also, he keeps introducing himself as an ex-judge, trying to restore some of his dignity in a society that does not respect him as an intellectual or as a symbol of law. He is looked at as a stranger who speaks a non-understandable language "it is as if you are not from here", a costumer says to him. Therefore, it is possible to say that Abu Laila is in exile at his homeland. He has returned to Ramallah, with high expectations as he is promised to be appointed as a judge. Yet, when he arrives there, he finds a hard reality, a society, which does not speak his "language". However, he has a strong will to enforce the law and to have a happy family life. He never stops arguing with

the costumers about rules even if he is insulted by them. At the end of the film, he manages to celebrate his daughter's birthday and to keep smiling in spite of all the pressures he has experienced during the day.

6.2.4 Reading "Laila's Birthday"

This film delineates the Palestinian internal identity and how the national values, particularly the moral ones, which are the context of social/personal interactions, in the society, are reshaped in response to the deteriorated living conditions in Palestine.

Remarkably, in this film, we do not see any Israeli soldiers or the traditional images of invasions or checkpoints. Yet the occupation is omnipresent through the noise of the Israeli jets, the occasional bombing, and the refusal of Abu Laila to go to the checkpoints as signs of fear and danger.

A Normal Day in Ramallah:

The film opens with a high-angled wide shot to the national space, Ramallah City, at dawn, then the camera moves to the private space, the home of Abu Laila, who wakes up suddenly after hearing a mysterious noise. The bedroom is very dark. The protagonist takes us back to the national space in which Ramallah appears as a calm lifeless city. He can not recognize the source of the noise. In fact, this mysterious noise and the darkness of the room in the opening scene refer to the gloomy life and the ambiguity of the circumstances in Palestine where people have no clear vision of the situation around them. It, also, shows that, in Palestine, people do not feel safe even in their very private spaces.

Then, Abu Laila takes the audience in a round trip throughout Ramallah, until he is back to the point of start, his home, with a cake and a present to Laila who has just turned 7 years old. Generally, the situations to which he is exposed reveal the breakdown of the social system in the occupied Palestinian territories and how people are not able to interact properly in the everyday life, while he, as an ex- judge, with no authority, symbolizes the absence of law and justice.

As we read in the film, in the very beginning, Abu Laila negotiates with an old costumer about the concept of justice. From the conversation, we infer that such a concept is meaningless for the old generations of the *Nakba*, who since 1948 have been waiting for justice to return to their home or at least to live in peace and dignity in a Palestinian state; "Justice is in the hands of God only," the old man says. He wears the Palestinian scarf "Kuffia" a national symbol that used to be worn by the Palestinian farmers in 1936 and later by the national fighters, particularly by the former President Arafat. This means, that the pre-1948 past is still present over time and space, and is invested to reinforce the Palestinian identity.

When Abu Laila goes to the Ministry of Justice to follow up his appointment, he is given a cold shoulder by the new manager there. In this context, the film shows some corruptive practices in Palestine. Actually, the reactions of the manager vis-à-vis show that some members of ruling class have no loyalty to their responsibility towards the citizens but instead take care of insignificant issues.

Moreover, Abu Laila mentions the continual change in the government, which reflects the political instability in the PNA areas; so much so that, nowadays, there are two governments, one in Gaza and the other in Ramallah. The leaders of both

governments adopt nationalist discourse and claim attachment to the national values as well as reform policies to justify their decisions and actions. This political instability and internal conflict affect the citizens' lives negatively. According to Abu Laila, "one day, he [the ex-manager] says he does not know who is the new minister. Then, he says there will be no nominations before the constitution of a government of national unity…. and the country is being destroyed. There is no unity, no patriotism, and he says come tomorrow." Yet, the new manager ignores him and treats him as with the old and familiar "Come Tomorrow." After 2007, a new aim was added onto the national agenda, which is to restore the unity between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

In the context of the internal conflict, the ordinary people are forgotten, so they are left to find their own means to survive. Even the employees of the PNA are not exceptional. Their salaries do not meet their family needs; therefore, they look for another source of income. Such a condition leads to weaken the loyalty of the public servants to the PNA. The disrespect of the PNA, by its employees, appears when Abu Laila goes to the police station to hand out a mobile found in his taxi. There, the officer is not wearing his police uniform. His clothes are untidy. Even when he deals with Abu Laila he follows unnecessary bureaucratic procedures which affects negatively the relationship between the citizens and the security apparatuses.

