Palestinian Cinema:

A Guardian of Palestinian Identity, Doomed by Hope

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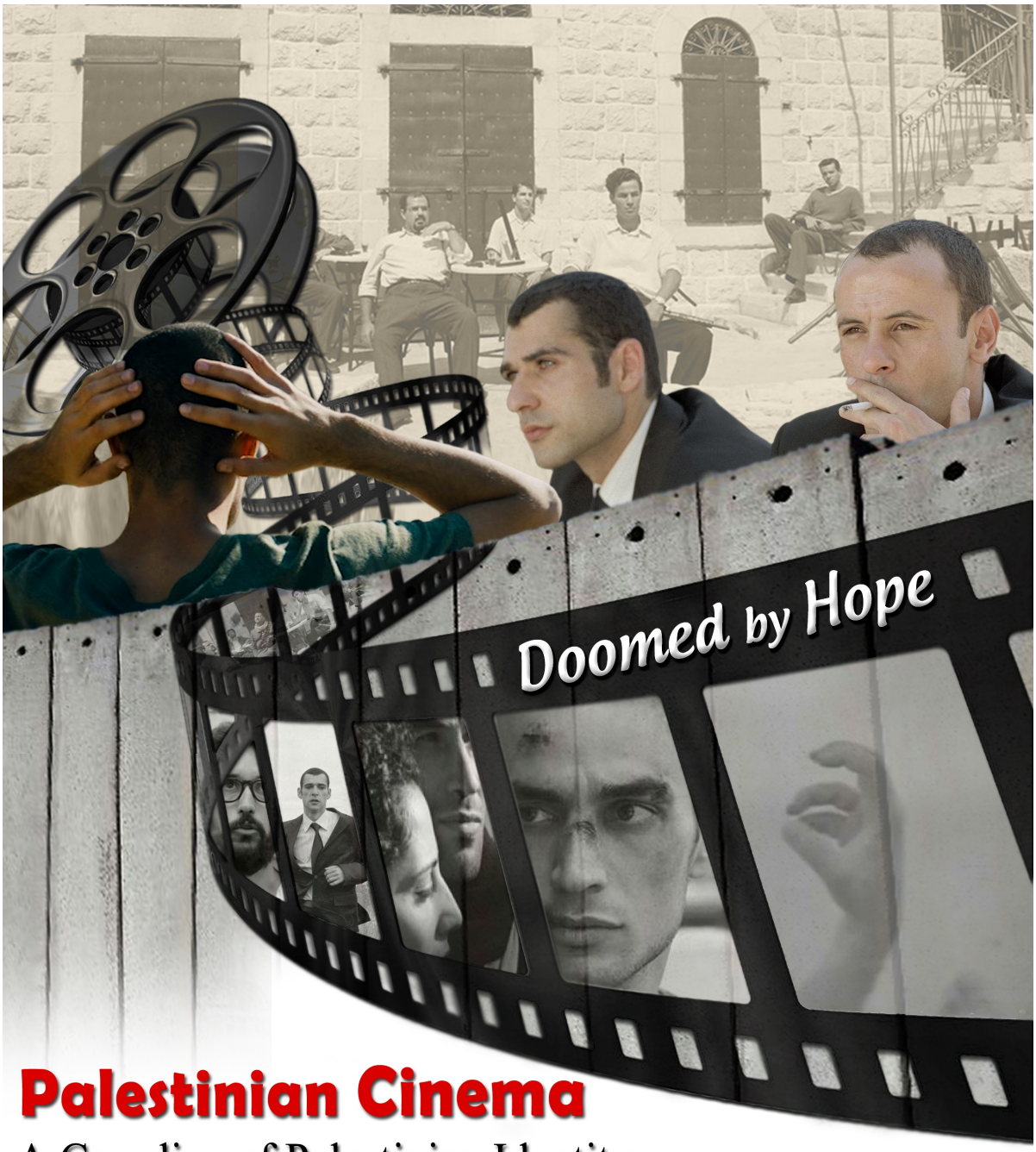

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Here—we have a past
a present
and a future
Our roots are entrenched
Deep in the earth
Like twenty impossibles
We shall remain. (Tawfiq Zayyād/ *Bāqūn*)

Introduction

In the absence of a formal and universally recognized Palestinian state, many Arab and Palestinian filmmakers have attempted to identify, highlight, and preserve a Palestinian identity through their films. Among other things, they attempted to accomplish these goals through the use of symbols that represent that Palestinian identity of which resistance is a fundamental component. By delivering these symbols to a global audience, filmmakers seek to protect Palestinian identity from extinction.

In attempting to research the role of Palestinian cinema in identifying and preserving a Palestinian identity, I undertook two avenues of research. First, I surveyed available literature, and reviewed at least two dozens films that were screened in the west and the Arab world and were either made by Palestinian filmmakers or dealt with the Palestinian issues as a subject matter. In my review, I attempted to identify common themes or tools that were used to paint a distinctively Palestinian identity. Second, I conducted field research in the West Bank in the Summer of 2016, living for several weeks in the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem. While living there, I sought to survey the local cinema scene, conducted research in local universities and other relevant institutions, and was able to conduct a few interviews with local filmmakers, both producers and directors.

I discovered over the course of my research in the West Bank that Palestinian filmmakers have not had a chance to widely screen their films in the West Bank, primarily due to the absence of movie theaters. Usually, the films were screened in universities or cultural centers, thus severely restricting their audience, both in terms of number and socioeconomic status. In addition, I had a hard time finding local sources about Palestinian cinema. I found limited Arabic-language source at Dār al-Kalema University in Bethlehem. Indeed, most of the Palestinians I met in the West Bank were not even aware of the reach of Palestinian cinema in the world. This point was reinforced in my interviews with the local filmmakers, who told me that, in fact, the target of Palestinian cinema is primarily a global audience that could then support Palestinians in their conflict against the Israeli occupation.

Below, I begin with a short introduction to the history of the Palestinian national trauma, and a review of Palestinian cinematic history. I then discuss what is recognized as the two stages of Palestinian cinema: pre-1980 or "cinema of the revolution," and modern Palestinian cinema which covers the period 1980 to the present. In discussing my interviews with Palestinian filmmakers in the West Bank, I focus on the fact that development of Palestinian cinema has, according to those filmmakers, been constrained by the absence of national funding and often unsuccessful efforts to attract international funding. I survey those films that have attracted attention at global festivals, then turn to the principal section of this paper: analyzing the use by Palestinian films of certain symbols in identifying, highlighting, and seeking to preserve a Palestinian identity. I conclude by synthesizing my findings from reviewing those films.

A Brief History of the Palestinian National Trauma

During the Ottoman Empire, Palestine was part of the Levant (Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Palestine) until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. In May 1916, the British, French, and Russians secretly agreed on a postwar plan, the Sykes Picot Agreement, which divided the Arab world into separate spheres of influence. This secret agreement became official on November 2, 1917 when Arthur James Balfour sent a letter to Lionel Walter De Rothschild that announced the British government's support for the establishment of a national homeland for Jews in Palestine. This letter would be known as the Balfour Declaration. At this moment in history, the Jewish population did not exceed 5% of the total population of Palestine. This letter was sent before the British occupation of Palestine. The Balfour Declaration that created a national state for Jews in Palestine read:

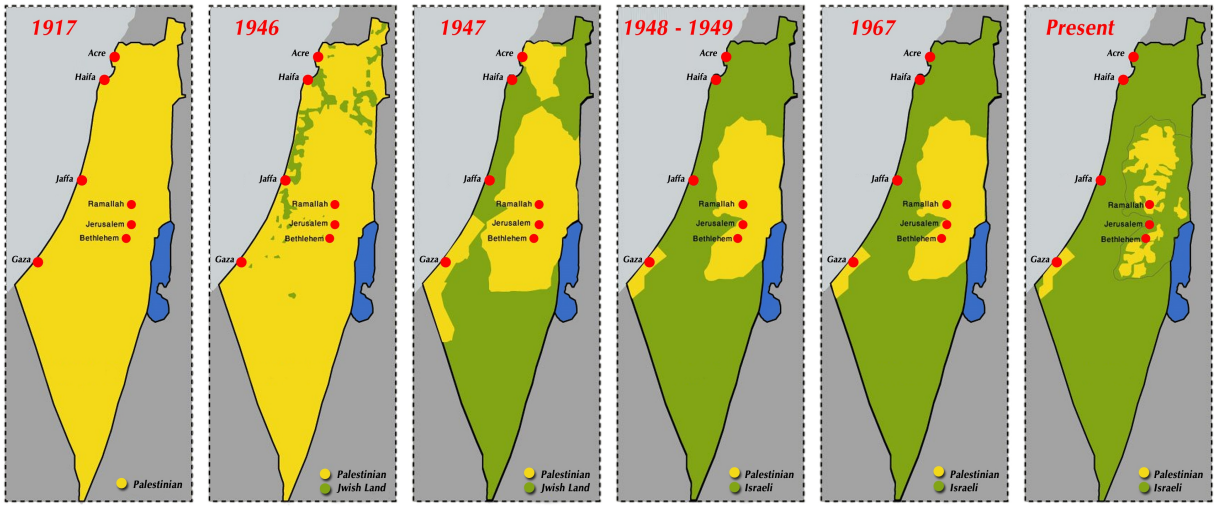
> His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. (The Rothschild Archives)[1]

In September 1918, two months before the end of World War One, the British occupied all of Palestine. Palestine remained under the British Mandate until 1947. The United Nations General Assembly voted for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state on November 29, 1947. On May 15, 1948, the establishment of Israel was declared, a day that is remembered by Arabs as the Nakba (the catastrophe). During 1948, more than half of all Palestinians were expelled from their land or forced to flee from the areas that became part of

[1] URL. www.rothschildarchive.org/exhibitions/timeline/#the_balfour_declaration

Israel. The year of 1948 was the year of Palestinian displacement. Since the end of the Ottoman Empire's rule in Palestine in 1918, Palestinians have struggled for statehood. In his article "Transformation of Collective Identity in Palestine" Mi'ari Mahmoud defines Identity as that which means a sense of belonging to a group, or number of groups, in which membership is demanded.

The image below describes the history of Palestine from 1917 to the present. The yellow color represents Palestine and the green color represents Jewish land. In 1917 Israel did not yet exist. The first big Jewish emigration was in 1936 from Nazi Germany and the Jewish population increased to nearly 30%, as Kamal Abdel-Malek mentions in *The Rhetoric of Violence*. The Jewish settlements started in 1946 and persist to the present.



After the Nakba Palestinians became a minority in the Israeli state by 1967, residing in the West Bank, Gaza, and occupied Palestine. The majority of Palestinians became refugees in the Arab majority states of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria. In his book *The Iron Cage: The Story of The Palestinian Struggle for Statehood,* Rashid Khalidi states, "The Israeli people today have a very powerful state, one that has been in existence for over fifty-eight years" (183).

In contrast, Palestinians have failed to obtain their independence since the Nakba; Palestinians have struggled to protect their identity.

Furthermore, during the British Mandate, the Palestinian Arab identity began to develop. Under the British Mandate, Palestinian Arab identity remained weak until the catastrophe of 1948. After the Arabs lost the wars of 1948 and 1967, the Palestinian identity grew stronger. The Arab nationalism failed to achieve Arab unity and liberate Palestine. Thus, Palestinians learned to depend on themselves in their efforts to develop their national identity and liberate Palestine; one way they have developed it is through film. There are different types of Palestinian's suffering; within Occupied Palestine (Israel) there is an ongoing struggle between hegemony and subservience. However, the experiences of Palestinians living in the West Bank differ greatly from those living in Gaza or Occupied Palestine. Furthermore, this suffering extends beyond this region, reaching Palestinians in the Palestinian camps in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria and elsewhere in the Arab world. Palestinian cinema attempts to portray the range of Palestinian's suffering and steadfastness in order to protect Palestinian identity, as I will discuss later in several films.

A History of Palestinian Cinema

To begin, what is the definition of Palestinian Cinema? This question is important in this case due to the absence of a Palestinian nation. In his book *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema*, Hamid Dabashi defines Palestinian cinema as "the mutation of that repressed anger into an aestheticized violence—the aesthetic presence of a political absence" (11). Thus, any film that engages with Palestinian issues is considered as a Palestinian film. In 1896 Palestine was introduced to cinematography when two brothers, August and Louis Loamier, who established the cinema, produced *Train Station in Jerusalem*. There are four stages in Palestinian cinematic

history: the first period, under the British Mandate, occurs between 1935-1948, evidence of which exists in newspapers and registration documents of production institutions and additional sources of information, but no trace of the films produced remains. The second period, under the Israeli occupation, between 1948-1967, where no Palestinian films were produced, is dubbed the "Epoch of Silence". In the third period, between 1968-1980, Palestinian cinema was created in exile and called "Cinema of the Palestinian Revolution." In their article "From Bleeding Memories to Fertile Memories," Gertz and Khleifi discuss the third period of Palestinian cinema that emerged in the 1970s in exile—filmmakers in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. This type of cinema is called the revolutionary cinema. The focus is on the Palestinian refugee camps and the suffering inflicted by losing their homeland. The films in the third period represent the Palestinian past, present, and future. The fourth period starts in 1980 and continues to the present, which is called the new Palestinian cinema. This period includes the First and Second *Intifadas,* and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. In the following paragraphs I discuss these periods in more detail.

In 1935, Ibrahim Hassan Sarhan produced the first Palestinian film: a 20-minute documentary film about king Saud's visit to Palestine. The film depicted the king with Mohammed Amin Al-Husaini, one of the well-known and respected leaders in Palestine before and after the Nakba, on their journey between Jerusalem and Jaffa. In 1939, Michelle Siqeli rented "Al-Ahli Cinema" in Acre to screen Arabic and foreign films. Additionally, Professor Ahmad Sedqi al-Dajani, a Palestinian cultural and intellectual character, said that he used to watch Arabic films such as the Egyptian film *The White Flower* at "Al-Hamrra Cinema" in Jaffa before 1948. In his book *The Palestinian Cinema in the Twentieth Century*, Bashar Ibrahim states:

> Generally, we will find that Palestinian cinema before the Nakba 1948 was just individual's attempts. It did not create a real Palestinian cinema because it was not an organized attempt nor did it lay a foundation for the Palestinian cinematic industry. In spite of attempts to establish a few cinematic production companies, it failed for subjective and objective reasons. In addition, the Palestinian cinematic attempts did not rely on cultural awareness, knowing the importance of the cinema, and its role as a media weapon effectively. It merely understood cinema as stories that could entertain an audience. Researchers have characterized this story as primitive, naive, and superficial[2]. (24)

The British Mandate imposed rules that prevented Palestinian cinematic production in addition to preventing the screening of films within Palestine that might have encouraged Palestinians to rebel against them, as Bashar Ibrahim mentions in his book *The Palestinian Cinema in the Twentieth Century*. Before the Nakba 1948, Palestinian cinema depended on individual attempts, but after the Nakba it became necessary to establish a real cinema that reflected the Palestinian dystopia, one that could deliver its voice to global audiences.

Directors of Palestinian films wanted to remind the world of Palestinian existence under Israeli occupation. Palestinian cinema insisted on validating Palestinian identity and nationality by addressing the trauma they experienced after losing their land—and showing the world that Palestinians still existed in spite of their struggle with Zionism, as related by Gertz and Khleifi's in their book *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma, and Memory*:

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2 **السينما الفلسطينية في القرن العشرين/ بشار ابراهيم**

عموما سنجد أن السينما الفلسطينية في الفترة ما قبل النكبة عام 1948 كانت عبارة عن محاولات ومغامرات فردية بحتة، لم تستطع خلق سينما فلسطينية حقيقية، لأنها أصلا لم تكن محاولات منظمة، ولم يوضع أي أساس لصناعة سينمائية فلسطينية، رغم محاولات تأسيس بعض شركات الإنتاج السينمائي، والتي أخفقت جميعها لأسباب ذاتية وموضوعية، كما لم تكن المحاولات السينمائية الفلسطينية قائمة على أساس من وعي ثقافي ومعرفة بأهمية السينما، ودورها كسلاح إعلامي فعال، بل فهمت كمجرد قصص يمكن تمثيلها وعرضها على الجمهور للتسلية، وهو فهم اعتبره الدارسون غاية في البدائية والسذاجة والسطحية.. (24)

> Palestinian cinema, in its attempt to invent, document, and crystallize Palestinian history, confronts the trauma. On one hand, it attempts to construct a historical continuity, leading from the past to present and the future, presenting traumatic past events. On the other hand, Palestinian cinema freezes history either in a utopian, idyllic past, or in the events of exile and deportation that disrupted it and are revived as if they were part of the present. (3)

Khleifi tries to explain the reason behind the need for Palestinian films created by and for Palestinians. It is a way to merge the events of the past with those in the present. This merging is a way to document the trauma for future generations to guarantee the continuity of Palestinian existence. The problem of the Palestinian trauma is that it is hard for Palestinians to let go and impossible to separate from their identity. The production of these films ensures that the trauma remains a living event, continuing and unchanging, as if fully present rather than just a memory.

