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**Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**The Concept of the "Self" and the "Other" in the  
New Palestinian Cinema**

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**This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for master's degree in Intercultural  
Communication and Literature.**

**December 2021**

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## Declaration

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referred, is the researcher's own work and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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## **Dedication**

To the family,

Tara and Yassar.

## **Acknowledgment**

My thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of many people. Many thanks to Dr. Nedal, my supervisor, who read over all of my modifications and helped me make sense of them all. Thanks also to the members of the committee Dr. Raed Abubadawia and Dr. Osama Abu Baha who provided direction and support.

Thanks to the Arab American University and the Graduate College for providing me with all of the resources I needed to complete my thesis. Finally, I'd like to express my gratitude to my husband, family, and friends for their support and love throughout this long process.

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the concepts of the "self" and the "other" in new Palestinian films, in particular, those films produced between 2009 and 2019, in order to understand the Palestinian narrative about the self-other binary. Also, it highlights the changes that occurred in the concept of the self and the other, taking into consideration the socio-political transformations that took place during the past two decades.

The study sample included six Palestinian films that had a significant impact after the 2000 Second Intifada. The study tried to answer several questions, the most important of which was: how prominent are the concepts of self and other in new Palestinian cinema, and what distinguishes each representation?

The study adopted the content analysis methodology. On the one hand, the researcher developed a coding instrument, relying on the unity of the personality. Accordingly, she reviewed various elements of the sample films in terms of the characters' demographic and individual characteristics as well as values. On the other hand, the researcher relied on the unity of the scene, using the critical analysis method to link the statistical figures to each film component as well as the director's vision, background, and production finance.

The study found that the concepts of self and other were shown to be very prevalent in the Palestinian new film. Moreover, new horizons for dealing with the Palestinian character (the self) have opened up, whilst representations of the other have remained stuck in tradition by neglecting the Israeli character. The study discovered that self-representations, like any other personality, had good and negative features, with negative traits dominating the other-representations.

The study recommended that, in view of the field's rapid expansion, new issues in Palestinian cinema be researched and linked to conceptions of identity, political and social change. Also,

directors should be more conscious of how they portray "the self" and "the other" while creating cinematic works, because they reflect the Palestinian people's collective narrative and influence their orientation in some way.

# **1. Chapter One: Introduction and Theoretical Background**

## **1.1. Introduction**

The Nakba (1948), which resulted in the displacement of Palestinians and the loss of their homeland, left an indelible mark on the new Palestinian consciousness. For more than 70 years, the historical injustice that has befallen the Palestinian people has sparked intellect and creativity in affirming, explaining, and protecting Palestinian identity in the face of the Zionist "other" and its project. This Nakba is predicated on forcibly uprooting people from their land and replacing them with groups of "settlers" from all over the world, which did not stop at land seizure, but went much further by plundering the Palestinian people's heritage and culture.

The Palestinians' dilemma of identity began to alarm them as the existential conflict began. Because people do not realize the significance of their identity until they are confronted with the other in a crisis. Then they return to their original components, which give them a sense of self, namely their uniqueness and distinction from others. Regardless of the difficulties, they feel compelled to preserve their identity. The more a person clings to their identity, the more severe the struggle with the "other" becomes.

Perhaps one of the most capable arts in expressing the problem of the self and the other is cinema, which allows the self's voice to communicate what is burning deep inside of anxieties, pain, and thoughts. It then criticizes both the "self" and the "other". This permits researchers to investigate the problematic nature of the self-other relationship. It has the potential to lead the recipient down the path of comprehending the self and the other in tandem, allowing us to embody our thoughts, feelings, and dreams while also presenting the self's challenges in the face of the other.

Identity distinguishes a person from others, determines his personality and traits, and has an impact on the group because it is essential to the individual. As a result, we cannot separate the "self" from the "we" since identity engenders an instinctual sense of belonging to and identification with the group.

Due to the political and military struggle, the problem of the Palestinian Arab "self" with the Zionist other has become obvious. Thus, without the confrontation with the other, who provides "self" with complex dimensions and makes it more accessible to the world, the characteristics of identity are unclear.

Over the course of the conflict, the Palestinians used the media and the arts, including cinema, to elevate the importance of resistance while treating the concept of the other in a stereotyped manner, while the worldwide Zionist media attempted to systematically deprive the Palestinians of their humanity and identity.

For a long time, the Palestinians were unable to construct a credible counter-narrative to the dominant Israeli narrative in the international media, despite the fact that it is based on fake "facts" and religious myths. According to (Manna, 1999; Al-Khalidi, 2007), the Palestinian narrative's weaknesses stem from the context surrounding the emergence of the Zionist movement and its relationship with the British Mandate, as well as the victor's history with the defeated. According to Salim Tamari (2020), the situation has changed lately when a wave of new historical research emerged, relying on a new methodology that relies on extrapolating the collective memory of the revolution.

Furthermore, by conveying a compelling Palestinian narrative, the new wave of Palestinian cinema contributes to bridging the gap. One of the most important new wave directors, Michel Khleifi, for example, describes his motive for working in film: "I believe

that an identity needs to be narrated" (Dabashi, 2016, P.49). Furthermore, Edward Saied states that "Palestinian cinema must be understood in this context." That is to say, Palestinians stand against invisibility, which is the fate they have resisted since the beginning; and on the other hand, they stand against the stereotype in the media: the masked Arab, the kufiyya, the stone-throwing Palestinian – a visual identity associated with terrorism and violence" (2016. P.3).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Like other national cinemas, Palestinian cinema contributes to the formation of national identity and reflects the collective narrative. As a result, it's critical to know what kind of narrative and identity Palestinian cinema reflects and forms. In fact, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is more than a political or military struggle; it is also a narrative-identity battle, which the study attempts to comprehend by examining how films portray the self and the other, as well as the relationship between them, in particular, those films which were produced in 2009.

Many intercultural societies have evolved around the world at a time when pluralism, acceptance of difference, and openness to the other are the dominant discourses. In Palestine, the question of the self and the other is critical, as it is a unique case after the end of the world's classic colonialism paradigm in the 1960s. In Palestine, the other (the colonizer) has an impact on the simplest aspects of the self's daily life. The fact that the political process between the PLO and Israel, which began in the early 1990s, failed to produce a political outcome on the ground or a shift in perceptions among the two peoples, meant that the self and the other concepts remained a dilemma. Might the one claim that, amid accusations against intellectuals of cultural normalization with Israel, it is sometimes dangerous to address the other outside of the mainstream.

Furthermore, in the midst of all of the political, economic, and social changes that took place in the early years of the 3rd century, it is critical to understand how Palestinians came to define the "self" as well as the "other," who is perceived as both a colonizer and a peace partner simultaneously.

### **1.3. Aim and Objectives**

The study provides a better understanding of how Palestinian identity is depicted in new Palestinian cinema. The overall aim of the study is to comprehend the concept of the "self" and "other" representations. The objectives of the study can be defined as follows:

- Determining the extent to which the concepts of self and other are present in new Palestinian cinema.
- Recognizing the characteristics of the self and other representations as a challenge in new Palestinian films.
- Understanding the national connotations of self-representations and the moral implications of other-representations.
- Grasping the self-other relationship as it is represented in films.
- Recognizing the impact of political changes on these representations.
- Determining if there is a difference in how directors perceive the self and the other based on their background as well as the funding parties.

### **1.4. Questions of the Study**

The study investigates the concept of self and the other in the new Palestinian cinema. It tries to understand how these films represent the Palestinian self and the other (the Israeli). More specifically, the following research questions need to be addressed:

- To what extent does the concept of self and other appear in the new Palestinian cinema?
- What are the characteristics of the self and other representations in new Palestinian cinema, in terms of demographic and individual aspects?
- What are the national implications of self-representation, and what are the moral implications of other-representation?
- What is the concept self-other relationships?
- How do political changes contribute to changing these representations?
- What are the national implications of self-representation, and what are the moral implications of other-representation?
- Is there a difference in the directors' perceptions of the concept of self and the other based on their background and funding sources?

### **1.5 Hypotheses of the Study**

The study assumes that understanding how Palestinian cinema interacts with the concepts of self and other requires placing it in a historical context and defining the dialectical connection between cinema and politics. Thus, by demonstrating how film became involved in the Palestinian revolution's early struggles, as well as current aspirations to achieve independence in a reality where politics permeates all aspects of life. The following are the study hypotheses in this context:

- The concept of self and other is very present in new Palestinian cinema and plays an important role, regardless of the films' topics.

- As a result of political changes and other reasons, the portrayal of the self and the other is getting more complicated in terms of the characteristics of the representations, and this also relates to the relationship with the other.
- Directors' perceptions of the self and others vary significantly based on their background and funding sources.

### **1.6. Rationale and Significance of the Study**

Palestinian cultural production such as literature, music, and cinema contributed to strengthening the Palestinian national struggle and highlighting its narrative during the years of the conflict. As Edward Said states, "In its attempts to articulate a national narrative, Palestinian cinema discovers a world that has been frequently hidden, and making it visible, sometimes in very subtle and eloquent ways, as in the cinema of Elia Sulaiman, or in folkloric ways in the later films of Michel Khleifi, is very exciting indeed" (Dabashi, 2006, P.5).

The significance of studying representations of the self-and-other duality in new Palestinian cinema is that it reflects the cultural perspective in its critique or promotion of the Palestinian narrative. This significance grows in light of the breakthrough that Palestinian cinema has made in terms of quality and quantity of films produced, as well as regional and international acclaim.

The importance of researching this topic also stems from the need to contribute to cinematic research, as there are few reliable scientific studies on Palestinian cinema, especially in light of recent political events.

The researcher expects that this study will call filmmakers' attention to, and encourage them to more intentionally focus on, representations of self and other in their films, as

they alter the audience's perception of identity in one way or another. The researcher also believes that by conducting this research, more researchers may be inspired to investigate other areas of Palestinian cinema.

This study is also important for focusing on female cinematic models, as three of the films examined in this study were directed by women. It also concentrated on the production of films in the besieged Gaza Strip, studying one of them and demonstrating the conditions under which it was produced.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

At a time when there are many studies looking at “self” and “other” representations in Palestinian and Arab literature and poetry, there are few studies looking at the same topic in cinema or dealing with the concepts of identity and narrative in the new Palestinian cinema with an approach that takes into account changing political connotations. In fact, the majority of cinematic studies in Palestine focus only on Palestinian cinema's evolution and use as a resistance instrument. Furthermore, the new films are not available on the Internet and are difficult to obtain through Palestinian cultural institutions.

There is a time pressure because this study was completed in less than a year. As well as the thematic constraints, the researcher is unable to delve further into other identity components or cinematic components because this study focuses almost completely on the concept of self and other in Palestinian cinema.

### **1.8. Operational Definitions:**

*The concept of the self and the other:* Human beings, whether individuals or groups, develop, adopt, and relate to themselves through the concept of the self. Individuals

believe in a set of physical, psychological, and social traits, as well as cultural aspects such as values, objectives, and abilities, which make up this conceptual pattern. The other is the one that is different from you in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity, or intellectual affinity, and their presence is essential for self-awareness and distinction. In this study, the self is the Palestinian people, while the other is the Israeli, who is the polar opposite of the Palestinian self, and whose political, social, geographical, and cultural circumstances force the two parties to interact.

*The Palestinian Cinema:* all Palestinian cinematic productions that have reflected their national and social concerns, as well as all documentary and feature films created since the 1930s. Palestinian cinema has never been constrained by the director's or financier's location or nationality. Ibrahim (2007) believes the commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people to be the most essential element of Palestinian cinema in his definition.

*New Palestinian Cinema:* It is the new wave of films produced after the decline of the Palestinian armed revolution movement. Many scholars feel that Michel Khalifa's film "The Wedding of Galilee" (1987), which signified a turning point in Palestinian cinema's vision and established a new cinematic age in terms of form and content, was the start of this cinema.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter established the study's theoretical basis. It explains that the aim is to have a better understanding of how Palestinian identity is portrayed in new Palestinian cinema by examining self and other representations. It identified several research questions, the most important of which are as follows: To what extent does the concept of self and other exist in the new Palestinian film, and what are the characteristics of them? Additionally,

the research suggested a number of hypotheses, including the following: The concept of the self and the other appears prominently in new Palestinian cinema, and the portrayal of the self and the other is becoming increasingly complicated in terms of representational characteristics and interaction with the other as a result of political changes and other factors.

The significance of the study, according to this chapter, is that the representations of the self and the other reflect the cultural perspective in its criticism or promotion of the Palestinian narrative. This significance grows in light of Palestinian cinema's recent breakthroughs in terms of quality and quantity of films produced, as well as regional and international recognition. This chapter also discusses the limitations that the researcher has in terms of time, subject, and resources. The essential definitions of research, such as the concept of the self and the other, Palestinian cinema, and the new Palestinian cinema, were also presented in this chapter.

## 2. Chapter Two: Literature Review and Related Literature

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of three sections: The researcher discusses the origin and development of the concept of “the self” and “the other” in its theoretical framework in the first section, as well as how various theories have benefited and employed it. The researcher also presents readings from the most well-known literature on two topics in the second section: the history and development of Palestinian cinema, and the socio-political developments that the Palestinian people have experienced since the Oslo Accords until today. This is to relate cinema as an artistic field to the socio-political context. In the third section, the researcher provides a reading of eight studies, Palestinian, Arab, and foreign, that dealt with or approached the research topic. Following that, in the conclusion, the researcher discusses how the readings assisted the study, the connections between them, and what the study will contribute to the topic.