In this film, Masharawi does not only depict the weakness of the Palestinian society but also the weakness of the Arab world in which words speak louder than actions. He also shows how the Palestinian issue is reduced to a humanitarian perspective. Remarkably, the rights of the Palestinians are mainly defined and supported in terms of human rights, rather than political and national ones. This is shown in the radio

news program to which Abu Laila is listening. The news focuses on the humanitarian situation in Palestine as well as on the ineffective response of the Arab countries regarding what is happening around them.

Ramallah, in the film, is a space that is too narrow to practice love or to contain youth desires. In this city, no one can enjoy privacy, so the lovers have to manipulate their families to meet. It is, moreover, very expensive as a young guy says: "one hour in taxi is cheaper than the internet."

Furthermore, Ramallah is a place in which people do not understand the language of the law. It is totally unfamiliar: "What? I don't understand. It is the first time in this country that someone asks me to fasten the belt. It is as if you are not from here," a costumer says. Abu Laila's language is unfamiliar for a society that is shaped under the arbitrary and the inhuman rules of occupation. A march, organized in solidarity with the prisoners, interrupts his way, coming from the opposite direction. In fact, this march is not just opposite to his car's direction; it is opposite to his beliefs as a supporter of law and order.

Generally, people are unable organize their daily affairs, and they show indifference to things. This is shown when an old woman tells Abu Laila that for her there is no difference if she goes first to the cemetery or to the hospital and asks him to decide for her. Noticeably, this old woman wears a Palestinian folkloric dress, one of the important national symbols.

Figure 11: An old woman wears a Palestinian folkloric dress

Besides, the film shows the banality of the prisoners' place in the Palestinian society. The ex-prisoner who was in the Negev jail says that he spent his time smoking in the prison and, in the scene, he is still doing so. This means that there is no difference in his life after liberation. He gets out from a small prison to a bigger one. Both the ex-prisoner, the costumer, and the ex-judge, his driver, are reduced to insignificant people.

The director uses close and medium camera shots mostly to express the restrictions and the oppression under which the people of the West Bank live.

One of the important changes in the Palestinian identity is that the poor tend to affiliate to national movements to satisfy economic needs; "probably they are handing out relief supplies. Let us try to get some wheat or rice," a woman says, and her husband replies "But it is Fatah or Hamas standing; all parties give only to their people." Here, the woman maintains "And I am with the ones with the supplies." This development is very dangerous for the Palestinian identity under occupation, when the factions are looked at as providers of economic assistance and their followers have personal and economic motivations.

Further, the film shows that between the internal conflict among factions and the conflict with the Israeli occupation, people are no longer able to understand the

situation around them. In the coffee shop scene, the people are not able to identify whether the soldiers whom they see on TV are Palestinians or Israeli ones or belong to some scenes in Iraq. And when an explosion takes place, they wonder whether it is from inside (caused due to internal confrontations) or it is an Israeli attack. Before 2007, the Palestinians used to accuse the Israeli occupation, but now the state of insecurity originates from the inside as well as the outside.

Figure 12: Abu Laila after hearing an explosion

In the film, we see a comic scene in which a man is talking to and about his donkey whom an explosion forced to be lifted up high at the end of his cart and was later pulled down. This scene shows that, in Palestine, there is not much difference between humans and animals. Under such unsupportive conditions, people lose their will to survive and try to put an end to their life as a young man asks Abu Laila to run over him.

Moreover, the children who are the promise of the future appear in the film as careless people or as dropouts from school, trying to earn a living. Such a miserable situation is an indicator of a hopeless future. This threatens the project of the independent Palestinian state and the whole identity of those children as the ones who are responsible for ensuring the continuity and the development of the nation.

After all the pressures that he has faced since the morning, Abu Laila finally loses his self-control and uses a police loudspeaker to call for the rule of law and order. It is ironic that Abu Laila has to break the law, by taking the microphone illegally, from the police car in order to call for respecting the law. It is remarkable that the ex-convict, who was imprisoned in Israel, "for breaking its laws and threating its security", and who knows, due to his experience, that the Palestinian society is influenced by the arbitrary laws, imposed by the occupation, is standing calmly, looking at Abu Laila while the latter as an ex-judge breaks the law to restore the order.