In the beginning the Palestinian directors were trying to merge the past into the present to portray their own experience or families' experiences. In their article "From Bleeding Memories to Fertile Memories," Gertz and Khleifi state, "The goals of Palestinian cinema were to reveal the actual reasons for [the] situation and to describe the stages of the Arab and Palestinian struggle towards the liberation of [their] country" (465).

Palestinians did not start rebuilding their lives in the diaspora until almost 17 years after the Nakba. It started with the unification of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) on January 1, 1965, to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and the declaration of a Palestinian revolution. Then, the members of the PLO recognized the importance of fostering Palestinian cinema, starting with Sulafa Mersal, the first Palestinian woman to graduate from the Higher Institute of Cinema in Cairo. She started working, in secret, with the support of Khalil al-

Wazir (Abu Jihad), one of the leaders in the Fatah movement and a member of the PLO. In 1968, Abu Jihad supported the establishment of a special section of cinematography and produced the first Palestinian cinematic film, *La Ll al-ḥal al-Silmi* (No for Peaceful Solution), directed by Mustafa Abu Ali, Salah Abu Hannud, Hani Jawharia, and Sulafa Mersal. The film came in response to the Rogers[3] Initiative, which was a framework proposed by the United States Secretary of State to achieve an end to belligerence in the Arab-Israeli conflict following the Six-Day War and the continuing War of Attrition. The Initiative also formally declared U.S. opposition to Israeli settlements. In order to continue producing Palestinian films that served the Palestinian revolution and the PLO, Fatah established the "Palestinian Films Unit". This unit, along with the Palestinian Research Center, produced *Mashāhid min al-Iḥtilāl fi Ghaza* (Scenes from the Occupation in Gaza) 1973, directed by Mustafa Abu Ali. The film depicts the dystopia of the Gaza Strip under the Israeli occupation.

During the seventies, the Democratic front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) produced many films, the first of which was *Al-Ṭarīq* (The Road) 1973, directed by Rafiq Hajar. It portrayed life in Lebanese refugee camps. In addition, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) produced a few films such as *Al-Nahr Al-Bāred* (named after a river in Lebanon) 1971, directed by Qasem Hawwal, one of the most important directors at that time, *Ghassan Kanafani/ al-Kalema al-Bonduqiya* (Ghassan Kanafani/The Word Rifle) 1973, and *Buyūtinā al-Ṣaghīra* (Our Small Houses) 1974. Furthermore, the PLO's Department of Culture and Information produced its first movies *Mukhayamāt al-Shabāb* (Youth Camps) 1972, *Dhikrayāt wa Nār* (Fire and Memories) 1973, *Al-Nidā' al-Mulleḥ* (Urgent Appeal) 1973, and *ʿlā Ṭarīq Falesṭīn* (On the Road to Palestine) 1974, directed by Ismael Shammut. The films

[3] William P. Rogers, the United States Secretary of State

produced during the seventies had an important role in developing Palestinian cinema; they formed the essential basis of Palestinian revolutionary cinema.

After 1980 a change occurred in Palestinian cinema when several filmmakers tried to extract the Palestinian story from the actual land, rather than evoking it out of the traumatic, abstract, perpetually repetitive revival of its destruction. In his book *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema,* Hamid Dabashi states that Edward Said says, "In its attempt to articulate a national narrative, Palestinian cinema discovers a world that has been frequently hidden, and the making visible, sometimes in very subtle and eloquent ways, as in the cinema of Elia Suleiman, or in folkloric ways in the later films of Michel Khleifi, is very exciting indeed" (5). The first movie, which is counted as the beginning of the new Palestinian cinema, is *Al-Dhākira al-Khiṣba* (Fertile Memory) 1980, directed by Michel Khleifi. In this film the place of time is powerfully re-created. It is a mix between reality and fiction. Part of the story is about a woman from a village called Yafet Al-Nazareth, who loses her husband in 1948 and have two kids. The Israeli occupation confiscates her land in Maraj Ibn 'Amer. In spite of all the difficulties and suffering she faces, she refuses to accept compensation for her land and she decides to strive to get it back. Palestinians have lost their lands and still struggle in order to regain their rights. In his article "Michel Khleifi: Filmmaker of Memory (Palestine)," Tim Kennedy states:

> Michel Khleifi displays the narrative-documentary style that he goes on to develop to such great effect. He also announces some of the major themes that permeate his later work: the centrality of land to Palestinian identity; the preservation of collective memory and culture; the difficulty of telling the history of the nation; the trauma of defeat, displacement, and exile; and his critique of the

> weakness and paralysis of what he considers to be an archaic Arab society. (Gugler, 53)

Another important documentary film is *Maʿlūl Taḥtafil bi-Damārihā* (Ma'loul Celebrates Its Destruction) 1984, directed by Michel Khleifi. Ma'loul is a Palestinian village near Nazareth. It was depopulated and destroyed in 1948. The Israeli occupation declared the village closed military zone except for May 15, the Independence Day for Israel. On that day, Palestinians can visit their village. The paradox here is whilst the Israelis celebrate their independence day, Palestinians commemorate their catastrophe, Nakba.

In 2005 "Shashat for Female Cinema in Palestine" was established in Ramallah. The idea of this project is to encourage and support women in Palestine entering the cinema production field, in order to develop the production of cinema by women, which discusses women's issues. Women have played an important role in Palestinian cinema in the diaspora, such as the director Mai Al- Masri. In September 9, 1989, Al-Masri started filming her first documentary film, *Aṭfāl Jabal al-Nār* (Children of Fire), in Nablus in the West Bank. It was her first time back to Nablus, after 14 years of living as a refugee in Lebanon. The film is set during the *First Intifada (1987-1993.) Children of Fire* presents a vivid picture of the young stone-throwers and of the Palestinian *Intifada*. Her second documentary film *is ʾḥlām al-Manfā* (Frontiers of Dreams and Fears) 2001. The film is about a first meeting between Palestinian children in exile from Shatila refugee camp/ Lebanon, with children in the West Bank from Dheisheh refugee camp/ Bethlehem. The film explores Palestinian children's dreams to go back to their country. In his article "Bounded Realms: household, family, community, and nation," David Morley states, "Today, the equation of the desire for roots or belonging with a politically regressive form of reactionary nostalgia is widespread" (Naficy, 163). Nostalgia and imagination

are symbols of resistance. Children are trying to protect their mental state without even realizing it. In her talk at the Palestinian Film Festival, Washington D.C, October 9, 2016, Mai Al-Masri said:

> All my films represent the humanity and the hope, and the resilience and resistance. Those 4 elements are common to all the films. Imagination and beauty are despite wars suffering, poverty. This is what I'm trying to show in the films as well. It's a form of resistance. This is the most powerful resistance of a people. Children hold the keys of that imagination because when they grow older they lose it. (Al-Masri Talk)

Al-Masri's first feature film is *3000 Layla* (3000 Nights) 2015. The film talks about documentary stories of female prisoners in Israel. The film won many awards, as I will mention in the international recognition section.

Films portray the increasing importance of land as a symbol of Palestinian identity and nationality. As Bashir Ibrahim claims in his book *A Look on Palestinian Cinema in the Twentieth Century*, "Cinema is a means for describing and analyzing the state of the Palestinian people, to explain the past and foresee a more desirable future, to lead a struggle and to spread awareness of the Palestinian problem throughout the world" (6). This is a way to protect Palestinian identity and to keep hope for a better future. In his film, *Palestine—Scored the People,* Qais al-Zubaidi documents the history in Palestine during the period between 1917 and 1965. This film is considered one of the most important films in Palestinian cinema, because it contains a great deal of cinematic and photographic documentation of the history of Palestine. In his book *The Palestinian Cinema in the Twentieth Century*, Bashar Ibrahim states:

> The importance of this film is that it is a serious attempt to build a historical narration and the Palestinian historical subject. The film depends on visual foundations, scenes, and images that Qais al-Zubaidi could frame to establish a Palestinian narration for the history of a specific place. The exciting thing is that the same pictures, which it was not be able to obtain before, the Zionist cinema tried to frame for its narration for the same place. We are facing a narration that wants to refute a narration.[4] (53)

Palestinian cinema was created under difficult conditions and could not ignore division in Palestinian society. Palestinians would never abandon their homeland. For this reason, Palestinian filmmakers have tried to protect the Palestinian identity and nationality through their movies and have shown the world the legitimacy of Palestinians' existence in their land. In their book *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma, and Memory,* Gertz and Khleifi state, "Palestinian cinema that reduces Israeli society merely to soldiers and settlers, while disregarding all other Israelis, contributes to a kind of a<cinematic> battle against those who have obliterated the Palestinians from history and geography" (7). Thus, they explain the struggle that is facing the Palestinian filmmakers protecting Palestinian history and geography from vanishing after Israeli attempts to attain erasure.

The messages the filmmakers are trying to deliver to the global society are that the Palestinians still exist in their homeland and they are facing a terrible occupation. Palestinians

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4 السينما الفلسطينية في القرن العشرين/ بشار ابراهيم

الأهمية في هذا الفيلم انه محاولة جادة لبناء رواية تاريخية لفلسطين، والموضوع التاريخي الفلسطيني، إتكاء على مرتكزات بصرية، ومشاهد وصور، تمكن المخرج قيس الزبيدي من صياغتها في نسيج يؤسس لرواية فلسطينية عن تاريخ مكان محدد.. والمثير في الأمر أن ذات الصور، التي لم يكن من الممكن الحصول عليها من قبل، هي ما حاولت السينما الصهيونية صياغة روايتها لذات المكان عبرها.. نحن هنا أمام رواية تريد تدحض رواية.

have faced many problems from the Israeli occupation, marginalizing them, and keeping them from holding the same rights as Israelis.

Palestinians face tremendous difficulties everyday of their lives form the Separation Wall that was built to separate the West Bank from Israel. The Israeli army humiliates Palestinians through the Separation Wall and the checkpoints between cities and villages in the West Bank. In her article "The Immobile Mass: Movement Restriction In The West Bank," Alison P. Brown states:

> Since the mid-1990s, movement restrictions form part of the segmentation of the West Bank into zones. Zones A and B, where most Palestinians live, theoretically under control of the Palestinian Authority, are made up of dozens of enclaves, separated from each other by Zone C, 60 percent of the land, under full Israeli control (Hass, 2002). Movement restrictions combined with the network of settlement zones, cut off travel between cities and villages of the West Bank, and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (504)

The checkpoints and roadblocks in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank increase poverty, disease, unemployment, and death for hundreds of Palestinians. According to Alison P. Brown in her article “The Immobile Mass”, that “Human rights monitoring groups recorded 75 deaths at checkpoints, due to heart attacks, complications in labour, and inability to reach medical facilities, between October 2000 and May 2003” (Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, 2003). There are a few directors who grew up in these circumstances who portrayed the dystopia they have lived. Thus, their films reflect their true experience better than other directors who made films without living the actual experience. In their article “A Dead-End: Roadblock Movies,” Gertz and Khleifi shed light on directors from a new generation who have reflected their society’s dystopia in their films, such as Michel Khleifi, Rashid Masharawi, Ali Nasser, and Elia Suleiman. Their cinema has evolved without direct contact or relationship with outside

cinematic culture. Most of these directors create documentary films, which is the best way to portray the dystopia to the world.

Additionally, Palestinian unity and identity appeared to be more threatened than ever with the Israeli demands to establish a Jewish state. The aforementioned new directors comprised a larger movement aimed at protecting Palestinian identity in the face of the threat of extinction. They avoided personal stories and focused more on eyewitness accounts from Palestinians in Israel and in the diaspora to reveal the differences between them. Palestinian filmmakers connect the past with the present to protect Palestinian identity.

Thus, directors are trying to portray Palestinian suffering through different types of movies that simulate reality or present memories. The Nakba commands a big presence in Palestinian cinema through the actual events that occurred in 1948 or by reflecting the Nakba's impact on Palestinian lives inside or outside Palestine. In his article "The Nakba Projected," Haim Bresheeth states, "Nakba is not only a memory but a continuity of pain and trauma reaching from the past into the heart of the present, as well as continuity of struggle in which the losses of the Nakba fuel the resistance to Israel occupation and subjugation"(499). Representing the Nakba in Palestinian cinema is important for Palestinians to protect their identity and to remind the world that Palestinians are the actual landowners. The Nakba trauma still exists in Palestinian memory. In "From Bleeding Memories to Fertile Memories," Gertz and Khleifi state, "The trauma remains a living event, enduring and unchanging, as if fully present rather than merely represented in memory"(466). The situation of Palestinians' memory outside Palestine is different than inside because Israel is trying to destroy Palestinian memory and obfuscating historical facts to erase Palestinian existence in history through the rules they impose on Palestinians who live in 1948 territory. In "The Nakba Projected," Bresheeth mentions, "The

amnesia in the case of Palestinians living in Israel after 1948 was a forced *public* one. The conditions for remembering and commemoration did not exist since Israeli's rule prohibited any such exercise of memory" (503-504). Palestinian cinema has depicted Palestinians' yearning and struggle for freedom. Some directors concentrate on the clarification of the details of the Palestinian tragedy, while others focus on documenting the brutality of the occupation.

Another essential element, which directors focus on is space, not just because space is important for Palestinian identity, but because of the sociopolitical influence that space carries. In her book *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World,* Lina Khatib states:

> The most intricate illustration of the complex role that space plays in represented political conflicts is the case of Palestine as imagined in the films. Edward Said has mentioned that the collective memory invents the geographical space. The Palestine problem itself is one largely about space, where the same landscape is fought over by conflicting parties. (44)

Therefore, most Palestinian movies emphasize that no other land can make Palestinians give up their right to their own space in Palestine. As a result, many directors represent the Nakba and its consequences in their films to sustain Palestinians' memories about their homeland as an authentic claim to the Palestinian landscape.

The trauma in Palestinian films has played a big role in depicting Palestinians' suffering inside Palestine or outside in exile. In their book *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma, and Memory*, Gertz and Khleifi state:

> Land became a symbol of a period that some of those in exile still remembered and most recognized as part of their heritage. Palestinian Vision is still structured

> according to the familiar pattern of trauma. Thus, it consists of the following stages: the tranquility of paradise before banishment, which is succeeded by disaster, and finally revenge. (70-71)

The focus is shifted from land as a source of life and livelihood to land as a source of emotional identification. The directors are trying to symbolize the land, memories, and culture as resistance policy, which is refers to the practices that Palestinians have adopted to protect Palestinian identity.

The Samed Institution for Palestinian Cinematic Production produced two films *Al-Miftāḥ* (The Key) 1976 and *Yūm al-ʾreḍ* (The Land's Day) 1987 directed by Ghaleb Sha'ath. The object of the key became a cultural symbol for Palestinians representing the hope of returning home. Palestinian refugees kept their home's keys in hope of returning to their home in Palestine. The second film *Yūm al-ʾreḍ* portrays the confiscation of Palestinians' land for military or security pretexts where the Israeli army shot the Palestinians when they refused to leave their land and left martyrs and wounded Palestinians. The land becomes a symbol in Palestinian life and counts as a type of resistance.