### 2.2. Theoretical Background: The Concepts of Self and the Other

In ordinary German, "ich: I" is the first person singular pronoun and contrasts with: you, he, etc. But it can also form a substantive, the “I, self, ego,” and then refers to a person's individuality or “ego” in contrast to the non-ego (Inwood, 1992, P.129). “The self”, according to the Cambridge dictionary (2011), is a noun that refers to a person's collection of traits, such as personality and aptitude, while the other is a determiner that is distinct from the thing or person already mentioned. Moreover, Alraed Arabic Dictionary (جبران, 1965) defines (الذات) the self of the human as its: essence, core, substance and an aspect of personality that is capable of deduction (P.370), while (الأخر) Is the other, different, last (P.33).

According to *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* (Bunnin, 2009), the self is "a unity that integrates all experiences, beliefs, and feelings of an individual and enables an individual to have an identity as the same person at different times" (P.627). The other, according to the same source, deals with "problems of separation, opposition, and alienation." Also, "In broader cultural terms, death, madness, and the unconscious have been called the "other" because they fall outside the model of rational self-awareness" (P.496).

The relationship between the self and the other, on the other hand, brings attention to the topic of a person's awareness of other personalities, which is also investigated in analytical philosophy. In his book "Totality and Infinity," Levinas (1979) explains the relationship between the self and the other as follows: "The absolutely other is the other." He and I do not form a number. The collectivity in which I say "you" or "we" is not a plural of "I" (P.39).

According to Arab thinkers, the conscious "self" is something behind the body; it denotes a true, fixed essence that bears the symptoms that generate the real feelings, junctions of feelings, emotions, and thoughts, according to Avicenna (Saliba, 1982). While "the Other" refers to everything outside or independent of the conscious self, everything that exists outside the perceived self is referred to as the one outside the self, not I or the other (P.131).

Sigmund Freud was a prominent theorist who studied the psychological idea of the self-ego. According to Freud's theory, personality is generated through conflicts between three basic elements of the human mind: the id, ego, and superego. He claims that the self

evolved from the interaction between the hobby's biological and instinctive impulses and the higher ego's evaluative parental and cultural ego (Freud, 1923, P. 25).

William James (1890) claims in his book "The Principles of Psychology" that a child's self-awareness develops gradually during his early years and grows as a result of language and social contact. James attempts to comprehend the self-concept by distinguishing between four components of the self: the material self, which consists of tangible characteristics; the spiritual self, which includes psychological characteristics and tendencies; the social self, which consists of what others perceive the individual and varies depending on the groups with which the individual is associated; and the pure ego, which consists of the ideas that form an individual's sense of personal identity (P.83).

In addition, American sociologist George Herbert Mead views the emergence of the self as a wholly social process, stating that "the self, as that which can be an object to itself, is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience" (1934, P.140). He asserts that the development of the self occurs through a series of social interactions in which the child goes through three stages: the preparatory stage, in which the child begins to imitate the behavior of others, the play stage, in which the child begins to play the adult role; and the game stage, in which the child emerges as a unified self capable of responding to the directions of the members of the group to which he belongs (P.192). The formulation of the social self, according to Mead, is the result of this three-stage process, which consists of two main elements: "I am subject," which is the individual's response to others' attitudes, and "I am object," which is the social trends that the individual learns during the socialization process (1934). As a result, Mead prioritizes social consciousness over individual awareness. To become 'conscious,' one must first

engage in various social situations within society, and then use that experience to adopt the perspective of others.

According to Anna Andrinkova (2008), the concept of the other is formed in an individual's consciousness later than the concept of self or we. As a result, his or her comprehension and perception of it is delayed because it is formed through daily experience as well as the culture and education that prevails (we) towards the other (them). The individual's desire to establish a dichotomy between us and them is realized once the image of the other is created (P.157). This is something James Mark Baldwin (1906) agrees with: "The ego and the alter are thus born together" (P.321). According to him, the concept of self is not intrinsic, but rather develops over time as part of a social process that includes both the self and the other.

"There is no I as such," Buber writes in his book (I and Thou), "but simply the I of the basic term I-You and the I of the basic word I-It" (2012). Buber investigates the complicated perspective of man's existence through the philosophical binary "I-you." A human is always interacting with the environment in numerous ways. As a result, "I-you" is the interaction that validates what is mutual and holistic between two beings; it is a pragmatic method that begins with the reality that beings meet in their actual and objective existence without any prior preparation.

However, despite attempting to deconstruct metropolitan culture and patriarchal beliefs, the concepts of the self and the other have been adopted in post-colonial and feminist theories. From a gender perspective, "Humanity is male, and a man defines a woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being." writes French feminist and social thinker Simone De Beauvoir on the self/other duality.

According to De Beauvoir (1952), the female is defined and distinguished in relation to the man rather than in relation to herself; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. She continues, "He is the Absolute; he is the Subject; she is the other" (P.15).

Furthermore, postcolonial philosophers view the construction of the western knowledge system about the colonized as being dependent on power relations inside colonial regimes' societies. The colonialist defined the "other" as non-modern, undemocratic, barbaric, and other characteristics that contradicted his societal values; that is, to consider his colonial act as an act of enlightenment towards the indigenous population. But, at its core, to justify colonialism and the exploitation of the resources and wealth of the colonial countries, "One can have no more doubt that the genuine other of the white man is and will continue to be the black man once one has comprehended the process described by Lacan," Fanon (1986:161) says, "once one has comprehended the process described by Lacan. "Only the white man, on the other hand, perceives the other as the not-self — that is, the unidentified, inassimilable — on the level of body image."

Fanon (1986: 146) employs a binary opposition approach to comprehend self-other notions. The seeming polarity between civilized and savage has legitimized colonizer power structures favouring "civilized white men," according to this distinction between two entirely opposing concepts. This leads to Fanon's concept of otherness, which divides the universe into two opposed and different parts: the logical, ordered, and masculine self, and the bad, irrational, and feminine other. In his book "Orientalism," Edward Said portrays the West's perception of the East as "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different"; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, "normal." (1979, P.40)

According to many Palestinian academics, the Palestinian understanding of the other is distinct from that of any other country (Taha, 2006, Al-Eileh, 2007, and Darawsheh, 2016). The other in Palestine, according to them, is the enemy "the Zionist Israeli Jew" Furthermore, the other here is not merely a notion, or an industrial or cultural product," Taha explains. Rather, it can be found in a vanishing settlement project... the other in Palestine is terrible, loud, powerful, and dominant (2006. 13). He goes on to say that the Oslo Agreements attempted to change the image of the "colonizer" into that of a "partner," and the "enemy" into a "friend". Taha, on the other hand, claims that the concept of the other existed in the folds of Palestinian cultural production before the emergence of Israel, with strong clarity, and without the literal existence of the term "other" in the context of the historical existence of foreign invasions of Palestine, the Crusades in the Middle Ages, British colonialism in 1917, and the emergence of Zionism.

## **2.3 Literature Review**

This section reviews the literature related to the study topic. It is divided into two parts: The first part examines the origins and progress of Palestinian cinema, emphasizing its significance and relationship with the Palestinian revolution, as well as its impact on politics and influence on it. The second part focuses on the political developments that the Palestinian people have faced in the years following the start of the peace process, as well as its consequences for both the Palestinian people's economic and social aspects.

### **2.3.1 Palestinian Cinema... The Emergence and Development**

According to George Khalifa (2014:18), the first Palestinian film was directed by Ibrahim Hassan Sarhan in 1935 and documented the arrival of Prince Saud bin Abdul Aziz, who later became King Saud. Sarhan's production company was thereafter registered in Jaffa as "Studio Filastin," and it went on to make several films before 1948. However, according to Adnan Madanat (1992:186), the first filmmaker in Palestine was Saleh Al-Kilani, who directed several documentaries in the 1930s in response to Zionist propaganda about Palestine, but his films were never widely distributed due to British restrictions on Palestinian artistic and cultural activities.

However, there were some pre-Nakba Palestinian cinematic experiences that did not amount to a distinct cinematic movement. On a collective and individual level, the Palestinians experienced the trauma of the catastrophe and the misery of refugee status after Al-Nakba and until 1967. As a result, there was no significant film production during this time period.

According to many historians, the Palestinian revolution marked the true start of Palestinian cinema. Sulaf Jadallah, the first graduate of Cairo's Higher Institute of

Cinema, worked in the Fateh Movement's modest photographic division, which opened at the end of 1967. In 1969, this department was renamed the "Palestine Film Unit," and it launched a small film project to document the revolution's struggles (1987: 86 العودات). After 1970, other Palestinian factions, such as the PFLP, became interested in forming video production units to explain the revolution, its goals and strategy, and the legitimacy of the armed struggle (63).

Mostafa Abu Ali and Hassan Abu Ghanima, the founders of "The Palestinian Cinema Group," said in a 1972 interview: "The duty of revolution any cinema is to incite the masses and encourage them to continue sacrifice and steadfastness, and to provide them with the political culture necessary to continue that struggle with faith and confidence in the inevitable victory, and to expose the enemies of the just cause." "Every film that weakens the will of the popular masses and doubts their chances of victory, or contains reactionary principles, or praises imperialist goals, is an anti-revolution film," (Shmet, 1973:33)

During the Beirut era, cinema was seen as a revolutionary tool. The goals of cinema in this era, according to Khalifa (2014:22), are to document the Palestinian people's struggle, to reclaim their rights, to convey the revolution's positions to the world and explain them, to document the Palestinian people's daily reality, and to contribute to the mobilization of Palestinians to engage in the revolutionary project, as well as to spread the new image of the Palestinian people.

On one hand, Al-Awdat (1987:68) argues that revolution films dealt with the issues superficially, i.e., conveying reality's voice without delving too deeply into or analyzing it. On the other hand, he describes how the revolution's cinema experienced difficulties

such as the lack of a strategy and clear goals because it was the cinema of a people without a state and without land; the gap in priorities and daily policies among Palestinian factions; the nature of the PLO's relationship with Arab regimes, which limited freedom of expression; and the fact that the filmmakers were unable to unite their efforts in a single institution that combines their human, artistic, and financial capabilities (74).

With the demise of the PLO and its institutions at various levels in the late 1980s, a number of independent filmmakers began to show their cinematic works, which were well received internationally and seemed to be a restoration of the innovative Palestinian cultural role. According to Anan Barakat, the new cinema began in 1980 with Michel Khleifi's film "Fertile Memory," which merged documentary and dramatic elements. He says Khalifa stands out because he "creates a new independent Palestinian movie that emphasizes the human side of the cause rather than the cause in its entirety" (2013.18).

One of the factors that paved the way for the emergence of a new cinema, according to Bashar Ibrahim (2007), was the emergence of a new generation of Palestinian filmmakers who were familiar with and participated in cinematic experiences all over the world. As well as the ability to access funding from European and American producers. This occurred concurrently with the transfer of political power (the PLO's leadership) to Palestinian territory, and it reached a pinnacle in the 87th year of the first intifada (20).

Several of the new wave's distinguishing features, according to critics, are its avoidance of slogans, political sermons, allegations, direct analyses, and the tyranny of ideology, as it was more intelligent in expressing Palestinians and their cause, as well as its ability to address and reformulate international public opinion.

Jahjouh (2018) feels that Palestinian cinema prospered during the Oslo Accords' period of peace and when the Palestinian Authority was in charge. From 1994 to 2001, he counted over a hundred films made in less than seven years (68). However, by the third millennium and the outbreak of the Aqsa Intifada, during which the occupation used various forms of terror against the Palestinian people, Palestinian film had reached a significant and historical turning point. The Palestinian cinema reacted to these crimes by undergoing a constructive revolution in producing films about the intifada and the occupation's misdeeds (70).

In addition, a new Palestinian cinema with a unique style emerged in a limited form, namely the Islamic Resistance Cinema, which is represented by the Hamas Movement. Al-Aqsa TV Channel has produced around 10 films in the last few years, including *Imad Aqel* by Majed Jundeyyeh, which we will cover in this thesis. These films are distinguished by their conservative style and the fact that they tell the stories of "Hamas" resistance members.

### **2.3.2 Palestine: Between “Oslo” and Today**

The world celebrated Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin's historic handshake at the White House 27 years ago. The signing of the Oslo Accords (1993-1995) was hailed by the international community as a historic moment in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a move toward a new era of Middle East peace. The Palestinians, on the other hand, were divided on these agreements. Many Palestinian academics condemned the Palestinian leadership's policies and warned of the dire consequences of the agreement for the Palestinian cause.

For example, Edward Said referred to the Declaration of Principles as a Palestinian surrender instrument or a Palestinian Versailles. "The primary consideration in the document is for Israel's security, with none for the Palestinians' security from Israel's incursions," he said (Said, 1993). Furthermore, many Palestinian factions have rejected the accords even some that are affiliated with the PLO, with the largest opposition coming from the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), a party that has grown in popularity during the Intifada.

The Israeli-Palestinian negotiations concluded in an interim agreement, deferring the fundamental issues (such as boundaries, refugees, and Jerusalem) until the permanent status negotiations, which were set to begin in May 1996. The permanent status was expected to result in the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338<sup>1</sup>. Over the course of five years of agreements, the Palestinians wanted political efforts to lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. However, the accords did not guarantee Palestinians' right to self-determination on their territory or the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) agreed to put an end to the intifada and reject violence and terrorism. In addition, through a letter of mutual recognition, the PLO recognized Israel and its right to exist in peace and security, whilst Israel merely recognized the PLO as the Palestinian people's representative.

