AT THE INTERSECTION OF RELIGION, NATIONALITY, AND TERRITORY: ZIONIST AND PALESTINIAN NATIONALIST NARRATIVES AND COUNTER NARRATIVES IN CINEMA.

By

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A Thesis
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Of
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, my mother, my mother, and my father. Thanks for not yelling at me every time I refused to do anything because “I have a thesis to write.”

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ABSTRACT

AT THE INTERSECTION OF RELIGION, NATIONALITY, AND TERRITORY: ZIONIST AND PALESTINIAN NATIONALIST NARRATIVES AND COUNTER-NARRATIVES IN CINEMA.

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George Mason University, 2016

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This thesis discusses the intersection of religion, nationality, and territory in Zionist and Palestinian Nationalist narrative, and how these intersections help keep up with or dismantling oppression. Using a socio-epistemic rhetorical lens, this thesis analyzes films in dialogue with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, specifically looking at how these films contribute to either Zionist or Palestinian nationalist narratives.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Zionism, an ideology that emerged in the late 19th century, is al aso political movement that calls for the reestablishment of a Jewish homeland. When Zionism, the ideology that Jews should return to their promised land of Israel, was first presented, the majority of Jewish people were against the idea. Rabbinic sources claimed that Jews were to be exiled from a Jewish state until the coming of a messiah who would then retrieve the Holy Land for them. Arguing for an ideology many believed to be in violation of God's will proved hard for Zionists and required an adaption of rhetorical positioning. Instead of arguing for the return of a "Holy Land," they argued for a safe haven for European Jews who were at the time being persecuted. The actual definition of Zionism shifted with the shift of different approaches preached by different leaders, which is how secular Jews were able to successfully settle in Palestine.

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Zionism has maintained hegemony in part through the dissemination of Zionist rhetoric in popular culture. However, particularly in recent decades, popular culture has also become a space for Palestinian and liberal Israeli voices to challenge Zionism and its narrative of Israeli state formation. The struggle over rhetoric between Zionist and anti-Zionist positions brings in the question of the rhetorical strategies used to frame the conflict by the various groups that lay claim to this disputed territory. Analyzing film in order to present Zionist and anti-Zionist discourses is important because cinematic representations reveal how meanings are made, communicated, reflected, and altered by cultural images.

This thesis addresses how questions of religion, nationality, and territory all intersect in Zionist discourse found in film and how they are also central to the cinematic circulation of counter narratives. I discuss how European colonialism is disguised as religious foundational mythology in Zionist discourse before writing on how cinema helps to humanize and transform displaced European Jews into citizens of an Israel that has always been waiting for them. I also address how this particular humanization of Jewish and Israeli people is often linked to the dehumanization of Muslims/Arabs, making the conflict semi-religious through rhetoric that frames the conflict as a centuries-old battle over the Holy Land. Lastly, I discuss the Palestinian self-awareness of what it will mean to reestablish a homeland, and how their struggle resembles those of European Jews.

When I speak of rhetoric throughout my thesis, I do so in the socio-epistemic context, where James Berlin in “Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class” defines rhetoric as “a political act involving a dialectical interaction engaging the material, the social, and the individual writer, with language as the agency of mediation” (Berlin, page 488). Bruce McComiskey in *Dialectical Rhetoric*, believes socio-epistemic rhetoric falls under two-dimensional rhetoric, that is, rhetoric that “promotes the values and interests of a single orientation in direct relationship to opposing orientations” (McComiskey, page

90), thereby keeping each orientation engaged in a power struggle against the other. Two-dimensional rhetoric also uses argumentative and persuasive strategies to develop and articulate one orientation by critiquing other orientations, often seen in contact zones. Mary Louise Pratt in *The Art of Contact Zones,* defines contact zones as, "'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today'" (Pratt, page 35). Rhetoric and cultural studies intersect here because both involve "the study of signifying practices, of language use in writing and speaking, and language interpretation in reading and listening, with the focus on the relation of these practices in the disposition of power—economic, social, and political—as a particular historical moment" (Bernard-Donals, 390). I will use both methodologies in order to analyze the films, looking closely at the language interpretation and language used in regards to the disposition of power in Israel and Palestine.

Literature Review

Since its creation in 1948, the state of Israel has been at the center of most discourse in the Middle East and North Africa. There are hundreds of documents supporting the state of Israel, hundreds more condemning the state, and quite a handful of documents choosing to stay neutral but voicing their opinions on the ways in which the state has been created. A criticism coming from Dr. Edy Kaufman[1] is not that Jews do not have the right to a homeland (a neutral position), but that the way in which they are removing Palestinians and occupying Palestinian territories needs to be stopped. In some ways, the conflict is quite simple: Palestinians have been removed from their homeland to make room for a Jewish state, and in the process, millions of Palestinians have been displaced, murdered, or impoverished. It becomes complicated because of the way language is used within the dialogues surrounding the conflict. The struggle over rhetoric between anti-Zionists and Zionists obscures the conflict because it sets it up as a semi-religious binary.

Because the conflict around Israel is often framed in the media as one that stems from religious identity, the work of Gauri Viswanathan is useful to shed light on the interaction between religion, identity, and modernity. In her preface to *Outside the Fold*, she discuss how religion has survived into the "adult" stage of modernity by insisting on the autonomy of national identity, specifically surviving because of its function of legal administration, bureaucratic rationality, and governance. The fusion between nationalism and religion, on both sides, then places religious identity "at a stage of historical development" prior to the existence of the nation, which itself is not inevitable or even necessary. The reduction of religion to something like national identity helps to break up nations along religious lines, forcing diverse communities to re-conceptualize their relations as antagonistic ones (Viswanathan, preface).

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[1] Dr. Edy Kaufman teaches human rights in the Department of International Relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Zionism, in a definition issued by the state of Israel, is the return of Jews to their homeland. But, what exactly constitutes "return" and what constitutes "homeland"? In his book, Zimmer agrees with Zionist thinkers, Achad Haam and Ben Gurion to the idea of a homeland but reexamines the term Zionism in regards to the current day movement and ideology. Consistent with Orthodox Judaism, he defines Zionism as the messianic return of the Holy Land. The only difference between true Zionism and the Zionism practiced today, he argues, is that Jews have decided to rise up and "emancipate themselves from exile without waiting for the messiah" (Zimmer, 41). To Zimmer, then, the movement is a secular movement and not a religiously mandated one, since Zionism constitutes a means and not an end. Although, Israel is one of the only two states created for a religious group (Pakistan being the other), what constitutes that state as secular or religious becomes unclear. Zimmer makes the point that the state goes against Judaism, which brings up the question again, *does identifying as a secular state help add legitimacy to the state?*

Rhetoric and Religion

After establishing the rhetoric around the actual state and its definitions, I am interested in how religion and rhetoric work to legitimize or delegitimize the state. Within the field of rhetoric, there have been a handful of scholarly works done already that address this issue. For example, in *Fundamentalism in Israel*, Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky write, “The value of the [Jewish] religion, at least in its Orthodox and nationalistic form that prevails in Israel, cannot be squared with democratic values. No other variable—neither nationality, nor attitudes about security, nor social or economic values, nor ethnic descent and education—so influences the attitudes of [Israeli] Jews against democratic values as does religiosity” (Shahak and Mezvinsky). Here, the authors argue that there has to be a correlation between religion and the state, and because there is that correlation, religion plays a role in the rhetoric surrounding the state.

Dr. Ray Heisy, in “The Rhetoric of the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” discusses how, according to anti-Zionist Abdel-Wahab El-Messiri, rhetoric is used to either illuminate reality or evade issues and historical totalities. According to pro-Zionist Robert Alter, rhetoric is years of propaganda from Arabs; specifically, accusations of war crimes committed by Israel, to remove peaceful solutions from the discussion. Scholar Brian Ray in “From Empathy to Denial” discusses the rhetorical exchanges on the extremes of both sides, addressing how the Holocaust is used to justify either the destruction or creation of Israel. Ray argues that Arabs have denied the effects of the Holocaust in order to deny the right to a Jewish homeland, and that Zionists have used the historical religious persecution of Jews in Europe to legitimize the need for a Jewish state. Authors have also looked at particular texts and analyzed the rhetorical tools used. For example, Jerome Polisky and Frances Wolpaw study the speech of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver in his speech at the American Jewish Conference, which legitimized the state of Israel. The authors concluded that the rhetoric used by Abba Hillel Silver was affective in the consolidating between American Zionism and Jewish opinion.

Religion used to de/legitimize the state:

Mitchell Bard in *Death to the Infidels: Radical Islam's War Against the Jews* uses anti-Muslim rhetoric to dehumanize Muslims in order to make the claim that Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories keeps extremists from establishing an Islamic Caliphate throughout the Middle East, and eventually the world. He joins the Zionist rhetorical discussion by establishing a religious dichotomy: Palestine equates to Islam, and the condemnation of Islam means the support of Israel. He makes the conflict one of Judaism versus Islam, instead of Israel versus Palestine.

Christianity is also taken into consideration in Zionist rhetorical discourse. Michael Hedding in "Christian Zionism 101: Giving Definition to the Movement explains, "Christian Zionism is not based on prophecy or end-time events. Most Christian Zionists would agree, however, that Israel's reemergence on the world's scene, in fulfillment of God's promises to her, indicate that other biblically-redacted events will allow" (Hedding). Historian Ilan Pappe notes in Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church's *Zionism Unsettled: a Congregational Study Guide,* "[T]he Bible became both the justification for, and the map of, the Zionist colonization of Palestine .... [P]ortraying the dispossession of Palestine as the fulfillment of a divine Christian scheme was priceless for galvanizing global Christian support behind Zionism" (Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church, page 41). While these scholars are taking into consideration Christian rhetorical discourse, they fail to include Palestinian Christians, repeating the Jewish/Muslim-West/East dichotomy.

Orientalist Rhetoric:

As previously stated, there are academics that have shifted the rhetoric to framing the conflict as one between Judaism and Islam, instead of taking the conflict as it is: a sovereign state created at the expense of Palestinian inhabitants. This rhetoric relies on several of the representations that Edward Said critiques in *Orientalism.* Orientalism is the inaccurate representation of the East created by the West, which deploys a Eurocentric prejudice against the Arab world and its cultures. Said notes that these inaccurate representations are created in order to push a certain agenda, and that they are not harmless. He claims that Britain and France pushed their Eurocentric agenda in order to continue their colonization of the Eastern World. While Britain and France's motives were clear cut, the United States never successfully colonized any region in the Middle East until the Iraq-Afghanistan war, so they had a different agenda. Their view of the Orient was highly politicized by the existence of Israel, since they never directly contacted the Orient. In an interview on *Orientalism*, Said makes the argument that the United States of America "others" the Middle East and North Africa for the sake of Israel, since the United States was the first nation to recognize the state of Israel, and one of the strongest current allies of Israel (Jhally).

In Said's work, he discusses how Middle Eastern people in Hollywood are always portrayed as villains. They are presented as heated, irrational, and violent. Presenting them as such it dehumanizes them because they are looked at as only things to kill or they will end up killing those who are humanized. Dehumanizing Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular allows for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their homeland and fosters continued support for Israel despite unethical policies carried out by the state. It also shifts the attention away from the crimes committed by Israel, and focuses only on the crimes committed by anti-Israeli groups, such as Hamas (Jhally).

Arab Identities and Zionist Ideology:

Building on his analyses of orientalism in a later work, "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims," Edward Said notes, "the Orient represented a kind of indiscriminate generality for Europe associated not only with difference and otherness but with the vast spaces, the undifferentiated masses of mostly colored people, and the romance, exotic locales, mystery of 'the marvels of the East'" (Said, page 7). Orientalist rhetoric is very important to understand in regard to the existence of Israel, since Palestine has played a role in the political will of the West.

According to pro-Zionist historians, "Palestine" was used only as "an administrative designation in the Roman Empire, and never since, except of course during the British Mandate period after 1922" (Said, page 8). This argument imagines that Palestine is an interpretation, not a continuous state like Israel. This is then to say that Palestine was essentially just rebuilt and reestablished as the Jewish state of Israel after the 1948 mandate (Said). As Said relates, this idea has been found in Moshe Dayan's remarks in 1969:

> "We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish

> state here. In considerable areas of the country [the total area was about 6%] we bought the lands from the Arabs. Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don't blame you, because these geography books no longer exist; not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal [Dayan's own village] arose in the place of Mahalul, Gevat- in the place of Jibta, (Kibbutz) Sarid- in the place of Haneifs, and Kefar Yehoshua-in the place of Tell Shaman. There is not one place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population"

His rhetoric demonstrates that these Arab villages were completely destroyed in order to be reconstructed into the Jewish state—not that these villages were ethnically cleansed of their original peoples. This Zionist remark has rationalized the eradication of Palestine by arguing that the state has been reconstructed into "better" or a more "modern" state. This "modernization" by European is a standard orientalist trope. It also completely eliminates the history of the state as being an Arab state, and does not take into consideration how the Arabs have felt with the European decision to "reconstruct" the state.