Palestinian cinema is dependent on visualizing the reality of the trauma through showing Palestinians' misery after the Nakba in 1948. In his book *The Question of Palestine*, Edward Said states:

> We should not, I think, scant the impressive generosity of vision, the audacity of leaps, the daring of certain formulations that stand out as the Palestinian will has been slowly forged. In other words, it has not just been a matter of Palestinian accommodations to reality, but often a matter of either actually anticipating or transforming that reality. (xii)

It is painful for Palestinians to deal with their reality while they live under arbitrary power. As a result, Palestinian cinema deals with this reality, which is the opposite of freedom, by focusing their message outside Palestine. The directors' mission is to transfer that reality into polymorphous descriptions.

Difficulties Facing Palestinian Cinema

Many Palestinian filmmakers struggle to produce their movies. Some difficulties include not having national support in the absence of an independent nation, seeking international funding, and facing shortages of professional equipment. In their book *Palestinian Cinema,* Gertz and Khleifi state, "The filmmakers themselves never stopped fighting for the status of cinema and making movies, despite the scarcity of resources, the shortage of competent crews, and the relatively minor interest expressed by the organization's leaders" (25). Directors have a difficult time convincing leaders of global institutions to fund their films. The directors need to show the leaders that well-funded productions create good films and give the filmmakers a chance to screen their films globally. This would help Palestinian filmmakers deliver Palestinian suffering to an international audience, which could help Palestinians more than institutions such as the United Nations. In his article "Why Palestinian Movie Theaters disappeared in Palestine 1967?" Taysir Masharqa states:

> The movie theaters in Gaza and the West bank were shut down for political and economic reasons after the beginning of the intifada. The resistance decided to shut down the movie theaters in Nablus, Bethlehem, and Ramallah for political reasons. In Gaza, the spread of a "religious tide" caused the closing of film theaters. But in

> Jerusalem, most movie theaters closed because of the occupation suffocating restrictions. As a result, directors are seeking international spectators.[5] (1)

Palestinians expect filmmakers to depict their suffering under occupation in order to deliver their voice to the world, especially the Arab World. Palestinian films have faced screening restrictions in other different countries also. For instance, Elia Suleiman, in his movie *Chronicle of a Disappearance,* which was sponsored by the Israeli Fund for Quality films, was boycotted by most of the Arab world. In his book *Three Signs in the New Palestinian Cinema*, Bashar Ibrahim states:

> *Chronicle of a Disappearance* is a Palestinian film that sparked problems and faced strong objections for productivity reasons, which prevented screening the film in most Arab countries such as Egypt. The reasons behind this prevention are because of the Israeli contribution to the film's funding. Additionally, the film includes a scene of the Israeli flag fluttering and plays the Israeli national anthem.[6] (136)

Thus, Elia Suleiman responded:

> There is a fear of anything perceived as destabilizing in a period when unity is considered essential. A large portion of the Palestinian audience waits for the

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5 **لماذا اندثرت صالات العرض السينمائية في فلسطين ١٩٧٦؟ بقلم: تيسير مشارقة**

بعد التضييق الإسرائيلي الخانق على أهلنا في القدس اضطرت معظم دور السينما وصالات العرض لإغلاق أبوابها. تعطلت صالات العرض في غزة والضفة الغربية لأسباب اقتصادية وسياسية بعد اندلاع الانتفاضة. قررت المقاومة بإغلاق دور العرض السينمائي في نابلس وبيت لحم ورام الله لاعتبارات سياسية. أما بخصوص دار العرض الغزاوية فقد أدى انتشار "المد الديني" في غزة إلى إغلاقها

6 **ثلاث علامات في السينما الفلسطينية الجديدة**

"سجل اختفاء" هو فيلم فلسطيني أثار إشكاليات ووجه بآعتراضات قوية، لأسباب انتاجية، بحيث منعت عرضه في مصر، على سبيل المثال، وذلك بسبب المساهمة الإسرائيلية في تمويل إنتاجه، على الأقل لأنه احتوى على مشهد طويل، يرفرف فيه العلم الإسرائيلي خفاقا على إيقاع "النشيد الإسرائيلي" يبثه التلفزيون الإسرائيلي في ختام إرساله اليومي" (٢٠٢).

> meaning to be immediately obvious. When they critique a movie, they actually evaluate in terms of its being good or bad for the Palestinians. (Gertz, Khleifi 42)

Another movie, *Divine Intervention,* directed by Elia Suleiman, was produced in a different kind of difficult situation. When Israeli soldiers heard shooting in different locations while filming the scenes, they did not recognize that this is just a movie and they shot the production vehicle. Also, according to Hamid Dabashi in his book *Dreams of a Nation: on Palestinian Cinema,* when Suleiman arrived to screen his movie in Ramallah, he discovered that the Israeli army had preceded him. Suleiman recalled "The entrance to the cinema had been bombed, the cashtill rifled, and the Dolby stereo stolen" (145).

Many Palestinian filmmakers have faced difficulties in screening their movies inside and outside Palestine. According to Dabashi in his book *Dreams of a Nation: on Palestinian Cinema,* the most notorious recent case is the refusal of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to consider *Divine Intervention* for an Oscar, objecting that Elia Suleiman is a stateless person, who represents a Palestinian film without a nation. In spite of the fact that he has Israeli citizenship, he refused to present his movie as an Israeli one because he identifies as a Palestinian and makes Palestinian movies.

In another event the Dreams of a Nation Festival in New York State in 2002 was attacked by some websites. According to Annemarie Jacir, a Palestinian director, "We began to receive a barrage of hate mail, personal attacks, and death threats" (Dabashi 28). But at the end, the festival was a huge success and thousands of people from several states attended.

In her article "Is there a Palestinian Cinema? The National and Transnational In Palestinian Film Production," Livia Alexander attempts to highlight the problem within Palestinian film production as the absence of a nation-state. Because of this fundamental problem

directors, for example, must seek external funding to produce their movies. Palestinian filmmakers depict the cultural and geographical distribution within Palestine, the Occupied Territories, and in the diaspora.

The article discusses the first films in Palestinian cinema, which started as a means of protecting Palestinian identity and nationality. These films provided a way to reflect Palestinian life under the Israeli occupation. Some films, such as *Curfew* and *The Tale of the Three Jewels* depict Palestinians in a negative light. Because the Israeli forces closed down cinemas one by one, Palestinian filmmakers lacked a local market in which to screen their films. As a result, local audiences had to read about the films without having a chance to watch them, which led Palestinian filmmakers to select international spectators as their target audience.

The Israeli occupation worries about the type of movies that the Palestinian filmmakers are willing to produce. In their book *Palestinian Cinema,* Gertz and Khleifi state, "The act of filmmaking in Palestine is also subject to interference and barriers due to the nature of the occupation and its policies on the ground" (54). The Israeli fear is that the Palestinian filmmakers have a chance to represent the Palestinian issue to the global society, which will expose the Israeli's oppression of Palestinians. In my interview with Saed Andoni in Bethlehem on July 19, 2016, I asked him: Why do you use animation in your films? Does it cost less? He says:

> Animation costs a lot; we suffered for five years searching for funding for *The Wanted 18*. We have a problem about funding because we are not accredited internationally as a state. Countries have treaties between them and we are not part of it. The problem in the beginning with *The Wanted 18* is that it was triple production, Canadian, French, and Palestinian. Then, by the time of signing the contract, France refused the Palestinian director and considered him as a

> consultant; Palestinians refused. After a while, the production became Canadian and the budget decreased. Again a new condition was imposed that 80% from the budget should be spent in Canada, so the animation was produced in Canada.[7] (Saed Andoni interview)

Several Palestinian filmmakers face really complex problems in producing their movies. The difficulties they face in convincing the leaders of global institutions to fund their films lead them in the end to accept some conditions, if they will not affect the core of the film. Then, if they receive the funding, they face the obstacle of Israeli occupation. If the directors succeed in producing the films, they face problems with the audiences. Thus, the absence of Palestinian sovereignty on its own land has caused many complications in producing Palestinian films.

International Recognition

Several filmmakers have decided to produce Palestinian films in order to target a global audience that can help them in getting support for the Palestinians in resisting the Israeli occupation. At the same time, making Palestinian films is a kind of survival for Palestinian identity because they will keep reminding the international society of the existence of Palestine as a nation.

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7 **مقابلتي مع سائد أنضوني في بيت لحم بتاريخ ٢٠١٦/٧/١٩**
سؤال: لماذا تستخدمون الرسوم المتحركة في أفلامكم ؟، هل تكلفتها أقل ؟
جواب: تكلفة الرسوم المتحركة أغلى بكثير، وهذا ما عانيناه لمدة خمس سنوات للبحث عن تمويل لفيلم "المطلوبون 18،" نحن نعاني من مشكلة التمويل لأنه غير معترف بنا دولياً كدولة، الدول بينها اتفاقيات ونحن غير موجودين فيها، والمشكلة في المطلوبون 18 في البداية أنّه إنتاج ثلاثي، فلسطيني وفرنسي وكندي والإخراج مشترك، وعند توقيع الإتفاقية رُفض أن يكون هناك مخرج فلسطيني من قبل فرنسا، واعتباره استشارياً فقط، ورفض الفلسطينيون العرض. وبعد فترة أصبح الإنتاج كله كندي، وانخفضت الميزانية بسبب انسحاب الفرنسيين، وفرضت كندا شروطاً جديدة بأن تُصرف 80% من الميزانية داخل كندا ولذلك تمّ إخراج الرسوم المتحركة في كندا.

One of the best films that depicts the consequences of the Nakba after 1948, *The Dupes (1972)* directed by Tewfic Saleh, won Tanit d'Or at Carthage Film Festival of 1972. It was nominated for the Golden Prize at the Moscow International Film Festival of 1973.

The first film in the new era of Palestinian cinema, *Fertile Memory (1980)*, directed by Michel Khleifi, screened in the same year in the Carthage film festival in Tunisia and won the first prize. It earned the Critics' Week Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1981. Also, many people have had the chance to watch it in dozens of other festivals and events, and it was two votes away from receiving the grand prize, the Golden Camera at Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. Additionally, *Wedding in Galilee (1987)* also by Michel Khleifi won the Fipresci Prize at Cannes Film Festival 1987, Grand Seashell Prize at San Sebastian International Film Festival 1987, Joseph Plateau Award at Joseph Plateau Awards 1988, and Tanit d'Or at Carthage Film Festival 1988.

The movie *Paradise Now (2005)* by Hani Abu-Assad opened in New York and then throughout the U.S and the rest of the world. It won 13 International Awards and 16 Nominations, such as Academy Award nominee for the Oscar (2006), as a best foreign language film, Golden Globe winner as a best foreign language film, and many other prizes. Additionally, the Academy Awards nominated his second movie *Omar (2013)* for the Oscar for the foreign language Film of the year. It was screened in many countries and won other prizes. In his article "Omar's Oscar nod point of national pride; Palestinian filmmaker proud to represent a territory occupied by Israel since 1967" Kelly Brendan mentions this opinion of Abo-Assad:

> Because we are under occupation, it means a lot to us. It's recognizing the Palestinians as a nation that has its own culture. It's great support because any people in the world that are occupied would love to feel free. To be representing

> Palestine for a second time also puts a lot of pressure on you because you're representing a case, not a state. It's the case of people who want to be equal and free like anyone else in the world. (Brendan, 1)

Divine Intervention (2002) by Elia Suleiman won the Judge's Choice Award in the 2002 Cannes Festival, the second most important prize after the Golden Palm as Gertz and Khleifi mentioned in their book "The Palestinian Cinema". Also, it won the Fipresci Prize in the festival. It won the Silver Hugo for Special Jury Prize at Chicago International Film Festival in 2002. Also, it won the Screen International Award at European Film Awards in 2002. Additionally, It won the Best Screenplay and the Netpac Award at the Cinemanila International Film Festival in 2003.

The Time that Remains (2009) was screened in different film festivals, such as the Cannes Film Festival 2009 and the Toronto International Film Festival. Additionally, the film won the Jury Grand Prize and nominated for the best film at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in 2009. It won also the Critics Prize of the Argentinian Film Critics Association at the Mar de la Plata International Film Festival in 2009. It was nominated for a Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2009. It was nominated for an Asian Film Award at the Tokyo International Film Festival in 2009. It won the Audience Award and was nominated for a Golden Alhambra at the Granada Film Festival Cines del Sur in 2010.

Rashid Masharawi who produced and directed many movies, has seen more international recognition than any other director. Masharawi's film *Curfew (1993)* was screened at the Cannes Festival and has won several prizes, such as the Golden Prize in the 1993 Cairo Festival, the UNESCO Prize Film Award and the Audience and Critics Prize for the best film at the Montpellier Film Festival.

5 Broken Cameras by Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi was screened at numerous festivals. It won the World Cinema Directing Award and IDFA in the Netherlands, where it won the Audience Award and the Special Jury Award, and the World Cinema Directing Award at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, which is one of the largest independent film festivals in the United States. In addition, it won the International Stefan Jarl Award at Tempo in Stockholm, one of Sweden's largest documentary festivals. Also, it was the first Palestinian film to be nominated for the Oscar for best foreign language film.

Budrus by Julia Bacha won 2nd place in the Panorama Audience Award at the Berlin International Film Festival of 2010, and it won honorable mention at Bahamas International Film Festival 2010. It won Best Documentary at the Bergen International Film Festival of 2010, and it received mention at the Madrid International Documentary Film Festival of 2010. It won the Audience Award at the Pesaro International Film Festival of New Cinema of 2010, and it won the Audience Award at the San Francisco International Film Festival. It won a Witness Award at the Silverdocs Documentary Festival of 2010, and it won a Special Mention at the Tribeca Film Festival of 2010.

The film *Little Town of Bethlehem* directed by Jim Hanon, Elik Elhanan, and Sami Awad won an award of the 2011 Reel Rose (Pope John Paul II Film Festival), and won the best Oklahoma film award at Dead Center Film Festival.

The Wanted 18 (2014) directed by Amer Shomali and Paul Cowan, has won several awards, such as the best feature documentary award from Aljazeera, the best documentary from the Arab World in the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, the Golden Tanit for best documentary film in Carthage Film Festival, and the Traverse City Film Festival's best documentary award. The directors were competing in 2015 with big budget blockbusters to win one of the highest honors

in the film industry—the Oscars.

Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel (2002), directed by Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan won the Grand Prize in the International Film Festival for Human Rights in Paris 2004, Human Rights Award- Special Mention at Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema 2004, and Mayor's Prize at Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival 2005. It was nominated for the Robert and Frances Flaherty Prize, also at Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival 2005.

There are many Palestinian movies that have received awards in global festivals, and several others that have gained global attention by being screened for international audiences. These films are just as important as those that have received awards. In this paper I only analyze the films that have been awarded by the international film community, which I discuss according to genre not chronology.

Palestinian "Memory" Films

Palestinians, who live in the West Bank and Gaza, live under the siege that is imposed on them by the hegemony of the Israeli occupation, so they do not have the volition to control their lives. When Palestinians cannot secure their rights from governments around the world, directors need to direct their compass toward the audience. In her article "Displacement and Memory: Visual Narratives of al-Shatat in Michel Khleifi Films," May Telmissany states:

> In the eye of the filmmaker, the collective memory of Palestinians is impregnated with diverse yet closely knit experiences that nourish and intensify the complex identity of the people. His main concern is not to prove that all Palestinians have an identical relationship to memory, on which they try to build their national and cultural identity, but rather, to ask how and by whom this multilayered memory is

> constructed and preserved and, ultimately to ask what remains from Palestinianness and Palestinian history when the land is confiscated and the people displaced. (76)

While Palestinians use traumatic memory as part of their identity and nationality, filmmakers attempt to give a different point of view, which is reminding Palestinians of their identity through images or shots of how much Palestinian's identity might change or what is remaining from it. Additionally, it might be a warning of losing Palestinian identity by the passage of time and modernization, which could easily destroy Palestinian traditions and culture that are an important part of Palestinian identity.

Some of the films that represent the memory of the Nakba are: *Chronicle of a Disappearance (1996)* and *The Time that Remains (2009)*, both written and directed by Elia Suleiman. The first half of the first film and most scenes in the second film were portrayed in Nazareth, which is the hometown of the director. Suleiman uses his family as actors. So, the question is: why does he do that? I would argue that they represent the Palestinian memory, identity, and nationality. Furthermore, this type of his movies, a combination of feature film and documentary using actors or places that belong to a true story, reflects a stronger argument in Suleiman's films. By basing his films on true stories and filming his family, not actors, he provides element of authenticity.