However, with the signing of the Declaration of Principles (Oslo I) in 1993, the Palestinian leadership began establishing the Palestinian Authority while also beginning

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<sup>1</sup> Look at (the declaration of principles) Retrieved from:  
<http://www.acpr.org.il/publications/books/43-Zero-oslo-accord.pdf>

the discussions that led to the Interim Agreement (Oslo II) in 1995. As a result, Israel began withdrawing its forces from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. In addition, Arafat and tens of thousands of Palestinians from the Diaspora were allowed to return to their country.

The PLO leadership's return to the homeland ushered in a new chapter in Palestinian history. The first elections were held in 1996, despite Hamas, the PFLP, and the DFLP boycotting them as a sign of their rejection of the peace process. Arafat was elected as the first president, and the Legislative Council was established with a Fatah majority. According to Ali Jarbawi, the Palestinian political legacy has been tied to "a dominant and charismatic leadership figure with complete monopoly and applied to the Palestinian decision-making process," as well as a "structured patriarchal system" created by the Oslo Accords (1999.26-52).

In addition, a new political élite arose, consisting of returning leaders, the monopoly élite, and high-ranking officials in the military and civilian structures. "This elite was defined by its political and economic dependence on Israel," and as a result, it was a "soft negotiator with it," Khatib writes (2007.212). Bishara believes that this political elite's primary concern is how to keep the peace process going under any circumstances in order to pursue personal interests, and that privileges may become a source of pressure on them during the process (1998.220).

The reality on the ground during the transition era was in direct opposition to the Palestinian dream of independence. Even after the establishment of the PA, Israel has continued to control the fate of Palestinians by pursuing policies that create new realities. For example, Israel maintained the permission system that had been in place to control

Palestinian movement during the previous decade, as well as practices of confiscating land and demolishing Palestinian homes.

On the economic level, the Oslo Accords fell short of the Palestinians' expectations. The Protocol on Economic Relations (Paris Protocol), which was signed in Paris on April 29, 1994 and became an annex to the Oslo 11, governed the new economic reality. Many Palestinian economists felt that the agreement maintained Palestinian economic dependence on Israel and that its conditions benefited Israeli interests. Furthermore, integrating the weak Palestinian economy with the powerful Israeli economy resulted in unequal trade and economic linkages, making economic development in the Palestinian territories extremely difficult. As a result, "the Palestinian GOP dropped by 24% in 1997 compared to 1993, Palestinian purchasing power fell, and many fell below the poverty line—some 30% of the population," Shtayyeh said. Furthermore, the unemployment rate has risen to 32% (1999.18).

Many violent events occurred between 1994 and 1999, including the murder of 29 Palestinian worshipers in Al-haram Al-Ibrahimi in Hebron by a Jewish extremist, and the events of the tunnel uprising in 1996, when the Israeli army killed around 100 Palestinians in response to their protests against the excavations beneath Al-Aqsa mosque. Furthermore, many Israeli citizens have been killed as a result of suicide bombings carried out by Palestinian forces opposed to the Oslo Accords, particularly Hamas.

Through American mediation, the Camp David Summit in 2000 failed to reach a permanent status agreement between Palestinians and Israelis. Arafat, who was blamed for the failure of the summit, was unable to accept the American-Israeli plan, which

included unfavorable terms for Palestinians. According to the Palestinian narrative about Camp David, Arafat was pressured to make concessions that would end Palestinian resistance to occupation without achieving the Palestinian people's rights to establish a sovereign state on the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as the right of return and compensation for millions of Palestinians (سوید, 2002).

It was common to hear that "Oslo" had collapsed a few years after the agreement was signed. Many academics looked at the causes for the peace process' failure. One of the key factors of the process' failure, according to Al-Khatib, was the structure of the process and its impact on the leadership's behavior. He goes on to say that the open-ended character of the process, the ambiguity of the terms of reference, constraints on Palestinian representation, and the sponsor's partial role all contributed to the Palestinian leadership's weakness and poor performance in negotiations (238).

The Second Intifada erupted two weeks after the defeat of Camp David. The direct cause was Sharon's visit to Al-Haram al-Sharif on September 28, 2000, and the violent repression of protesters, but it was also an expression of Palestinian frustration with the failure of the peace process and Israel's disregard for their basic rights, such as freedom of movement, security, and development. Unlike the first Intifada, which was characterized by unarmed protests, the second Intifada was marked by the escalation of military attacks between Palestinian factions and the Israeli army.

Military invasions into Palestinian cities occurred during the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed. The second intifada killed 4,412 Palestinians and

1,100 Israelis, including 300 soldiers, according to official Palestinian and Israeli data<sup>2</sup>. In addition, Israel assassinated and detained a number of Palestinians, including political and military figures such as Yassin, Rantissi, Saadat, and Barghouthi. Furthermore, in March 2002, Israel imposed a three-year blockade on Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at the Palestinian presidential headquarters in Ramallah, which lasted until his death on November 11, 2004.

Nonetheless, Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, ended the second Intifada in 2005. When he negotiated an agreement with Sharon at the Sharm al-Shaikh summit to discontinue all acts of violence against all Israelis, and in turn, Israel would cease all military activities against all Palestinians everywhere. According to Jarbawi, Abbas tried to rally internal support for ending the armed intifada and lobby for exterior concessions in order to gain popular support (2007). Furthermore, Abbas attempted to put an end to all forms of armed resistance to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory.

Sharon made unilateral efforts to withdraw from the Gaza Strip in 2005, evacuating roughly 8,000 settlers and dismantling all settlements. In contrast, settlement growth has been rapid in the West Bank. However, some may argue that Sharon's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, carried out without consultation with the Palestinian Authority, created a vacuum in Gaza, allowing Hamas to gain power and control of the entire Gaza Strip later on, especially in light of the political process' failure (Shtayyeh, 2016.77).

In 2006, a Palestinian-Palestinian conflict erupted following Hamas' victory in legislative elections, resulting in a political crisis linked to hurdles to a smooth power transition.

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<sup>2</sup> Look at: (The second Intifada). Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2003/12/20084101554875168.html>

Bloody events broke out between the two sides in the Palestinian territories in July 2007, with tens of people murdered before Hamas militarily took control of the Gaza Strip. This situation resulted in the establishment of two political and executive authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Despite dozens of discussions to establish an agreement, the actual divide between the West Bank and Gaza has grown at the political, legal, and social levels.

Israel conducted four wars against the Gaza Strip between 2008 and 2021, killing thousands of Palestinians and destroying Gaza's infrastructure. However, Palestinian resistance forces in Gaza have been able to improve their military capabilities in order to inflict harsh blows on the Israeli army throughout the years<sup>3</sup>.

Following the events of the Palestinian divide, the PA resumed negotiations with Israel on final-status issues at the Annapolis conference in November 2007, which further undermined the PA's position. The Palestinians entered the talks without adhering to their own demand that Israel cease settlement construction. Following the "Arab Spring" in 2013, the Palestinians decided to reopen negotiations with Israel on final status issues, which lasted nine months but yielded no results.

The Trump Administration of the United States recognized Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital in late 2017 and relocated the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The Palestinians saw this as a setback to the peace process. Especially after Trump's "Deal of

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<sup>3</sup> Look at: The confrontation of the three days, Resistance develops and draws deliberate blows. (2018, November 14). Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2018/11/14/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AB%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D8%B6%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%A9>

the Century" peace plan, which ruled out the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state based on the 1967 lines, was presented at the start of 2020. To make matters worse, Israel's relations with four Arab countries have been normalized.

The majority of Palestinians believe that the two-state solution is no longer realistic. According to a Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research study conducted in December 2016, 65 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip believe the two-state solution has failed<sup>4</sup>. Because they dread the alternative, the Palestinian National Authority, most Arab states, and the international community cling to this approach

In a distinct context, the Palestinian collective identity evolved throughout the last century as a result of political, economic, and social changes. These changes have impacted many parts of the Palestinian people, including the West Bank, Gaza, Palestine in 1948, and the Diaspora. The separation of local, national, religious, and universal identities in Palestinian society is the result of a number of factors, including geographical and social space, the fragility of national identity, the lack of a social project that eliminates regional and ethnic differentiation, the unprecedented crisis in the Palestinian national project, stereotypes held by other social groups about one another, and the colonial legal framework (Al-Sakka, 2017).

The significant deterioration in Palestinians' economic and political fortunes following the Oslo Accords reflects how they see themselves. Mi'ari conducted five surveys between 1994 and 2006 for his study "Transformation of Collective Identity in Palestine" to assess the influence of the Oslo Accords on Palestinian collective identity in the West

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<sup>4</sup> Look at: 62- نتائج استطلاع الرأي العام رقم - | PCPSR (2018, December 10). Retrieved from: <https://www.pcpsr.org/ar/node/677>

Bank and Gaza Strip. He concluded that the Palestinian identity has remained the most important identity since the foundation of the PA. However, due to the growth of traditional identities, particularly religious and clan affiliations, it has lost some of its power. The worsening of socioeconomic conditions, the failure of the political peace process, and the issue of corruption within the Palestinian Authority have all contributed to Hamas' increasing popularity and the deepening of Muslim identity," he claims. He also mentioned the rise of clan identification as a result of Palestinian parties' weakness and the PA's backing for clan structure (2009).

Majed Kayali believes that the Palestinian national political identity is currently facing a historical challenge, as it is being eroded, atrophying, and fragmenting, as well as undergoing a transformation, due to the lack of a national goal that unites Palestinians in all of their places of existence, as well as the lack of unifying institutions for them and their identity (the PLO, factions, and popular organizations). He argues that the political entity (the PA) lacks the necessary resources to survive because its survival is dependent on forces of control and authority, such as the security force, foreign aid, and Israeli approval, all of which undermine the PA's national credibility. (2012)

The Oslo Accords, on the other hand, have had an impact on Palestinians in Israel. According to Mi'ari, Palestinian identity has waned slightly as Israeli identity has grown, particularly in the early years of Oslo. The fact that the accords neglected them is said to be the basis for this. Mi'ari observed that, like Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinians in Israel have strengthened their traditional identities, particularly clan affiliations (2008).

According to a poll done by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), 37.4% to 59.4% of Palestinians believe they have no representation in the PA, PLO, or political, religious, or secular movements. In addition, 45.5% of Palestinians think the current political situation is poor (2017)<sup>5</sup>. The Palestinians' sense of identity has been harmed by this convoluted circumstance. It also accentuated Israel's image as a colonial force rather than a peace partner.t

However, the political shifts, as well as their social and economic consequences, were reflected in Palestinian cinema. The most significant impact of the political track's launch and the establishment of the National Authority is the diminution of the Liberation Organization's role, which was the sponsor of the revolution's cinema. The Palestinian Authority established institutions such as the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Culture, and Palestine Television, but they showed little interest in cinema. While some see this as a setback for the Palestinian cause, others see it as a step forward for a genuine, free, and creative cinema free of political dictates and national slogans.

#### **2.4. Related Studies**

This chapter consists of three parts based on the geographical distribution of the studies that deal with the concept of the self and the other in cinema and literature. four Palestinian local studies, three Arabic studies, and two foreign studies make up this section.

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<sup>5 5</sup> Look at: (2017) مسح الهوية Retrieved from:  
<https://cbs.birzeit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Arabic-Youth-Survey-2017.pdf>

### 2.4.1 Local Studies

A study on "The Image of the Hero in the New Palestinian Cinema After the Oslo Agreement" was conducted by Karaja (2018). The aim of the study is to find answers to the following questions: In terms of upbringing and composition, what does the hero symbolize in Palestinian cinema? How does the film's identity change as a result of foreign funding? What is the difference between foreign and Arab financing and official Palestinian financing? What is the director's role in the face of this data? The researcher concluded that the image of the hero has undergone a transformation, with different connotations depending on political factors and their social, psychological, and other implications for the Palestinian hero, based on a critical analysis of a sample of 6 Palestinian films produced after the second intifada. According to the researcher, the new generation of Palestinian filmmakers distinguish themselves through their scripts by emphasizing the complexities of Palestinian society through personal experiences that can be applied collectively. And it was through it that the national worry could be seen.

In 2007, al-Eileh published a research titled "The Image of the Self and the Other in the Palestinian Novel in the Occupied Territory after 1967." The objective of the research is to find answers to the following questions: Has the constructed image of the other (the occupation) been surpassed by the imagined image of the other? Is there a degree of untruth and generalization in this image? Was the self-image portrayed in the novel published in the West Bank and Gaza Strip favorable and glorified? Or was it subjected to a complex of self-flagellation, humiliation, and rebuke? The researcher finds that the concept of a solid and pure self, which the resistance chose as an approach to preserving Palestine, has filled a good position in the Palestinian narrative by analyzing 11 Palestinian novels. The Palestinian novel, on the other hand, gave different visions of the

Palestinian self, such as the utilitarian and defeated self, which regarded national effort as an investment project that would give it power and opportunity. The researcher also concluded that the aggressive Jew who targets the Palestinian human being in his rights, culture, and history, reflects the image of the other in the Palestinian novel, which is characterized by racism and bloodshed, and adopts the military machine in occupying Arab land, judaizing it, and settling it.