Abu Laila refers to the original source that stands behind the disorder in the occupied Palestinian territories, which is the Israeli colonial system, a system which completely besieges the Palestinians and shapes their life in accordance with Israel's interest. It does not give them a space to feel their humanity or feel their self-autonomy in the PNA areas. Therefore, they can not function within a proper life system.

Figure 13 Abu Laila: The Law for the Strongest

Abu Laila criticizes the spread of weapons in the Palestinian society for personal or factional purposes but not for national resistance.

The film ends where it starts, showing Abu Laila at home with his family. In spite of all the hardships in the film, it ends happily by celebrating Laila's birthday. This end can be read as an optimistic message from the director. That is to say "*There's on this land what is worth living*", in words of the national poet Mahmoud Darwish (Darwish Literature retrived on 29 October 2013).

Chapter 7

CLOSING REMARKS

> *"Your freedom and mine can not*
> *be separate." Mandela.*

This chapter seeks to pull the strings of the study together. It includes a summary of the research, as well as the conclusions.

7.1 General Summary of the Research

This study is a contribution to the literature of the Palestinian cinema. It is based on analyzing two films selected from this cinema, with the aim to trace the recent developments in the Palestinian identity after the Oslo Accords and in response to the ongoing siege and Intifada.

The Oslo Accords were a transformational point in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as they were intended to solve this complex problem. As a result of such accords, the Palestinians gained the right of self-autonomy and established the PNA as an internationally recognized political body. Yet, this supportive atmosphere was turned into a pessimist one when the Palestinians have realized that, on the ground, the PNA is powerless in front of the Israeli occupation. Things have gone from bad to worse, with the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, and later with the outbreak of the bloody conflict between Fatah and Hamas under the ongoing siege imposed by Israel. Such harsh living conditions have influenced the Palestinians' national identification, always-already in process.

The cinema has been one of the defensive mechanisms employed by the Palestinians to represent and protect their identity. The Palestinian filmmakers succeeded to establish a national narrative that encounter the Israeli storytelling machine. Since the 1980s, they have made films inside the occupied Palestinian territories. Some of these films won international awards and managed to make the Palestinians' voice reach the world despite the closure.

Taking into consideration the role of these films in portraying the situation in Palestine, in this study, I conducted a deconstructive textual analysis of "The Salt of this Sea", by Annemarie Jacir and "Laila's Birthday", by Rashid Mashrawi to examine how the national identity of the Palestinians, including their sense of the self and the other, their belonging to their homeland and their vision for the future, is reconstructed.

For the purpose of this study, I read a fair part of the literature dealing, particularly, with issues of nationalism, memory, exile, diaspora, and return. Reviewing the emergence of the national identity, I follow the modernist school, which considers nationalism as a new form of identity, which goes hand in hand with the western ideology of modernization and its teleological notion of progress. Nations have no essence from the past; rather, they come into being through the articulation of some variables such as culture, memory, traditions, and so on. In other words, nations are created in the present, and then they are projected to the past. In this process, the memories are manipulated, as Said maintains, to serve the national goals. Here, I recall Bhabha's argument that to re-member means to create a unity out of the dismembered past.

Moreover, I reviewed the concepts of displacement (Diaspora and exile) as they occupy a very important place in the Palestinian identity after the catastrophe of 1948. Traditionally, those notions are conceptualized in the Palestinian context from a narrow perspective. According to this perspective, the self identifies with a particular home authentically, and when it is displaced from that home, it lives an experience of alienation. Then, it develops a strong sense of longing for return to that place where the self can only feel at home. Yet, Said and Hall criticized this view for its negative consequences on the situation of the Palestinian people and argued for a modern understanding of these concepts. For them, diaspora and exile should be defined in terms of hybridity, heterogeneity, and cosmopolitism. Said maintains that one can not return to the same place from which one is displaced.

"The Salt of this Sea" concentrates on the right of the Palestinian refugees to return. It shows how the return is a very difficult experience. Also, it indicates changes in the Palestinian identity in terms of political rights and the social structure. Moreover, it portrays how the inhuman life conditions under the siege force people, particularly the youth, to seek a home outside Palestine. "Laila's Birthday" depicts the situation within the Palestinian self. It shows the instability, the disorder, and the lawlessness in the Palestinian territories.