Elia Suleiman and Assaf Amir produced the first film, *Chronicle of a Disappearance,* in Nazareth and Jerusalem. It is about Palestinian disappearance as an entity. This movie is set between the signing of the Oslo Accords, which is the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangement for the Palestinians signed by Israel and the PLO, as representative of the Palestinian people, and the second Intifada, also known as the al-Aqsa Intifada, which broke

out in September 28, 2000, following a visit by Israel's then-opposition leader Ariel Sharon to Jerusalem's Temple Mount (or al-Haram al-Sharif). It is a way to remind the world of the Nakba and that the Oslo Accords, are wrong because they do not give Palestinians rights. This movie is series of stories and it is divided into two parts: "Nazareth: personal diary" and "Jerusalem: political diary," reflecting a similar interchange. In his article "The Nakba Projected," Haim Bresheeth mentions how memory leads to identify the identity in *Chronicle of a Disappearance* and other films, "They signal that memory is the material of myth and myth is the foundation of the identity of nations" (503). Memory (the diaries) is used in this film as a symbol of Palestinian identity. The diaries could be seen as an eyewitness to the events, which occurred at the time it had been written.

The second film, *The Time that Remains,* has a historical span; it was directed by Elia Suleiman and filmed in the cities of Nazareth and Ramallah, by outside private companies such as MBC Group, France3, Canal+ and TPS Star. The director wanted to share his autobiography as an authentic witness of to the misery that the Palestinian society faces under occupation.

The director uses his father's diaries, his mother's letters, and his own memories. The film is divided into four stages: 1948, when Nazareth surrenders to the Israeli army and is occupied. Fuad, Elia's father, repairs guns. Because of this he is denounced and, after a mock trial, beaten senseless by Israeli soldiers. 1970, following Fuad's life after he got married and made a family of his own until Elia, his only son, became a child. During this period, Elia is berated for talking about American imperialism in class. 1980, Elia's youth before and after his father's death. Present, the final period, portrays Elia's return to Nazareth after he spent 12 years in America caring for his dying mother.

Palestinian cinema represents trauma not just as historical past but also as a living event enduring and unchanging. The movie, *The Time that Remains,* was produced in 2009. Elia Suleiman portrays the epic nature versus the history of daily life. The director presents his autobiography when his father decided to stay in Nazareth and refused to leave with his family in 1948 as a type of resistance. In "A Chronicle of Palestinian Cinema," Gertz and Khleifi state that "The Palestinian struggle escalated, and the escalation determined the agenda of Palestinian film directors. Filmmakers sought to establish Palestinian narrative on the basis of the actual land, the real place and the life in it, rather than by reviving the past in the present" (Gugler 188). Suleiman wants to show how Palestinians, who have refused to leave, spend their daily lives after 1948. He presents Palestinian suffering, especially that of his family, under the Israeli occupation. This movie is counted as a Palestinian national movie, as Hamid Dabashi mentions in his book *Dreams of a Nation*.

The director, who is also the protagonist of the movie, chooses to be silent in his movies in order to make the space talk. Space is more powerful than dialogue, if the director knows how to use it. In *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema,* Hamid Dabashi mentions his interview with Elia Suleiman when he asked him about the significance of silence in his cinema, "silence is very close to death, and maybe there is an unconscious insistence on my part that there is death in every image that I see... In other words, not too much polluted rigor or speech or that which can be preachy to the spectator, and thus the spectator has that meditative capacity or role or space to actually fill in or participate with the image" (154). In spite of Suleiman's view of using silence, the image could be describing the situation. For instance, the checkpoint scene in *Divine Intervention,* made by the same director and that I will discuss later, portrays Palestinian's suffering; it does not need people to talk to make the scene understandable.

Space is a main theme of Suleiman's film, not just this film but also in all his other films. In her book *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World,* Lina Khatib states that "Space, both physical and imagined, is not only part of the identity of people, but also a dynamic tool often utilized to define the identity of nations" (15). This is exactly what Suleiman is trying to do by using space to protect his identity. When he depicts his home, his school, and his city, he crystalizes the idea of nostalgia through his autobiography as a Palestinian holding his ground as a form of resistance. All of these places are an important part of the director's identity that more broadly represents Palestinian identity. So, the space (places) is used as a symbol of Palestinian identity.

When Suleiman films Nazareth city before and after 1948, he wants his audience to understand that space stays the same. The establishment of the Israeli state will never change the Palestinian identity. Khatib mentions in her book *Filming the Modern Middle East,* that, "The meanings of a space are based on the social power structure of the culture representing those meanings. Space becomes a question of difference, where differences between culture/ spaces are socially constructed" (17). Suleiman shows in a few scenes the theft of cultural inheritance in the same space that is used as a symbol of Palestinian resistance. Culture and space are the two things that the director is trying to protect in his movie. These two elements are the chance and the hope for Palestinian continuity. When Suleiman represents his own story in his movie, he wants to prove that Palestinians will not forget their land. In spite of the fact that Palestinians have different views towards protecting their identity and land, all agree that the Israeli occupation should end.

In the first shot of the movie, there is a portrait that represents the Palestinian culture and history because it shows oranges, which Palestine is famous for exporting to other countries. The

director in this shot reminds the Palestinians of what they left behind when they decided to leave. Oranges are a symbol of Palestinian identity and nationality.

In the scene when the mayor comes to sign the document waiver with the Israeli officer, he seems insulted by the situation. He decides to sign the document, not because he agrees to the occupation's existence, but because he realizes that he is in a feeble position. The Arab leaders failed to defend Palestine. His agreeing to officially surrender might hold two meanings: the first is that he refuses to leave his country. For this reason, he agrees to sign the waiver because of his fear of exile. The second is that he dreads the death that the Israeli army would bring him if he refuses to sign the waiver, the same way they killed thousands of innocent Palestinians. Either way, he decides to stay in his homeland even under the Israeli occupation.

In another scene, when a man comes to the place where the Israeli army holds arrested Palestinians who are fighting against them to protect their lands and families, the man chooses suicide when he sees the Israelis occupying his homeland. He would rather die than live under the occupation or leave his country.

There is another type of leaving seen in the different faces in Suleiman's film. First, when Fuad's father, Elia's grandfather, decides to leave, but Fuad himself refuses because he believes in the continuity of Palestinian resistance. In this period of time the Palestinians' principal form of resistance was to stay in their homes and lands, to not run away and give in to the occupation, because that is exactly what the occupation favors. Israeli forces committed serious massacres in some Palestinian villages in order to terrorize people and force them to leave. In her book *Erased from Space and consciousness: Israel and the Depopulated Palestinian Villages of 1948*, Noga Kadman states:

> On April 9, Irgun and Stern Gang paramilitaries killed more than a hundred residents of the village of Dayr Yasin, most of them noncombatants, including women and children. Based on the accounts of witnesses, both Palestinians and Jews, Israeli historian Ilan Pappe concludes that later, on the night between May 22 and 23, Israel carried out a massacre in the village of al-Tantura on the shore under Mount Carmel, which was "far worse than the infamous case of that at Dayr Yasin." He describes how 200-250 residents were killed there, in a raging spree by the Israeli forces after they occupied the village and also by a systematic summary execution of boys and men on the beach. (11)

But what would have happened if all the Palestinians who left Palestine in 1948 had refused to leave? Would Israel have been able to expand its occupation over Palestine in 1967? Or would we have seen a different structure of Palestine? Fuad looks very disappointed in his father's decision, but at least he has made his own decision to stay.

Second, Fuad's friend Anis decides to leave. When Anis comes to visit Fuad at his atelier where Fuad makes weapons, he tells Fuad that he will leave with his family for a couple of days. This is exactly what most Palestinians thought when they decided to leave their homes and lands: that they would come back after the Arabs help them win the war of 1948. Fuad encourages his friend to stay and fight to protect his homeland. Later, he gives his friend a gun, but unfortunately Anis refuses and accepts surrender.

Third, Fuad gets a letter from Thurayya, who is Anis's sister, the woman he loves, telling him that she has to leave with her family. He is again disappointed that she is telling him to give up his gun and stop fighting the Zionists who came to steal his life, homeland, and history.

Additionally, there is a scene that portrays another way of resistance. The Israeli army arrests Fuad, the soldier covers Fuad's eyes at a beautiful spot on a hill. Fuad is inhaling the air with enjoyment and listening to bird songs. When the officer is threatening Fuad, saying that he would shoot him in the head if Fuad does not tell him where the guns are hidden, Fuad is fast in his reaction and refuses to betray the resistance and his country. He decides that it is better for him to die on his land, better than the exile that he might face. If he had already insisted on staying in spite of the fact that all the people he loved had already left, he would not surrender now.

Silence, like space, is depicted as an important piece of the film. In the scene where the fireworks appear to celebrate the establishment of Israel, Elia's mom, who is sitting on the balcony, refuses to look at the fireworks, and she turns her face toward the window on the other side in silence. When Suleiman turns on the recording of a song "Seboni ya nass", he uses the song instead of dialogue to express anger and thus shows the influence of the absence of dialogue on facial expression at that moment. She appears to be reminiscing. Palestinians have insisted on sustaining the contiguity of their memories for the next generation, who hopefully will continue the resistance and recover their rights.

The conditions of Palestinians under occupation come with a few contradictions. At Fuad's school, two different events occur that represent the life of Palestinians under the occupation. The first is when the kids are singing about celebrating the establishment of Israel. The second is when teachers and kids hear about Jamal Abdel-Nasser's death. In this scene, it appears to show how much losing the only hope of freedom they had disappoints those in the school. The paradox between the two scenes is how they express sham behavior in the first one, but in the second one they express their authentic feelings.

In these two movies *Chronicle of a Disappearance* and *The Time that Remains* Elia Suleiman is trying to represent the effects of Nakba on three generations. He will not stop for the future because the Palestinian issue is a dilemma centered on the way to free their country. It will be hard to accept living under the Israeli occupation as long as Israel refuses to give Palestinians their legitimate rights to be legal citizens in their homeland. Whilst Elia Suleiman uses the diaries, letters, and spaces as symbols of Palestinian's memory in order to protect Palestinian identity, directors in the following two films use different types of symbols.

There are two other films that allude directly to 1948. The first one is *The Return to Haifa (1981)*, based on Ghassan Kanafani's novel and directed by Qasim Hawwal. It is the only feature movie that was produced by a Palestinian organization, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, at that period of time. In the pandemonium of 1948, a family left a child behind. After 1976, the family, which now lives in Ramallah, decides to go back to Haifa to look for their missing son. The baby here is used as a symbol of land and the parents' attempt to return their rights that they lost during Nakba. The parents discover that their son was adopted by a Jewish family, joined the Israeli army, and became an officer. He refuses to return with his birth family to Ramallah and, because of that, the father, who was previously opposed to the idea, decides to allow his other son to join the Palestinian organization that fights Israel. Resistance in this film is shown as the only means to reunification of both family and land. The father does not have another solution to return his son (land) other than resistance. This is a way not just to get back his son, but also to protect his identity from extinction if he stays silent. The Nakba has separated the Palestinian families and made them suffer for the rest of their lives. Therefore, taking action is important to regain lost rights.

Palestinian cinema has faced many difficulties. The main issue in Palestinian movies is to confirm nationality, as Livia Alexander states in her article "Is there a Palestinian Cinema?" that "Those issues of nationalism are the heart of Palestinian cinema, and cultural expressions of nationalism remain central to many Palestinian films" (150). The problem with Palestinian films is the absence of a nation-state, so the directors seek to get external funding to produce their movies. *The Dupes* addresses this problem.

The second film of the Palestinian memory films is *The Dupes (1972)*, which did not count as a national film as Nadia Yaqub mentions in her article "The Dupes: Three Generations Uprooted from Palestine and Betrayed," in spite of its being a story about Palestinians, because it was produced outside Palestine. The director, Tewfik Saleh, got support from the Syrian National Film Organization and produced the film in 1972. This movie, filmed in Syria and Iraq, came out after the events of "Black September" in 1970 in Jordan, which led to the expulsion of the PLO and its fighters from Jordan. This incident is in the background; however, the movie did not allude to it. The director portrays the difficulties that Palestinian refugees have faced because of the floundering of Arab attitudes towards Palestinians and the Palestinian problem.

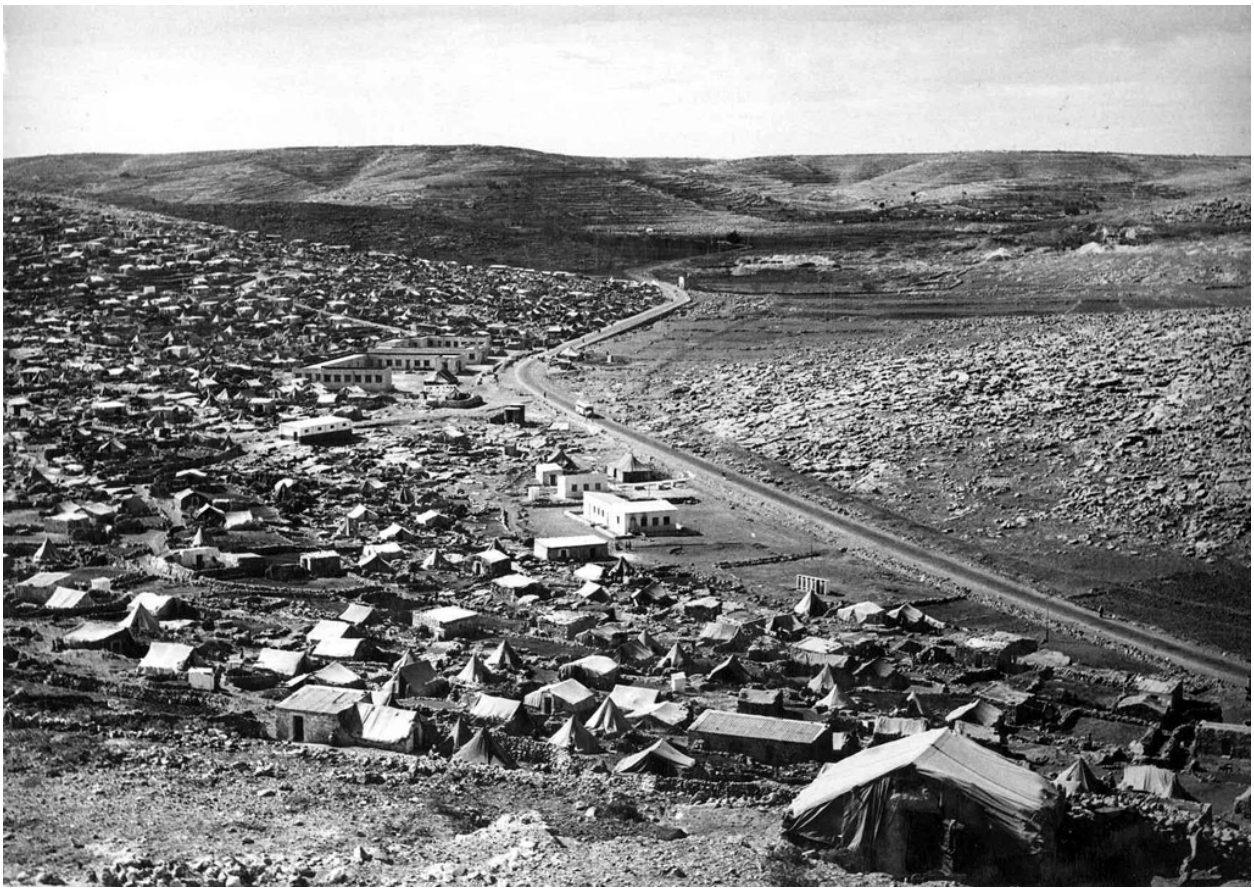
While *The Time that Remains* depicts the suffering of three generations in the Occupied Palestine, *The Dupes* portrays the suffering of three generations in the diaspora. Both films show the period of 1948, the Nakba and its effects on Palestinians. *The Dupes* is based on Ghassan Kanafani's novel *Men in the Sun* published in 1963. Kanafani was the first writer who wrote about Palestinian misery. He was hiding in Beirut at the time, because he did not have proper identification papers. The events in the movie took place in 1958 – after 10 years of Nakba. The image below is of the Dheisheh camp in 1948. Palestinians who live in this camp, were depopulated from villages from all around Palestine, such as Al-Walaja, Zakaria, al-Majdal, Dir

Aban… In her book *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration*, Laleh Khalili states, "The Palestinian refugees' commemorative narratives have at various times and in specific historical contexts exhibited moods which can be categorized as tragic, heroic or *sumud* (steadfastness)" (90).