Historically, the Middle East has always been misunderstood and misconstrued in the West. Middle Eastern studies programs in the United States are often part of a bigger program, such as Governmental Studies program or International Relations, which then leaves little room for the Middle East to be understood from a Middle Eastern perspective instead of a Western one. Doing this allows for the Middle East to be misunderstood because,

> if you look carefully at all the expert literature produced both in government and in the University since World War Two you will never find yourself in any way prepared either to understand or to come to terms with the major revolutionary upheavals in the Middle East. Thus literally nothing produced by Orientalism or Middle East scholarly

> expertise has either explained or accounted for the continuing resistance of the Palestinian people to Zionist oppression, nor the Lebanese civil war, nor for the enormous Cultural Revolution that has place in the Arab states. The going jargon amongst the area experts takes no account of class conflict, nor of lived history, nor of the complex intrinsic formation and production of Arab society. Instead one gets a never-ending parade of pseudo-terms and concepts—“elites,” “traditional values,” “modernization” and so forth… (Said, page 16).

The movement gained popularity because the misunderstanding of the Middle East enabled Zionists to label the Zionist movement as a movement of modernization.

Zionism, then, needs to be examined in order to speak about its victims—the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who have had their homelands stripped from them in order for a Jewish state to be created. Zionism has “hidden, or caused to disappear, the literal historical ground of its growth, its political cost to the native inhabitants of Palestine, and its militantly oppressive discriminations between Jews and non-Jews” (Said, 11). It also needs to speak about its Jewish victims, the Sephardi Jews who were forced to choose between their Arabness and their Jewishness within a Zionist rhetorical framework.

In “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims,” Ella Shohat discusses how “Zionist ideologists have spared no effort in their attempt to make the two terms “Jewish” and “Zionist” virtually synonymous” (Shohat, page 1). It forces Sephardic Jews to choose between being Arab and being Jewish. Since they are both Arab and Jewish, European Zionism found a blanket statement to keep Sephardi Jews from choosing their Arab heritage, by claiming Zionism “‘saved’ Sephardi Jews from the harsh rule of their Arab ‘captors’” (Shohat, page 3).

Within this binary, the Zionist master narrative benefited from demonizing the Muslim Arabs, and separating Jews from their Arab-ness. Arabs became the enemy the West opposed in the interest of "modernity." Even though "an integral part of the topography, language, culture and history of the Middle East, Sephardim were necessarily close to those who were posited as the common enemy for all Jews-the Arabs," (Shohat, page 25) Sephardi Jews were convinced to fear their Arabness as an attempt to separate the two groups and create hostility. It becomes paradoxical, then, that Zionism was created in order to end a Diaspora at a time when Jews suffered in the West and longed for the East, "only to found a state whose ideological and geopolitical orientation has been almost exclusively turned toward the West" (Shohat, page 24).

Scholar Muhsin Yusuf states in "The Partition of Palestine: An Arab Perspective" that, "From the point of view of the Arab Palestinians, the Zionist project is a first-grade imperialist European one, mingled with Jewish ideas, for misleading purposes only" (Yusuf). He claims that the European style Jewish state is a reminder of the Crusaders projects. The similarity between Zionism and the Crusader project then calls for the support for the Zionist entity in Palestine, since it was, and still is, a Western notion. Being a Western notion, then, for Palestinian Arabs, being anti-Zionist is not to be anti-Semitic; "The Arabs are opposed to political Zionism, but in no way hostile to the Jews as such nor to their Jewish fellow-citizens of Palestine" (Yusuf).

Yusuf notes that, believing military power could overcome settlers, Palestinians have used violence against the Jewish state. Opposing Israeli action through violence and paramilitary force has been, and still is, used by Arab Palestinians, and its use needs to be reconsidered. Hany Abu-Assad, in an interview about his film *Paradise Now* (2005), discusses the use of violence in his film. He presents the reality of Palestinians who "just agree to [suicide bomb]" because their motivation is "the feeling of impotence" (Riding). This martyrdom exists because the Arab-Palestinians depicted know no other means of resistance, which is why it becomes important to critique Palestinian nationalism. Palestinian nationalism, as with Zionism, is the belief in the self-determination of a national stemming from the righteousness of nationalism. All forms of master narratives, whether they are Zionist or Palestinian nationalist, need to be examined, to remove them from a cycle of oppression.

Defining Terms:

Zionism: Nathan Birnbaum presented the first documented usage of the term "Zionism." According to the Jewish Library, the general definition of the term is "the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumptions of the Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel." Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Zionism has come to include the movement for the development of the State of Israel and the protection of the Jewish nation in Israel through support for the Israel Defense Forces.[2] This return to the homeland, according to Judeo-Christian sources, comes not from a manmade ideology, but from the Torah, and later the Christian Old Testament. According to religious theology,

> "The biblical foundation for Christian Zionism is found in God's Covenant with Abraham. It was in this covenant that

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[2] "Zionism" *Virtual Jewish Library*, accessed 03/25/2016.

> God chose Abraham to birth a nation through which He could redeem the world, and to do this He bequeathed them a land on which to exist as this chosen nation. Christian Zionism is confirmed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. The major and minor prophets consistently confirmed this national calling on Israel, promised her future restoration to the land after a period of exile, and spoke of her spiritual renewal and redemption bringing light to the world" (ICEJ)[3]

According to both Christian and Jewish Zionists who have founded their Zionism off Judeo-Christian texts, the movement is not a political movement, but a religious movement ordained by God.

According to Rabbinic sources, though, in order for an establishment of a Jewish homeland, a messiah must be present. Using the Torah, many religious scholars quote Rambam Melachim 11:1 to provide proof that the state should not exist without a messiah. This verse states, "The king Moshiach will eventually arise and restore the kingship of the house of David to its former status, build the Temple and gather in the exiles of Israel." Since it has been written that the King Moshiach, the messiah, will return the exiles of Israel, then the existence of Israel without a messiah becomes invalid according to religious Jews.[4] Therefore, equating Judaism with Zionism becomes problematic for religious Jews, and also equating Zionism to the establishment of Israel (the religious movement described in the Torah) also becomes problematic.

The terms Zionist and Jewish become synonymous in Zionist Discourse, as Shohat notes, in order to allow for European colonists to take over Palestine with little hesitation. When Israel was established in 1948, European Jews were suffering through the Holocaust. When attempting to establish the state, the dialogue surrounding the Zionist movement was calling for a safe haven for Jews. Thus, when one equates Zionism to Judaism in this sense, any sort of critique becomes framed as anti-Semitic, because being against the state equates to supporting the persecution of Jews in Europe. Therefore, keeping religion within the conversation allows for the continuous support, but theologically speaking, without a messiah, the movement is far from being equivalent to Judaism.

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[3] International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, *Biblical Zionism: Giving Definition to the Movement.* Accessed 03/25/2016.

[4] According to Rabbi Dan Segal, "The state of Israel contradicts the Jewish belief that Moshiach will come and afterwards all the Jews will return to the Holy Land. They will go there under Moshiach's leadership" (Segal, *True Torah Jews*).

Zionism, thus, becomes not a religious movement for the establishment of a Jewish homeland, but a political one for European settlement. This is because, as Said notes, Zionism becomes a movement to modernize the East into a progressive country. The dialogues surrounding the movement shifted, once the actual state was established, to reconstructing a barbaric, almost empty land. This is similar to many colonist ideologies: when European countries entered Eastern countries, they did so in order to establish a modern state. Therefore, it becomes no different with Israel. When speaking of Zionism, then, within this work, I speak of its current usage: a movement to colonize an Arab land in order to European settlement.[5]

Occupation:

> **“***All our holy places are still under occupation, and so far we have not liberated one inch of Palestinian land. All Palestinian land is occupied – Gaza is occupied, the West Bank is occupied, the 1948 lands (i.e., Israel) are occupied,*

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[5] Edward Said talks about this notion within his work, “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims.”

> *and Jerusalem is occupied."– Official PA TV Live, October 9, 2013*[6]

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, occupation is defined as "the possession, use, or settlement of land"; and " the holding and control of an area by a foreign military force" (Merriam-Webster, "Occupation"). Thus, by definition, Israel has occupied Palestine, and continues to do so in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but to different people, occupation holds a different meaning.

Journalist Eric Mendal and Congressman Trent Franks[7], among others, have argued that Israel can not be defined as an occupier because the state simply reclaims ancestral homeland; "the Jewish patriarchs and matriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah – are buried in Hebron; the Jewish matriarch Rachel is buried in Bethlehem; Judaism's holiest of holies, the ancient temple and its surviving Western Wall, stand in East Jerusalem" (Mandel). Since Zionists claim that Israel belonged to their ancient Jewish ancestors, the land becomes the birthright of the Jewish people, regardless of territorial birth. In a Zionist framework, Israelis are simply Jewish people who have returned to their land, not Europeans occupying historically Arab land. As part of this narrative, Israel makes the further claim that it simply bettered Palestine;

> "Israel helped modernize Palestinian infrastructure (aiding in the creation of more than 2,000 manufacturing plants), established seven universities in the West Bank, expanded schools, taught modern agriculture, set up medical programs, and opened more than 100 health clinics. Israel

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[6] Mandel, Eric. "What 'Occupation' Means Depends on Who is Speaking" *the algemeiner*. Feb 18, 2014.

[7] In Ari Soffer's article, "Israel is Not an Occupier," Franks states, "If US focuses on truth and justice we'll realize that Israel has been there for 3,000 years - the same language, the same people, the same culture for 3,000 years - and it's always astonishing to me that we somehow now think that they're the occupiers"

> instituted freedom of the press, association, and religion, and launched the first Palestinian administration the local Arab population had ever known. Unemployment plummeted, life expectancy soared, and the population nearly doubled” (Mandel).

So while to many Israelis, the land has simply transformed—from Israel, to a barbaric Palestine, back to a modern Israel— in actuality, it is far from that. Israel has established a homeland on a homeland, occupying the space. As Marwan Barghouti suggests, with the continuous existence of Israel, we have occupation because “occupied territories”☐ refers to the entire state of Israel: As long as a Jewish nation exists, Palestine is “occupied” (Barghouti).[8]

Palestinian territories, specifically the Gaza Strip and West Bank, are occupied. As political commenter Lisa Hajjar has stated, “Israel’s occupation of Gaza continues to the present day because (a) Israel continues to exercise “effective control” over this area, (b) the conflict that produced the occupation has not ended, and (c) an occupying state cannot unilaterally (and without international/diplomatic agreement) transform the *international* status of occupied territory except, perhaps, if that unilateral action terminates all manner of effective control” (Hajjar).[9] Within the fourth chapter of this work, I discuss how Israel has continued to occupy Palestinian territories, stripping Palestinians from their right to live.

Apartheid:

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[8] Barghouti, Marwan, “There will be no peace until Israel’s occupation of Palestine ends” *The Guardian.* Oct. 11, 2015.

[9] Hajjar, Lisa “Is Gaza Still Occupied and Why Does it Matter?” *Jadaliyya* Jul 14, 2014.

Apartheid, by definition is, “racial segregation; *specifically*: a former policy of segregation and political and economic discrimination against non-European groups in the Republic of South Africa” (Webster). While the word is an Afrikaans one and derives from policies enacted by the Republic of South Africa, it has been extended recently as an attempt to illuminate Israel’s various segregationist policies. Senators such as Barbara Boxer have come out to say that, "Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, and any linkage between Israel and apartheid is nonsensical and ridiculous,” (Makdisi), which is flawed because there is a systematic segregation that calls for the unequal treatment of citizens.

Apartheid, as defined by the U.N. General Assembly, is the act “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” (Makdisi). Israel is a Jewish state: it has established a homeland for a specific group of people, and has assured dominance within the state. Their dominance comes from the oppression of non-Jews; they are denied of their right to life and liberty, are subjected to arbitrary arrest, have had their property expropriated, and do not have the right to move within their country. The state has “creat[ed] separate reserves and ghettos for the members of different racial groups, preventing mixed marriages” (Makdisi). Take for example the freedom to freely move within the country: Israeli citizens are allowed to go through the state freely, while Palestinians are subjugated to harsh provisions of military law, frequently banned from crossing borders, and are subjugated to humiliation check point regulations.[10] Also, “While Jewish citizens can move back and forth without interdiction, Israeli law expressly bars Palestinian citizens from bringing spouses from the occupied territories to live with them in Israel” (Makdisi).