"The Image of the Other in Palestinian Poetry 1994–2004," by Taha, was published in 2004. This study, according to the researcher, explores the collective "self" discussion that cultural elites express in their discourse with "another" who does not care about them and instead threatens them with murder, expulsion, and fragmentation. Taha tries to respond to the following question: What changes have occurred in the Palestinian poem in terms of the image of the other and the self since the Oslo Accords were signed? Taha used a critical cultural perspective to deconstruct and analyze the literary phenomenon in its creative context, taking into account all historical, social, and psychological approaches. According to Taha's study, the other, which was previously rejected outright, has become ambiguous at the turn of the third millennium, and this has arisen for two reasons: the first is the confusion of the self and its deprecation, and the second is the confusion in dealing with and looking at the other, which has become seized in two places: the opposite or the partner. Nonetheless, Taha believes that the conventional view of the colonizer remained acceptable and prevalent, and that, while the Palestinian poem after "Oslo" was marked by difficult questions in an internal conversation, the image of the other/contrast remained the backdrop for this dialogue.

A study on "The self and the Other in Israeli Literature" was conducted by Darawsheh in 2013. The aim of the study is to find answers to the following questions: What are the

representations of the Israeli and the Palestinian in the modern Israeli novel? Do left-wing writers have a different perspective on the final solution than writers and politicians? The researcher uses discourse analysis theories to examine the content of David Grossman's novel *The Smile of Capricorn*. He concluded that the writer's perspective on Palestinians is similar to that of other Israeli writers and politicians. He still believes that he is descended from a purer race than the Palestinians, and that the solution he is advocating is achieved by the Palestinians giving up more land and dignity until the situation calms down.

To sum up, Palestinian researchers agree that the concept of the Palestinian self has witnessed a remarkable change during the past years, according to political and social changes. As well, the Palestinian self is often dealt with as an ordinary human being with its strengths and weaknesses. However, when it comes to the concept of the other, the colonizer's stereotyped view remained acceptable and prevalent. The other is still the aggressive Jew who opposes Palestinian rights. On the other hand, the Israeli view of the Palestinian remains the same as the traditional view of racial superiority.

#### **2.4.2 Arab Studies**

Because it was difficult for the researcher to discover Arab studies that discussed identity concepts in Arab film, she decided to focus on studies that investigated the concept of self and other in Arabic literature. The researcher focuses on 3 studies that are connected and span a wide spectrum of Arab novelists.

A study of "The Image of Jews and Arabs in the Arabic Novel" was conducted by Abu Hnaish (2021). The purpose of the study is to find out the following: What are the present reasons for the rise in Jewish-related writing? What is the point of returning to earlier

stages of the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to write about them? Is the public perception of Jews changing? What patterns can be seen in the image's transformations? Did the Arab novelists include Jews in their stories as a part of the Arab fabric? On the other hand, what picture of the Arab self do Arab novelists have in their works? In the mirrors of each other and of the other, how did the images of the Jew and the Arab look? Through a critical analysis of 11 well-known Arab novels set in two historical periods: before and after the Arab-Israeli conflict, and distributed geographically: inside and outside occupied Palestine, the researcher came to the conclusion that, depending on the philosophical orientations of the novelists, the Arabic novel portrayed diverse representations of the self and the other. Some depicted the Jew as an Arab, a human with both positive and negative characteristics, while others gave a set image of the Jew based on the Islamic viewpoint. Some writers focused on the conventional image of the just, occupying, and unlivable Jew, while others portrayed Jews as people who value peace and harmony, emphasizing the human aspect and the hardships they faced in Europe. The researcher discovered that the Arabs' picture ranged from a positive image of a desirable past to a negative image of a miserable present. In contrast to the renaissance experienced by the other, the entire study sample agreed to critique the Arab self, disclosing its flaws and crimes in terms of scientific backwardness and civilized degradation.

Hamoudeh (2013) conducted a study on "The Self and the Other-Arab Novelist Models" in 2013. The aim of the research is to find answers to the following questions: Is there a link between the self and the other in the Arabic novel? What is the extent to which the language of violence is present in the embodiment of the self-and-other problem? In Arabic literature, who is the most prominent "other"? The researcher employed language analysis methods and concentrated on the novel models' narrative components, such as

title, name, pronoun, and dialogue. In addition, he used psychological, social, and mythological methodologies in his research. Eight fiction models from eight Arab countries were included in the study, including a novel by Sahar Khalifia from Palestine. The researcher came to the conclusion that the Arabic novel had transcended the language of dominance and superiority, which is responsible for imposing prejudices that distort the image of the self and the other, especially once monolinguals were eliminated and different languages and points of view were introduced. The researcher also determined that in the study sample, the self and other images looked to be balanced, each with its own set of advantages and disadvantages. Faced with the other (the colonizer or the enemy) or encountering him/her, the self appears in all of its states (fascination, defiance, resistance) as a husband or friend.

Shawsh (2015) investigated "The dialectic of the ego and the other in Wassini al-novel Araj's "The Prince's Book: Paths of the Iron Gates"-a reception and interpretation method. The goal of the research is to find answers to the following questions: Is the Arabic novel capable of bridging the gap between the self and the other? How much of the language of harmony, or violence, is there in the embodiment of the self-and-other problem? Did Arab novelists such as Wasini Al-Araj, for example, provide diverse perspectives on the issue? Wasini's journey began with an exclusive viewpoint that scorned the self and despised everyone who differed from it, or was it the other way around? To be able to read the multi-significant text with several readings, the researcher used the receiving and interpreting approach. The researcher concluded that Wasini al-Araj was able to transcend the duality of self and other, and saw the other in a positive light based on tolerance, civilized dialogue and peace, and coexistence between them, which requires openness to the other and benefiting from his experience, sciences, and civilization in

order to build a strong state similar to theirs. The novelist was also able to demonstrate the strengths of the other and the shortcomings of the self, leading him to believe that the ego's "weakness and backwardness" are products of the ossified Algerian mindset controlled by tribal fanaticism. The researcher also determined that the novelist was able to depict the ego's quest for freedom and complete independence from the other.

To summarize, Arab researchers agree that there is a significant difference in how Arab writers approached the concept of the self and the other, as well as a distinction in the definition of the other, who can be a colonial Zionist, a Western, or an Asian or African. The self and other images appeared in the Arab novels to be balanced, with each having its own set of upsides and downsides.

### **2.4.3. Foreign Studies**

Where there are several studies on the concept of self and other in literature, cinema, and art conducted around the world, the researcher selects two studies that are the most closely related to the current study title. The first study focused on Hollywood films, whereas the second focused on Hungarian films.

Basuki conducted a study on "the Concept of the Self and the Other in Western Movies" in 2001. The aim of the research is to find answers to the following questions: What are the most recent developments in Western cinema's understanding of self and other? What are the differences between dealing with African-Americans, Indians, and Hispanics based on ethnicity? The researcher took a critical approach, drawing on Frankfurt School critical theory. The study came to the conclusion that the stereotypical attitude toward the "other" has continuously evolved in western films. Some films featuring African-Americans as heroes show them in a more respectable manner. For the first time in years,

he discovered that modern American films showed Indians as sympathetic human beings with valid problems, starting a trend for Indian heroes. Furthermore, attitudes towards Hispanics and African-Americans have begun to change. Some Hispanic characters were transformed into socially acceptable individuals who were permitted to fall in love with some stunning white Anglo women. In recent years, the Western world has begun to doubt the concept of heroism as a whole. The study came to the conclusion that a Western film will not appeal to today's audience in the same way it did earlier unless it treats the "other" with respect.

Tion (2017) conducted a study on "The Postcolonial Self and the Other in Bela Tarr's Film: *Werckmeister Harmonies*." The goal of the research is to find answers to the following questions: Isn't it safe to conclude that mimicry in postcolonial times lost its satire angle entirely, becoming an instrument for growth, industrialization, and modernization that excolonial people joyfully and unrelentingly embraced? Isn't post-colonial society devoid of the ambivalence that Bhabha recognized as a result of Lacanian "lack"? And hasn't imitation, as a subtle instrument for developing identification, vanished, ushering in the implications and effects of the same now unresolved identity crisis that used to offer ex-colonial cultures reprieve from an overdrawn and anxiety-ridden identity crisis? The researcher examined Béla Tarr's film in depth, pointing out how Bhabha's theory fails to handle the pragmatics of "real world" postcolonial politics. The researcher came to the conclusion that the director of the film is advocating a historical analysis that does not focus on antagonism, referencing the work of theorists like Nancy and Irigaray, who are pushing for a reexamination of both victim and victor, as well as perpetrator and subjugated self. This is because the functions of these two entities will inevitably become blurred, reversed, and possibly superimposed over one

another at some point. Thus, the task of producing the foreboding confrontation between the Self and the Other becomes the challenge of staging the terrifying encounter between the Self and the Self for Béla Tarr.

Both researchers agreed that current Hollywood and Hungarian films have experienced a shift in how they deal with the self and the other. There is a greater acceptance of the other, as well as a form of self-criticism.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

In its first section, this chapter examined how philosophers, psychologists, behaviorists, feminists, and post-colonialists have treated the concept of the self and the other. The literature review backs up the researcher's hypothesis that this concept is fundamental and closely related. The self's presence implies the presence of the other, which is the self's polar opposite.

Although the concept of the self and the other is not new, it has evolved in postcolonial studies in order to better understand colonizers and colonized behavior. In terms of race, culture, and behavior, the colonialist self believes that they are superior to the colonized other. They believe that they are civilized and democratic, whereas the other is backward and undemocratic. The colonizer is attempting to capitalize on this impression in order to justify its colonization by claiming that they came to liberate and educate the other country's people rather than steal the resources of their country.

These readings provided a theoretical perspective on the current study as well as a broader understanding of the concepts of self and other. However, this study has altered how the two concepts are shown, making the colonized Palestinian "the self" and the Israeli

colonizer "the other" as mirrored in the self's consciousness and unconsciousness. Because Palestine is still the world's last bastion of classic colonialism, this concept can be implemented in a post-colonial context, but with a twist: making Palestinians the focus of attention through their films.

The question of whether political changes have influenced Palestinian concepts of self and other was examined in the first section. It confirms the researcher's hypothesis that these political changes had a significant impact on Palestinians' understanding of their identity and, as a result, on their perceptions of the other.

The second section of this chapter examined the literature on Palestinian cinema's emergence and evolution, as well as the characteristics of each period, its goals, and those responsible for it. The section has demonstrated that film production in the first wave was minimal, capacities were limited, and productions were unique. While the second wave's production was supported by the PLO's institutions, which used it to further the revolution's goals, these products were direct and ideological. In the new wave, Palestinian filmmakers produced films that received prizes and were notable for their originality on a global level.

This comparison of the three waves of Palestinian cinema gave a lot of clarity to the research. The findings supported the researcher's hypothesis that the cinema of each stage was strongly linked to the Palestinian people's political and economic circumstances. It also answered the question of whether funding sources influence film content, as it explained how the link between funding and political leadership during the second wave limited cinematic content, whereas third-wave directors' openness to various sources of funding allowed them to start creating more liberal film content.

The readings in this section, on the other hand, are a little dated and concentrated on discussing revolution cinema and the beginnings of the new cinema, but the value-added of this study is its in-depth look at new films from the new Palestinian cinema.

This section also discussed the post-Oslo phase of political and social change. The Palestinians are experiencing a multi-faceted dilemma, as this section has demonstrated. After 25 years, neither the promised independent Palestinian state nor the political track have been established. In addition to tightening the siege on Gaza, Israel continues to impose it de facto through settlement construction, land confiscation, and military control in the West Bank. Furthermore, the conflict between Hamas and Fatah continues unabated, with no indications of abating.

In the last section of this chapter, the researcher looked at eight distinct studies that are related to the study topic: the concept of self and the other in the Palestinian New Cinema. Three of these studies are focused on the self in Palestinian cinema and the self and the other in Palestinian fiction and poetry, and they are all local. The latter three are regional studies, focusing on the self and other in Arab literature. The last two studies are global in scope, looking at the concept of self and other in both western and Hungarian cinema.

All local, Arab, and international researchers agree that the concept of the self and the other have evolved dramatically in novels, poetry, and film. There is a difference in the concept of the other: while the Zionist colonizer represents the other Palestinians, the Arabs regard the other as a Zionist, Western, African, or Asian. African-Americans, Indians, and Hispanics are the others among Americans. Across the general population and in diverse cultures, the gaps between self and other are reducing, and there is a noteworthy drop in feelings of superiority and fear of the other. There is a trend toward

increased self-criticism and greater empathy for others. This is mostly owing to intercultural communities and technical development's ability to facilitate communication and openness.

Studies in Palestine and the Arab world have addressed issues similar to those addressed in this study, such as the characteristics of self and other representations, their interrelationship, and the impact of finance on production. The outcomes were also consistent with the hypotheses. According to studies, the theme of the self and the other is essential in Palestinian and Arab literature and cinema. Self and others' representations have become more complicated. Moreover, depending on the funding, the representation of the self and the other varies.

Despite the fact that the studies address topics related to the study's subject focus, none of them goes into depth about the concepts of the self and the other in new Palestinian cinema, taking into account political and social changes as well as the study's time period. As a result, the study adds to all past research efforts on the topic. Therefore, this study is unique in adding to the current literature.

### **3. Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The content analysis approach has evolved to use quantitative and qualitative tools and methods to investigate the contents of textual, audio, and visual media. According to Holsti (1969:14), "Any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying defined properties of messages" is included in content analysis. Berger (1991: 25) claims that content analysis is a study technique based on quantifying the amount of something (violence, unfavourable depictions of women, or whatever) in a representative sampling of a mass-mediated popular art form.

Because the study problem and aims are related to clarifying media content, represented here by Palestinian cinema films, the researcher believes that the content analysis approach is the most appropriate for the current study. It is important to study the message's major elements, their qualities, and their relationships to one another in order to comprehend it, and this is what the content analysis approach provides.