Nadia Yaqub in "The Dupes: Three Generations Uprooted from Palestine and Betrayed," gives Saleh's own reasons for making this film, "I wanted to show and say something about those Palestinians. The historical and political issues and the inhuman ways they were and are treated by the whole world became the most important reason to make the film" (Gugler 117). Saleh was looking for support from his audience: that they might force a change by pressuring their governments to help the Palestinians end their ongoing tragedy. In her book *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity,* Viola Shafik states:

> Saleh's film was one of the first to give Pan-Arab slogans a more solid base and to state the common responsibility of the Arab states for the disastrous situation of the Palestinians. Taufik Saleh introduces the film with a documentary sequence depicting the refugees' misery and their hopeless situation in the camps. He then illustrates the difficulties of the protagonists, who have neither the money nor valid papers to obtain a work permit in one of the affluent neighboring countries. (156)

Saleh desired to deliver a strong message to his audience to encourage them to take action to help Palestinians. After Saleh lost faith in the Arab governments, he demanded Arab unity and pan-Arab responsibility for what happened to Palestinians since 1948.



This movie tells the story of three Palestinian refugees from three different generations looking for a better life in the oil city of Kuwait. The decision they made – to hide inside the tank of an oil-transport truck – was not easy because they knew that they would travel through the desert and then be smuggled into Kuwait through the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. Under the heat of the desert sun, the three men die of suffocation, unable to alert anyone to their presence.

In the first scene in the movie, Saleh uses the palm trees as a national symbol. As Nadia Yaqub states in her article "The Dupes," that "Saleh adds a lush grove of palm trees, which is geographically accurate, as the Shatt is famous for its palm forests, and evocative of Iraq, as the palm tree is its national symbol" (Gugler 117). The idea of having this scene was important for the movie because the Shatt, called Shatt-al-Arab, is owned by all Arabs allegorically, and Arabs are supposed to be able to go anywhere in the Arab World. Ironically, the Shatt is not just a

symbol of Arab nationalism in the film, but also the locus for the individualist capitalism that Kanafani and Saleh criticize, as Yaqub argues in her article. Most Palestinians were looking for a place that would allow them to rebuild their lives and Kuwait was a very good place to start because it was in the beginning of its oil boom.

One of the protagonists of this film is Abu Kaiss, who was a peasant in Palestine. He was forced to leave his country and suffered significant physical pain on the way to Iraq. Reaching Shatt-al-Arab might give him a sense of security as he was still in the Arab World. Or it could give him a sense of guilt for leaving his family and land. When Abu Kaiss lies down and touches the soil of the land, the smell forces him to remember his homeland and his wife, who has the same smell as the land. In his article "The Palestinian Peasant As National Signifier," Ted Swedenburg claims that the signifier of the peasant is used to build a sense of a united Palestinian nation in order to continue the struggle against Israeli colonial polices. The peasants' closeness to the soil seems to be suitable for national identity, given the Zionist project of representing exclusively Jewish ties to the land and its rejection of any authentic historicity of Palestine. The peasants became the heroes for the first time in Palestinian national literature. The olive trees, orange trees, za'atar and peasants (In Arabic: fellaheen) have become symbolic in poetic and novel writings. The composition of literature is one way by which Palestinians hold onto their land and protect their heritage and land from the Zionist movement.

In one scene, when the Zionists attack Abu Kaiss's village, the music reflects the sadness of that moment: losing the war that resulted in Israel occupying most of Palestine. Abu Kaiss prefers fighting alongside his people, against the Zionists. When his son attempts to prohibit him from joining the rebels to defend his village, he refuses because his land is as important as his son and it is his honor to defend and protect his land. The camera also shows the teacher

(Salem), who does not know how to pray but does know how to hold a weapon to defend his land. Saleh focuses on Salem's hand, after he was killed, as a way of symbolizing death by holding the weapon. Then, Abu Kaiss's voice can be heard saying that master Salem was lucky because he died before he saw the Zionists occupy the land. Abu Kaiss does not appear on the screen, but his voice is heard. This is not a specific case, but a general one for all Palestinians who left their land and have suffered since 1948.

In another scene depicting Palestinians suffering in refugee camps, living a life of humiliation and indignity, Saleh uses documentary images and shots to create a powerful sense of guilt in his audience. The camera images with the music do the talking because that is expressive in its own way. The refugees eat at the same time; no more privacy as they had in their homes. They look like they are in a prison. This type of life forces many Palestinians to seek ways to improve their lives. Life without dignity forces Abu Kaiss to leave his family to look for a better life when he says, "God rest your soul, master Salem, you stayed over there and thereby have saved yourself from all the misery and have spared your white hair that shame. If you had lived, master Salem, and if you were drowned in poverty, as I am, would you have done what I did?" (00:13:40-00:14:15). Abu Kaiss must make a choice. If he chooses to stay, he would suffer poverty. And if he chooses to leave, he would suffer humiliation and insult.

When Abu Kaiss makes his decision to leave, it is not an easy one; especially since he would leave his wife and children without protection or money. But when he decides to leave, he asks himself many questions, which help him decide that he is making the right decision, when he says, "Are you still unaware that your house and trees are lost? What do you depend on? What are you waiting for?" (00:15:25-00:16:00). He decides to confront his destiny.

The director uses documentary photographs of Arab leaders in this scene, superimposing the questions, pointing out that Abu Kaiss should not wait for them to liberate his country. Palestinians should seek their autonomy without depending on other Arabs. The Arab governments deceived the Palestinians in the wars of 1936 and 1948, especially in the ten years after Nakba, they still did not attempt containment of the crisis. In his book *The Question of Palestine,* Edward Said states:

> Each Palestinian community must struggle to maintain its identity on at least two levels: first, as Palestinian with regard to the historical encounter with Zionism and the precipitous loss of a homeland; second, as Palestinian in the existential setting of day-to-day life, responding to the pressure in the state of residence. Every Palestinian has no state as a Palestinian even though he is "of," without belonging to, a state in which at present he resides. (121)

Abu Kaiss must decide what is best for him and his family. He dreams that he can secure the education of his children in a proper school, buy olive trees like the ones he lost in his homeland, and build a home for his family, but none of these worked out as he hoped.

When Abul-Kheizaran, the truck driver, succeeds in smuggling the three men into Kuwait after crossing the border, he finds them dead in the tank because they could not survive the concentrated heat. What happened to Abu Kaiss and his friends' dreams? The dreams died with the people. Would it have been better for them if they had stayed in Palestine, maybe not in their homes, but in their country? Is it easy for people to leave their country? Of course not, but staying in their country in spite of whatever risky circumstances they would face, protecting their identity would be much better than leaving. That appears to be the judgment of Saleh in *The Dupes*.

Language plays a perhaps unintentional role in reinforcing Saleh's message. The director succeeds in depicting different Arab accents from various Arab countries, all via actors from one country: Syria. The Arabic language should unite the Arab countries. But in spite of the language being a central part of Arab nationalism, Arabs fail to create the Arab dream and establish one identity and one country. The purpose of making this movie is perhaps to remind Arabs that decisive action must be taken now. The paradox is when the Syrian actors succeed in uniting Arabs in presenting the Palestinian, Iraqi, and Kuwaiti dialogues; Arab nationalism achieves its goal of having the ability to represent any Arab country no matter where the person comes from, while the Arab governments fail to unite against their common enemy to free Palestine.

Another Saleh message is that the exploitation of human beings becomes a profitable trade during any war that generates hundreds of thousands of refugees. In *The Dupes* Palestinians have added a new suffering to their list when they fall prey to people who want to exploit their need to build a new life in another country. When Abu Kaiss meets the man who came from Kuwait, the man convinces him about the golden life that awaits him in the oil-rich country. The golden life's rumors spread around the camp, which makes Asa'ad and Marwan also decide to travel to Kuwait. Because Abu Kaiss becomes pathetic and loses his hope of going back to his country, he starts having a flashback of how Arabs are useless in helping Palestinians with their crisis. Saleh's message is reinforced: Palestinians must choose their destiny for themselves when Arabs derail the Palestinian issue's resolution.

In the first scene Saleh adds the palm trees, which were not in Kanafani's novel where he just describes the sand, the glowing white sky and black birds circling overhead. Saleh was looking for an Arab identity symbol that he could use to deliver his message, and the palm tree exist in many Arab countries, and have become a national symbol of Arab unity in the film, as

mentioned before in Nadia Yaqub's article "The Dupes". (Unfortunately, he did not succeed, because nearly the entire Arab world banned any screening of the movie). In "The Dupes," Nadia Yaqub states:

> The connection between the production of films about Palestine and progressive Arab politics was not straightforward. Palestine was exploited by Arab governments as a means of distracting their populations from domestic problem. In fact, Saleh himself only came to direct *The Dupes* after his first screenplay was denied funding by the NFO[8]. After it was made, and despite its critical success, *The Dupes* was heavily censored; it was screened for two just weeks in Damascus and was not shown at all in Egypt or Iraq. (Gugler, 118)

Saleh adds a scene that is not part of the novel, though, using images of the United Nations, the Arab rulers, and the documentary photos of Palestinian suffering in the camps. These documentary photos fall in the frame of the plot, though, which supports the crux of the novel. In the last scene of the movie, Abul-Kheizaran does not say what is in the novel, "Why didn't you knock on the tank's walls… Why didn't you say something, Why, Why, Why?" It looks like Saleh wants to keep this question for his audience to preserve the movie as an open-ended tragedy, or perhaps Saleh believed that the question has now been answered. As Yaqub notes, the movie came after the PLO was created as a response to the Palestinians' complaints and demands for action. Overall, the movie succeeded in loyally translating the novel to film in spite of the few differences mentioned above.

Saleh succeeds in portraying the several stages of Palestinian struggles that Kanafani identifies as "the Deal," "the Road," "Sun and Shade," and "the Grave." In Kamal Abdel-

[8] Syria's National Film Organization

Malek's book *The Rhetoric of Violence: Arab-Jewish Encounters In Contemporary Palestinian Literature And Film,* he states:

> In "the Deal" there is the bargaining over the price of smuggling the main characters into another country, literally crossing borders. "The Road" describes the ordeal of going through the scorching heat of the desert, where "the sun was pouring its inferno down on them without any respite." (36) The road, a liminal entity, is described by Abul-Khaizuran as the *sirat*, "the path which God in the Qur'an promised his creatures they must cross before being directed either to paradise or to hell. If anyone falls he goes to hell, and if anyone crosses safely he reaches paradise. Here the angels are the frontier guards" (Ibid.). Both "Sun and Shade" and "the Grave" provide powerful descriptions of the fateful journey, which ends in the gratuitous death of the smuggled men. (39-40)

The importance of this film is to illuminate Palestinian suffering and to find a way to help them. Saleh demands Arab unity in the face of Israeli occupation. The dealings of Arab governments with the Palestinian issue indirectly led the three men to their death. This movie does not reflect just the past and the present time in the lives of Palestinians, but it is giving a glimpse into the future of other Arab refugees.

If one compares Fuad's scene in *The Time That Remains,* when he refused to leave with his family, with the scene in *The Dupes,* where the three men died in the desert of Kuwait, one could glean the Palestinian filmmakers' view that people should not leave their country under any circumstances because nobody knows when death will come. The three men who left their country in a misguided attempt to take care of their families were dead. Fuad, by refusing to leave, builds his own life in his country, and at the same time, protects his home and identity.

On the one hand, in *The Dupes*, the journey to Kuwait emphasizes the estrangement that Palestinians feel in the Arab areas that become increasingly infertile the further away they are from their homeland. It accentuates the belief that the pan-Arabic notion is no replacement for home. On the other hand, *The Time that Remains* highlights the struggle between Palestinians and Israelis over the same space. While Palestinians attempt to protect their identity and nationality from extinction, Israelis insist on expelling Palestinians from their homes through brutality. These two films, *The Return to Haifa* and *The Dupes,* use the baby (the lost son), the olive tree, land's soil, peasants, and hope as symbols of Palestinian identity. In the aforementioned films memory serves as a symbol of Palestinian identity. In the following films, documentary films, there are different symbols that are used to protect Palestinian identity.

Palestinian Documentary Films

There are different types of films that attract global audiences, some of which are documentary movies about non-violent resistance. The non-violence movement has started growing against the Separation Wall in the West Bank, especially in the villages such as Bilʿin, Nilʿin, Al-Maʿsara, Walaja, and Budrus as well as in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem. People in these villages demonstrate peacefully every week against Israeli policy concerning the confiscation of Palestinian lands. The purpose of this movement is to draw the attention of the international community to the deportation policy that Israel imposes on Palestinians, who have refused to leave their lands. Palestinians are exposed to torture, insult, and death in order to protect their land.

The film *5 Broken Cameras* was filmed from *2005 to 2010*, and directed by Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi. The film documents the non-violence movement in Bilʿin village against the Separation Wall. Burnet uses 5 cameras in documenting this peaceful movement, because his

cameras are repeatedly destroyed by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). This film documents the aggressive response to the non-violent resistance by both the IDF and Israeli settlers. In his article "5 Broken Cameras," Salomon Rogberg reports:

> Burnet, who initially bought a camera to document his newborn son Gibreel's childhood, becomes both a participant in the ongoing struggle and an itinerant journalist. If he is originally motivated by a desire to protect his own piece of land and olive trees, he is eventually caught up in a struggle with international ramifications. (1)

The film is intended for a global audience. According to Burnet, Palestinians need to protect their lands and identity and get freedom and peace for the next generation. People in Bilʿin village are suffering everyday to protect their land and their olive trees.

The second documentary film I will be addressing is *Little Town of Bethlehem (2009)*. There is a panel featured in the film that consists of Jim Hanon the director of the documentary, Elik Elhanan of Combatants for Peace, and Sami Awad, who is executive director of the Holy Land Trust. This movie also documents the growth of the non-violence movement. This documentary film is about three men who live in the West Bank, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem: Sami Awad is a Palestinian Christian who was forced with his family in 1948 to move to Bethlehem, Yonatan Shapira is an Israeli Jew who was an IAF captain until 2003 when he and 26 pilots signed a letter refusing to be part of the indiscriminate attacks on Palestinians in the occupied territories, and lives now in the United States, and Ahmad Al-Aʿzzeh is a Palestinian Muslim who lives in the Bethlehem refugee camp.

The film targets college audiences hoping to encourage them to support the non-violence movements that could bring peace to the region. Awad characterizes non-violence as an attack

on “the structures that create violence, but not the people who utilize violence.” The three men have been jailed, received death threats, and been accused of collaboration or betrayal. They continue to follow in the non-violence tradition established by Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi as Andrew Stimson mentions in his article “Little town of Bethlehem”. According to Elhanan, the movement was not a success story. He admits, “We are failures every day [that] we did not end the occupation, we did not remove one checkpoint, we did not save one kid from dying, we did not stop one house from being demolished”. In spite of all this, the three men are convinced that the conflict must end through non-violent movements. In his article “Little Town of Bethlehem,” Stimson states, “*Little Town of Bethlehem* depicts individuals who deliberately choose dignity, respect, and recognition of shared humanity in the face of incredible social pressure and physical danger. The film provides a rare glimpse of hope in a conflict that so often appears impossible to resolve” (48). The global audience will see Palestinians suffering under Israeli occupation.

A third documentary film is *Budrus (2003)*, directed by Julia Basha, which focuses on Budrus village, which is located near the Green Line (the line that separates Israel from the West Bank,) and its resistance against the Separation Wall that would separate their village and destroy their olive trees: Eyed Morrar, who is featured in the film, says, “We have given those trees the names of our mothers. For 50 years I have been watering these olive trees, if they uprooted them, they have to uprooted me too” (00:17:02). In one part, the Separation Wall will surround six Palestinian villages, cutting them off from the rest of the West bank and hundreds of acres of their land. In Budrus village the Wall will confiscate 300 acres from Budrus along with about 3,000 olive trees, as Eyed mentioned in the film. In this film Eyed and his daughter convince movements like Fatah and Hamas to protest side by side and attract Israelis to the movement.