Apartheid is then, not just racial segregation, but a segregation that calls for the unequal treatment of citizens based on any difference: whether it be race, religion, sexuality, etc. As Makdisi notes in her article, Israel is an apartheid state because:

> And so it goes in all domains of life, from birth to death: a systematic, vigilantly policed separation of the two populations and utter contempt for the principle of equality. One group — stripped of property and rights, expelled, humiliated, punished, demolished, imprisoned and at times driven to the edge of starvation (down to the meticulously calculated last calorie) — has withered. The other group — its freedom of movement and of development not merely unrestricted but actively encouraged — has flourished, and its religious and cultural symbols adorn the regalia of the state and are emblazoned on the state flag.

So whether we are discussing Palestinians within Israel, or Palestinians in Occupied Palestine, we are discussing a group of people suffering under an apartheid state. Even then, as Noam Chomsky has insinuated, calling Israel an apartheid state is a gift to Israel since “The Israeli relationship to the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories is totally different. They don’t want them. They want them out, or at least in prison” (Chomsky).[11]

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[10] Makdisi, Saree “Does the term 'apartheid' fit Israel? Of course it does” *Los Angeles Times*, Mar 28, 2016.

[11] Chomsky, Noam “Israel’s Actions in Palestine are ‘Much Worse Than Apartheid’ in South Africa” *Democracy Now!*, Aug 8, 2014.

CHAPTER TWO

Exodus (1960)

The creation of Israel in 1948 was not just a political struggle, but also a religious struggle for exiled Jews. Historically, Jews have been persecuted: during the Exodus of Egypt, pogroms (Russia late 19th century), the Holocaust (1936-1945), and other lethal forms of European anti-Semitism. Jews, among with other minorities, were ethnically cleansed because of their religious identifications. The Zionist movement gained momentum during World War II when European Jews were forced out of their homelands and were looking for a safe haven. *Exodus* portrays the political struggle by focusing on Jewish persecution, but also follows what Yosefa Loshitzky calls the "boat film" genre to evoke sympathy in an American audience. According to Loshitzky, this genre "mobilizes boats, ships, and submarines as metaphors of national birth and death" (Loshitzky, page 5) because boats, ships, and submarines are associated with a womb that gives birth to new nations. Just as the founding myth of America is associated with Columbus's *Santa Maria* and the *Mayflower*, which brought the first white Settlers to America, *Exodus* recalls these ships to waken an identification between Israel and America as "two promised lands" (Loshitzky, page 6).

Exodus (Otto Preminger, 1960), based on the Leon Uris novel about the Hagnah Ship the *SS Exodus*, is an epic film on the reclamation of Israel. Uris was sent to Israel by the eminent public relations consultant Edward Gottlieb "'to create a more sympathetic attitude' toward the newly established state," in the 1950s, a time when "Americans were largely apathetic about Israel" (Shaheen, page 325). Therefore, as Jack Shaheen suggests in *Reel Bad Arabs, Exodus* introduced "filmgoers to the Arab–Israel conflict, and peopled it with heroic Israelis and sleazy, brutal Arabs, some of whom link up with ex-Nazis" (Shaheen, page 325). Working off of Uris' book, Dalton Trumbo teamed up with Austrian-American director Otto Preminger to create the film. Using an all-white-European Hollywood cast, the film plays on the tension between sameness and difference by appropriating three major "'others': the 'old Jew,' who becomes a Zionist American 'new Jew' (the American Sabra); the indigenous Arab, who becomes a Zionized Palestinian; and the Holocaust survivor, who becomes a Zionist martyr" (Loshitzky, page 6).

The only Jews presented in the film were European Jews who came to Israel during the Holocaust. As Loshitzky explains, the movie presents a "new Jew," a counter image to the diasporic victim. Specifically, she explains that, "[Ari]'s classic looks, invoking the beauty of an ancient Greek sculpture, are a far cry from the stereotype of the old Jew. His salient Americaness redeems him for the American Jewish male from racial and ethnic difference, and makes him a source of narcissistic identification" (Loshitzky, page 6). Karen, who is a "Holocaust survivor whose Aryan/Waspish look makes her a perfect candidate for American citizenship," (Loshitzky, page 7), also allows the West to identify with her. Especially considering that Karen was offered American citizenship through Kitty but chose the Zionist dream over the safety and comfort of the United States. Kitty is imagined as America: the omnipotent healer of weaker nations. Kitty's image, along with Karen's, evokes the West to identify with the Jewish struggle, and feel a part of their success. Loshitzky notes that, "The Americanization of the new Jew and the cinematic construction of the Sabra as an American star embody, as Ella Shohat observes, 'the virility of both the Sabra soldier and the American fighter, merging both into one myth, reinforced and paralleled by the close political and cultural Israeli-American links since the sixties. Israel, in conjunction with Hollywood, in other words, made possible the filmic transformation of the passive Diaspora victim into the heroic Jew'" (Loshitzky, page 6). The new Jew project creates an "East versus West" dichotomy— by linking American identity and European-Jewish Israeli identity under a Western image, the dichotomy calls for the 'other-ing' of the East, which becomes problematic for Sephardi Jews. Either forced to choose between their Arab-ness and Jewish-ness, or silenced as to not complicate this split, Sephardi Jews find little space in the discussions surrounding the foundation of Israel.

Introducing the "Old, Diaspora Jew," the film illustrates hundreds of Jewish people waiting on the island of Cyprus, waiting to be assigned to different refugee camps. Witnessing the mass migration, Kitty Freidman, the wife of a deceased soldier in the war, asks her taxi driver, "what is going on here?" to which he replies, "ships have arrived here with Jews for the camps, Madam." Kitty, as the image of America, implies the limited knowledge the West had in regards to the persecution of Jews during the

Holocaust. Conveying Western bewilderment, then, "served its purpose from a Zionist point of view: it had helped persuade the world that the Jewish people needed their own state" (Loshitzky, page 4). The mass migration of European Jews into refugee camps portrayed a yearning for home which stems from loss—both the literal loss of Jewish present homes in Europe, as well as the loss of original home in Zion—that is highly embedded in political Zionist rhetoric. Said claims, "Only the Jews as a people (and consequently individuals) have retained both a sense of their original home in Zion and an acute, always contemporary, feeling of loss" (Said, page 19). Kitty's recognition of the European Jewish need for a homeland, accompanied by her gained sympathy, then, enabled political Zionism to thrive in a Western mind.

Furthering Western understanding of the necessity of a Jewish homeland, the taxi driver explains to Kitty, "you see, the Jews go on a ship from Europe to get to Palestine. The British catch them and send them here [Cyprus]. The Arabs don't want them in Palestine, and the British don't want them here, either." By briefly invoking this dichotomy of Arabs in opposition to Jews (defined exclusively as European refugees) the film secures sympathy for Jews who are struggling just to be accepted anywhere, whilst setting up the struggle to be Jews against a British colonial power. The British colonization of Palestine during this time conveys the Palestinian lack of real control over Palestinian land, therefore, detailing the weakness of both Palestinians and Jews against British power.

Delineating the strength of British power in opposition to Zionism, a commander for the British army tells Ari, an undercover Jew working in the war, "I say that's good [sending them back to Hamburg]. It's a German matter, I say they handle them." Presenting the power the British have in sending European Jews back to Germany insinuates the British hold the same power to send refugees to Palestine. British anti-Semitic attitudes toward European Jews, portrayed through the commander's comment, "I have a strange feeling about [Jews]" and "Oh, I don't care about Jews one way or another, they are trouble makers," clarifies British opposition to political Zionism as stemming from an ignorant prejudice, and not as a favoritism to Palestine. Noting British opposition to European Jewish settlement in Palestine, a land that once belonged to Jews, becomes crucial because scholars have determined that, "Zionism is to be carried out by Jews with the assistance of major European powers" (Said, page 22). Therefore, for the establishment of Israel, Zionists need the approval of British forces, which comes with the British self-realization of their own anti-Semitism coupled with their newfound sympathy, and not from the approval of Arabs.

I purposefully used the phrase, "a land that once belonged to Jews" because of the strong religious rhetoric regarding the Holy Land found within the film. When Ari and Kitty go to Palestine together, he takes Kitty to the top of a mountain that overlooks the Jewish and Arab cities that he is familiar with. On this mountain, he explains his father's name, Barak Ben Canaan, and its religious significance. He tells Kitty that after his father's migration to Palestine from Russia, he chose the surname Ben Canaan because he considers himself a descendent of Canaan. His surname, "ben Canaan"[12] literally translates to "son of Canaan." According to Exodus,

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[12] Ben is Hebrew and Arabic for "son" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben_(Hebrew)

> "Canaan is the father of Sidon, his firstborn; and of the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. Later the Canaanite clans scattered, and the borders of Canaan reached [across the Mediterranean coast] from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then [inland around the Jordan Valley] toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha" (Exodus 10:15-19).

Ari's father considering himself to be a descendent of Canaan affirms that he descends from the land of Canaan, part of the region labeled as Palestine, which implies that he is not settling in Palestine, but resettling in his land. Ari confirms his interpretation of Zionism as being a religious movement through his justification to Kitty that Jews, as a collective religious and ethnic group, simply want their native land; "wanted by 600 men and women, a country. A native land, a home. That's all they are dying for, just to call attention towards Israel without ever having seen it themselves." He alludes European Jews are dying for their native land of Israel, not solely dying in attempt to seek refuge from genocidal anti-Semitism. Furthering his interpretation of religious Zionism, when Kitty counters Ari's Zionist project by retelling General Sullivan's suggestion of the impracticality of the establishment of Israel because of Arab opposition, Ari responds, "Tell [Sullivan] what God said to Moses, 'go on to Pharaoh and say to him, 'let my people go so they may serve me'' Exodus 7."[13] Ari evokes a religious understanding of Zionism by not presenting the movement as being political—that is, a movement of European Jews seeking refugee— but by presenting God's ordainment for the establishment of Israel found in Judeo-Christian texts.

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[13] While in the film, Ari cites Exodus 7, looking for the actual scripture, I found it in Exodus 8:1; "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me.

Incorporating the biblical story of Moses, Ari presents the entire ship carrying European Jews as being a metaphor for Moses' cradle and crossing of the water. As Loshitzky notes,

> "The ship, Exodus, which in the Zionist narrative of the birth of the state of Israel plays such a crucial role, is also used as a metaphor of birth. The ship not only evokes Moses' cradle and the crossing of the water, which are part of the Exodus myth, but it follows an interesting and unexplored cinematic tradition of the 'boat film' genre (a claustrophobic countergenre to the more personal and open space oriented 'road film') that mobilizes boats, ships, and submarines as metaphors of national birth and death in films…"

Mobilizing the ship not only evokes the Exodus myth of Moses', therefore portraying the Zionist movement as a religious movement, but also conveys the national birth of Israel as being inherently Judeo-Christian. The religious metaphor presented, then, bases the foundation for Jewish claims on Palestine, which is argued in Akvia's narrative. Akvia, Ari's paternal uncle, therefore also a child of Canaan, affirms his religious Zionist interpretation by explaining to Ari that, "one can argue that justice claims for Arabs on Palestine just as one can argue justice for Jewish claims on Palestine."

The film's religious connection is carried on through Ari and Kitty's relationship, specifically when the couple initiates their romantic interest in each other on the top of the mountain. Looking down from the mountain, Ari tells Kitty, "If you look closely, you can see the stones that Joshua walked upon when he conquered this place." According to Hebrew texts, Joshua is "the successor to Moses and conqueror of the Land of Israel," whose leadership of the Jewish people "lasted for 28 years" (Mindel). Reiterating the land's religious significance, Ari questions the bewildered Kitty, asking, "How well do you know your bible…this is mount Tebor, that is where [Barbara] stood when she watched Barak march off to fight the Canaanites. It's in the book of Judges. 3,200 years ago. That is when the Jews came to this valley. It was not just yesterday or the day before." Ari then, not only suggests that European Jewish 'settlement' in Palestine is merely the migration to an already established Jewish land, but also suggests a Western disconnection between religious 'truths.' Therefore, Kitty and Ari's kiss at the end of this scene implies a newfound Judeo-Christian connection and understanding in regards to the historical, and present day, existence of Israel.

The creation of the Jewish state, just like the creation of any state, stirred internal conflict around the way in which the Jewish state should subjugate current Palestinian land. The internal conflicts between the Irgun and Haganah are blurred in attempt to present the clash between the opposing groups as marginal. Akiva Ben Canaan is head of the Irgun, a Zionist paramilitary that calls for the establishment of a Jewish homeland through any means possible, including violence. Akvia's brother, Barak Ben Canaan, is head of the Haganah, a more peaceful paramilitary that calls for the establishment of Israel with international support. Barak opposes the Irgun because "[the Irgun] presented us as a bunch of murderers," while his brother holds to violent means because he "does not know of any national that was not born with violence" since "terror, violence, death; they are all midwives that bring free nations to this world." Presenting the leaders of the two opposing paramilitary groups as being biological brothers, then, presents the conflict as familial, which in turn reduces "politics to family romance" (Loshitzky, page 11). Keeping the conflict "within the family" enables the filmmakers to bridge together both political groups into one harmonious peaceful paramilitary, in attempt to convey Zionist understanding as being the healer for the Irgun. Removing the use of violence in the film is done so because, “no sizeable segment of the Israeli population has as yet been able to confront the terrible social and political injustice done [to] the native Palestinians is an indication of how deeply ingrained are the (by now) anomalous imperialist perspectives basic to Zionism, its view of the world, its sense of an inferior native Other” (Said, page 23). Therefore, presenting the use of violence as being an internal conflict, which was then resolved by Zionism itself, eludes the Zionist movement away from the confrontation of the social and political injustices done against Palestinians.