Researchers propose combining qualitative and quantitative message analysis to grasp the meanings of texts by assessing both hidden and visible content. Because it isn't accurate to assume that quantitative factors such as the number and frequency of media messages are connected to significance.

As a result, the researcher developed a coding model as well as conducted a critical content analysis of them in order to go deeper into the film samples and provide a more comprehensive analysis of them as well as a relationship between the various components. According to Neuman (1997), "a researcher uses objective and systematic counting and recording techniques to produce a quantitative description of the symbolic

content in a text," while he also acknowledges that "there are qualitative or interpretative variants of content analysis."

### **3.2. Procedures of the Study**

1-After reviewing the theoretical literature and studies relevant to the study's issue, the researcher created the study's title, objectives, and problem.

2- The researcher designed the study's instrument by developing a content analysis tool that was reviewed by three other academics (Dr. Ayman Youssef, Saeed Abu Mualla and Dima Saqf Al-Hait).

3- On the topic of the impact of film content on various sources of funding, the researcher conducted two interviews with two researchers in the field of cinema (Saeed Abu Mualla and Ala Karaja).

4- Several research sources and previous studies were used to design it, including:

- a) Primary sources: seeing a number of new Palestinian films released between 2009 and 2019 and making preliminary remarks regarding the proposed analytical categories.
- b) Secondary sources include earlier studies and articles on the topic.

5- The researcher relied on the Holsti method by analyzing a sample of six films. A statistical analysis was conducted of the data represented by the categories, and they were arranged in appropriate tables from which the frequencies and percentages for each of the categories were calculated. Moreover, in the first part of the fourth chapter, the researcher implements the process of content analysis and extracts the statistical results.

5- The researcher delved into the analysis of each film separately according to the critical content analysis method, to link the statistical figures to the film components in the second part.

5- In the fifth chapter, the results were discussed, which ended with a number of recommendations.

### **3.3. Questions of the Study**

The research questions for this study focus on the concept of self and the other in the new Palestinian cinema presented in Palestinian films produced over the past 20 years (2009–2019). The following research questions are posed:

- To what extent does the concept of self and other appear in the new Palestinian cinema?
- What are the characteristics of the self and other representations of the sample films, in terms of demographic and individual aspects?
- What are the national implications of self-representation, and what are the moral implications of other-representation?
- What is concept self-other relationships?
- How do political changes contribute to changing these representations?
- Is there a difference in the directors' perceptions of the concept of self and the other based on their background and funding sources?

### **3.4. Study Population and Sample**

All Palestinian films produced between 2009 and 2019 are included in the study population. According to IMDP, an online database of cinema information, there were

approximately 160 Palestinian films created during this time period, while the true number could be higher.

Due to the difficulty of doing an analysis of all of the films in the study community, a purposive selection of 6 films was chosen, which could be evaluated in the time available and accurately represent the study population. The sample also takes into account the directors' regional distribution (Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinians in Israel and the Diaspora) as well as the production date. Other factors considered by the researcher included the fact that the films were directed by some of the most well-known Palestinian filmmakers, that the majority of them were shown at international film festivals and won awards, and that the majority of them received significant media attention, as well as the fact that the sample included women directors. These films are: *Pomegranates and Myrrh* (2008) by Najwa Najjar, *The Time That Remains* (2009) by Elia Suleiman, *Omar* (2015) by Hany Abu-Assad, *Imad Akl* (2009) by Majed Jundieh, *Wajeb* (2018) by Annmarie Jacir, and Farah Nabulsi's *the Present* (2019).

### **3.5. Unit of Analysis and Categories**

The coding book relies on the unity of the personality as it is the most appropriate unit for the purpose of the study. Each individual character who appears in the sample of six films, including those who do not speak or execute key activities in the tale, is the unit of analysis. Characters are categorized into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Any character who is crucial to the plot is referred to as a "primary character." A subsidiary character isn't as important as the main character. Secondary characters appear in one or two scenes and serve a specific, limited role. However, the critical content analysis relies on the unity of the scene in addition to the personality.

### 3.6. Coding Procedures: Research Instrument

An analysis codebook was designed for data collection on self and other representations for the purposes of the study (Appendix 1, P99). The data on a character's identity, gender, appearance, roles, qualities, and values of a sample of six films, totalling 9:55 hours of cinema footage, is recorded using the analytical codebook and many coding forms (Table 1). Individual traits such as being strong (str), ambitious (amb), smart (sma), brave (bra), confident (con), kind (kin), and leader (lea) were coded for only primary and secondary Palestinian and Israeli characters. Characters were also coded for national and moral connotations, as well as the self-other relationship, in order to answer the study's questions.

Table 1 – Overview of Films in the Study Sample

Film	Duration (Min)	Year	Financing	Director	Where do they live	Place of events
The Time that Remains	98	2009	European	Elia Solaiman	Europe Palestine	Nazareth
Omar	98	2015	Local	Hani Abo Asad	Europe Palestine	West Bank
The Present	24	2020	European	Farah Nabulsi	Uk	West Bank
Imad Akl	153	2009	Local/Hamas	Majed jundeiah	Gaza Palestine	Gaza
Pomegranates and Myrrh	109	2008	Local	Najwa Najjar	USA	West Bank
Wajb	91	2018	European	Annmarie Jacir	USA+Palestine	Nazareth

All of the characteristics' quantity and frequency were also coded. The measures were coded on a two-point scale: present (1) and not present (1). The characteristic was

recognized as present and marked on the coding sheet every time a character was mentioned as having that characteristic. After the data was collected, it was collected and summarized, and frequency distributions were generated.

### 3.6.1. General Identifiers

In order to gain a general overview of all the characters in the sample, the variables representation (self or other), gender, age, character role, and character appearance are recorded for each individual character. Each identifying variable's coding categories are listed below (Table 2).

Table 2 – Identifying Variables and Coding categories

	Variable	Coding Category
1	Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Self: Palestinian Character</li> <li>• The other: Israeli Character</li> </ul>
2	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Female</li> </ul>
3	Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child (0-18)</li> <li>• Young (19-35)</li> <li>• Adulthood middle age (36-55)</li> <li>• Older adulthood (56+)</li> </ul>
4	character role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary</li> <li>• Secondary</li> <li>• Tertiary</li> </ul>
6	Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good-looking</li> <li>• Not good-looking</li> </ul>

### 3.6.2. Individual Characteristics

Data on individual features of all characters is collected to examine the concept of self and other in the sample. Within the classification of positive and negative characteristics,

the researcher coded a number of general qualities. Each identifying variable's coding categories are listed below (Table 3).

Table 3 – Identifying Variables and Coding categories

	Variable	Coding Category
	Positive Characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong</li> <li>• Ambitious</li> <li>• Smart</li> <li>• Brave</li> <li>• Confident</li> <li>• Kind</li> <li>• Leader</li> </ul>
2	Negative Characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak</li> <li>• Cruel</li> <li>• Hesitant</li> <li>• Coward</li> <li>• Unsmart</li> <li>• Unambitious</li> <li>• Pushy</li> </ul>

### 3.6.2 National and Moral Values

In order to analyse the national values in the sample, the variables committed and uncommitted to the national cause for each individual self-representation character are recorded. Furthermore, the moral connotation of the other-representations is documented using two variables: consistent with the occupation's violence and inconsistent with it.

Each variable's coding categories are listed below (Table 4 and 5)

Table 4 – Identifying variables and coding categories

	Variable	Coding Category
1	Committed to the national cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of the Palestinian cause</li> <li>• Resists occupation peacefully</li> <li>• Resists occupation Armed</li> <li>• Feel with their people</li> </ul>
2	Uncommitted to the national cause:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unaware of the Palestinian cause</li> <li>• Aware but unconcerned</li> <li>• Collaborating with the occupation</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resigned to the reality</li> </ul>
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Table 5 – Identifying Variables and Coding categories

	Variable	Coding Category
1	Consistent with the violence of the occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practicing the violence of colonialism</li> <li>• Accepting the violence of colonialism</li> </ul>
2	Inconsistent with the violence of the occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rejecting the violence of colonialism</li> <li>• Resisting the colonial violence</li> </ul>

### 3.7. Critical Content Analysis

After coding the content of the film sample, the researcher uses the critical analysis approach to examine the sample films because the overall meaning of the movie and the messages it contains is greater than the sum of the partial meanings that make it up. Only the meaningful relationship between the elements in light of the overall framework of the content may provide a comprehensive meaning.

As a result, the researcher begins by providing an introduction to the director, his artistic style, themes, and past productions, as well as an introduction to the film under consideration, its story, characters, funding source, and awards or nominations. The researcher then follows the film's scenes and examines its events and characters, resulting in a portrait of the self and other, as well as their characteristics, in the film. The researcher supports her claims with direct evidence from the film. The researcher also discusses the film's weaknesses and strengths.

### 3.8. Conclusion

This chapter describes the research strategy, methodology, and study procedures in this chapter. The researcher used content analysis as a method. To acquire a more thorough

and in-depth grasp of the concept of self and other in the six sample films, she employed a coding model and then critically analysed them.

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## **4. Chapter Four: Results and Analysis**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter contains a presentation of the findings of the research question analysis, as well as tables and descriptions. In addition, the researcher dived into analysing each film separately using the critical analysis method in order to link the statistical figures to the film components in the second portion.

### **4.2. Results of the Coding Procedure**

This part is dedicated to reporting the findings of the researcher's coding technique used to answer the study's questions using the content analysis approach.

#### **4.2.1 General Identifiers**

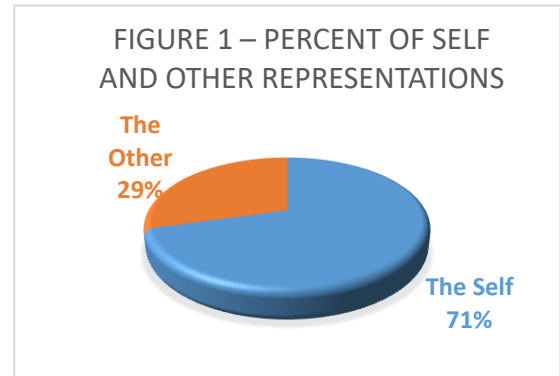
Character representation (Self/Other), gender, age, character role, and character look are all general descriptors in this study. They'll give a wide overview of the sample's self and other representations.

##### **4.2.1.1 Character Representation and Role**

The researcher provided a distribution of the sample members of the "characters" who appeared in the films of the study sample according to representation: the self and the other, in order to answer the study's first question about the characteristics of the self and other representations of the sample films. The character's role, as seen in the tables (1/2) and figures (1/2), is also the primary, secondary, and tertiary:

Table 1 – Overview of distribution of representations of the self and the other

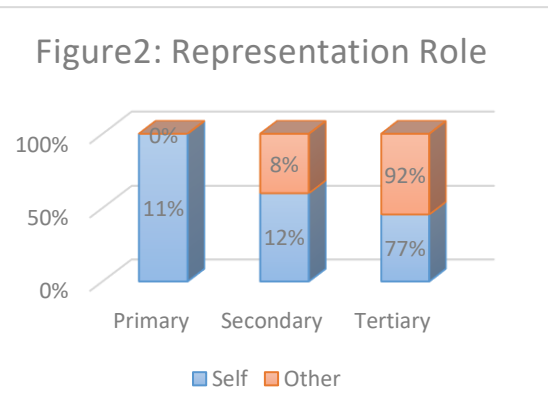
Representation	Frequency	Ratio
Self (Palestinian Characters)	125	71%
Other (Israeli Characters)	52	29%
Total	177	100%



A total of 177 characters were identified as self and other representations in the six films. Figure 1 shows that 71 percent of the 177 characters found in the sample were Palestinian characters (self-representation). While Israeli characters accounted for 29% of the total (other representation).

Table 2 -Overview of character role of the representations of the self and the other

Role	Self		Other	
	Frequency	Ratio	Frequency	Ratio
Primary	14	11%	0	0%
Secondary	15	12%	4	8%
Tertiary	96	77%	48	92%
Total	125	100%	52	100%



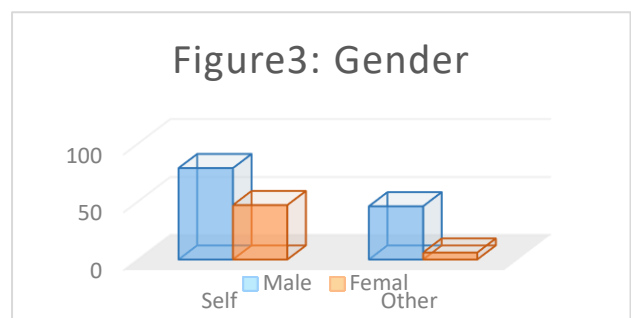
All of the primary characters (14) and the majority of the auxiliary characters (19) in the table above are for Palestinian representations (the self). As shown in Figure 1, 92 percent of the 52 Israeli characters found in the sample were tertiary characters, meaning they only appeared once or twice in the film and did not undergo any behavioral or attitude changes.

#### 4.2.1.2 Character Gender, Age and Appearance

Herein, the researcher provided a distribution of the sample members of the "characters" who appeared in the films of the study sample according to gender: male and female. In addition to age, childhood, adolescence, middle age, and old age. And there's the matter of appearance: good-looking vs. not-so-good-looking.