7.2 Conclusions

As I mentioned above, I used "The Salt of this Sea" and "Laila's Birthday" as a ground on which to stand, in order to find out the recent transformations that took place in Palestine and affected the identity of its people. Both films depict the current situation in the occupied territories under the control of the PNA.

The films show the emergence of a ruling class, which includes those who occupy leading positions in the institutions of the PNA. The members this class adopt a nationalist discourse to justify their views.

Moreover, the films deconstruct the common belief about the siege as a national experience that unifies the Palestinians. Gertz and Khleifi, (2008) indicate that "[T]he shared experiences of siege, curfew, and exile make each of the individual stories an allegory of the collective experience." However, in the films under discussion, the siege is not represented as a sign of national suffering exclusively, but also as a functional instrument that operates within the interests of a particular privileged group. It enables them to make more profits at the expense of the working class and to justify their oppressive actions in the society. So, it works against the national unity. It is possible to say that the siege exposes the fractures that the "national unity" is trying to suppress.

Remarkably, the films highlight the emergence of an internal significant other in the Palestinian identity after the violent confrontations between Fatah and Hamas which resulted in separating the Gaza Strip from the West Bank and creating two governments, which are dominated by the Israeli occupation. Since 2007, each of those two factions looks at the other as a threat and as an obstacle in the face of the national unity. Today, the end of the internal conflict is at the top of the national agenda, along with the end of the occupation. In this context, a significant transformation in relation to the use of weapons in the PNA areas is brought to our attention. According to the conditions of "The Wye agreement", the use of any weapons by the Palestinians, without prior coordination with the Israeli army, is an act of terrorism for which the PNA is held responsible. Yet, today, in the context of

internal conflict, the use of weapons is allowed under the Israeli–American surveillance. In her film, Jacir refers to the strategic alliance between the USA and Israel, which gives the latter the power to go further in its colonial activities. I recall that on one of Imad's t-shirts, we read "America do not worry" and so is Israel. The disregard that the Israeli occupation and the USA show in relation to the availability and the lawless use of weapons in the PNA areas demonstrates that their interpretation of, and response to the agreements change in accordance with Israel's interests.

In his film, Mashrawi criticizes the state of lawlessness in the Palestinian society. He shows that currently the state of insecurity does not only originate from the Israeli other, but also it comes from the inside where the rule of law is not enforced. Additionally, he shows that, under the tightened siege and the high rate of poverty, the poor tend to affiliate to national factions to satisfy economic needs.

Noticeably, in "Laila's Birthday", the Israeli soldiers are off-scene, yet the occupation is always there. It is represented through the noise of the Israeli jets in the sky and by the representation of the checkpoints as places of danger to stay away from. The significance of this film lies in that it concentrates on the internal situation in Palestine and reveals its complexity. It breaks down the collective traditional image that reduces the Palestinians to heroes, or victims. Of course, the Israeli occupation is responsible for the miserable living conditions in the Palestinian territories. Yet, I think that the Palestinians themselves take part of this responsibility, as shown in the film.

By contrast, in "The Salt of this Sea", the Israeli soldiers, the checkpoints, the separation wall, and other signs of occupation appear throughout the film. Jacir shows how the separation wall which has been built, by the Israeli authorities, after the Second Intifada redrew the map of the occupied Palestinian territories as well as Israel. Unlike any other borderline, which is a point of separation and connection at the same time, this wall is designed to block communications between the Israelis and the Palestinians as much as possible.

Like Mashrawi, Jacir addresses the actuality in the occupied Palestinian territories, but she focuses on the right of return. She highlights the transformation in the position of the PNA at this point. Through "The Salt of this Sea", Jacir shows the convergence between the Israeli and the Palestinian views regarding the question of refugees. The Palestinians tend to support the suggestion that the refugees should stay in the hosting countries and be offered citizenship there.

As we see from Soraya's experience, the Palestinian state, which is under construction is not designed to include all the Palestinian refugees. This indicates a remarkable change in the Palestinian identity. I recall that the principles of the Palestinian national charter, issued in 1968, guarantee the rights of return and citizenship to all refugees after the independence of Palestine.