The Zionist movement also evades answering to the confrontations of the political injustices done against Palestinians through the film’s portrayal of Arabs and Jews working together for the petition for a Jewish state. The deceased villager, Kamal, who supposedly donated an entire village to Barak Ben Canaan in an attempt to help create a Jewish state, illustrates a foundation of Palestinian support for European-Jewish settlement. Taha, Kamal’s son, inherits his father’s Zionist dream, and welcomes European-Jewish settlers by insisting their presence will be mutually beneficial. After Ari authorizes European-Jewish settlement by stating, “You’re here to build a Jewish homeland in Palestine,” Taha assures the settlers that, “In this valley we should dwell together in peace, since our words are almost exactly the same. We say Salam, you say Shalom. Let us seal our friendship together.” Taha’s encouragement of European-Jewish settlement in Palestine, interpreted through his family’s voluntary donation of an entire village, sends an “obvious message,” as Loshitzky notes, that “the Arabs (their brothers) gave them the land because they knew that the Jews would bring progress to the region" (Loshitzky, page 8). Welcoming European-Jewish colonization in hopes of progression, then, portrays the complexity of colonization. Taking a passage from Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, a leading French geographer, Said quotes that:

> "A society colonizes, when having itself reached a high degree of maturity and of strength, it procreates, it protects, it places in good conditions of development, and it brings to virility a new society to which it has given birth. Colonization is one of the most complex and delicate phenomena of social psychology"[14]

The film illustrated the European Jewish settlers as just this- a more civilized group, ready to take empty spaces (in the film's case, an entire village), and transform them into a part of Palestinian society.

Transforming from an imagined empty, weak space to a manifestation of colonialist phenomena, Israel, thus, was born with the approval of Western and Eastern forces as illustrated through the film. Crowds of European Jews and Palestinians rejoiced after the declaration of an independent Jewish state was announced, imagining an absolute approval from *all* inhabitants of the land. Furthering this notion of complete support, an emcee declares, "We shall work together, as equals, for the Jewish state of Israel." Through fantasizing Israel as an egalitarian society, the filmmakers demonstrated a state working for *all* peoples—a solution needed after years of unequal British domination in Palestine. The film, then, introduces the Palestinian-Israeli conflict immediately upon Israel's initial creation through Taha, who minutes after the declaration, reverses his position on Zionism. Taha's disagreement to the state of Israel comes from his religious beliefs, directly stating, “I know now that I am a Muslim, I cannot go against my people.” The film, therefore, sets up the conflict as being semi-religious, since his opposition to the state stems from his religious identity, and not his national or ethnic identity.

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[14] Agnes, Murphey, *The Ideology of French Imperialism* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1949), pp. 189, 110, 136.

The movie did not end with hope of a stable country, but instead, portrayed Middle Eastern Anti-Semitism after Zionists overcame Western Anti-Semitism. We see Western Anti-Semitism at the beginning, when the European Jews were illustrated as being unwanted in every country, which is exemplified through the scene when Ari illegally signs off to have the boat *Olympia*, carrying 611 Jews, to set for Palestine. The British blocked the dock and asked Ari to board the ship. He replies, “Almost 2 million Jewish children have been butchered because nobody wanted them. No country wanted them. Not your country, nobody’s country. And now nobody wants the ones who did survive.” We also clearly the abuse Jews have endured when Akiva tells Ari,

> Firstly, justice itself is an abstraction, completely devoid of reality. Secondly, to speak of justice and Jews in the same breath is a logical absurdity. Thirdly, one can argue that justice claims for Arabs on Palestine just as one can argue justice claims for Jewish claims. Fourthly, no one can say that Jews have not had their fair shares of injustice within the past ten years. Fiftly, let justice work for someone else for a change

Akvia highlights the Anti-Semitism; specifically, that Jews throughout history have had many injustices done against them, and that they have not had justice throughout their lives. Coupled with anti-Jewish remarks such as, “already beggars, I don’t see how you stand them,” the film emphasizes worldly Anti-Semitism. Ari’s remark, “What is so unusual about a Jew dying? Is it anything new?” uses irony, to convey how the world does not blink an eye when a Jewish person is killed, which changes by the end of the film.

Although the rhetorical position had been the British opposing against European Jewish migration, it veers to Israel being created with the help of Christians and the British. Arabs, then, were presented as being the opposing forces, although they were shown working together during Taha's narrative. We see this change when Karen tells Kitty about Dafna, the Jewish martyr who died at the hands of Arabs. In another scene, Kitty tells Ari, "Even if you get the petition and Jewish state, you can't keep it. 500,000 Jews against 50 million Arabs? You can't win." Exemplifying Arab objection to the state, when Kitty ask the General Sullivan why European Jews have not been given a homeland in Palestine although they were promised one, he replies that it is because the British are in charge of keeping peace and they know that, "Arabs are fanatics on the subject of Jewish immigration." Sullivan's remarks portrays to the viewer that the only reason that the British were ever protesting against the immigration of Jews into Palestine is not because they were specifically against it, but because they could not do anything about Arab opposition.

Harping with the portrayal of Arab opposition forcing the British to haut European Jewish migration, Christians are represented as cooperating with Jews for Jewish settlement. General Sullivan, the man who once stood against Jewish migration, revoked his position because he could not stand to see the atrocities done to Jews. Karen's narrative exemplifies Christian support: first with Kitty offering her refuge in America, and then with the Hanson's adopting her. Karen tells Dov, a boy who resents the rest of the world for not attempting to stop Jewish persecution, “The Hanson’s were Christian and they adopted me,” assuring him that not everyone hates Jews, but they have Christian support. Dov comes to the realization that he has Christian support when he seeks refuge in a church when British soldiers were following him. He was able to hide behind a painting of Jesus Christ, symbolizing the help that the Jews were able to get from their Christian counterparts. Since Christianity is associated with the West, it conveys that only with European support were Jews able to establish a homeland.

The film ends with the depiction of a semi-religious rhetorical conflict: that Muslims, because of their Anti-Semitism, oppose Jewish migration. After the British sign the petition to create the state of Israel, Taha tells Ari that he cannot go against his “Muslim people,” and that he must oppose the state. Muslims are then portrayed as being inherently violent, uprising against the Jewish inhabitants of the state. Panicking, Taha explains to Ari that, “Understand the Grand Mufti has publicly committed himself and every Arab man, woman and child to die rather than accept the partitioning of Palestine.” A Grand Mufti is the highest official of religious law according to Sunni Islam, conveying Islam as the opposing force to the state of Israel. When violence erupted throughout the state, Ari’s sister, Jordana, goes to Fort Esther to retrieve their weapons to defend their new state, which were confiscated by the British. Refusing to return the weapons, Jordana relays to Ari that, “The commander refuses to return our weapons. He said it would only provoke violence. And he won't interfere in local problems, except to punish troublemakers.” Ari replies to Jordana, “I suppose that means us, if we try to defend ourselves." Conveying Muslim-Arab violence, paired with Ari's use of "defend," communicates that Israeli violence is simply a reaction to Palestinian violence.

In the battle between Palestinians and European Jews presented in the film, Taha has a change of heart, and is martyred while trying to convince his village of the Zionist movement. In the scene where he is found dead, Taha has "A Star of David is tattooed in blood on his bare chest" and "his dead naked body is positioned in a crucifix-like way" (Loshitzky, page 8). Embedded with Judeo-Christian symbols, Taha, being a Muslim, reconciles the three great monotheistic religions through this image. Karen, like Taha, is martyred at the hands of Arabs. Their shared grave symbolizes the martyrdom that redeems the nation, and the "legitimation of Zionism through the symbolic annihilation of Palestinian identity and selfhood" (Loshitzky, page 9), as well as the death of the "old Jew." The "New Jew," then, can only be born on the grave of the Palestinian and Holocaust survivor. The Palestinian must die because they contaminate the Zionist task of creating a "New Jew," because there is no place for the Palestinian in a community dominated by Zionist values. As Said notes, "Palestinian Zionism attempted to first minimize, then to eliminate, then all else failing, finally to subjugate the natives as a way of guaranteeing that Israel would not be simply the state of its citizens (which included Arabs of course) but the state of the whole Jewish people, having a kind of sovereignty over land and peoples that no other state possessed or posses" (Said, page 30). The Holocaust survivor must recover through "redemptive Zionism" from the trauma of the Holocaust to transform them from victims to heroes, or to become martyrs if they are beyond redemption.

Using a psychohistorical approach ("the view that personal history is no less important than public history," Loshitzky, page 13) coupled with the epic genre, *Exodus* portrays a kind of history perverted by imagination. The film evokes both national and individual psychohistory, which "renders the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through its characters' psychology, as well as through a dialectical process by political argumentation whereby each party to the conflict (personified by a psychologically motivated character) presents his or her version of the political and historical events" (Loshitzky, page 13). Borrowing from Hayden White, Loshitzky claims combining history and narrative the film "'points to a moral, or endows events, whether real of imaginary, with a significance that they do not posses as a mere sequence'" (Loshitzky, page 13). The film becomes a moral drama on Zionism, promoting Zionism as civilizing the indigenous Arab population who welcomed Zionism to progress an underdeveloped corner of the world. Furthermore, the "New Jews" welcomed by Arabs are presented as native to this land, which is implied through Ari's surname, Ben Canaan, which literally translates to "child of Canaan." Zionism becomes a project of taking back the Holy Land by the "New Jew" native from the enthusiastic Arab willing to sacrifice for the Zionist movement. Therefore, *Exodus'*s preferred liberationist reading of the creation of Israel, created for an American audience, in turn reveals a multiplicity of ideological contradictions between "history," "myth," "religion," and "nationality."

CHAPTER THREE

The dehumanization of Jews and Palestinians are historically discrete, and the forms they take are distinct. In the 1930s, the West was aware of what was befalling Germany's Jews, but considered the persecution of Jews as a German matter. Failing to hinder the progress of genocide by rejecting Jewish requests to bomb extermination camps, Western powers are still haunted by their non-involvement. Martin Kemp in, "Dehumanization, Guilt, and Large Group Dynamics with Reference to the West, Israel, and the Palestinians," suggests that "the proximity and nature of the Holocaust led to the splitting off and projection of European anti-Semitism by mainstream Western society, leaving an ineradicable unconscious link between any negative affect felt towards 'Jews' and the horrors of the Nazi genocide" (Kemp, page 390). Israel, strongly identified with survivors of European anti-Semitism, leaves the West inarticulate when faced with Israeli criticism because it becomes hard to see Israel as anything other than victim. Kemp suggests "that the attempt to offset profound guilt may have led Western countries to concur in Israel's definition of what an ally should be, and that this may have ultimately required acquiescence in the dehumanization of the Palestinians" (Kemp, page 390).

The dehumanization of Palestinians comes from political Zionism's failure to offer European Jews an escape from the dynamics of oppression. Zionism proposed national liberation and human renewal along with “a complete and physical and psychic changeover” (Kemp, page 390), which left Holocaust survivors victims to the “new Jew” project. Holding on to the residues of being a victim- “lack of worth, shame, and guilt”- as a consequence, necessitates “the adoption of a ‘dualistic’ or ‘genocidal mentality’ that, unresolved, leads to trans-generational re-enactment” (Kemp, page 391). It could be argued that what drives Israel to dehumanize Palestinians comes from the belief that the Arab population should “be rendered into a form where their humanity could be compromised and their rights accordingly disregarded, and that the need to defend against the guilt engendered by this requires [Palestinian] continued demonization (Kemp, 394). Therefore, political Zionism merely offered European Jews a reversal of roles in the dynamics of oppression (Kemp, page 393). Paired with Western guilt, this role reversal has dehumanized Palestinians in films in order to present Israeli Jews in as positive light as possible. Through my analysis of the films *Hava Nagila* (2012), and *Dancing in Jaffa* (2013), I argue that the humanization of one religious group has been built upon the dehumanization of the other.

Hava Nagila

Hava Nagila (2012), directed by American filmmaker Roberta Grossman traces the history of the famous Hebrew folk song, accessible to Jews across the globe. This song, sung at bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings, and any celebration, is a song of joy, love, perseverance, and faith. It is also Zionist the narrator of the documentary states, “Hava Nagila has these Zionists resonances to it…it’s much more about ethnic reclamation.”