Bilʿin has become a symbol for non-violent resistance. Bilʿin works with Budrus to save their land.

In her article "Palestinian nonviolence: Is the Budrus model still viable?" Daniella Cheslow states, "Indeed, even as audiences from America to Germany to the West Bank embrace 'Budrus', the momentum generated by Budrus is waning. Now, the model of non-violence appears to be faltering amid lack of a unified leadership and apathy among local Palestinians" (1). After 55 demonstrations, the Israeli government moved the Separation Wall around Budrus almost entirely to the Green Line, after destroying the land and uprooting hundreds of olive trees. In Budrus Palestinians have succeeded to minimize the damages of the Wall on their land. Others persist in getting their rights. Israel will not stop apartheid and its racist policy against Palestinians, as I will demonstrate with an analysis of the following film.

The Wanted 18 (2014) is an animated documentary film, directed by Amer Shomali and Paul Cowan. It is an astonishing true story from the First Palestinian Intifada, which started on December 8, 1987, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The film is a combination of animations, documentary images, and storytelling. During the first Intifada in 1987, a siege was imposed on the West Bank and Gaza. In his book *The Rhetoric of Violence: Arab—Jewish Encounters In Contemporary Palestinian Literature And Film*, Kamal Abdel-Malek states:

> The Intifada, the most comprehensive revolt since 1936, breaks out in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The United National Command is established and directs the mass uprising against Israeli occupation. The Israelis respond with administrative detention, curfews, expulsion of Palestinian activities, closing of Palestinian schools and universities, and destruction of Palestinian homes. (16)

The narrator of the film says, "Early 1988, a Beit Sahour cow truck drove to an Israeli kibbutz.

An Israeli peacenik there agreed to sell my town the cows" (00:04:00). This is the beginning of the true story of Beit Sahour, which began the Israeli economic boycott as a part of non-violent resistance. Beit Sahour town decided to boycott the Israeli products and bought 18 cows, which were born in an Israeli Kibbutz, so they could produce their own milk rather than buy it from Israel. The cows were a symbol of freedom and independence. In the film an advisor to the Israeli military governor on Arab affairs says:

> Beit Sahour was a different issue. It presented a problem of a different sort. First, it is a Christian village with a population of a higher socioeconomic and educational level. The confrontation there was more complicated—particularly since Beit Sahour was at the forefront of the nonviolent uprising. The civil resistance and tax revolt were harder to put down. (00:12:05-00:12:41)

The state of Israel has not allowed Palestinians to produce their own products. Majed Nassar**,** a doctor in Beit Sahour, said, "We deserve to have a home. We deserve to have our land. We deserve to have our freedom. And we deserve to have cows" (00:14:00-00:14:12). Because of the siege, the leaders of Beit Sahour community divided jobs between people to meet their needs.

There was a medical committee taking care of the wounded, a teachers committee to teach children at schools, and an agricultural committee came out of the idea of having cows to produce their own milk in order to be self-sustaining with backyard farming. In his article "The Wanted 18 Cows, Economic Resistance, and Israel," Alaa Tartir states, "*The Wanted 18* illustrates three areas that Israel, as a colonial and occupying power, hates to see. These areas are: Palestinian sovereignty, resistance and mobilization, and self-reliance" (1). This challenge sheds light on the recognition of Palestinian nationhood in the international community. In his

speech to the United Nations Crispon Tickell, The United Kingdom representative, said:

> Whatever the rights and wrongs of the tax strike by the citizens of Beit Sahour, due legal process must be followed. There can be no excuse for the illegal and arbitrary confiscation of furniture and household belongings and the machinery, which provide the livehood for small-business people. We've expressed our serious concern to the Israeli authorities, and we call for an end to blockading of Beit Sahour. (*18,* 00:58:15-00:58:45)

The Israeli occupation imposed curfews on Beit Sahour because of the fear that the rest of the West Bank and Gaza would work similarly to Beit Sahour in producing their own products. Thus, the city became a prison. After this non-violent resistance for almost four years in Beit Sahour, the Oslo Accords were announced in 1993, which broke down the *Intifada*. In their book *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: Oslo and the Lessons of Failure* Rothstein, Ma'oz, and Shikaki report part of the Oslo Accords:

> The basic document in the Accords is the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangement (DoP), which was signed in Washington on September 13, 1993. The DoP set down the arrangements for the establishment of the Palestinian Council, the transfer of powers and responsibilities to it, its jurisdiction, and the transitional period pending the conclusion of permanent status negotiations. (60)

People in Beit Sahour felt that Palestinian leaders in the diaspora betrayed them and their resistance when they agreed to the Oslo Accords. Additionally, when I visited Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem, the West Bank in June 2016, I interviewed all of the Palestinians I met about their opinion of the Oslo Accords, and they all said: " We are betrayed by our leaders in the

diaspora. Yes, we were living in a big prison, because the fence was around the camp, and no one could go outside the camp without Israeli permission, but we lost our dignity because of the Oslo Accords, and we prefer the occupation to losing our dignity" (Personal Interviews, Bethlehem). They feel this way, because the Oslo Accords represent submission to the idea of a permanent Israeli state on Palestinian land. The Oslo Accords were supposed to free Palestinians from the Israeli occupation, but what Palestinians have gotten is a distrust of the Palestinian Authority that is supposed to protect them, not be a helper for the occupation.

Palestinians have suffered, resisted, and died in order to protect their identity and nation. In his article "The Wanted 18 Cows, Economic Resistance, and Israel," Alaa Tartir states, "After the 1993 Oslo Accords, the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority became completely dependent on international aid. This aid industry over the last 25 years stripped the Palestinians from their transformative potential and instead helped Israel in sustaining and subsidizing its occupation" (2). The Palestinian Authority failed to achieve its independence even over the West Bank and Gaza Strip and still Israeli occupation controls everything.

I interviewed Saed Andoni, one of the executive producers of *The Wanted 18,* in Bethlehem on July 19, 2016. Also, storyteller of events he witnessed in Beit Sahour, and he is a member of Beit Sahour non-violent resistance. The following is taken from the interview:

Question: What is the reason behind using animation in *The Wanted 18*?

Saed: Because we don't have archive for the first *Intifada*, just a few scenes.

Question: Is it really a true story?

Saed: The hardest mission is how to make the spectators believe a strange but true story. How could people believe that the strongest army in the Middle East is chasing 18 cows! And for that reason, we brought the Israeli military ruler to talk about the story of the 18

cows where he said they should suppress this nonviolence movement from the fear of it spreading over the West Bank.[9]

The importance of this film is that it mimics reality into something, comical and cynical. The film attracted international audiences and individuals such as Michael Moore, who, according to Andoni, was astonished when he watched the film. Furthermore, the BBC representative at the Toronto Film Festival (2015) told Saed Andoni: "You have a great film, but I cannot be part of it because it will be professional suicide for me" (Saed Andoni's Interview). *The Wanted 18* shows not just Palestinians suffering and resisting, but also it encourages the right to self-determination. Additionally, using economic independence as a major fact of the film, builds a strong case for the need of resistance and confrontation.

The last documentary film is *Route 181:Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel (2002)*, directed by Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan. In the summer of 2002, the directors traced their trajectory on a map that they obtained from the United Nations, which includes Palestinian villages before Israel renamed them with Hebrew names. Through this journey, the two directors interview people from the two sides, Palestine and Israel. Some of these interviews occur in the same space where Palestinians and Israelis are neighbors. According to Joseph Massad in his article "The Weapon of culture: Cinema in the Palestinian Liberation Struggle," "*Route 181* is perhaps the best exposition of the Zionist movement and of Israeli society that the Palestinians have been confronting for a century" (Dabashi, 39). Khleifi and Sivan adopt the virtual partition

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9 **مقابلتي مع سائد أنضوني أحد منتجي "المطلوبون ١٨"**

في ٢٠١٧/٧/١٩ في الساعة الثانية عشرة ظهراً في جامعة دار الكلمة:
س: ما هو السبب وراء استخدام الرسوم المتحركة في "المطلوبون ١٨"
ج: لأنّه لا يوجد لدينا أرشيف لمرحلة الانتفاضة الأولى، فقط وجود بعض المشاهد.
س: هل هي قصة حقيقية فعلا؟
ج: المهمة الأصعب هي كيف نجعل المشاهدين أن يصدقوا قصة غريبة ولكن واقعية. أكبر جيش في المنطقة يلاحق ١٨ بقرة! ولهذا السبب أحضرنا الحاكم العسكري الإسرائيلي ليتكلم عن الموضوع عندما قال: أنّه يجب قمع هذه الحركة التي لا تستخدم العنف في بيت ساحور خوفا من تمدد هذه الحركة في جميع أنحاء الضفة الغربية.

of the United Nations Resolution 181 on November 29th 1947 as shown in the film, " 56% of Palestinian land to Jewish minority, 43% to the Arab majority, and 1% under international authority" (Part 1, 00:01:00). This resolution is from the outbreak of the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948. *Route 181* runs for four and a half hours and is divided into three parts: the South, from the port city of Ashdod to the Gaza Strip; the Center, from the Jewish-Arab city of Lyd/Lod to Jerusalem; and the North, from Rosh Ha'ayn, near the new "separation barrier," to the Lebanese border.

The first shot depicts, in wide shot, where the sky is torn apart by two Apache helicopters. It reflects Palestinian life under the Israeli occupation, where the Israeli army attacks Palestinians almost every day in the West Bank and Gaza. It is also a sign of despotism and oppression in the Israeli policy against Palestinians. Racism has played a dominant role in the past, which is made apparent by the directors' search for the lost village of Nabi Yunis in Palestine, depopulated and destroyed in 1948. They meet two Palestinians from the same village, but now with a different name—Aylabun—in Israel. When the two directors move north, they find an old building on the side of the road. They ask an Israeli woman, who came from Yemeni Jewish parents and owns a kiosk in front of the old building, about the building and she says that it is an archaeological site and it belongs to the shrine of a sheikh in a village that was called Baraqa, which was depopulated and destroyed in 1948.

Then, they find a very old house, a Palestinian house. Inside this house, there is an old Palestinian woman with her son. They live in Masmiyya, a Palestinian village almost completely depopulated in 1948. In her book *Erased from Space and Consciousness: Israel and the Depopulated Palestinian Villages of 1948*, Noga Kadman states, "Ghazi Falah lists fifty-six such names. The immigrant camp set up in the depopulated Palestinian village of al-Masmiyya was

named Mashmia' Shalom ("Sounder of Peace"), a biblical Hebrew phrase that sounds reminiscent of the Arabic name" (101). The old woman and her son refuse to leave their house in spite of the racist policies under which they live. The old woman's son says, "I have no Jewish friends anymore… because basically they don't treat us like human beings" (Part 1, 00:20:00). Despite all their troubles, they have decided to challenge the occupation's racism and hold their ground in Masmiyya. The woman's decision to stay in her home is a symbol of resistance, when the rest of the family moved to the West Bank, Gaza, and Jordan.

Afterward, there is a Palestinian village called Sawafir and renamed Moshaf Shafir in 1949. Groups of Hungarian immigrants settled in this village in 1949 after the Israeli occupation gave them the land for free after they depopulated the Palestinians from their village. When directors interview one of the Israeli settlers in this village about the Palestinian issue, he says, "To protect the Jewish state, it is difficult to give Arabs, who were expelled from here, the return right…there is no realistic solution as long as Jews are divided between agree and disagree" (Part 1, 00:38:00). So, the first Intifada started, the Palestinians rose in the face of the occupation to get back their land and rights as we have seen in *The Wanted 18*. A few storytellers say in the film that they were close to freeing their country, but the Oslo Accords destroyed their dream. This reinforces what I heard from Palestinians in the Dheisheh refugee camp.

Space is significant during this journey. The camera portrays everything on the way driving north. Space is used here as a symbol of Palestinian identity. In her book *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration*, Laleh Khalili states, "Spaces provide a stage for commemoration, but they can also act as mnemonic makers, sources of commemorative narrative, and a focus of contention over the meaning of history" (82). Directors acknowledge Palestinian villages, which were depopulated and destroyed by Israeli occupation

in 1948, and use space to prove Palestinian nationhood. Spaces of communication become an essential factor of resistance. Additionally, in the *Intifada*, Palestinians have used disputed space as a major location for their demonstrations. It is significant to mention space in analyzing Palestinian films as an instrument to assist with creating a spatial politics of effect and optimism within a conflict situation.

In the second part of the journey, which starts from Lyd/Lod to Jerusalem. There is a demonstration in Lyd/Lod, which combines both sides—Palestinians and Israelis. They both refuse the apartheid policy of Israeli occupation of Palestinians. Israelis try to depopulate Lyd of Palestinians, so they start to impose rules that the Arabs should not exceed 20% of Lyd's population, but since 1948 the Palestinian population increased three times and put Israel in an impasse. In her article "Creating geographies of hope through film: performing space in Palestine-Israel," Elizabeth Mavroudi states, "The film stresses the role of spaces of communication that can become confrontational or therapeutic and can allow opinions to be aired…a demonstration in Lod/Lydda where people are using their voices and public space to try and achieve social justice for Arabs in the Town" (568). Palestinians have refused to leave their city and they protect their identity through proliferation to guarantee their continuity on their land.

In the second part of the film (the center) during the town hall meeting of Lyd/Lod, a Palestinian man tries to get formal approval for Palestinians to rebuild their houses. The Israelis do not allow the Palestinians to restore their homes, as a way to pressure them to leave the city. Then, a Palestinian woman tries to get legal approval to build an extra room for her brothers, to protect them from vagrancy, but the government refuses her order many times. Then, she decides to build it without permission because she knew they would not give her a formal approval. As a

result, the government decides to destroy the room. One of the directors asks her, “Why do you not leave to solve the problem?” She says: “I will never leave my city. I am a Palestinian and this is my country and I should have rights” (Part 2, 00:13:40). In spite of the apartheid policy that Israel practices against Palestinians, many Palestinians have refused to leave in order to protect their identity.

A barber in the old town of Lyd/Lod, talks about the time when Jewish gangs occupied Lyd and besieged its people. Around 50,000 Palestinians were ejected from Lyd by force. The barber and other Palestinians witnessed how Palestinians were forced to leave; they did not leave by choice as is described in some books. The Israeli forces attacked a mosque and killed everyone. The barber says:

> After two weeks from this massacre, the Israeli forces took Palestinian youth, the barber one of them, and took bodies to the cemetery and burned them. After the Israeli forces ended the siege, they entered the old town and stole the houses. Then, six Israeli soldiers raped a young woman where she left her little daughter and ran away after they finished raping her. (Part 2, 00:24:15)

Afterward, directors meet an Israeli artist and they ask him: “When we look at the old map, we see two villages: Qubab and Abu-Shosha, where are they today? The artist asks: do you mean geographically? Yes. He says: Qubab is to the north, while Abu-Shosha to the south, but now it has become a settlement called Karmi Yousef. There were exchange refugees; refugees went, refugees came” (Part 2, 00:40:10). The Israeli artist is proud to present a Zionist version of events. He talks about his refugee parents, who came from Europe. They told him of the life of suffering they lived during the Holocaust. One of the directors asks him: “Your tears now are an image about your suffering because of your parents’ suffering, does it allow you the possibility

to understand the people's suffering of the two villages that they have been destroyed? He replied: no I don't feel guilty at all. The Arab World expelled Jews from their countries" (Part 2, 00:44:10). Why do Palestinians have to pay the price of the Holocaust? Later in part 2, directors meet Jews from the Arab World such as Iraq, Yemen, Morocco, and Tunisia and they all agree that they did not face problems while they lived in these countries. They hope to go back to their countries, as they call them. There is a contradiction here; while the Arab Jews say that their life back home was beautiful, the Israeli artist gives himself a pretext to make himself as a legal occupier.