It is obvious that the historic Palestine is no longer part of the Palestinian official discourse. Besides, the film shows that the return to an authentically pristine place is not possible because this place is always under transformation. So, the homecoming journey in itself is an adventure of displacement. Recall how Soraya and ʿImad find

Al Dawayma a completely new place, with a new name and a new history. This means that

> [t]he past […]is not a whole that existed somewhere as "given" and that can be brought into the present. Instead, the past is precisely that which cannot be grasped by research, that which is absent and cannot be displaced again, because in *itself* the past has no meaning and no original unity (Weymans, 2004, p. 174).

Another significant point in this film is that it demonstrates the heterogeneity in the Palestinian community as well as the Israeli one regarding the relationship to the "external other." The film does not reduce the Israeli other to the identity of the oppressor. It gives space to the Israelis who stand against the occupation and who call for peace. Similarly, Jacir's film displays the difference within the Palestinian society in conceptualizing the relationship to the Israeli other. For example, Soraya tends to establish her relationship to the Israeli people based on a binary opposition. For her, everything seems essentially as either black or white. The good is always good and the bad is always bad. So, for her all the Israelis are aggressors. This includes the tough Israeli soldiers in the film, as well as the pacifist woman (the current owner of Soraya's grandfather's home) who received her in a friendly manner. Soraya never uses the word "Israel." She tries to exclude the other and to deny its identity as much as she can.

Nevertheless, the other characters in both films such as ʿImad, Marwan, and Abu Laila tend to be more flexible in their relationships and reactions vis-à-vis the Israeli other. They acknowledge openly the weaknesses and the failure of the Palestinians in their confrontations with Israel. As Abu Laila says, the Palestinian just want to live and to bring up their children. Therefore, he, Marwan, and their like do not exclude the other. Rather, they look for peace and coexistence with the Israelis.

Masharawi selected a happy end for his film, celebrating Laila's birthday. This little girl and her happiness symbolize the promising future of Palestine, while the end of the Jacir's film is a tragic one. The two lovers are separated; their dreams are broken, and their exile is an inescapable fate.

The last point that I would like to raise in this study is concerned with the concept of peace. Nowadays, the Palestinians are trying to achieve the so-called peace at both national and international levels:

They are engaged in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiation process, which started many years ago, under the auspices of the USA, with the aim to establish an independent Palestinian state. At the same time, they are, currently, involved in a Palestinian-Palestinian negotiation process, which has started since seven years ago, under the auspices of Egypt, with the aim to end the conflict between Fatah and Hamas and to unify the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Yet, as we remark in the films, the Palestinians are disappointed by the deadlock in the negotiations at both levels. The siege continues and no signs for a better future can be discerned. Therefore, youth like ʿImad tries to find a home outside their homeland.

Obviously, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both sides are suffering. The Israelis should understand that the military power does not bring security. I Recall the Israeli woman in "The Salt of this Sea" who describes the insecurity of the situation, saying "it is terrible the situation in this violence."

In such pessimistic environment, both sides should redefine their understanding of the notion of peace. The peace should not be understood as an end result of accords or negotiations. Rather, it is a way of thinking and acting, a path that people should

follow when they respond to the other within or outside the borders of the nations. To solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict peacefully, both parties have to unlearn what they inherited as a given about the other. As I come to the end of my research whose home is communication and media studies, I should highlight the essential role of the various media in reshaping our identities. Media representations can contribute to the promotion of peace and reconciliation, by adopting ethical values in framing self-other relationships.

In my opinion, Jacir and Mashrawi succeeded to represent the hard experiences to which the people in the occupied Palestine are exposed at political, economic, and social levels. They showed how the miserable living conditions, under the Israeli closure, have affected the Palestinians' self-other relationships, and how their depression forces them to try to commit suicide or to take other illegal actions. So, the two filmmakers managed effectively to transform the siege into feelings through the cameras' eye; they transmit the Palestinians' suffering to audiences all over the world. Remarkably, both the Palestinians and the Israelis are depicted as besieged identities who lead unhappy lives, in the context of the ongoing conflict. My last words in this chapter are a quote from Nelson Mandela "*Your freedom and mine can not be separated.*"

7.3 Recommendations for Further Researches

Given the crucial role of media in setting our agendas, and re-framing our world, there are always a lot of work to do in order to investigate their effects on our self-other relationships, particularly in the areas of conflicts. For further researches, I recommend to study the framing of the Arab Spring revolutions in the Palestinian media. Moreover, further researches are needed to examine the representation of the

Palestinian minority inside Israel, in the Palestinian and/or Israeli media, as the members of this minority, being Israeli-Palestinians, stand in-between the Palestinian-self and the Israeli-other.