The song is about establishing a Jewish homeland, through peace, love, and happiness. The opening of the documentary presents a young Jewish couple singing and dancing to “Hava Nagila” at their wedding, with family and friends joining in. “Pulled by the joy force to the dance floor,” the narrator gets across that those surrounding the couple cannot help but dance to this song because, “it is so happy, yet it is so Jewish.” Including shots of different people, all across the globe, dancing and singing to this song, the documentary demonstrates the happiness and joy of Jews around the world.

Attempting to dispel misconceptions of Jewish culture, the narrator of the documentary travels the United States to arouse conversations about Jewish culture from American encounters with “Hava Nagila.” One scholar interviewed explains, “Jews are not known as being happy, but this is a happy song.” Already presenting a paradox, the documentary works towards combating fallacies associated with Jewishness by evoking an interest in Jewish culture, but also guilt, rendered from the scholar’s statement, “how you react to this song tells a lot about who you are.” Beginning the documentary with a statement that provokes self-reflection, the Western audience is forced to contemplate their own prejudices towards Jewish culture. Recognizing and then putting aside any internal prejudice, then, exposes the Western audience to the reality of Jewish culture illustrated in this film.

Already tying “Hava Nagila” with Jewish identification, the film then associates the song with Judaism as well. In the small village of Sadagora, Ukraine, the song spread to five million oppressed and impoverished Jews to waken Jewish optimism. As an attempt to forget Jewish sorrows, the song called forth the celebration of life, highlighted through the song's lyrics:

> *Hava nagila, hava nagila* (Let us rejoice, let us rejoice)/
> *Hava nagila ve-nismeha* (Let us rejoice and be glad)
> /*Hava neranena, hava neranena* (Let us sing and be glad)/
> *Uru, uru ahim* (Awake, awake, brothers)/
> *Uru ahim be-lev sameah !*(Awake, brothers, with a joyful
> heart!).

Interested in finding the origins of this optimistic song, the filmmakers traveled to Ukraine, coincidentally meeting a Rabbi who claims to be the descendent of Rabbi Israel Friedman, who is said to have created The Great Synagogue, the synagogue where the filmmakers traced this song back to. Yisrael Friedman, the claimed great, great, great grandson of Israel Friedman, explains that "there are ten levels of prayer, and right above [prayer] is music." Claiming the lyrics are a cry out to God, while also equating music to prayer, Rabbi Yisrael signifies the song's religious importance.

After the 1948 partition plan, which called for the creation of Israel, Jews began to "[build] a new nation through Hava Nagila." Panning over groups of men and women rejoicing, the film illustrates people cheering and dancing with "Hava Nagila" playing in the background. Over these images, the narrator states, "finally, in 1948, there was a reason to celebrate," and, "that night, everyone went out and cheered" and "Hava Nagila was there." Demonstrating the joy that came with the establishment of the homeland, coupled with a scene where a man sings, "now all those in Palestine are no longer depressed, we would like to dedicate this song if we may suggest," conveys European Jewish success through Western support, while also removing profound Western guilt because of the "correction" of injustice. This line, specifically, is crucial to the portrayal of the creation of Israel in that it exhorts to the Western viewer that either all Palestinians were Jewish, and thus, relieved when the partition to create a Jewish state was declared, or that *all* Palestinians benefited from the partition. One reading presents a historical inaccuracy, that is, failing to convey the multiplicity of religious and ethnic groups in Palestine, while the other reading silences indigenous Palestinian voices and their feelings towards the state change.

Motivated after the establishment of a Jewish homeland, American Jews attempted to get back to their Jewish roots. American Jews were "curious about the new sounds of the homeland that is being reborn," turning to music to find a connection between their American-ness and Jewish-ness. With this yearning for a connection between American and Jewish identity, Klezmer music, associated with European Jewry, began to change, taking on Hava Nagila because, "Hava Nagila represented a movement and repertoire away from the old Klezmer into something much, much simpler and easier for the assimilated Jewish audience to understand." European Jewry had just been wiped out, so to forget about the pain of the Holocaust, Klezmer music had to connect with the image of the "New Jew," that is, the replacement for the weak, victimized "Old Jew." The "New Jew" image, thus, became illustrated through the song's marketing in the United States. The film presents several record albums that illustrate the "new Jew" image—strong, cheerful Jews—to first evoke an American identification with the new

Jew before removing of the connection with the Diaspora Jew. Attempting to complete remove the connection with the Diaspora Jew, American Jews took advantage of the migration to suburbs because, "[Jews] embraced the suburbs for what they offered-for the fact that this could give them a real grounding in American middle class life." Assimilating into American suburb life meant stability, which European Jews had longed for. Jewish identity, then, began to transform with the migration to the suburbs.

Jewish identity was rehashed in the film through the representation of the suburban American Jew. In an ironic, tongue-in-cheek tone, the film gives three steps on how to be a Jewish American living in a suburb: be happy, build a really big synagogue, and throw a party. The Jewish transformation into the assimilated suburban American Jew, whose only goal is to live comfortably and happy, allows for an egotistic self-identification from the Western audience. Therefore, while it is not politically incorrect to say suburban Jewish-American culture is generally happy and stable, the film oversimplifies the different depths and dynamics of American-Jewish culture to create an "us" with American secular-Christian culture.

The West and Hava Nagila

In attempt to rid itself of past guilt for American anti-Semitism, the film reveals the importance of Hava Nagila to the Western, non-Jewish audience—increasing both sympathy and support of Israel. Harry Belafonte, one of the first non-Jewish artists to sing the Hava Nagila, believes that, "in song, I think all humanity finds a place in which to reside where there is no fear." When asked to perform his cover of Hava Nagila in Germany, Belfonte was at first reluctant because he did not want to go to a country that had perpetrated “the greatest mass murders the world had ever known.” Eventually visiting Germany, Belfonte communicates the deep shock he was in after seeing how loving and happy the Jewish people were, and the lack of fear. Clarifying himself, Belfonte explains that although it had only been ten years since the Holocaust ended, no Jewish person was angry or scared, and instead, had a demeanor that read, “let us have peace, let us rejoice.” Belfonte’s narration of his personal encounter with direct victims of the Holocaust presents the Jewish people as continuously being loving and peaceful people, even during the after-effects of deadly anti-Semitism. Belfonte was not alone in his efforts to present the Hava Nagila to a non-Jewish audience, but harmonized with Italian-American singer Connie Francis.

Connie Francis created an entire Jewish album, including the Hava Nagila, in attempt to merge “Theme of Exodus” and Hava Nagila together, because she wanted to combine “something as serious as Exodus with something as light hearted as Hava Nagila.” Francis’ medley is affirming the exact same “New Jew” narrative trajectory as found in Exodus: from trauma to strength and renewal of vitality in the homeland. Through Francis’s medley and reference to the Preminger film, juxtaposing the Holocaust with the Exodus from Egypt, conjures a specifically Eastern victimizer, linking Arabs and Nazis in ways reminiscent of Speilberg’s *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Shohat and Stam, page 152). Shohat and Stam in *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, explain that linking Arabs and Nazis in Speilberg’s *Raiders* reinforces “American and Jewish solidarity against the Nazis and their Arab assistants” (Shohat and Stam, page 153). The misrepresentation of the Eastern world as quasi-Nazis, then, conveys the “othering” of the Arab world, which contrasts the “we” found in American and Jewish relations. Borrowing from Edward Said’s *Permission to Narrate,* Kemp explains that the creation of this “us” versus “they” dichotomy stands to “justify everything ‘we’ do and to delegitimize as well as dehumanize everything ‘they’ do” (Kemp, page 397).

Manipulation of Language

Dancing in Jaffa (2013)

Pierre Dulaine, world-renowned ballroom dancer, traveled to Jaffa, Israel with a mission in mind: to teach Muslim-Arab-Israelis and Jewish Israelis ballroom dancing because, “[his] belief is that when a human being dances with another human being, something happens; you get to know that person in a way you cannot describe.” Bringing children of two different faiths together, the Jewish faith and Muslim faith, he believes, will bring peace to the future of Israel. He notions that, whether Israeli citizens are Muslim or Jewish, they can put aside their differences if they are taught the beauty of dance and music, which is important in bringing together children “who have been enemies for so long.” While this notion that interpersonal interaction is all that is needed to solve sectarian conflict is a hopeful one, the way in which the documentary depicts the situation in Israel is problematic. Jewish-Israeli filmmaker Hilla Medalia, the director of the film, and Pierre Dulaine, both mold the two religious groups into separate binaries. They do not include Christian Arabs, thus the film sets up the conflict as semi-religious between Jews and Muslims. Including Christian Palestinians triangulates the binary opposition, calling for a more complicated narrative. Failing to do so is a weakness that immediately limits the film's ability to analyze the conflict in any meaningful way.

In the opening scene, the film writes, "Jaffa, an ancient port city and historic gate to the Holy Land, has been home to both Palestinians and Jews since the 19th century. The 1948 Arab-Israeli war caused nearly 70,000 Palestinians to flee the city. The few thousand who remained became Israeli citizens." While it is historically accurate to say that Jews inhabited Jaffa, it is misleading to say only that these people were Jews-they were Palestinian Jews. Palestinians did not "inhabit" the place; the state was called Palestine. To say that Palestinians inhabited Jaffa is to erase the history of Palestinian people on this land, while also presenting Arab-Jew as a paradox, which it is not. Another rhetorical strategy used is with the choice of using "flee." The Palestinian inhabitants did not flee because of a simple war; they were pushed out or killed in favor of the new state of Israel. There was no mention of the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in favor of Israel either; by choosing to say "war" and "flee" allows the Western audience to assume that the people left by choice because of a conflict from both parties. Finally, the filmmakers mention those Palestinians who remained were given Israeli-citizenship. While this is true for many Palestinians, giving them citizenship did not make them equal. Palestinians living in Israel are second class citizens and do not have the same rights as Israelis, which is why it is problematic for the filmmakers to announce that Palestinians have Israeli citizenship.[15]

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[15] Munayyar, Yousef "Not All Israeli Citizens are Equal" *The New York Times*, May, 2012. In this article, Munayyar discusses how Palestinians are second-class citizens in Israel, despite being born in either Israel or Israeli-Occupied Palestine.

Dulaine visits five different primary schools within Israel: two Arab-Israeli schools, two Jewish-Israeli schools, and a mixed school. Speaking to parents before hand, he gauges their comfort levels with their children dancing with the opposite gender, and then asks if they would be comfortable with their children dancing with children from a different faith. The parents from the Jewish-Israeli school expressed their comfort with their children dancing with the opposite gender, while the Arab-Israelis were depicted as being hesitant for religious reasons. The Arab opposition to mingling with the opposite sex conveys to the viewer that the Arab-Israelis are "backwards" in thought and religion, while Jewish-Israelis are modern in both religion[16] and thought for their cooperation. Dulaine, when asked in an interview about the documentary if it took a lot of negotiating said,

> Yes, yes. Even negotiating with the Jewish schools. Not as hard because they are modern-thinking, if you want to use that word. With the Arab-speaking schools it was not easy, but because I didn't have an ulterior motive [they agreed]. The world is becoming smaller and smaller. The parent or headmaster or mistress of a school cannot shut the world out. You are supposed to be teaching children for the next 20, 30, 50 years to live a universal life.[17]

Imply that Arabs are "less progressive thinking" than Jewish-Israelis, then, sets to oppose the two religious groups. In the film, Dulaine attempts to teach the Arab children that "'Don't shake hands-don't dance'- you don't have to be married to touch." Similarly, when Dulaine's dance partner attempt to shake hands with a male security guard is kindly rejected, she remarks, "that is very telling of their culture if he will not even touch a woman. How will you get them to dance with the opposite gender?" Incorporating a Eurocentric viewpoint, the film associates the Jewish religion to modernity and progression, whilst labeling Arabs as backwards. There are a variety of ways for the groups to interact without touching, and the girls could waltz with other girls, and the boys dance with other boys. The boys and girls did not *have* to interact with the opposite gender; Dulaine chose this. The choice of ballroom dancing instead of a traditional Palestinian dance like debke also portrays a Eurocentric "modernizing" of the Arab and Israeli citizens.

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[16] While it depicts Jews as being religiously okay with touching the opposite gender, in the Torah, forbids for Jews to touch the opposite gender; excluding family members (Leviticus 18:6; 18:19).

[17] Sheridan, Patricia "Patricia Sheridan's Breakfast With ... Pierre Dulaine" *Pittsburg's Post-Gazette.* July 16, 2012.