In the scene at the checkpoint the Israeli soldier has a bad attitude toward the two directors. He thinks they are Palestinians when he shouts at them and humiliates them. Then, when they start shouting at him because they have Israeli identification cards, the soldier defends his behavior as following military orders. This is a way to make Palestinians' lives a disaster and encourage them to leave the country; some Palestinians could not endure and left. Many Palestinians refuse to leave their country because they know that suffering, humiliation, and insults by Israeli's occupiers are part of their resistance to protect their Palestinian identity and nation. The same scene repeats as the two directors move from one place to another. It shows the daily life of Palestinians, which deals with all kinds of racism. Later in the court, the victim (Palestinian) becomes a terrorist and the executioner (the occupation) becomes the victim.

Directors arrive at a village where Israel destroyed a three-story building with six apartments for security reasons, similar to the image above. There is a handwritten sentence on one of the destroyed walls that says, "This is the peace of Israel." The Directors talk to a man who lost his son, father, and three uncles, and all of them were killed by Israel. When they ask him: "Why did you not leave Palestine? He says: I will not ever leave Palestine: this is my

country, this is my city, this is my village, and this is my destroyed home. I prefer to die than leave my country" (Part 2, 01:16:00). He believes that by his staying, he defeats his enemy. In this scene, many heartbreaking things happen to Palestinians, different kinds of suffering, but in the end many insist on not leaving their country.

Furthermore, an old woman describes the life of suffering they live under the occupation, without mercy or pity. For instance, the occupation does not allow them to go to the hospital; an Israeli soldier pushes the old woman until she falls down while she is trying to explain that she needs to go to the hospital because she has heart problems. Additionally, a pregnant woman was prevented from going to the hospital when she was in labor. Another man says: he owns 500 acres in Abu-Dis near Jerusalem and he could not obtain even one acre from it. This miserable life leads some youth to become suicide bombers because they cannot endure this dystopia, not because they are terrorists, as Israel declares. This idea of suicide bombers will become clear and understandable in the forthcoming discussion of the film *Paradise Now*. Afterward, the directors arrive in Ramallah at the time when Israel imposed a curfew on the city in 2002, during the Second Intifada or *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, which happened from September 2000 to February 2005. In her book *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine*, Laleh Khalili states:

> The 100 martyrs were the first 100 casualties of the al-Aqsa Intifada killed by Israeli gunfire during protests, stone-throwing, in suspicious circumstances, or as bystanders…It implicitly stated that martyrdom was *sought* by none of the 100 martyrs (none were suicide bombers), and that they were killed in an asymmetry of violence perpetrated by a powerful state upon unarmed bodies. (113-114)

Ramallah becomes a ghost town. There is a scene with a destroyed building where president Yasser Arafat was trapped by the Israeli army. In spite of the curfew, Palestinians continued their lives and challenged their circumstances, as seen in the following scene.

In a very optimistic scene, Palestinians challenged the occupation by breaking the curfew in Beit Jalla near Bethlehem. A father decides to have his son's wedding despite the difficulties. People who decide to attend the wedding have to walk through rough terrain to arrive. A wedding is very important in Palestinians' life. A wedding is a guarantee of Palestinian continuity and is part of their resistance. In *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories,* Partha Chatterjee states, "The wedding is part of the "inner domain of culture" where a community can conduct its work to construct a national identity independently of the colonial state" (237). In *Route 181*, in the wedding, women wear their traditional dresses as part of their Palestinian identity. Likewise, the songs that women sing are also part of Palestinian culture and identity. Palestinians attempt to protect their identity through adherence to their customs and traditions. For instance, many Palestinians in the diaspora who are part of modernized society have insisted on wearing traditional dresses as a part of protecting their Palestinian identity.

In the third part (the North) the first shot is of a few houses of which most were destroyed. There is a beautiful old building called Borge Tsedeq. An Israeli man, with parents from Yemen, says: "After excavation in the area in front of the old building, they found a cemetery, which belongs to Arabs"(Part 3, 00:01:33). Palestinians were buried in this cemetery.

Then, in a very long shot, the camera portrays the Separation Wall as seen in the image below, which makes Palestinians' lives miserable because they are living in a big prison, as

mentioned before in the two documentary films *5 Broken Cameras* and *Budrus*. In her article "The Immobile Mass: Movement Restriction in The West Bank," Alison P. Brown states:

> The 2003 'apartheid wall' or 'security fence' acts as both external and internal closure. An accompanists' report describes the process of going to school in Jubara village, which is trapped between the Wall and the Green Line. The army has a list of all 300 people who live in the village, and no other Palestinians are allowed to enter Jubara. There is one road through Jubara. The southern entrance is blocked by the Wall, with a heavy steel gate. The northern entrance is controlled by military checkpoint. (512)

This is like a prison where, unlike people in other countries, Palestinians cannot live normal lives, as pictured in the image below. The Separation Wall destroys Palestinians' lands.

Immobility causes social and economic problems. The United Nations (ESCWA)[10] defines "The term "the crime of apartheid", which shall include similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practiced in southern Africa, shall apply to …inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them" (10[11]). Most Palestinian filmmakers portray apartheid acts against Palestinians, even Palestinians who have Israeli citizenship and are supposed to have the same rights as Israelis, as mentioned before in Lyd/Lod scenes.

[10] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.
[11] URL. The United Nation; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. "Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid: Palestine and Israeli Occupation, Issue No.1." March 24, 2017.

At al- Ḥawāra, a village near the Nablus checkpoint, there is a peaceful demonstration. Space is used here. Demonstrators (Palestinians and Israelis), who are from the Coexistence Movement, *Taʿāyyush* (Living Together), want to deliver food into Nablus where there has been a shortage of food for 60 days. These people hold milk cans in their hands as a sign of peace and walk toward the checkpoint. While they are walking, they start chanting about ending the military occupation, the necessity of ending the curfew; soldiers should go home, and free, free Palestine. Later, the Israeli soldiers start attacking the demonstrators to stop them entering Ḥawāra village. In "The Immobile Mass: Movement Restriction in The West Bank," Alison P. Brown states, according to Israeli official security sources cited by the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, "Curfew is used at the time of military operations such as house demolitions or arrests, and following confrontations between residents and the army. It is associated with the protection of settlers… curfews are also used to safeguard the movement of settlers in areas where settler roads pass through or near Palestinian villages" (504). With this type of life, Palestinians do not have a choice other than resistance. Resistance can lead to disabilities, prison, or death in the fight for freedom, but all of these are better for Palestinians than leaving their country, or living without dignity under Israel's occupation.

In a scene that comes after the demonstration, the camera depicts a farm of olive trees. As mentioned before, olive trees are important for Palestinians as a symbol of Palestinian identity. It is harvest season. Women are reaping olives from trees. Additionally, the Palestinian woman has become a symbol of sacrifice, resistance, and Palestinian identity. Khleifi asks an old Palestinian man: "Why did you not leave in 1948?" The answer, like many Palestinians' answers, is that: "I am a Palestinian and I prefer to die in my country rather than face humiliation and insult outside Palestine" (Part 3, 00:25:20). Again, the idea of staying is a part of Palestinian resistance.

A Palestinian village, Lubia, became Lavi. Additionally, Jews started to settle in Al-Shajara village in Galilee because of its location and water. They depopulated Palestinians from their village and moved them to an area called To'an; others unwillingly moved to Syria and Jordan. Directors meet one of the people who were depopulated from Al-Shajara village. She is an old Palestinian woman. She starts telling her story of when Jews started killing people in Al-Shajara and Lubia to scare them and to make them leave. Her dream is to see her village one time before she dies, or if anyone can get her some of Al-Shajara's soil. As mentioned before in *The Dupes,* we see the importance of the land and its soil. The old woman saw her only sister, who went to Syria in 1948, for the first time in 1972. In her article "Where is the Political in Cultural Studies? In Palestine" Helga Tawil-Souri states, "Joseph Massad has claimed the history of the Nakba has never been a history of the past, but decidedly a history of the present"[12] (470). Since 1948, Palestinians have suffered different types of problems, not just inside Palestine, but also in the diaspora, such as immobility between Arab countries, employment prevention, lack of identity documents, and others.

Later, directors meet Ahron Grenberg, his parents are from Russia and Lithuania, and he was a soldier in the Israeli army in 1948. In Galilee, he was involved in a military operation called, "The Broom." In their conversation:

> Grenberg: The Galilee is crowded with Arabic villages and we wanted to build a front to thwart at the Arab Army such as the Syrian, Lebanese, and Jordanian army. So, they had to expel Palestinians from their villages, not to kill them.
>
> The director: But how did you do that?
>
> Grenberg: Laughs.

[12] Massad (2008) argues that the term 'Nakba'—translated as catastrophe, cataclysm, or disaster—is inappropriate. Because Palestinians don't just suffer from a historical event that has passed but are still reeling from it, Palestinians should be called *mankubin*, closer to meaning 'catastrophe-d or disaster-ed people'.

The director: What about kids and women?

Grenberg: We did not come as occupation and control people; the idea is to eject people from this area. We destroyed the villages to build Jewish settlement and kibbutz.

The director: What about these people if they want to return?

Grenberg: Returning is impossible. We did not seek for the war; we accepted the partition and Arabs refused.

The director: Do you remember Suleiman's trial? (Part 3, 00:55:00)

Suleiman's trial is about two women who fought for a baby. Suleiman decided to divide the baby into two parts. The real mother refused the division, but the fake mother accepted. The director is trying to deliver an important message here about this story. Whilst the real mother is Palestine, which represents the Palestinians who refused the partition, the fake mother is Israel, who accepted the partition. When Grenberg laughs by way of reply as to the way the Israeli army expelled Palestinians from their villages, it proves that massacres were conducted by Israel in Palestinian villages to scare other villages and make them leave easily for lack of weapons.

Afterwards, the directors meet an Israeli woman, who came from Morocco. She was a member of a youth movement in Morocco when she was 16 years old in 1959-1960. Her job, with other members, was to convince Jewish families to immigrate to Israel in secret because the Moroccan government banned Jews from leaving Morocco. It was illegal emigration. She says: "My dad had a good life in Morocco. When he came here, he did not find a job and it was really difficult for him to adapt to the new life" (Part 3, 1:09:35). Another Moroccan-Jewish old man hopes to go back to his country (Morocco) because he misses it a lot. When a young man told him that he has roots in Israel because he has lived here more than 50 years, the old man

disagrees and says that his country is Morocco. Also, an Israeli woman came from Tunisia. She lost her son when he was 20 years old. She says that if she can go to Tunisia, she will not come back to Israel. She believes that Arabs and Jews can live together peacefully, but the problem is with Sharon, the Prime Minister at that time, and his people. The idea is that Arabs and Jews had good relationships in the Arab World, but the Zionists have decided to paint the conflict as religious. The conflict is about establishing a Jewish state, which will destroy Palestinian identity.

In the five documentary films, *5 Broken Cameras*, *Budrus*, *Little Town of Bethlehem*, *The Wanted 18*, and *Route 181*, different symbols are used in representing Palestinian identity. Some of these symbols are: non-violent resistance, the 18 cows, remaining, woman's steadfastness, and the land (destroyed buildings). All of these not only represent Palestinian identity, but also they are a fundamental part of Palestinian resistance. As will be seen in the following films, other types of symbols can represent this resistance.

Palestinian Tragic Films

In another context, Palestinian cinema takes *weddings* as another symbol for Palestinian continuity. For this reason, Palestinians get married at a younger age, so they can generate more Palestinians to protect their land. They hope new generations might have more power than their parents to achieve their independence from the Israeli occupation in order to protect Palestinian identity. In her article "From Resistance and Bearing Witness to the power of the Fantastical," Rasha Salti writes:

> Weddings are life-affirming rituals that promise the continuity of a community, the discursive transience from the coupling of two bodies to the survival of a collectivity. The struggle for its fulfillment is integral to the struggle for survival

> against the occupation, the threat of extermination, and ultimately for liberation, independence and the right to self-determination. (45)

To represent "the wedding" in film, directors, through their films, portray weddings using different methods. Thus, a wedding is not just an expression of the need for the continuity of Palestinian generations, but also it is a symbol of optimism and sumud (steadfastness). In her article "Refugees, Resistance and Identity," Julie Peteet states:

> Steadfastness takes on connections of survival for Palestinians, who see themselves as victims of a neocolonial movement in which their displacement defined the possibility of the project. *Sumud* registers a refusal to acquiesce… *Sumud*, as an act of resistance, is only meaningful in the context of an exceedingly powerful, well-equipped other in possession of and willing to unleash the means of mass destruction. (Guidry, Kinnedy, and Zald 196)

Wedding in Galilee (1987), directed by Michel Khleifi, is one of the first movies made in Israel to feature an Arab point of view. This film is a richly detailed picture of marriage, tradition, and national identity. It is the first feature film that was depicted inside occupied Palestine by a Palestinian director. It is ironic that the couple getting married needed permission from the Israeli military governor to get married. The governor insults Palestinian peasants when he refuses to grant permission, unless he is invited. Khleifi's decision for writing this film is that he wanted to erase the boundaries between fiction and reality. In his article "From Reality to Fiction—From Poverty to Expression," Michel Khleifi writes, "I wrote a modern tragedy in which two "gods" confront each other, representing two systems, military and modern, one of the Israeli military governor and the other the patriarchal and archaic authority of the Palestinian Mukhtar, or mayor of the village…I was interested in the theme of joyfulness and resilience

under occupation" (Dabashi, 50). It is a complex equation between these two sides. Whilst the *mukhtar* refuses the existence of the occupation on his land, he is taking on the occupation's role in his home. Then, he decides to have the wedding under any conditions, even if his enemy would attend the wedding.

The story is about an elder Palestinian who needs permission from a military governor to hold a traditional wedding for his son. Curfew is imposed on the village where the wedding should happen. The army commander agrees to allow the wedding but on the condition that he and his officers will be invited as guests of honor to the ceremony. The wedding occurs in spite of the objection of the father's brother and other people from the village. The brother says, "There can be no celebration without dignity, and no dignity in the presence of the army" (00:16:20). The wedding does happen in a complex situation, and the Israeli soldiers attend the wedding.

This film shows the importance of the land, which represents the Palestinian. In his article "Reflections on Writing the History of Palestinian Identity," Issam Nassar states, "the fellahin (peasant) character became an essential part of the way Palestinians view themselves. Later, Palestinians would adopt peasant forms of dress, the kaffiyah headscarf, and the village dance dabkeh as symbols of Palestinian national identity" (5). The Palestinian village is used to symbolize Palestinian roots in their community. Some symbols include dancing, traditional food, and traditional clothes. Khleifi portrays Palestinian traditions in occupied Palestine (Israel). The film's setting is a Palestinian village where people have suffered from the occupation. Palestinians used traditions to ground themselves in their identity and nation.

Another movie is *Paradise Now (2005)*. Directed by Hani Abu-Assad, it is one of the most critically acclaimed movies in Palestinian cinema. The film portrays the life experiences of

suicide bombers and the social and cultural conditions of contemporary Palestinian society. Whereas *Wedding in Galilee* reveals the continuity between generations, in which the wedding is counted as a symbol of resistance and *Sumud* (steadfastness), *Paradise Now* sheds light on the ending of life (death), as a way of protecting Palestinian identity and dignity. Both encourage resistance against Israel's occupation, but in different ways. *Paradise Now* addresses the radicalization of Palestinian youth into suicide bombers. In her article "The Palestinian Cinematic Wedding," Nadia Yaqub states:

> In many ways "*Paradise Now"* is an anti-wedding film. Wedding films play on the potent symbolism of community and continuity inherent in the wedding itself. *Paradise Now,* on the other hand, uses a planned suicide bombing to explore division and sterility within Palestinian society. (76)

In *Paradise Now*, two friends, Khalid and Saʿid, have been selected to carry a bomb into Israel. Whereas Khalid has been convinced that this is not the right idea for resisting the occupation, Saʿid still insists on executing the suicide mission. On the one hand, Saʿid wants to avenge his dad, who was forced to betray his people. On the other hand, Saʿid's despair leads him to execute the mission because it is the only way to regain his family's dignity. There is contradiction in the names of Saʿid and Khalid. Saʿid means happy, but in reality Saʿid is unhappy and desperate. Khalid means eternity. Both of them are handsome. Thus, why does the director choose these names and characters? Why do both of them decide to blow themselves up? These types of questions are targeting international spectators, but why? In this case, audiences would look behind the scenes, so they would look for the reasons for making a painful decision like this. Similarly, the name of the film, *Paradise Now*, is illogical. While the title

means *Janna* (paradise), the film portrays the life of Jaḥīm (hell) that Palestinians live under the occupation.