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APPENDIX

Appendix: Filmography

Below is a list of many films produced in the Palestinian cinema, cited from (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008):

Abu-Ali, Khadija, 1981: Children But

Abu-Ali, Khadija, 1982: Women for Palestine

Abu-Ali, Mustafa, 1971: With Blood and Spirit

Abu-Ali, Mustafa, 1972: Al 'Arkoub

Abu-Ali, Mustafa, 1973: Scenes from the Occupation in Gaza

Abu-Ali, Mustafa, 1973: Zionist Aggression

Abu-Ali, Mustafa, 1974: On the Road to Victory ('Ala Tarikin Nasr)

Abu-Ali, Mustafa, 1974: They do not Exist (Laysa Lahom Wojood)

Abu-Ali, Mustafa, 1977: Palestine in the Eye (Filistine Fil 'Ayn)

Abu-Ali, Mustafa, Jean Sham'oun and Pino Adriano, 1977: Tel a-Za'tar

Abu-Ali, Mustafa and others, 1968: Say No to the Peaceful Solution

Abu-Assad, Hani, 2000: Nazareth 2000 (An-Nassira 2000)

Abu-Assad, Hani, 2003: Rana's Wedding (Ors Rana)

Abu-Assad, Hani, 2002: Ford Transit (Ford Transit)

Abu-Assad, Hani, 2005: Paradise Now (Al Jannato-l-An)

Abu Wa'el, Tawfik, 2001: Waiting for Salah A-Ddin (Fintithar Salah-Eddin)

Abu Wa'el, Tawfik, 2002: The Fourteen (A-Rabe' 'Ashar)

Abu Wa'el, Tawfik, 2004: Thirst (Atash)

A-Dawud, Hikmat, 1983: Forever in Memory (Abadan Fith-Thakira)

A-Zubeidi, Kaise, 1977: A Voice from Jerusalem (Sawton Mina-l-Quds)

A-Zubeidi, Kaise, 1978: An Opposite Siege (Hisar Modadd)

A-Zubeidi, Kaise, 1982: Barbed-Wire Homeland (Watano-l-Aslaki-Sha'eka)

A-Zubeidi, Kaise, 1984: A Slaughter File (Malaffo Majzara)

A-Zubeidi, Kaise, 1984: Palestine: the Chronicle of a People

A-Zubeidi, Subhi, 1998: My Very Private Map (Kharitati-l-Khassa Jiddan)

A-Zubeidi, Subhi, 1999: Ali and his Friends ('Ali Wa-Asdika'oho)

A-Zubeidi, Subhi, 1999: Women in the Sun (Nisa' Fish-Shams)

A-Zubeidi, Subhi, 2000: Light at the End of the Tunnel

A-Zubeidi, Subhi, 2001: Looking Away ('Hawal)

A-Zubeidi, Subhi, 2002: Crossing Kalandia (Roadblock)

Alhabbash, Isma'il, 2002: New Apartment

Al-Hajar, Rafik, 1973: The Road (At-Tareek)

Al-Hajar, Rafik, 1974: United Guns (Al Banadik Mottahida)

Al-Hajar, Rafik, 1974: May of the Palestinians (Ayyaro-L-Filistiniyeen)

Al-Hajar, Rafik, 1975: Born in Palestine (Mawloodon Fi Filistine)

Al-Hajar, Rafik, 1975: The Intifada (Al Intifada)

Al-Hassan, Azza, 1996: Women Talking (Arabiat Tatakallamna)

Al-Hassan, Azza, 1998: Kushan Musa (Kushan Musa)

Al-Hassan, Azza, 1999: She, the Sindibad (Hya-S-Sindibad)

Al-Hassan, Azza, 2000: Place, or Outside of Paradise or Out of Eden

Al-Hassan, Azza, 2001: News Time (Zamano-l-Akhbar)