The relationship between Jewish-Israeli student Lois and Arab-Israeli Alaa, while very heartwarming, becomes problematic in that it exists within the documentary to demonstrate the modern Israeli versus the unprogressive Arab. In one scene, Alaa asks Lois, "where is your father?" to which she replied, "I have never met him. My mother got me from the sperm bank." Clearly confused, Lois asks Alaa if he knows what a sperm bank is. Not knowing, she explains, "the boys go there and leave their [sperm]…" She could not say the word sperm, so he mother chimed in, "Alaa, I could not find a husband but I wanted to have kids. Why not? So I went to this bank where they had sperm of a man and put it in my body. And they were born!" Including this specific scene, which did little to enrich Alaa and Lois' relationship, is done to present the Jewish-Israeli family as modern and progressive, while the Arab families are still behind.

The film attempts to give the documentary some political depth by involving the conflict, but does so in a way that only highlights the oppression of Israel-Jews by Palestinians. In a taxi cab, Pierre tells his driver, “My dream was to teach Israeli-Palestinian children and the Israeli-Jewish children to dance together” to which the driver replies, “It is a problem that the Arab children and the Jewish children dance together because I know that it will have a lot of problems between us.” Pierre tries to argue with the taxi driver that there can be peace between the two groups through dance, to which the taxi drive replies, “I lost four of my best friends in Gaza, it can never happen. It’s not like we go to fight them or something, but I cannot trust them, and I know that I do not want to dance with them.” There is no mention of the causalities caused by Israeli soldiers in both Israel and Israeli-Occupied Palestine. The taxi driver went as far to even say that they do not go to Occupied Palestine to fight, but never mentioned what exactly they are doing in Gaza.[18] The film takes him at his word by never dispelling what he says, or presenting an opposing argument.

Whether purposeful or incidental, after Dulaine’s cab ride where he learns about Palestinian violence, the movie presents Arab-Israelis carrying out peaceful protests within Jaffa. The protestors were allegedly yelling, according to a Jewish-Israeli citizen, “We heard them say they ‘will liberate Jaffa with sweat and blood’, but we are here to say Jaffa is a Jewish city.” After Dulaine introduces the protests within the film, he goes to the mixed school to film their feelings towards the protests. A Jewish-Israeli teacher asks her students, “what about throwing stones during protests?” Implying peaceful protests turn violent, she furthers her claim by telling her students about how her closest brother died during a protest, stating, “my brother was killed by a suicide bomber and he never hurt anyone.” She ends the discussion by saying, “Israeli’s side is the painful side of the war.” The film agrees to her statement by failing to present the Arab-Israeli point-of-view, specifically their feelings towards the war and the injustices they have encountered.

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[18] According to BBC, in 2014 alone, over 2,104 Palestinians were killed in Gaza. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28439404

Instead of presenting the Arab-Israeli point of view in regards to the violence that came with the creation of Israel, Dulaine furthers the victimization of Israelis by presenting the violent and uncooperative nature of Palestinians. When Pierre and Madam went to Pierre’s old childhood home (Pierre was born in Jaffa to a French father, and a half-Palestinian half-British mother), they were denied access. Insisting on visiting his old home, Dulaine sent the interpreter back with the message that he is no threat. The interpreter comes back with the message, “the homeowner says he feels threatened.” Still insisting, the interpreter goes back to the home, only to run back in a hurry stating they have angered the homeowner. Pierre replies, “it makes my blood boil” to see how the Arabs are denying them access for no reason. The interpreter tells them to hurry and move because, “he is going to shoot us” to which Madam replied, “so were we about to be target practice?” The interpreter tells them both, “fairly close [to being target practice].” Therefore, the film fails to present a Palestinian point-of-view, and instead, works towards furthering the Israeli point-of-view.

Noor, a young Arab-Israeli girl who goes to a mixed religion school, depicts the inherited anger and violence that Muslims have. I say Muslim because Noor is Jewish-

Israeli by ethnicity: her mother converted to Islam from Judaism before Noor’s birth. Highlighting the fact that Noor’s mother is a convert to Islam, then, allows the film to attribute all her anger and violence to her faith, and not from her Israeli identity. Noor is constantly in trouble throughout the film because she bothers other students, as well as refuses to listen to her schoolteachers. Not only is she bothersome, but the film also depicts her as being a terrorizing force within her school, which is highlighted when Noor’s teacher tells her, “don’t threatened Diana again, she’s afraid of you.” Therefore, the film depicts Noor, and ultimately her faith, as violent and inherently threatening. Only after Noor learns ballroom dance does she open up and become a better student. Thanking Pierre for his transformation, Noor’s teacher tells him, “at the beginning of the school year, she was like a closed flower, and now she is opening up.” The teacher’s statement conveys to the viewer that Noor, through ballroom dance and Dulaine’s depiction of modernization, was able to become a non-threatening part of society.

Noor was not the only student, struggling to be a peaceful part of society, but most of the Arab students were presented as being highly anti-Jewish. In one scene, a schoolteacher tells Pierre, “one of the Arab boys said to the girl that he doesn’t want to dance with her because she’s Jewish.” After hearing this, another teacher tells the Arabs, “you should all be ashamed” for not wanting to dance with someone because of their religion. After demonstrating Arabs as encompassing anti-Semitic ideas of Jewish students before really meeting them, the documentary ends with what seems like a heart-warming lesson. Pierre asks the students what they have gained after this experience, to which Lois replies, “to trust one another.” After learning how to tolerate one another through dance, the Jewish-Israeli students were finally able to trust the Arab-Israeli students. Again, this rhetoric is problematic because it shows Judaic values as being those of peace, love, and joy, while the Arabs are slowly learning such values through Israeli influence. Once the Arab children were able to learn those values, the Jewish children were finally able to trust them, which again, shows the audience that there is a reason for distrust in the first place.

Pink-Washing

Pinkwashing is "the practice of presenting something, particularly a state, as gay-friendly in order to soften or downplay aspects of its reputation considered negative."[19] Israel has presented itself as gay-friendly in order to shy away from the atrocities they have done in order to create their state, and in order to continue their occupation over Palestine. Israeli pinkwashing furthers the idea that Israel is a state dedicated to democracy and human rights, as opposed to Palestine. Being the only "civilized country" within the Middle East, the discourse around this rhetoric, "seeks to convince white Americans and Europeans that supporting Israel is imperative for women, LGBTQ-identified individuals and their allies" (Bohrer)[20]. Israel makes the claim that it is the only state where LGBTQ-identified individuals can live freely, regardless of religion or race. This "pinkwashing," allows for Israel not only to gain international support, but "plays on a variety of racist and Islamophobic tropes, but also impedes a thorough and nuanced analysis of queer and feminist liberation" (Bohrer).

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[19] "Pinkwashing" Yourdictionary.com/pinkwashing

[20] Ashley Bohrer is a queer feminist Jewish activist and academic based in Chicago. She is a founding member of Jews for Justice in Palestine.

While Israel labels itself as a gay-friendly state, “The idea that Israel must be defended regardless of its human rights abuses or racist violence separates LGBTQ liberation from larger social and structural phenomena” (Bohrer). Refusing to acknowledge queer Palestinians, who have been harassed, displaced, bombed, incarcerated, etc., essentially dehumanizes not only LGBTQ individuals, but also Palestinians as a whole. Not only does Israel not acknowledge queer Palestinians, but also Israel claims to be gay-friendly, when “in fact the Israeli army pressures LGBTQ Palestinians into becoming informants against their friends and families by blackmailing them and threatening to expose their sexualities” (Bohrer). Israel exploits LGBTQ identifiers, which again dehumanizes both Palestinians and people from the LGBTQ community.

The pinkwashing of Israel is common throughout the media, which has become problematic for the issue of human rights and LGBTQ rights. While Israel presents itself as being cautious of all human rights, the state has demonstrated that it is far from even-handed or just in its actions towards the Palestinian territories, and the Palestinians within its borders[21]. In Eytan Fox’s film, *The Bubble,* the film demonstrates that, not only are Israelis LGBTQ friendly and open to “peace within the Middle East,” but contrasts Israeli pinkwashing with the depiction of Palestinian barbaric-ness. Through my analysis of this film, I argue how pinkwashing enables Israel to portray that they did not settle on Palestinian land, but they essentially modernized a part of the Middle East that needed to progress.

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[21] I will go further in chapter four.

The film follows the lives of three roommates as they work towards “ending the occupation” through new-age tactics, while attempting to find love in the busy city of Tel Aviv. The film opens with Noam, a music store clerk currently in the Israeli Defense Force, as he sits at a checkpoint between Tel Aviv and Nablus. At the checkpoint a pregnant woman goes into labor, evoking Noam to rush to her side to calm her down until an ambulance arrives. Noam calms the woman down with the help of Ashraf, Noam’s love interest later in the film, an Arab with a fluency in Hebrew, thus translating. Once the ambulance arrives with an Israeli doctor, the woman delivers a breached baby boy, who is announced dead after the doctor attempts for a minute to find his pulse while giving him CPR. Once the baby is announced dead, Jihad, a prominent Hamas member, starts a riot, screaming, “this is how you killed the baby.” The film portrays Hamas/Palestinians as fanatics looking to appropriate any death for the discourse of national martyrdom, and while that may lay true for a component for Palestinian nationalism, this is not the whole truth. Outside of the Arabic-speaking context, Jihad signifies “Holy war.” Therefore, one of the fewer Palestinian characters presented overall is a literal Jihadist. The film, then, illustrates how Israel wants to present itself: As a modernizing power attempting to civilize Palestine, whose efforts were then misunderstand, evoking a Palestinian hatred toward the state, thus creating a “war” between the two.

Cutting between Tel Aviv and Nablus, the film imagines Tel Aviv as being a city of progression and modernization, through the film’s depiction of Nablus being uncivilized and backwards. In Tel Aviv, the film portrays the different faces, ideas, and fashion statements of Israeli citizens in a coffee shop Yuli manages. Yuli, one of the three roommates, interviews potential employees for roughly 15 seconds each, enabling the viewer to humanize and connect with the Israelis portrayed. This contrasts the Palestinians, whom we do not see except briefly, and in a negative light. The Palestinians at the checkpoint are quiet and do not speak, and do not step up to help the woman in labor. In the checkpoint scene, they are merely there, but not actually present, as the Israeli soldiers were. The only other time we encounter Palestinians is during Rana's wedding, and in those scenes, they are either quietly in the background, or heated up, ready to create chaos. Therefore, the film has dehumanized Palestinians, except the one Palestinian who has rejected his nationality, because his gay-ness and his nationality do not mix. This character, Ashraf, represents the oppressed Palestinian who is saved by Israel.

There are two ways to view Israel as being the savior for Palestinians: fighting for human rights and peace for Palestinians, and fighting for LGBTQ rights. Lulu, the only main female character in the film, is planning a rave titled, "Rave Against the Occupation." Advertising for this rave, she starts shouting in the streets, "rave for peace," "let's dance instead of shooting," and "show them that we are younger, we do not want war." Lulu's demonstration conveys that although the older generation has disrupted the peace within both nations, the younger generation realizes they need to end the occupation and leave Palestinian territories alone. Lulu does not stop there, though; she is seen being a savior in her own personal space. Lulu works at a soap store and overhears two women joking with each other about how a certain soap in the store "smells and looks like Arabs." Instantly enraged, Lulu gets in an argument with the women and rudely tells them that the soaps smell better than they both do. Lulu's instant reaction conveys that while there can be prejudices against Arabs in Israel, the new generation is against the prejudice and actively calls against it.

Lulu is not alone in her attempts to protest against both systematic and social racism, but Noam does so as well. In a conversation with Ashraf, Noam tells him that while growing up, his father got the Arab kids banned from playing at his childhood park because it was reported that they were being too rough with the Israeli kids. His mother was so upset with her husband's actions that she planned a reconciliation party at the park and invited all of the Palestinian children and their mothers. On the day of the party, "no one [showed up], not even the Israeli mothers," which saddened his mother, but "[his] father laughed at her attempt at world peace." Noam's mother attempting to reconcile with Arab-Israelis after her husband's actions conveys that although there are existing prejudices against Palestinians, these prejudices are generally not accepted by the Jewish-Israeli population. Although, the film depicts these prejudices as stemming from a genuine and justified fear, in Noam's case, the violent nature of Arab-Israeli children. Expressing to Ashraf how Israeli prejudices against Palestinians are justified, Noam is shut up by Ashraf who prefers not to "talk politics." Ashraf discusses these prejudices as "politics," then, structures these prejudices as being a part of the state, and not common people.

The biggest concerns the three main characters have over human rights are those of people who identify as LGBTQ, which is where Ashraf's character comes into play.