In his article "Paradise Now," Hamid Dabashi argues that a global audience would not understand the desperation that drives people to blow themselves up. This film does not portray the daily humiliation and suffering of Palestinians under Israeli occupation. As a result, the spectators who are not familiar with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict could think that Palestinians are terrorists, because there are no scenes portraying the Israeli persecution of Palestinians. It is not difficult to convince Khalid not to blow himself up because he does not have a shameful background like Saʿid. In her article "There Are Many Reasons Why: Suicide Bombers and Martyrs in Palestine," Lori Allen states:

> According to local human rights organizations, more than 1,500 Palestinians have been killed, including more than 280 children and 60 suicide bombers, and approximately 20,000 have been injured during the past 20 months. Ongoing closures and internal siege have kept poverty and unemployment hovering around 50 percent for months, according to the World Food Program. Palestinians explain that these harsh conditions contribute to the wide support suicide bombers have gained. (4)

When people lose hope for their lives, their reactions are unpredictable. In the Palestinian case, a very small minority of youths blow themselves up to get vengeance from their enemy. In one scene Saʿid says:

> I was born in a refugee camp. I was allowed to leave the West Bank only once. I was six years old at the time, needed surgery, just that one time. Life here is like life imprisonment. The crimes of the occupation are countless. The worst crime of

> all is to exploit the people's weaknesses and turn them into collaborators. By doing that, they not only kill the resistance, but also ruin families, ruin their dignity, and ruin an entire people. (1:03:14-1:03:54)

Wedding, suicide bombers, education, peaceful protest, and others things represent the Palestinian resistance intended to protect the Palestinian identity and nationality from extinction.

The movie *Divine Intervention* (2002), directed by Elia Suleiman (ES), is a chronicle of love and pain, a merger between comedy and tragedy, seriousness and irony. A man named Elia, who lives in Jerusalem, is in love with a woman who lives in Ramallah. They are only able to meet at the Israeli checkpoint. A crazy and funny idea comes to Elia to spend a day with his beloved in Jerusalem. He inflates a big red balloon imprinted with Yasser Arafat's face and releases it at the checkpoint; the balloon distracts the Israeli soldiers, then Elia and his beloved pass the checkpoint in the direction of Jerusalem.

Suleiman likes to use silent scenes because silence has a greater influence on the audience than dialogue, and he makes the space define the scene. In their article "Between Exile And Homeland: The Films of Elia Suleiman," Gertz and Khleifi quote Suleiman as having said in one of his interviews, "I want to open the way to multiple spaces that lend themselves to different readings…I am trying to create an image that transcends the ideological definition of what it means to be a Palestinian, an image far from any stereotype" (172). In a few scenes checkpoints are depicted to show the type of life that Palestinians live under the occupation. In her article "The Immobile Mass: Movement Restrictions in the West Bank," Alison P. Brown quotes Amira Hass as having said, "Since the mid-1990s, movement restrictions form part of the segmentation of the West Bank into zones. Zones A and B, where most Palestinians live, theoretically under control of Palestinian Authority, are made up of dozens of enclaves,

separated from each other by Zone C, 60 percent of the land, under full Israeli control" (504). Palestinians do not have freedom of movement. Israeli soldiers insult and humiliate Palestinians at checkpoints. In their article "Between Exile And Homeland," Gertz and Khleifi write "the film *Divine Intervention* testifies to the difficulty of creating this kind of multiplicity of spaces during a time of national threat" (172). The space is divided by checkpoints that affected Palestinians' lives and control their movement between villages, cities and sometimes inside them. In her article "The Immobile Mass: Movement Restrictions in the West Bank," Alison P. Brown states, "*Internal closure* is used to control movement within the West Bank and to prevent entry and exit from villages, cities, and refugee camps, by the use of roadblocks and checkpoints" (507). These immobility restrictions have caused many problems, such as a lack of access to healthcare.[13]

In one scene, Israeli forces practice shooting portraits of a Palestinian woman, who covered her face with *kufiyya* (the Palestinian scarf that is used as a symbol for resistance). Then, in a fictional movement, the woman appears and starts throwing stones with a *meqālʿ* (slingshot), which is another type of resistance, targeting the soldiers. In her book *Second Life: A West Bank Memoir,* Janet Varner Gunn says, "The Palestinian stories deliver a different message: to be human is to resist. Although the stone has become its best-known instrument, Palestinian resistance also takes place at a less palpable level" (40). Afterward, the Palestinian woman holds a Palestinian map, which is made of iron; she uses the map to blow up a helicopter. Resistance is the main point of this scene. In one shot, we see her face: she is Suleiman's beloved. She is

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[13] As mentioned before of the human rights report about the death of 75 people due to heart attacks, complications during labor, and the inability to reach medical facilities.

resisting because they will not allow her to enter Jerusalem. In their book *Palestinian cinema*, Gertz and Khleifi write:

> The violence itself becomes the common denominator that provides cohesion or explanation for the disconnected parts. Thus, someone throwing a bomb into a collaborator's home, someone spraying it with bullets, people beating a snake violently with clubs and then shooting it, children chasing after Santa Claus and murdering him are all a part of the big picture. (186)

As seen in the movies, life under persecution, inequity, injustice, and tyranny leads people to react to protect their lives and fight for their rights to save their identity.

In these three films *Wedding in Galilee*, *Paradise Now*, and *Divine Intervention*, wedding, death, space, kufiyya, and *meqāl*ʿ are symbols of resistance that guard Palestinian identity. The following films utilize different symbols to represent Palestinian identity.

Palestinian Dramatic Film

The movie *Salt of this Sea (2008)*, directed by Annemarie Jacir, is a combination of pain and love. The film starts with documentary images of Nakba events, such as the al-Dawayima village massacre that occurred in 1948. It gives the audience a feeling of the film being a documentary, but suddenly it shifts into fiction. In her book *Erased from Space and Consciousness: Israel and the Depopulated Palestinian Villages of 1948*, Noga Kadman states, "The IDF carried out a number of massacres here as well, and news of the atrocities contributed to the decision to flee from other villages. Abu Sitta lists nine massacres conducted by the IDF in that period, on top of al-Dawayima, including in the villages of Saliha and Safsaf in the Upper Galilee" (13). The movement from non-fiction images to fictional shots is used as a way to prove that Palestinian identity is inherited for generations.

The story is about Soraya, a Brooklyn Palestinian, who travels to Ramallah to claim an inheritance. When she goes to the British Bank, the officer tells her that all Palestinian deposits evaporated in 1948, but she refuses to give up and decides to claim it. When she meets the waiter Emad and his friend, they decide to restore her money by a crazy idea— attacking the bank and getting back the exact amount that her grandfather deposited before the Nakba. They succeed. Then, she decides to visit Jaffa and Emad visits his village Dawaima, where the massacre occurred. At the end of the film, the love story between Soraya and Emad concludes with a sad moment when an Israeli policeman arrests Emad and deports Soraya to America. This film combines the past and present through Soraya when she insists to get back her grandfather's money. Thus, Soraya's action signifies her insistence on protecting her Palestinian identity. The money, like the land, was stolen by the US, Europe and Israel.

Another movie that goes on a different path is *Omar (2013)*, directed by Hani Abu-Assad. This movie is about friendship, love, and trust. In this film, Abo-Assad portrays territory that has been occupied by Israel since 1967. He focuses on Palestinian behavior as a way of protecting their identity and does not explicitly discuss political issues. In her article "Omar's Oscar nod point of national pride; Palestinian filmmaker proud to represent a territory occupied by Israel since 1967," Kelly Brendan quotes Abu-Assad as having said:

> What I'm interested in is human beings who have to make tough choices under extreme circumstances, and instead of working for their interests, they start working against their interests. Every human being could be facing these sorts of dilemmas. This is where you have to make a decision about your identity. I feel this is more interesting than any political statement. (2)

In the opening scene the film portrays the Separation Wall while Omar climbs over it to go and see his beloved Nadia. The scene is similar to the act of students in the image below, which turns Palestinian lives into a disaster. This wall divides this small town into two parts, which increases the suffering of Palestinians, besides the occupation's more overtly hostile acts. As discussed before, the documentary films show the negative effects of this wall on Palestinian lives. This type of life convinces some youths to blow themselves up or conduct a "martyrdom operation" to get out of this miserable life, on one the hand, and on the other, to avenge the occupation. Omar's feelings quickly become as torn apart as the Palestinian landscape, but it is soon evident that everything he does is for the love of Nadia.

Abu-Assad's goal in making this movie is to do so without depending on a certain political situation. This political condition might change and, for this reason, Abu-Assad built his idea on a love story that could live forever. Kelly Brendan quotes Abu-Assad as having said, "I

consider it a love story set against a political background. I don't want to make a movie that when this political situation will end or when the conflict will end, the film will end with it too. You want to make a movie that will live forever and be independent of place and time" (2). I disagree with Abu-Assad in this opinion because the film depicts very important things in Palestinian daily life. It is difficult to divide politics from Palestinian life. The Occupation, Separation Wall, prison, and resistance are all political issues because they are reality. The film depicts the tools that the occupation uses to force some Palestinians to betray their own people. If the occupation failed in its mission, it would destroy the reputation of an honest resistant with other tools, such as to arrest a person and release him quickly to appear to be a traitor in his people's eyes. Because Omar refuses to deal with the occupation, he pays the price. He loses his best friend Tarek, his love, and his life. The following film, *Curfew*, shows a different type of suffering, which is important for the world to see the prison Palestinians live in, even inside their house.

The film *Curfew (1993)*, directed by Rashid Masharawi, tries to reflect Palestinian suffering under the Israeli occupation. He portrays Palestinian life under the siege that Israel imposed on Gaza in 1993. The film focuses on twenty-four hours in the life of Abu Raji's family, as they try to help their neighbors. In addition to the siege, the Israeli army storms Palestinian houses and arrests innocent men in a humiliating way.

Masharawi illustrates the need of a pregnant woman for medical treatment. Soldiers prevent her family from taking her to see the doctor, and, because of that, Abu Raji's wife goes to help her. This movie shows how humanitarian tragedies foil the hope for peace and make Palestinians continue their armed resistance. Because of Israel's barbaric practices against Palestinians and global forces' unwillingness to act, Palestinians are forced to resist in different

ways, as mentioned before in the films. The film is a combination of pain and love, hope and frustration that Palestinians face in their daily life.

In all three emotional films, *Salt of This Sea, Omar,* and *Curfew* the directors attempt to portray Palestinian frustration with life under the Israeli occupation. Despite this frustration, the directors show that hope is the key source of continuity for Palestinians. Different types of symbols are used in those films and some others are shared with films that were discussed before. Inheritance, love, hope, and remaining are symbols of resistance that serve to protect Palestinian identity. Symbols have become a fundamental part of producing Palestinian films because of the authentic image that they project to a global audience.

Conclusion: What do "Palestinian films" tell us about a Palestinian identity?

Palestinian films have sought to protect Palestinian identity through the use of certain symbols, such as the land, the olive tree, oranges, weddings, traditional costume, kufiyya, dabka dance, and others, in all of the films that I reviewed. In *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma, and Memory*, Gertz and Khleifi state:

> Palestinian [political] organizations reiterated their belief in cinema as a significant tool for the advancement of their cause. They even specified clear goals for it: cinema was to document their struggle. It was intended to justify the Palestinian position, record the reality of people's everyday lives, harness the masses to the new enterprise, and advocate the new Palestinian image. (22)

Unlike other Arab countries, Palestinians failed to obtain their independence at the end of the British Mandate. In the absence of a universally recognized Palestinian state, Palestinian cinema undertook to identify, highlight, and preserve a Palestinian identity. As a consequence,

the Palestinian political aspirations dominate Palestinian films. Of all the films I reviewed in my research, not a single one was made just for entertainment.

Palestinian cinema focuses on the Occupation as a major theme. These are the main topics: life story and identity formation, the 1948 catastrophe (*Nakba*), refugees, exile and return, weddings, suicide bombing, forbidden love, Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel, and international solidarity with Palestinians.

The Palestinian identity becomes stronger day after day, though it was almost absent before 1967. In his article "Transformation of Collective Identity in Palestine" Mahmoud Mi'ari states, "The failure of Arab nationalism to achieve Arab unity and liberate Palestine, as reflected by Arabs' massive defeat in the June War of 1967, strengthened Palestinian identity and taught Palestinians that they should rely on themselves in the struggle to liberate Palestine" (585). Palestinians of 1948, who live under Israeli rule, are identified as Arabs, not Palestinians, in Occupied Palestine (Israel) for political reasons. The reason could be to encourage them to live in the Arab world, especially, after the apartheid policy Israel imposes on them, such as laws preventing them from building or restoring their houses. For instance, in *Route 181*, the woman was forbidden from building an extra room for her brother in an effort to make her leave her city.

What are the tangible effects resulting from Palestinian filmmakers having won international recognition? In *Dreams of a Nation* Hamid Dabashi writes, "Making a case for the cause and consequences of Palestinian cinema as one of the most promising national cinemas cannot stop at the doorsteps of simply proposing that its local perils and possibilities are now transformed into a global event" (7). Thus the global audience can support the Palestinians in their resistance against the Israeli occupation. According to Dabashi in *Dreams of a Nation* "a stateless nation generates a national cinema"(7). Thus, whereas the political solutions fail to

generate a Palestinian nation, the Palestinian cinema has attempted to protect a Palestinian identity from extinction. In "The Weapon Of Culture," Joseph Massad states, "The hope, however, is that Palestinian cinema will not only remain a *weapon of resistance* but that it will also become a *weapon and an act of culture*" (42). Palestinians are trying to live with dignity on their land, but the occupation has made it hard. If Palestinian filmmakers have faced problems in producing their movies, which is a peaceful resistance, what are other ways do they have to protect their people, land, nationality and identity? As Bashir Abu-Manneh mentions in "Towards Liberation," in response to the Israeli occupation, "We are not asking for the impossible: we want to live without oppression or violence, without our people killed, without hearing the sounds of bullets everyday. But with the occupation you are forced to extract your freedom and independence because they will offer you nothing" (67). Palestinian films are a true image of the life that Palestinians are facing day to day. In the film *Route 18* Palestinians of Abu Dis, whose bulldozed house is spray-painted, say, "They won't destroy our determination. We'd rather die than leave or be thrown onto buses and expelled. The events of 1948 and 1967 won't be repeated" (Part 2, 01,18,00). This is a strong message that Palestinian filmmakers try to deliver to the world.

In "Dreams of a Nation," Helga Tawil-Souri quotes Lisa Mullenneaux as having said, "Palestinian film is the attempt to re-voice the silences of the witnesses, victims, and historical losers" (1). Palestinian life is portrayed as full of suffering, both inside and outside of Palestine because Palestinians are victims of oppression. The Palestinians failed to achieve self-determination and establish a state during these crucial twelve years between 1936 and 1948 due to Britain's earlier agreement, in its Balfour Declaration, to the Zionist movement's demands for

a Jewish state in historic Palestine, aided greatly by the circumstances surrounding World War Two and the Jewish Holocaust.

As a result of the failure of their national aspirations, Palestinians—now living under Israeli occupation—are suffering discrimination and the threat of ethnic cleansing. Israeli citizens of Palestinian origin suffer the lack of civil rights and equal treatment by the state. Palestinian refugees, living in Arab and non-Arab host countries, have their distinctive brand of suffering. Palestinian cinema has attempted to deal with all three dimensions of the "Palestinian problem."

Many directors have maintained through their movies the struggle for the retention of a national identity. In *Palestinian Cinema* Gertz and Khleifi state, "The films delineate a national Palestinian collective united against the Israeli enemy, while simultaneously deconstructing that collective and examining the identities comprising it: the village, class, gender, family, and so on. These identities have vied with the national identity" (85). Since 1948, Palestinian discourse and the Palestinian cinema within it, have been seeking to foster nationhood, thus reaffirming a national identity.

Here, on the slopes before sunset and
At the gun-mouth of time
Near orchards deprived
Of their shadows
We do what prisoners do:
We nurture hope. (Mahmoud Darwish, *Yunakeb 'an Dawlaten Na'ma*)

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