Table 3 -Overview of character gender of the representations of the self and the other:

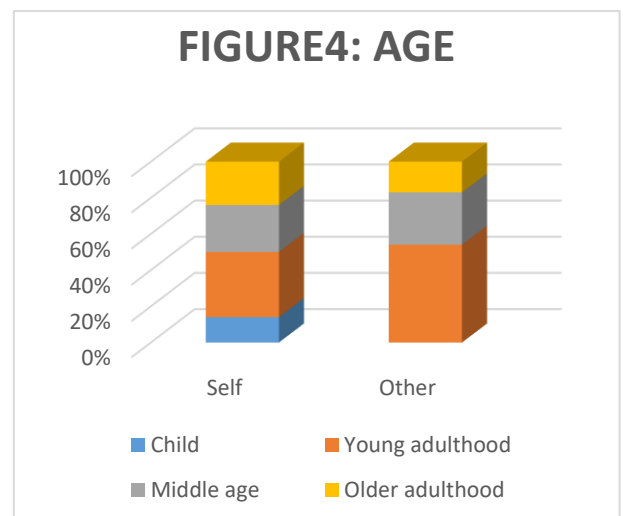
Gender	Self		Other	
	Male	79	63%	47
Female	46	37%	5	10%
Total	125	100%	52	100%



According to the statistics in the table above, males constituted a majority in the representation of the self and the other. Figure 3 shows that female characters made up 37% of the 125 Palestinian characters identified in the sample. Among the 52 Israeli characters found in the study, only 10% were female characters.

Table 4 -Overview of character age of the representations of the self and the other

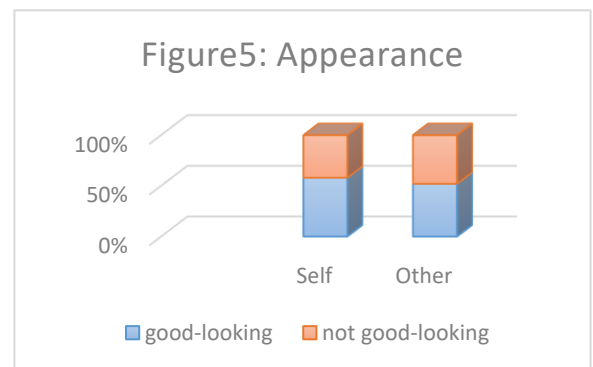
Age	Self		Other	
	Child	17	14%	0
Young adulthood	45	36%	28	54%
Middle age	33	26%	15	29%
Older adulthood	30	24%	9	17%
Total	125	100%	52	100%



The data in the table above demonstrates that middle age and older adulthood are the most prevalent age categories in the sample, whether for Palestinian or Israeli characters. Figure 4 shows that 14 percent of the 125 Palestinian characters in the sample were children, 36 percent were early adulthood characters, and 24 percent were older adulthood characters. While there are no child characters and only a few older adults (17%) represent the other (17%), Meanwhile, 54 percent of the characters are in their early twenties, while 29 percent are in their middle age.

Table 5 -Overview of character appearance of the representations of the self and the other

Appearance	Self		Other	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
good-looking	72	58%	28	54%
not good-looking	53	42%	24	46%
Total	125	100%	52	100%



According to the data in the table above, the "good-looking" category of character appearance received the highest percentage of votes, with 58 percent for self-representations and 54 percent for other-representations.

#### 4.2.2 Characters Behavioral Traits and Characteristic

In this section, the researcher calculated the frequencies of a variety of positive and negative aspects of the self and other representations of the self in the sample films to characterize the characters' behavioral traits and characteristics. As seen in tables (6) and figures (6).

Table 6 - Number and Percentage of Characters Behavioral Traits by Representation

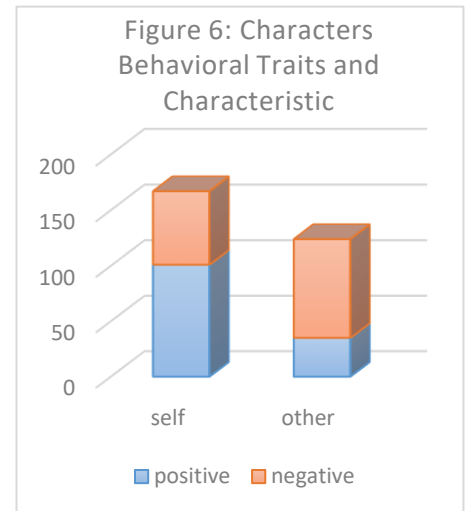
Positive Characteristic	Self		Negative Characteristic	Self	
	Count	Percentage		Count	Percentage

.Strong	11	11%	15	43%	Weak	22	33%	19	21%
Ambitious	16	16%	2	6%	Unambitious	11	17%	2	2%
Smart	19	19%	7	20%	Unsmart	4	6%	9	10%
Brave	6	6%	0	0%	Coward	6	9%	12	13%
Confident	11	11%	7	20%	Hesitant	9	14%	10	11%
Kind	32	32%	3	9%	Cruel	8	12%	25	28%
Leader	6	6%	1	3%	Follower	6	9%	12	13%
Total	101		35	100%	Total	66		89	100%

According to the data in the table above, self-representations outnumber other-representations in the frequency of positive individual qualities, whereas other-representations outnumber self-representations in the frequency of negative individual characteristics.

11 of the self-representation characters have been coded as strong, while 22 have been coded as weak. Of the other representation characters, 15 were labeled as strong, and 19 were coded as weak. 16 of the self-representation characters have been tagged as ambitious, whereas 11 have been labeled as unambitious. Only two of the other representation characters were tagged as ambitious, while nine were coded as unambitious. All 19 of the self-representation characters have been coded as smart, while four have been coded as unsmart. While seven of the other characters were categorized as smart, nine were labeled as unsmart. Six of the self-represented characters have been

coded as brave, while the other six have been tagged as cowards. While no other-representing characters were tagged as brave, 12 were coded as cowards. 11 of the self-representation characters have been categorized as confident, while 9 have been tagged as hesitant. While 7 of the other-representing characters were coded as confident, and 10 were coded as hesitant. A total of 32 characters representing the self have been classified as kind, while eight



have been coded as cruel. Twenty-five characters representing the other were coded as kind, while the other three were coded as cruel. Six characters representing the self have been coded as leaders, and six characters have been coded as followers. Only one of the other characters was labeled as a leader, while the other 12 were labeled as followers.

#### 4.2.3 National and Moral Values

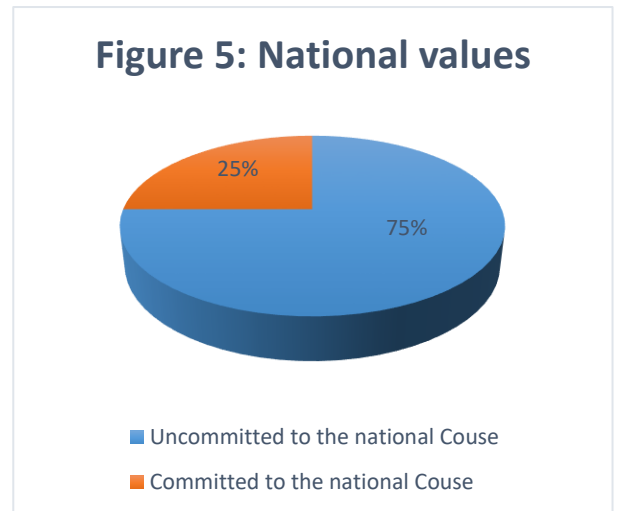
The researcher used two variables to characterize the national ideals held by the Palestinian characters in this section: committed and uncommitted to the national cause. The moral implications held by the Israeli characters are also explored through two variables: accepting and rejecting colonial aggression. This is shown in the tables (7/8) and figures (7/8).

Table 7 - Frequency and Percentage National values held by the Palestinian characters

Committed to the national Cause			Uncommitted to the national Cause		
Aware of the Palestinian cause	19	37%	Unaware of the Palestinian cause	2	12%
Engaging in nonviolent resistance	10	20%	Aware but unconcerned	5	29%

Engaging in violent resistance	7	14%	Collaborating with the occupation	4	24%
Expressing sympathy for their people	15	29%	Resigned to the reality	6	35%
Total	51	100%	Total	17	100%

The data in the above table shows the study sample's repetition of 51 behavioral signs indicating commitment to the Palestinian national cause, reflected by Palestinian characters (self-representations), as well as the study sample's repetition of 17 behavioral signs indicating lack of commitment to the national cause.



In particular, 19 Palestinian characters demonstrated awareness of the Palestinian cause, with 10 characters engaging in nonviolent resistance, 7 characters engaging in violent resistance, and 15 characters expressing sympathy for their people.

On the other hand, only two Palestinian characters appeared to be unaware of the Palestinian cause, while five others appeared to be aware but uncaring, four characters appeared to be collaborating with the occupation, and six characters appeared to have surrendered to the realities of occupation.

Table 8: Frequency and Percentage of moral values held by the Israeli characters:

Value	Frequency	Ratio	
Accept or practice colonial violence	45	96%	1
Reject or fight colonial violence	2	4%	2
Total	47	100%	

According to the data in the table above, 45 of the Israeli characters in the sample accept or practice colonial violence, while just two of them reject or fight colonial violence.

#### 4.2.4. Relationship between the Self and the Other

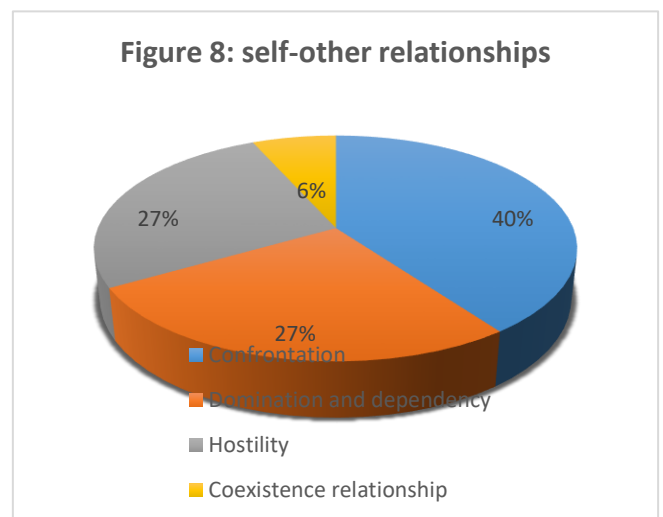
To respond to the study's first question, what is the concept of self-other relationships?

The researcher is looking for indicators that the primary and secondary characters are sending out, either directly or indirectly, through their thoughts and actions, that express the nature of the self-other relationships. The following is shown in table (9) and figure (8):

Table 9: Frequency and Percentage of perceptions of self-other relationships:

Relationship	Frequency	Ratio	
Confrontation	6	40%	1
Domination and dependency	4	27%	2
Hostility	4	27%	3
Coexistence	1	%6	4
Total	15	100%	

According to the statistics in the table above, the confrontational relationship between Palestinian and Israeli characters was the most prominent in the study sample, with the characters reflecting roughly 40% of the signals. The relationship of domination and dependency came in second with 27%, followed by the relationship of hostility with 27%, and finally, the relationship of co-existence with 6%.



### **4.3. Results of Critical Content Analysis**

The researcher employs a critical content analysis approach to the films in the study sample in this section, with the scene serving as the unit of analysis. to integrate production and content into a sophisticated analytical approach. Furthermore, for each of the six films, the researcher introduces the director, his or her background, the production conditions, and financing, which aids in answering the study's questions.

#### **4.3.1. The Time That Remains ... The Cinema of Symbolism**

After *Cyber Palestine* (2001) and *Divine Intervention* (2003), Elia Suleiman directed *The Time That Remains* (2009), which was co-produced by France, Italy, Belgium, and the United Kingdom. Suleiman stays true to his style in these films, merging personal and general themes, documentation and narration. A look at symbolism and black comedy from a different perspective.

Suleiman was born in the city of Nazareth in the year 1960. He moved to London and then to France when he was 17 years old. For several years, he returned to Nazareth and Jerusalem, where he developed a passion in cinema. In 1982, he returned to New York and began his career as a filmmaker.

Suleiman won several international film prizes and swiftly rose to prominence as an innovator in Palestinian cinema. He is a well-known filmmaker whose films have received positive reviews and sparked interest not only in Palestine but throughout the world. Suleiman has embarked on a remarkable journey of realism and renewal. In one of his interviews, he stated, "I tend toward hyper realism; my films represent an exaggerated reality" (Maarouf.2013). By replacing conversation with rich symbolic

landscapes and evidence that can be read in a variety of ways, his scenarios appear to be quiet.

Many critics believe that Suleiman's cinema represents a quantum leap in Arab cinema in terms of narrative, style, and cinematic language, allowing the audience to read the details of the Palestinian cause and observe its evolution in a language that is far removed from the revolutionary rhetoric used by Palestinian cinema in the past: "My mission is not to expose Israel." The picture itself is about violence, but it is violence experienced through the eyes of an individual... My films don't burrow down inside the identity, but inside the human experience, "he continued (Maarouf.2013).

In his "Cyber Palestine", Suleiman depicted the monotony of life in Jerusalem and Nazareth as well as the nature of the emptiness in which people lived during that time, which was shared between hopes of resistance, liberation, and the reality of the imposed peace process. In his second film, "Divine Intervention," Suleiman focuses on the difficulties faced by Palestinians living under occupation in Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as their inability to freely travel between their own cities and districts; all of this is told through a love story told in the form of a black comedy.

In his film "The Time That Remains", Suleiman attempts to travel back in time to his birth city of Nazareth in 1948, the year of the Nakba, based on individual and collective experiences. He used this combined perspective of individual and collective experiences to try to grasp the Palestinian situation and what it has become over the years.