Although the film’s focus on LGBTQ rights is important, *The Bubble* portrays such rights as being more or less guaranteed in Israel (they are not). The roommates agree to take in Ashraf, regardless of his illegal status, because “do you know what its like being gay over there?” Noam’s remark sets up the main narrative in this film: that Palestinian LGBTQ subjects seek refuge in Israel because they are given their rights there, and fear for their lives in Palestine. This is presented best in Nablus, where Noam goes to visit Ashraf and his family, and kisses Ashraf among arrival. Ashraf pushes him off the first time and says, “You want them to kill me? You don’t know what its like [being gay] here.” They cannot resist each other, though, and Ashraf and Noam beginning kissing, and Jihad—Ashraf’s soon-to-be brother-in-law—catches them in the act, and threatens to “out” Ashraf once the wedding is over. Ashraf fears for his life, knowing that in Palestine his life is now endangered if anyone finds out, and goes back to Tel Aviv with Noam.

Having to go back to Nablus to attend his sister’s wedding, Ashraf tells his sister that he is in love with Noam, a male in Israel. His sister tells him to cut it out, and to marry Jihad’s cousin in order to stop his “wrong” ways. Heated up, Noam shouts at his sister that she should accept him, and she tells him to go away before he ruins her wedding day. Later on at the wedding, Ashraf goes to dance with his sister, and sees her crying. Getting upset with himself, he goes to Jihad and asks to become a suicide bomber. Sent to the same café Yuli manages, Ashraf coincidentally sees Noam ordering inside the café. Noam also sees Ashraf and runs to him, and a switch of consciousness, Ashraf runs into the middle of the street, away from all people, and kisses Noam seconds before blowing himself up. Ashraf and Noam die in the middle of the street together; hurting no one else but himself and Noam, Ashraf narrates “maybe there really is a paradise where we can just love each other.”

The film ending in Ashraf and Noam’s suicide in Tel Aviv, along with his mention of paradise, presents Israel as being the paradise he speaks of. Ashraf could not have the leisure of Israel because of his nationality, but it is the one place where he could have lived peacefully. Israel is imagined as this paradise because of Ashraf’s life in Israel as well. For example, Ashraf attends a rave that his roommates planned: in this rave, Ashraf was able to express his sexuality and have a good time. His day-to-day life was also easier in Israel: he was able to have a stable job at the café, go out with Noam, and be openly gay. Therefore, this film may critique Israel’s prejudices against Palestinians, but ultimately presents Israel as being the paradise that wants to be attained by LGBTQ-identifying Palestinians.

Ending with the prevalence of religion, both Orthodox Judaism and Islam condemn homosexuality, but within this pinkwashing, Islam is the only religion presented that condemns homosexuality and LGBTQ identities. Israel is presented as being a progressive, secular state, while ignoring the prevalence of homophobic Israelis who have committed hate-crimes towards LGBTQ-identifiers. Not only that, but it is illegal to be openly gay in Israel, and marriage is still between man and woman; “Marriage is an exclusively religious institution in Israel, with separate religious authorities for Jews and Muslims, Christians and Druze. For Israeli Jews, marriage policy is dictated by the Chief Rabbinate, which is under the exclusive control of the Orthodox—and firmly opposed to gay marriage" (Hoare). [22]

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[22] Hoare, Liam; "Israel Won't Legalize Gay Marriage. Here's Why" *Slate* Nov 21, 2013.

Orientalism in Hollywood

Hollywood popular culture has a huge influence on modern Americans, since the ideas and representations fed tend to be the only representations we have of certain groups of peoples. As Said points out in *Orientalism*, the United States never had direct contact with the "Orient" up until recent years, so little is known except that which is presented to us in films and media. Hollywood has regularly demonized Arabs and Muslims, which Jacquie Salloum demonstrates in *Planet of the Arabs*, a documentary film comprised of numerous clips depicting Arabs in US film. Jack Shaheen claims that out of the 1000 films that have Arab and Muslim characters, over 900 of them depict them in a negative light, while only twelve of them depict them in a positive light, and around fifty-two show neutrality. Salloum's film was inspired by Dr. Jack Shaheen's book, *Reel Bad Arabs*, which brings to light the negative depictions of Arabs and Muslims in films.

In *Planet of the Arabs*, Salloum edits together snippets of different films that vilify and dehumanize Arabs. She incorporates a scene from *The Delta Force* (1986) where an Arab terrorist Mostafa makes the claim that, "we are not fighting your people, we are fighting your government…one day we will drive to the White House… and [boom], it will blow…" Following this scene, she integrates another dialogue from *True Lies* (1994), directed by James Cameron, which illustrates Helen Tasker telling Harry Tasker; "there are no borders…they are going to invade our country…there is nothing stopping them." Another dialogue, from director Aaron Norris' *The Hitman* (1991), "he told me to tell you camel jockeys…that if you fuck with them, they will cut off your balls," illustrates Muslims and Arabs as dark, dirty, and mean, while their counter parts are depicted as white and innocent, yet powerful. Immediately, the view is set up believing that there is an "us versus them" dichotomy. Making the protagonists relatable to the modern American, it allows for the writers to convey certain ideas about the Other, and courts sympathy for the protagonist and gain hatred for the antagonists. Since in these dialogues the Muslims and Arabs are represented as intimidating and hate filled, the narratives justify their eventual deaths in the films, because their lives are no longer meaningful because they are a threat to all. Not only does Salloum highlight the different instances were Westerners are in danger because of Middle Eastern threat, but also points out that in these scenes, Arabs are a threat to their own people.

Salloum incorporates clips of Arabs committing violent acts not only to Westerners, but also to other Arabs, revealing that for Hollywood, Arabs are inherently violent people. She also incorporates cartoons that contain Arab caricatures, such as "Ali Baba, the Mad Dog of the Desert." In many of these scenes, the Arabs are not fighting Westerners but are fighting themselves, which reinforces the stereotype that Arabs have an inherently violent nature. These Hollywood films also forward the idea that Arabs themselves do not value their own lives, implicitly raising the question of why, then, should anyone else. In Steve Carter's *Bulletproof* (1988), Capt. Devon Shepard shouts at an Arab, "in your country, you treat women like camels and send young boys to their deaths because of your sad excuse of a God." Such a portrayal suggests that Arabs do not care for their own women and children, and that their safety has never been a concern for them. It suggests that since Arabs have already dehumanized more than half of their own population, it does not matter if the West continued with this dehumanization. Not only does Salloum highlight the different instances were Westerners show that Easterners are in danger because of Middle Eastern threat, but also points out that in these scenes, the Arabs are driven by their faith.

Since there has been an established “us versus them” dichotomy, the film presents this as an “us (Judeo-Christians) versus them (Muslims) dichotomy.” *Rules of Engagement* (2000) directed by William Friedkin presents this with the dialogue between an American solider and Arab man. The solider asks the Arab man, “Can you tell us what God’s command is?” to which the Muslim Arab replies solemnly, “to kill Americans.” While nowhere in the Qur’an does it implicitly state followers must “kill Americans,” the scene becomes even more problematic in that it conveys to the western audience that terrorist attacks are God ordained in Islam. If God drives these acts of terrorism, then, the film illustrates 1.9 billion Muslims as all participating in or condoning terrorist attacks. Salloum also incorporates *Judge Advocate General (JAG)*: *In Country* (season 7, episode 23), where a police officer asks a prisoner, “you were educated in the West, what happened” to which the prisoner replies, “I learned to love Allah.” Depicting the West as the inherent good that was infected by Islam, the film furthers the set binary depicted in orientalist rhetoric. She uses another scene from *The Hitman,* when Seattle cop Cliff Garret asks the Arab terrorist, “I am not afraid to die, are you?” to which the Arab Muslim man replies, “no, Allah protects us!” Similarly, taking from *Law and Order American Jihad* (season 13, episode 1), the scene when the prosecutor, in attempt to gain more information on Islamic martyrdom from the defendant, asks what drives him to commit terrorist attacks, to which he replies “it is an honor to die for Allah.” These films all reiterate and promote this rhetoric that Islam, contrasting with the Judeo-Christian “good God,” promotes acts of terrorism.

In every scene where an Arab is present, regardless of whether the setting is in the West or in the East, the Arabs are wearing traditional Islamic attire (attire perceived by the West as being Islamic). The men are wearing long cloaks and headdresses; yet, they are always strapped with weapons. This conveys to the viewer immediately that these men are Muslim, although many Arabs are not Muslim. Portraying these men wearing traditional attire depicts to the viewer that Arabs are still stuck in the seventh century, having yet to modernize. Presenting these men as backwards allows the history of the Arabs to take over the present. Historically, taking the crusades and the Arabization of the East and North African into consideration, Arabs have proven to be diligent soldiers and warriors. It is no secret that the Arabs once dominated a significant portion of the Eastern world, but by allowing their history to depict their future is problematic in this sense. Arabs have progressed with the world, so to depict them as men still carrying swords and riding on horseback everywhere they go furthers the idea that Arab men are still stuck in their past, and their past ways.

Planet of the Arabs, also addresses the Orientalist rhetoric that brings in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In one clip Salloum takes from *The Detla Force,* a solider tells his people, “Israel is America’s best friend in the Middle East, its only 20 minutes from Beirut…” Although Israel is in the Middle East, the soldier’s statement links Israel to the United States, thus, evoking sympathy for Israel. Salloum borrows from *The Delta*

Force (1986,) again, specifically the scene where an airplane hostess says to an Arab fighter, “you claim you come from a revolutionary organization” to which he replies, “that is correct, we are freedom fighters, we are fighting for our brothers.” The character associates him with Nazis by yelling back, “but then you do not want to be associated with the Nazis who killed six million Jews!” Another Arab man jumps in front of her and exclaims, “not enough, Lady! Not enough! The Jews stole Palestine, they stole our land.” What becomes problematic in this scene is that it links Palestinian nationalism to anti-Semitic bloodlust and insinuates that support for Palestine is itself an existential threat to Israel. This rhetoric evokes the fear that as long as Arabs have access to the Holy Land, they can potentially create a second Holocaust.

There are multiple scenes that push the idea that all Muslims/Arabs are against all Jewish people, rather than being critical of or even opposed to Israel and its policies. Salloum includes the scene (discussed earlier) from *Exodus*, in which General Sutherland states, “the Arabs are fanatics on the subject of Jewish immigration.” Reincorporating *The Delta Force,* Salloum includes the clip when a young girl asks her mother, “they don’t like Jews, huh mama?” to which her mother replies, “no, they don’t sweetie, they do not like Jews.” These scenes position Muslims as the historical enemies of Jews, therefore making Jews the oppressed and Muslims the oppressors. The dichotomy between Muslims and Jews is also portrayed in *Law and Order: American Jihad* (season 13, episode 1), specifically the scene where American Jihadist asks, “are you Jewish…as a Jew, isn’t it your mission in life to kill all Muslims?” Salloum incorporates this clip, which suggests that while Jews are peaceful people, they are accused of being anti-

Muslim. This depiction then furthers the idea that Muslims have this “war” with Jews in their heads, which is why Muslims act upon it. By creating this distinct dichotomy between Muslims and Jews then allows people to position the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a Jewish-Muslim conflict.

Dehumanization of Muslims

Since their 1948 expulsion from their homeland (the Nakba), Palestinians have resisted the injustices committed against them in a variety of ways. Although violent resistance has become the most visible and spectacular (in the sense that it is a media spectacle) form, there is a strong history of non-violent resistance within Palestinian nationalism. Central to this form of resistance is a shared struggle bound up with a shared culture, language, and often religion amongst the Palestinian people that allow Palestinians to collectively find new ways to resist against the trauma enacted against them. Palestinian filmmaker Hany Abu-Assad defines film as a form of active resistance because; “… keeping the case alive is a form of resistance. Making these films is like unconsciously making documents that can be kept in history and keep your case alive. It’s a way of resistance” (Haidar). Abu-Assad uses film as a form of resistance while also portraying the various ways Palestinians attempt at resisting in his films *Paradise Now* (2005) and *Omar* (2013). A shared theme in these two films is the way in which immobility and stasis keep the main characters from being able to resist in the only ways they are taught: through violence. However, this immobility also keeps them from resisting through non-violent means (as Israel has strategically planned out), and it prevents them from being able to live together as a cohesive society. By denying them of their right to live in their own homeland, Israel denies them of the most active form of resistance: continuance of life.

Abu-Assad’s *Omar* opens up with a young man, Omar, waiting for cars to clear the road next to a partitioning wall so he may climb up to reach a different part of Palestine. There is a rope on the wall, making it obvious that many Palestinian youth climb the wall when they need to, as Omar is constantly doing throughout the film. The wall Omar has climbed is the Kalandia Wall, which separates Jerusalem from Ramallah; he had to climb it instead of the El-Ram wall, which he explains was too crowded. Similarly, *Paradise Now* opens with with Suha needing to go through a checkpoint because of the separation wall. The appearances of partition walls are common and mimic real life. In occupied Palestine, walls are placed in order to make it harder for Palestinians to move about freely. For example, Omar’s private life is “…affected by obstacles such as the ‘separation wall’ and [he] attempts to get on with [his] daily life by adapting to a changing and increasingly restrictive network of Israeli checkpoints, surveillance, and control” (Mavroudi, 561). There is a physical immobility because of the apartheid wall, and also because of closed off borders and checkpoints.