Al-Hassan, Azza, 2002: Three Centimeters Less (

Al-Hassan, Azza, 2004: Forgotten Images (Sowar Mansiyah)

Al Quattan, Omar, 1991: Dreams of Silence (Ahlam Fi Faragh)

Al Yassir, Nada, 2001: Four Poems for Palestine

Andoni, Sa'ed, 2002: Last Frontiers (Al H'odoudo-l-Akhira)

Andoni, Sa'ed, 2002: Zero ('Alas-s-sifir)

Asaf, Roger and others, 1973: Sirhan and the Pipe (Sirhan Wal-Masoura)

Awad, Jibril, 1982: Berlin, the Trap (Berline, Al Masyada)

Awad, Jibril, 1983: Good Morning Beirut (Sabaho-L-Khayri Ya Beyrout)

Badr, Liali, 1984: Road to Palestine, The (Attareeko Ila Filistine)

Badr, Liana, 1999: Fadwa (Fadwa)

Badr, Liana, 2002: Green Bird, The (At ta'iro-l-Akhdar)

Badr, Liana, 2002: Zaytounat (Zaytounat)

Badr, Liana, 2003: Siege, a Writer's Diary (Hisar, Mothakkarato Katibah)

Bakri, Muhammad, 1998: 1948

Bakri, Muhammad, 2002: Jenin, Jenin (Jenin, Jenin)

Elias, Hana, 1991: The Mountain (Al Jabal)

Elias, Hana, 2003: Olive Harvest (Mawsimo-z-zaytoon)

Habash, Ahmad, 2001: Moon Eclipse (Khosoufo-l-Kamar)

Halil, Mahmud, 1984: Tayseer (Tayseer)

Hassan, Nizar, 1994: Independence (Istiklal)

Hassan, Nizar, 1996: Jasmine (Yasmin)

Hassan, Nizar, 1998: Myth (Ostura)

Hassan, Nizar, 2000: Cut

Hassan, Nizar, 2001: Defiance (Tahaddi)

Hassan, Nizar, 2003: Invasion (Ijtiah)

Hawal, Kassem, 1971: Al Bared River (An Naharo-L-Bared)

Hawal, Kassem, 1973: Ghassan . . . The Word, The Gun

Hawal, Kassem, 1974: Why We Plant Flowers, Why We Carry Weapons

Nazra'o-l-ward, limatha Nahmilo-s-Silah)

Hawal, Kassem, 1976: New Life (Hayaton Jadeeda)

Hawal, Kassem, 1978: Tel A-Za'atar (Tel-A-Za'atar)

Hawal, Kassem, 1982: The Return to Haifa ('A'idon Ila 'Haifa)

Irshid, Nabila, 2001: Travel Agency (In English: Travel Agency)

Khleifi, Michel, 1980: Fertile Memories

Khleifi, Michel, 1984: Ma'aloul Celebrates its Destruction

Khleifi, Michel, 1987: Wedding in Galilee ('Orso-l-Jaleel)

Khleifi, Michel, 1989: Canticle of the Stones (Nashido-l-Hajar)

Khleifi, Michel, 1994: Tale of the Three Jewels

Khleifi, Michel, 1996: Forbidden Marriage in the Holy Land (

Lutfi, Nabiha, 1977: Because Roots Don't Die

Malas, Muhammad, 1987: Dream, The (Al Manam)

Masharawi, Rashid, 1981: Partners

Masharawi, Rashid, 1986: Passport (Jawazo Safar)

Masharawi, Rashid, 1989: The Shelter (Al-Malja')

Masharawi, Rashid, 1991: House-Houses (Daro-w-Dour)

Masharawi, Rashid, 1991: Long Days in Gaza

Masharawi, Rashid, 1992: The Magician (As-Sahir)

Masharawi, Rashid, 1993: Curfew (Hatta Ish'aarin Aakhar)

Masharawi, Rashid, 1995: Haifa ('Haifa)

Masharawi, Rashid, 1997: Rabab (Rabab)

Masharawi, Rashid, 1998: Stress (Tawattor)

Masharawi, Rashid, 2001–2: Here is the Voice of Palestine

Masharawi, Rashid, 2002: Ticket to Jerusalem (Tathkaraton Ila-l-Quds)