In his most recent Oscar-nominated film, "It Must Be Heaven", Suleiman attempts to continue the story begun in his previous three films by telling his own story, the story of his family and relatives, ordinary Palestinians living a complicated life that drives them

to despair, but not without resistance. In fact, Suleiman tells the entire story to the public from the inside out throughout the film. In this film, the globe becomes Palestine, and the Palestinians become global citizens.

The majority of "The Time That Remains" scenes take place in Nazareth throughout Elia's childhood and young adulthood, with scenes from Ramallah and Jerusalem thrown in for good measure. The picture alternates between four time periods: 1948, when Fuad, Elia's father, is the major character; the late 1960s, when Elia was a child living with his father and mother; the late 1970s, when Elia was a young man; and finally, the early 2000s, when he became a man.

The film contains approximately 30 interrelated and separate sequences, all of which are very symbolic, with the Palestinian character appearing in most of them. The self-representations are diversified in terms of gender and age, since the entire family appears in many situations, including the woman, the youngster, and the elderly. As well as, both gender represented.

The Palestinian character is a main character in the majority of the scenes. The key characters are Fouad, Elia's father, Elia, Elia's mother, and ancillary characters such as the aunt, the elderly neighbor who attempts suicide, the neighbor recruited into the Israeli police, and others.

While the Israeli character "the other" appears in around half of the sequences (directly or indirectly). The other-representation in the majority of these scenes is a male character, usually a soldier in the Army. Only two sequences include an Israeli woman, who is also a soldier. All of the characters are youthful; there are no old or child characters. The Israeli

character is a secondary or tertiary character in most scenes, with only one scene in which it becomes the primary character.

The director is concerned with the Palestinian as a human being and as a member of a family. As a result, they can be found in people of all ages and genders. While they were the focus of the majority of the scenes in the film, the Israeli character appeared in flat form as a member of the Israeli Army, which is why the Israeli character is seen carrying weapons in the majority of the scenes.

### **The Steadfast Defeated "Self" vs Fragile Colonial "Other"**

The events of the film begin in the present, where Elia, returning from travel, is in the back seat of a taxi driven by an Israeli driver. The driver seems unfamiliar with the road and is lost because of a storm, despite his attempts to contact his friends for help. A sign that he does not know the country because he does not belong to it, while the Palestinian character here appears calm and confident. Throughout the film, the audience is continuously exposed to this duality. In two main characters, Elia and Fouad, as well as eight supporting characters, confidence prevails over the Palestinian character. Only two secondary characters appear to be confident in other-representations.

Through Flashback, Suleiman goes back to 1948, when indigenous people were forced to evacuate their homes and families were dispersed by Jewish gangs. Suleiman tells the story of his father, Fouad Suleiman, in his youth, who does not want to surrender and escape, and is subjected to arrest and abuse with group of young people, but he clings to his weapon and insists on staying. Soraya, his fiancée, sends a message urging him to quit the country because it has already been lost.

In a different scene, Fouad risks his life to save a wounded Palestinian warrior. Scenes depicting a Palestinian character with courage-like attributes are replayed multiple times. For example, after his Israeli colleagues dreaded approaching the accident, Fouad rescued an Israeli soldier injured in a military vehicle accident, in a moment that highlighted the humanism of the "self."

Suleiman shows occupation gangs stealing the contents of a house in Nazareth, including the gramophone and the carpet, in one of the scenes. As a humorous moment reflecting the dimensions of the aggression committed by the "other," the song "My Heart is My Guide" by Leila Murad plays in the background from the gramophone. In actuality, the "other" took anything they could get their hands on, including personal items, cultural heritage, and identity.

In another humorous scene, Elia mocks, with his comic style, the Arab narrative regarding the role of the Arab armies in the liberation of Palestine. In this scene, a lonely and lost Iraqi soldier passes by a group of Palestinian men, including Fuad, sitting quietly in a coffee shop. Each time an Iraqi soldier tries to go to a city, they tell him that the city is already free. Even though the Arab character appears only in two scenes, it reflects the aspects of credulity, weakness, and good intentions.

The Palestinian character varies in the scenes of the film, sometimes steadfast and sometimes broken. In the scenes in which Suleiman moves from Nazareth to the West Bank, several contradictions appear, attempts to withstand and triumph over life despite political oppression. The dominant, strong "other" weakens in the face of the "self's" indifference to reality under occupation and contempt for its own strength and tyranny. This is represented in several scenes, including the scene of a soldier who asks a mother

who is pulling a baby cart to go to her house, and she arrogantly responds that he is the one who has to go to his house. In addition to the scene of a dancing party in a restaurant in Ramallah, not paying attention to the army's calls for a curfew,

In fact, many scenes show that the Palestinians are in a continuous struggle with the occupation's measures, and that the restrictions, prosecution, and imposition of curfews are proof that the occupation is afraid, especially that these measures are defied by the Palestinians, who face them mostly with extreme indifference and irony.

In one of the scenes, Elia, the child in his primary school in Nazareth, is forced to sing the Israeli national anthem (the Independence Anthem), in a scene that reflects the state of contradiction and alienation from their environment and maybe the inner self experienced by the Palestinians living in the territories of 1948, during that period in the seventies, and the dominance of the "other" identity over the identity of the self.

In scenes, the neighbor who works with the occupation police is shown as an ashamed person, but his son, after so many years, will do the same job, but he will appear more reconciled with the fact of working for the occupation. In one of the scenes, he exercises his authority (the authority of the occupation/the other) towards a Palestinian child coming from the West Bank without a permit.

Observer see Suleiman's characters engaged with and impacted by the national issue and its concerns in almost all of the scenes. The fact that the Palestinians' daily lives did not divert their attention away from their major national concerns.

Suleiman also employs black comedy in several scenes, both to mock the state of frustration experienced by the Palestinians living in the occupied territories of 1948. For

example, in the scenes of the drunken neighbor who was searching for creative solutions to get rid of the occupation and to mock the power of the occupation, as Suliman did by jumping off the wall with the pole stick.

While the Palestinian character appears as a coward in many of the scenes, including the escape scenes, and in two scenes in which a Palestinian with a covered face is working for the occupation, and in other scenes it appears in the character of the neighbor who works with the occupation police and his son as well.

Suleiman takes great effort in addressing the concept of the other, the aggressive colonizer, emphasizing that the other is a threat to the self's human rights, culture, and history. The other, on the other hand, relies on the military machine to take the country and govern the people, hence there are no scenes in which an Israeli character is not fully equipped. As seen by the scene of an arrogant Israeli commander signing a surrender agreement with the weak and subservient mayor of Nazareth, he is a superiorist who perceives itself as above the law and above all of the indigenous people.

The Israeli character did not show any courage in any scene at all. One of which was a scene in which several armed men gathered against a blind-folded Palestinian civilian, with fear expressions and precaution on their faces. In addition, in another scene where an Israeli soldier refused cowardly to help his wounded colleague, a Palestinian ran to help.

The characteristics of hostility, confrontation, and challenge dominate the relationship between the self and the other in the film. As the Israeli appears most of the time as an enemy and an alternative to the Palestinian existence, while in only 3 of the scenes it

appears as a relationship of domination and coexistence between the Palestinian and the Israeli.

To sum up, in his film, Suleiman tries to understand what happened to the Palestinian individual-collective self during the 60 years from the Nakba until the second intifada. In his film, he documents historical milestones that begin with the Nakba, the setback, survival, and then the fall back imposed by the post-Oslo period. In the last section, the challenge and steadfastness return.

Most of the scenes, the Palestinian characters possessed positive qualities such as strength, courage, and kindness, while the characters possessed negative qualities, represented by weakness, cruelty, cowardice, and hesitation. While the Israeli character was not focused on in a way that showed any positive qualities and remained distant, secondary, and devoid of kindness, it appeared that most of the scenes had negative characteristics.

It can be said that Elia Suleiman in his film showed the Palestinian as a natural character with normal human characteristics in which virtues and vices naturally coexist. Removed from the cliché that prevailed in revolution films, which depicted the Palestinian as a hero while the Israeli remained as a flat, unhuman figure, far from the scenes, in the army's uniform and weapons.

#### **4.3.2. Omar... The Sin of Cooperation with the Occupation**

*Omar* (2013) is the fifth film directed by Hani Abu-Assad, and it is his second film that received an Oscar nomination after *Paradise Now* (2005), which also won a Golden Globe Award. *Omar* is one of the few films that has been fully funded locally. Abu

Assad's cinema is political, focusing on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and showing the human aspects inherent in it.

Hani Abu Assad was born in Nazareth in 1961 and immigrated to the Netherlands in 1980, where he worked as an aeronautical engineer for years before entering the world of cinema and television. He belongs to the generation of cinematographers who began working in cinema during the first intifada, and his beginning as a film maker was in 1991, when he directed his first short documentary film, *For Whom It May Concern*.

His well-known film “*Paradise Now*” deals with the reasons that motivate Palestinian youth to carry out suicide operations by exposing the lives of two young friends hours before they carry out a martyrdom operation on an Israeli passenger bus, with its focus on the state of oppression and frustration caused by the occupation's procedures and the social dynamics of Palestinian political life.

While his film, *Omar*, deals with the reasons that drive Palestinian youth to cooperate with the colonizer through a story of three friends who plan to resist the occupation and snipe an Israeli soldier assigned to guard a checkpoint near the apartheid wall. They were pursued by Israeli intelligence using the most heinous methods of repression, intrigue, and blackmail in an attempt to persuade them to spy on the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (the military arm of the Fatah movement) to which they belong.

Abu Asaad's films raise a great deal of controversy, whether within the circles of supporters of the Palestinian cause or its opponents. On one hand, these films are accused of glorifying and justifying violence and humanizing its perpetrators, and on the other hand, they are accused of not reflecting the reality of the Palestinian struggle as it should.

The film takes place in the West Bank, as Omar travels between his hometown and that of his beloved Nadia through the wall that discontinues the Palestinian geography. The duration of the film is 96 minutes, and it consists of 26 scenes. The Palestinian character is present in all scenes and plays a primary role. Characters of different ages and genders appear, but the starring roles are limited to the three friends: Omar, Amjad, and Tariq, in addition to Nadia, and so on. Set aside, all the other Palestinian characters are secondary and almost do not participate in the conversation.

While the character of the Israeli "the other" appears in about 40% of the scenes, either directly or indirectly. The character of "the other" appears is always presented as a male character, specifically within the institution of the occupation army and the intelligence service, a one-time female soldier appears alongside the male soldier. All the characters are mostly in the youth category, while the representations of children and the elderly are completely absent. The Israeli character appears as a main character in the scenes of the interrogation in which the Israeli officer Rami appears in six scenes, while in the rest of the scenes it is secondary, namely in the scenes of arrest and the army's tracking down the resistance fighters.

Most of the scenes show the depth of the Palestinian character, as they appear as part of a family and have feelings, such as love and longing between Omar and Nadia, friendship between Omar, Tariq and Amjad, sacrifice and patriotism, and other feelings. The Israeli characters appear flat, except for two scenes in which Detective Rami appears, talking with his mother and ex-wife about his daughter. The Israeli character appears always in army uniforms and carrying weapons.

### **The Manipulating "Other" vs the Weak and Treacherous "Self"**

The events of the film begin with Omar climbing the apartheid wall, escaping gunfire to visit his lover's house on the other side of the wall. This scene, which is repeated many times in the film, depicts the character's determination and impatience with life,

The three friends begin training to use guns in order to carry out a shooting operation against the occupying soldiers in the next scene. When the operation is carried out, however, the characters appear hesitant and fearful, particularly Amjad, who refuses to shoot until his friends force him to. However, the film scenes show a lot of hesitancy and fragility presented by the Palestinian characters

From here, the plot of the film begins, as the intelligence service begins to search for the shooter, where Tariq is suspected and pursued after arresting Omar, and the Israeli officer, Rami, gives him two choices: life imprisonment or collaboration to find the soldier's killer.

Despite the courage and steadfastness shown by Omar during the interrogation scene, he quickly weakens and agrees to release him so that he can communicate with his lover and evade the intelligence.

A state of suspicion begins between the three friends, which is also reflected in the relationship of Omar and Nadia, and here each of the friends tries to prove their loyalty and dispel suspicion about their work with the occupation by an ambush they prepared for the army. But the ambush fails, and Omar is re-arrested and tortured, raising more suspicion that he is a spy.

The "self" representations, particularly Omar and Tariq, appear strong and solid at first, but quickly succumb to the "other's" lie, which sows doubt among the friends. However, there is another weak Palestinian character, "Amjad," who is willing to betray his people with little effort on the part of Israeli intelligence. Amjad claims that Nadia is pregnant with his kid, causing Omar to have a deep crisis and Tariq's death. This character demonstrates that treason for Palestinians does not always imply cooperation with the occupation but can take several forms.

However, Omar assists Amjad in marrying Nadia and provides him with all of his savings, believing that he will save and shield Nadia from the scandal. That reflects positive qualities such as the self-characters' kindness. Also depicted were negative traits such as cowardice, selfishness, and betrayal, which featured in multiple scenes, including the funeral of Tariq, who died accidentally in an argument amongst the three friends after learning that his sister Nadia was pregnant with Amjad.

In Abu Asaad's film, the Palestinian character is portrayed as a natural character with normal human characteristics. The Palestinian characters possessed positive qualities such as strength, courage, kindness, and attachment to their homeland in nearly half of the scenes, while the characters in the second half of the scenes possessed negative characteristics such as weakness, cruelty, cowardice, hesitation, and selfishness.