Suha passes through a checkpoint while entering Palestine. At the checkpoint, an IDF soldier is pointing his weapon at her during the entire process, already deeming her a threat while another solider searches through her belongings. While Gregory does not mention the film, he notes in *The Colonial Present that, “*The ground war involved the performance of highly abstract spacings too, in which every Palestinian was reduced to a threat and a target" (Gregory, page 118). There is a physical limitation of movement, and also a "mental limitation" of movement because the checkpoints are deemed as intimidating; Palestinians, thus, go through checkpoints only when it is utterly necessary to do so. Within *Paradise Now,* the checkpoint physically stops Khalid from being able to return to his home. Israeli forces close off a checkpoint to Sebastia, Nablus, where Khalid lives, so he is forced to stay with Saïd and his family. Khalid has to adjust to the circumstances, which resonates with the immobility for Palestinians beyond the film. In occupied Palestine as in the films, the Palestinians are "policed by hundreds of standing and mobile checkpoints" (Baylouny, 52). These checkpoints and other hindrances are placed because; "policies geared to make mobilizing more difficult are based on the premise that the movement is hierarchical, controlled by a leader who 'commands' his followers" (Baylouny, 50). By restricting free movement to and from cities, Israel ensures that Palestinians cannot collect as a society, like Saïd and Khalid do in the film. Just like with Khalid, Palestinians do not always know if they will be able to pass through a checkpoint, and "the uncertainty of being able to pass through borders and checkpoints prohibit[s] effective planning" (Baylouny, 53), which is why the occupiers have chosen to close them off at any time.

In order for one to understand just how controlled occupied Palestine is, one must first understand what the state currently looks like. According to Baylouny, "the tiny West Bank, smaller than Delaware, was divided into 300 separate areas. The accords increased the number of borders, checkpoints, and the use of closure or refusing entry for Palestinian workers to Israel" (Baylouny, 51). There are millions of Palestinians living within the small state. This causes tiny spaces, narrow roads, and all around immobility and stasis throughout occupied Palestine. This is shown in *Omar,* when Omar is forced to run through the city in between small alleyways and buildings. In both films, Abu-Assad portrays Palestine as crowded and limiting to those living, which accurately portrays how it is for most Palestinians.

The films also depict a physical immobilization because of violence done upon Palestinians. In *Paradise Now,* when Khalid and Saïd are with the brigades preparing for their mission, the camera focuses on a man building a bomb with synthetic hands. It is assumed that he has faced some sort of torture prior. Khalid was asked by a friend why his father limps when he walks and does not have a foot, to which Khalid replied, "during the First Intifada, Israeli soldiers broke into our home. They asked [my father] which foot he wanted to keep, so he chose the right leg." Israeli soldiers physically immobilized Khalid's father because it keeps young, strong Palestinian men from being able to resist against the occupation. This is not an uncommon occurrence in Palestine, since Israel strategically keeps Palestinians from being mobile throughout their state, which is why Palestine has literally become, "a prison with homes as cells" (Wick, 28).

Palestinians have imagined their land as a prison because of their mental immobility: an immobility that is not physically forced upon them, but imagined in their minds because of fear. Abu-Asaad actually created his film *Omar* while going through a mental immobility. The idea for the film, "had been nagging at him ever since he began to suspect that someone on the set of his second feature film, 2005's *Paradise Now*, must have been a spy" (Asfour). This article addresses exactly what Abu-Assad portrays in the film: how extreme paranoia, fear, torture, and the idea of a temporary homeland keep the Palestinian people from moving amongst themselves. Abu-Assad kept himself secluded, feeling as though “he was constantly being watched” (Asfour) and would even go as far as registering himself in one hotel room but sleeping in another. Palestinians in *Paradise Now* and *Omar,* allow their fear overwhelm them, and create a mental stasis for themselves and those around them.

Abu-Assad does not attempt to present Palestinians as being real victims of Zionism, but instead presents the way in which Palestinians are dehumanized within their territories. This dehumanization is also done by Palestinians themselves; Khalid in *Paradise Now* states, “under the occupation, we are already dead.” Similarly, Said tells Suha, “life is boring” because he feels a sense of weariness or “zahaq” as Wick explains. Zahaq is, “a feeling of being fed up with a form of isolation and deepening economic hardships” (Wick, 35). This feeling is what allows Saïd and Khalid to sacrifice their selves because they feel there is no sense of life under the occupation. Understanding the actions that led to violent reactions allows the films to better critique the rhetoric surrounding martyrdom and national heroism, which needs to be addressed before establishing a nation.

Abu-Assad engages with the treatment of suicide bombing and martyr rhetoric, and challenges these notions. In *Paradise Now,* Khalid and Said are set on becoming suicide bombers, in order to gain the national heroism promised from the brigades. They praise Suha’s father, a martyr given his promises of fame after death. Suha tells them she would personally, “rather have [her] father alive than have him known as a martyr.” Suha continuously questions the use of violence, even stating that, “if you kill, there is no difference between occupier and occupied.” She understands the solution for Palestinians does not come from the repeat of history. The nation will never progress if founded on violence, because the conflict will be continual. She believes in different forms of resistance, specifically human rights groups and open discussions.

Abu-Assad depicts film as being another means of resistance. Mavroudi states, “film and theatre performances can be a powerful tool in this endeavor because they may use and interrogate space in more radical, malleable ways, in order to try and imagine hope and peaceful alternatives, or to encourage communication and connection between rivals” (Mavroudi, 560). Abu-Assad depicts the stereotypes of suicide bombings and martyr rhetoric in order for Palestinians to gain a self-awareness, which will then allow them to critique their nation. Gaining self-awareness, followed with alternative means of resistance, the film works to suggest a different route in establishing a free nation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

The Time That Remains (2009)

The 2009 semi-biographical film *The Time That Remains: Chronicle of a Present Absentee,* written and directed by Elia Suleiman, depicts four periods in the director's family history. Fusing both the personal and the political, Suleiman depicts family history that corresponds to four distinct eras in Palestinian-Israeli history: the 1948 war, the early 1970s including the deal of Gamal Abdel Nasser), the 1980s (when his father died), and the present day, including the death of his mother from complications related to diabetes. Suleiman does not create a comprehensive historical narrative although his film instigates an interest in conflict and history. Suleiman's carefully chosen moments, views, and angles, "which happen to be placed in an overtly signified historical context," creates a film of "epic and historical qualities that avoids what Suleiman calls 'sensationalism, the bombastic, and the predictable scenes'" (Abu-Remaileh, page 83). The film glances over decades without recounting history or providing dates, focusing instead on unfamiliar moments.

The Time That Remains covers the same history as *Exodus*, *Hava Nagila, Paradise Now,* and *Omar,* although the films differ in their interpretations of history, revealing a multiplicity of historical accounts. *Exodus* and *Hava Nagila* focus on the political and religious Zionist movement that founded the state of Israel, recounting the history from a Zionist point of view. Evoking the necessity to illuminate both religious historical myths as well as pre-Zionist Jewish history, *Exodus* and *Hava Nagila* create a historical narrative essential for the understanding of the 1948-to-present Zionist movement. Contrasting with these two films, *Paradise Now* and *Omar* create a historical narrative from after the 1948 establishment of Israel, focusing on the present-day Palestinian living in Palestine, and their encounters with the Zionist aftermath. To put it simply, *Exodus* and *Hava Nagila* present Jewish history from the perspective of Jews, while *Paradise Now* and *Omar* present Palestinian history from the perspective of Palestinians in Palestinian territories. *The Time That Remains*, here, offers a unique perspective in that much of the film is Israeli history, from the point of view of a Palestinian within the borders of Israel.

Recounting history, *Exodus, Hava Nagila*, *Omar,* and *Paradise Now* all carry a similar story-telling approach, using chronological narratives to illustrate historical accounts. *Exodus* begins with the Diasporic Jewish search for a homeland and ends with what eventually became the current Palestinian-Israeli conflict, evoking memories of different histories through Ari's character. *Hava Nagila* works as a documentary in search of histories, therefore, begins with the present day and works back to early Jewish history. *Paradise Now* and *Omar* offer a present day continuous history, focusing on the after-effects of the historical moment on the present-day Palestinian citizen. *The Time That Remains* is episodic, jumping between historical moments and purposely leaving out chunks of history, at an attempt to veer away from presenting historical reconstructions of events. This stylistic departure from the other films emphasizes a discontinuity, which then does not engage with the history of the past, contrasting the other four films' attempts at engaging with the past in order to make sense of the present.

Suleiman plays with the structure of his film to create a discontinuity in narrative, which is reflective of Suleiman's skepticism of master narratives. Within Suleiman's work, "the framing of the shots, the editing of the film, and its structure are just as important as what is seen, said and heard within the frames" (Abu-Remaileh, page 84). Therefore, the structure of Suleiman's work mediates Suleiman's own relationship with master narratives, whether they are Palestinian nationalist or Zionist. Instead of contributing to master narratives, Suleiman creates self-reflexive metanarratives that seek the universal through the experience of the local, so as to "create not just films that become a metaphor of Palestine, but rather films where Palestine becomes a metaphor for the world" (Abu-Remaileh, page 90).

Suleiman renders the life of his father, Fuad, when he was a gun maker for the resistance forces. In this section, we see the brutality and struggle that he goes through on a daily basis. His struggles are not exclusively Palestinian, or meant to depict Palestinian life under Israeli occupation. Rather, they illustrate an experience that can be identified with around the world. For Suleiman, "if an Uruguayan is watching my film, and has an identification with the story of Fouad [sic] in the film, then this is where I believe I have traveled an experience, a universality of some sort, which I think cinema is up for. So this is not about molding or summing up an experience located in Palestine. This is about all the experiences that can be conceptually, Palestinian-ally, called so" (Haider). Suleiman uses Palestine because he is familiar with this area that is his home, not necessarily because of a subversive agenda. To him, all nationalist discourse is problematic because it stops one from empathizing with others from different national borders.

We see his critique of nationalist discourse from his illustration of young Suleiman. The film depicts a schoolteacher lecturing young Suleiman for commenting on US colonialism once, and for questioning political authority another time. In his teens, Suleiman's mother mentions that Suleiman was accused of tearing the Israel flag, again questioning nationalist identity. For Suleiman, nationalist identity is problematic, "because if we start to say that "this is us, until here, and the rest is them or other" that means we have put ourselves into our own ghetto and nailed ourselves to the ground, while if our national identity is expansive in terms of the seduction and pleasure of being others, then our national identity can enhance so much of the world's experience" (Haider). When we identify with one certain nationality, we lose our identification with humanity.

While Suleiman is critical of police force, government, and institutionalized power, he still supports the right of a Palestinian homeland because it symbolizes the freedom Palestinians are trying to attain. He states, though, "I will be fighting until the flag has risen. But then I will be fighting to lower that flag again" (Haider). If the state of Palestine does not encompass the justice and democracy people should adhere to, and instead becomes another oppressive authority, then Palestinians need to fight to lower the flag again. Suleiman questions the right for Palestinians to raise their flag in the film, specifically with his depiction of violence.

Illustrating the violence attempted by Palestinians in order to establish a state allows Palestinians to gain a self-awareness of the colonialist nostalgia. Suleiman explains, “I’d say that there’s something quite Jewish about being Palestinian. Really, I would. I’m willing to bear intense moments of melancholy because I dream about that one place, the loss of Palestine” (Samare). Jews were once in the same situation as Palestinians are now, longing for a homeland to return to, making the struggles similar in theory. This self-realization is presented so there is no repeat of history, but also to critique Palestinian nationalism. Being pro-Palestinian should be about positively constructing the spaces around the state, and offering an all-accepting statehood. Dominant nationalism only obscures empathy, thus falling into the cycle of oppressive governments. Suleiman, then, asks these questions through his film, before opening discussion on what will happen after the revolution.

The question of narrative or counter-narrative seems most important when linked to the role it plays in keeping up or dismantling oppression. That oppression can, as we have seen in the examples given, come from within nationalist discourse itself whether they are Zionist or Palestinian-nationalist. Counter-narratives in cinema and broader discourses, then, play the crucial role of forming and performing a narrative not tied to the cycle of oppression. It does not fight the proverbial fire by creating *another* fire; it’s an attempt to restart the conversation entirely anew, consciously stepping outside of the nationalist-counter nationalist circle. While we see that the Palestinian people need a break from that oppression, that break cannot come at the expense of building a cinematic (or other) narrative that is linked to that vicious cycle, and needs to start on its own terms. This new counter-narrative brings a new hope by stepping aside from that cycle, and starting its own cycle with its own voice.

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