Masharawi, Rashid, 2002: Upside-Down (Maklouba)

Masri, May, 1982: Beneath the Ruins (Tahatal Ankad)

Masri, May, 1990: Children of the Mountain Of Fire (Atfalo Jabal-in-Nar)

Masri, May, 1998: Children of Shatila, The (Atafalo Shatila)

Masri, May, 2001: Borders of Dreams and Fears

Mdanat, Adnan, 1976: A Report from Tel a-Za'tar

Mdanat, Adnan, 1977: Palestinian Visions (Rou'an Filistiniya)

Mer, Juliano, 2004: Arna's Children (Atfal Arna)

Najar, Najwa, 1999: Wadi'a and Na'im (Wadi'a Wa-na'im)

Najar, Najwa, 2001: A Forgetfulness Ointment (Jawharo-s-Silwan)

Najar, Najwa, 2002: A Child called Muhammad (from the Once Again series)

Nassar, Ali, 1983: Story of a Coastal Town,

Nassar, Ali, 1994: The Wet Nurse (Al Mourdi'aa)

Nassar, Ali, 1997: The Milky Way (Darbo-t-Tabbanat)

Nassar, Ali, 2002: In the Ninth Month (Fish-Shahri-t-Tassee')

Nimer, Samir, 1973: The Four-Day War (Harbo-L-Ayyami-L-arba'a)

Nimer, Samir, 1973: Palestinian Night (Laylaton Filistiniya)

Nimer, Samir, 1973: Zionist Terrorism (Irhabon Sayouni)

Nimer, Samir, 1974: The New Yemen (Al Yamano-l-Jadeed)

Nimer, Samir, 1974: The Winds of Liberation (Ryaho-t-Tahreer)

Nimer, Samir, 1974: Whose Revolution is This? (Limani-th-Thawrra?)

Nimer, Samir, 1975: Kafr Shuba (Kafr Shuba)

Nimer, Samir, 1977: War in Lebanon (Al Harbo Fi Loubnan)

Nimer, Samir, 1984: Roots (Al Jouthoor)

Phauzi, Ali, 1980: Youth from Palestine (Shabeebaton Min Filistin)

Sa'adi, Muhmud Ibrahim: Bleeding Memories (Thikrayaton Damiya)

Salame, Marwan, 1984: 'Aida ('Aayda)

Salame, Marwan, 1986: The Olive Tree (Shjarato-z-Zaytoun)

Saleh, Tawfik, 1972: The Dupes (Al Makhdo 'oun)

Sha'ath, Ghaleb, 1976: The Key (Al Miftah)

Sha'ath, Ghaleb, 1978: Earth Day (Yawmo-L-A'harar)

Sha'ath, Ghaleb, 1980: Don't Drop the Green Leaf

Shahhal, Randa, 1977: Step by Step (Khotwatan Khotwa)

Shammut, Isma'il, 1972: Youth Camp (Mo'askarato-sh-Shabab)

Shammut, Isma'il, 1973: Memories and Fire (Thikrayaton Wanar)

Shammut, Isma'il, 1973: Stubborn Call (An Nidao-L-Molih)

Shammut, Isma'il, 1974: The Road to Palestine ('Ala Tareeki Filistine)

Shamoun, Jean, 1980: Song of Freedom, The (Ounshoudato-L-A'harar)

Shehada, Abed A-Salam, 1995: Women's Rights, Human Rights

Shehada, Abed A-Salam, 1996: Small Hands (Al-Aydi-s-Saghrira)

Shehada, Abed A-Salam, 1997: Close to Death (Karibon Min-Al-Mawt)

Shehada, Abed A-Salam, 2000: The Cane (Al-'Okkaz)

Shehada, Abed A-Salam, 2000: The Shadow (A-Thell)

Shehada, Abed A-Salam, 2001: Debris (Radm) (from the Once Again series)

Suleiman, Elia, 1990: Introduction to the End of an Argument

Suleiman, Elia, 1991: Homage by Assassination

Suleiman, Elia, 1996: Chronicle of a Disappearance

Suleiman, Elia, 1998: Arab Dream (Al Holmo-l-'Arabi)

Suleiman, Elia, 2000: Cyber Palestine

Suleiman, Elia, 2002: Divine Intervention (Yadon Elahiyya)