While the character of the Israeli "other" appeared flat, manipulative, inhuman, in the army's uniform and carrying weapons. The only main Israeli character in the film is the character of Detective Rami. He appears as a cruel and malicious character who exploits the feelings of the Palestinians, but he is strong and intelligent. Because the Israeli

character was carrying weapons in the majority of its appearances, it assumed the status of force in these scenes.

The film showed the Israeli character as a perpetrator in most of the scenes, and focused on the Palestinian as a victim of the occupation's actions. However, many scenes highlight that the Palestinians continue to face the occupation's measures, and this becomes clear in the last scene, in which Omar shoots Detective Rami after discovering the fact that he was betrayed and that his friend Amjad collaborated with the occupation and lied to him about his relationship with Nadia.

In most of the scenes, hostility dominates the relationship between the self and the other, and while the film's main character gives up to the occupation and the conditions it imposes on him, he corrects his course at the end of the film and decides to confront the occupation after a period of wandering and confusion. Thus, in Omar's character, people can distinguish two models of the "self": a lost and defeated model that accepts cooperation with the occupation and a model of resistance and sacrifice for national and personal causes.

To conclude, the spectator of "Omar" can notice the Palestinian identity of the film and its reflection of the Palestinian reality. The film was able to tell the Palestinian story of the Palestinian man facing all its contradictions, fears, hesitation, and weakness, yet he is committed to defending his land and homeland, even if it costs him his life in the end.

Although Abu Assad addressed participation in the occupation in its national context and its influence on the resistance, he could not fully depict the social and human dimension,

as occupation agents are shunned and despised by Palestinian society, and this sin cannot be socially tolerated.

#### **4.3.3. Imad Aqel ... Hamas's Cinema**

*Imad Aqel* (2009) is a film produced by Al-Aqsa Media Network, which is funded by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Gaza Strip. This film was directed by Majed JundiyeH and the script was written by Mahmoud al-Zahar, a member of the Hamas political bureau. The film presents the life of the martyr Imad Aqel, who was one of the most prominent leaders of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military arm of Hamas, and was wanted by the Israeli authorities for many years at the end of the last century, before he was assassinated in November of 1993.

JundiyeH was born in 1967 in the Gaza Strip and died there in 2017. He holds a diploma in cinema from Germany. He produced many cinematic, dramatic, and documentary works, but the most important of them beside *Imad Aqel* is *Dissipated Illusion* (2014), about the operation of capturing the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. All of JundiyeH's films reflect a direct revolutionary, partisan, and mobilization character, as they support the resistance (represented by Hamas) and adopt its narrative. As a result, his films received limited media coverage and funding, and they were not nominated for any Arab or international awards.

In fact, the film industry in the Gaza Strip suffers great challenges due to the siege that the Strip has been living through since 2007. This is in addition to the recurring wars and the state of internal political division, which have had serious effects on the economic and humanitarian conditions of the residents of the Strip. This situation has been reflected on the film industry in Gaza, making it late and less mature when compared to the film

industry in the West Bank and within the 1948 borders, in terms of artistic and technical matters such as photography, lighting, etc., which may be due to the lack of experience and the limited contacts with the cinema world outside Gaza.

The events of the film take place in the Gaza Strip, Hebron, and Jerusalem. The film goes through several periods of time, starting with the birth of Imad Aqel, his childhood in Jabalia camp, then his early youth, and his leadership of military action in the first intifada, until his martyrdom. The duration of the film is 150 minutes and consists of about 56 scenes, the most of are played by the Palestinian character, and the characters vary in terms of gender and age, as the entire family appears in many scenes, including women, children, and the elderly. The character of Imad Aqel is the center of the film, as he appears in most of the scenes and all the dialogue revolves around him.

### **Absolute Good Self vs. Absolute Evil Other**

Despite the presence of the family in the film, the human dimension was absent from the Palestinian character. The main character appears without any emotions, and his relationship with the family lacks feelings as well. He is not affected by the martyrdom of his companions, nor does he smile or cry for once.

While the Israeli "the other" character appears in about half of the scenes directly, mainly as a male character, specifically soldiers in the army and intelligence officers. The ages of the characters range between young and old. Well-known personalities appear, such as former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the Commander-in-Chief of the Israeli Occupation Forces, Ehud Barak. Children and female characters are completely absent, which shows the Israeli character as a flat character and part of an institution that is only the Israeli army. The Israelis carry weapons in most of the scenes in which they appear.

The events of the film start in the past, in the year 1971, on the night of Imad Aqel's birth, when the Israeli army prevents the midwife and her husband from arriving at the family's house, but they defy and continue their way, and Imad is born on a rainy night. In the later scenes, spectator see Imad as a child in the streets of Jabalia camp, watching the attacks of the occupation soldiers against women and children, and looks of defiance and anger appear on him. Scenes of the occupation's attacks are repeated, and in one of them, Imad the child says, "*The day I bury you in the dirt will come.*" His revolt increases when he receives news that a settler has burned Al-Aqsa Mosque. Scenes of national and religious mobilization are also repeated through the mosque and Quran memorization sessions, in which Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, founder of Hamas, appears.

The events begin to accelerate, and the Intifida erupts, in which Imad, the young man, participates and is subjected to arrest. Then he is released, and his adventures begin with the implementation of dozens of armed operations in which he moves between Gaza, Jerusalem and Hebron. The film enters a phase of monotony by repeating scenes of "the self-representations committing murder and violence against the "other", which lack the element of surprise, as the resistance men each time they eliminate the occupation soldiers without a single exchange of fire. The scenes are built in a stereotypical way, which makes them not realistic.

The Palestinian characters, particularly Imad and his crew, appear powerful, confident, and devout in the majority of scenes. Agents of the occupation appear hesitant, traitorous, and cowardice, despite being a marginal model of self.

As for the Israeli character, mostly appears hiding behind his firearm, yet it's terrified and cowardly. One of which is the scene of the soldier kidnapped by Imad Aqel and his group,

who appears trembling and unable to speak. In this scene, which reflects the state of surrender and subservience of the Israeli soldier, the director refutes the image of the super army that Israel is trying to promote.

Scenes depicting the occupier's inhumanity and targeting of children and women are repeated throughout the film as a result of the representation of the other as ultimate evil and the representation of the self as absolute good. As well as the repeated dialogue scenes portraying Imad as a myth that the occupation force was unable to reach. In one scene, an Israeli officer confesses that he always imagines Emad standing behind him. In most of the scenes, whether through discussion or heroic fighting scenes, the Palestinian character appeared strong and consistent.

The Israeli character was depicted as a perpetrator, killing, torturing, and arresting Palestinians, while the Palestinians were depicted as victims of the occupation's crimes. Many scenes, however, focused on the Palestinian confronting the occupation, depicted self-representations as violent offenders, such as the scene in which he kills religious Jews during their prayers, talks about the slaughter of the kidnapped soldier, and repeats phrases like "killing the Jews is worship and getting closer to God."

In the film, the focus was on religion as a motive for resistance, as we see it as a companion and perhaps an alternative to patriotism, as scenes of prayer and "Duaa" are repeated, and all the women in the film appear veiled. And before Aqel falls as a martyr at the end of the film, he insists on praying before engaging in the final fight.

In Jundieh's film, the dominant strong (the other) turns into a weak person and loses his strength in front of the faith of the exemplary Mujahid (the Self), which breaks the power

and tyranny of the occupation and becomes an anightmare for it. This is represented in several scenes, including Rabin's scene, which concludes the film with the sentence, "I hope to wake up in the morning and find Gaza drowned in the sea."

In most of the scenes, he shows characteristics of hostility, confrontation, and defiance towards the other, as he appears most of the time as a criminal and murderous colonizer, while in a few scenes, a dominant relationship appears between the Palestinian and the Israeli, which are the scenes that focus on the relationship between officers and agents.

Here, it can be said that Jundiya presented a superficial picture of the agents' motives for working with the occupation, which are for self-interests often represented by money, without delving into their personalities and circumstances, as they appeared selfish and opportunistic. Except for them, all of the Palestinian characters in the film are obsessed with national and religious concerns that are inconsistent with their personal interests and concerns. Even Imad's mother, despite his known fate, urges him to resist, a behavior that goes against human nature.

Jundiya adopts his direct approach to raising issues, telling history in detail and documenting events, so that the symbolism is completely absent and the film presents a serious character that often makes the spectator bored.

To conclude, "Imad Aqel" narrates the features of an important historical period for the Palestinian people, from the beginning of the seventies until the early nineties, according to Hamas' narrative. It highlights the development of Hamas' military abilities since its inception, especially in the Gaza Strip. However, the film is accused of marginalizing important historical facts and excluding all other political, social, and military actors of

that era, such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which is completely absent from the film. Therefore, Hamas appears as the exclusive entity that carries out resistance work and the only component of the Palestinian people.

From a narrow perspective, the film attempts to understand what happened to the Palestinian individual-collective self during the seventies until the first intifada. In addition to highlighting the Palestinian will to rise from the clutches of occupation through self-reliance and carrying weapons within national and ideological motives. The film documents the position of a significant part of the Palestinian people towards the Oslo accords, which are mentioned without details, showing them as a treacherous agreement, which came to undermine the resistance and find an alternative to it. In a way, it justified the state of division that occurred many years later, as the betrayal of the party that signed the agreement is sufficient justification to turn against it later.

In most of the scenes, the Palestinian characters possessed positive qualities such as strength, courage, and connection to the homeland, while the characters possessed negative qualities in only few scenes, represented by weakness, cruelty, cowardice, hesitation, and self-indulgence. While the Israeli character was not focused on in a way that showed any positive qualities and remained distant, secondary, and devoid of kindness, it appeared in most of the film scenes in a negative, cruel, cowardly, weak, and hesitant way.

It can be said that Junidyeh portrayed the Palestinian as a resistant character with a solid character and heroic qualities in which virtues overshadow vices in an exaggerated manner, consistent with the stereotype that marked the revolution films, which portrayed the Palestinian as a hero. While the Israeli was portrayed as a flat, inhuman character, far

from the scenes, in the army's uniform and carrying weapons. In terms of its characteristics, this film may be considered an extension of Palestinian revolution film.

#### **4.3.4. The Present... Palestine On Netflix**

The Present (2019), is Farah Nabulsi's first short film as a director, but she has written and produced three other shorts. The 24-minute film that was released on Netflix in March 2021, is distinguished by its intense events and its short and fast plot. Although it is about the suffering of the Palestinians in the West Bank from the occupation checkpoints, a matter that has been discussed a lot in Palestinian cinema, it has received a lot of local and international attention, as it has won the award for Best Short Film at the 2021 British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film.

Farah Nabulsi is a British-Palestinian writer, filmmaker, and human rights activist. She was born (in 1976), raised and educated in London for Palestinian parents who were forced to leave Palestine. In 2015, she started working in the film industry by founding a non-profit media production company, which aims to re-humanize the Palestinians and draw attention to their suffering due to the Israeli occupation<sup>6</sup>.

Before "the Present," Nabulsi produced and wrote three short films: "Oceans of Injustice," "The Nightmare of Gaza," and "Today, They Took My Son," all of which center on the daily suffering of Palestinians under Israeli occupation in the occupied territories. In the first and second shorts, Nabulsi adopted the themes of drowning and nightmare to reflect the deep feelings of helplessness, fear, and panic that the experience of life under

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.farahnabulsi.com/>

occupation implies. While she used the theme of motherhood in the third short to reflect the deep feelings of the experience of detention among the detainees and their families.

In the "Present", by highlighting an ordinary Palestinian day on which a husband tries to buy a gift for his wife on their wedding anniversary, Nabulsi tells the world the story of the reality of Palestine, years after the failure of the peace process and the consequent perpetuation of Israeli control over Palestinian lives.

### **The Oppressed "Self" vs the Oppressor "Other"**

The events of the film take place in a village where, like many others in the West Bank, the Israeli occupation has installed a gate (or checkpoint) at its entry. The film consists of eight scenes. The Palestinian character is present in all scenes and plays a primary role. Characters of different ages and genders appear. The starring roles are limited to the father, Yousef, and the daughter, Yasmine. In addition to secondary characters such as the mother and the sellers in the shops that they visit.

While the Israeli "the other" character appears as a secondary character in four sequences as either male or female soldiers within the occupation army's institution, as well as in the youth category, with no children or elderly characters.

The film's eight scenes show the depth of the Palestinian character, as it appears as part of a loving family. These characters clearly experience feelings of love, fear, anger, weakness, and oppression. While the Israeli character appears flat with no feelings except cruelty in army uniforms and carrying weapons,

The events of the film begin with Yousef returning from his work through an Israeli checkpoint crowded with workers, in a scene that reflects the inhumane conditions

experienced by Palestinian workers in Israel. In the next scene, Yousef appears on his bed at home, where his daughter Yasmine jumps into his lap, and his wife comes and wishes him a happy day on the occasion of their wedding anniversary.

Yousef and Yasmine go out to buy a gift for the wife, facing difficulties at the checkpoint that separates their town from the rest of the Palestinian areas. Due to the provocations and harassment of the soldiers, Yousef finds himself compelled to explain the reasons for his passing the checkpoint and enumerate the items he wants to buy from the market, until he begins to lose his patience. Here, Yasmine gets scared and asks her father to calm down. But in any case, he is punished, and after a long detention, he is released, but the little Yasmine has wet her clothes as a result of the long wait. Here, the spectator can notice the signs of despair on the faces of the characters, a clear image of the daily frustrations experienced by the Palestinian people due to the occupation.

On the way back, after the father and daughter had a good time and bought a fridge as a present for the mother, a military checkpoint blocked the path of the truck they were riding in. They continued their way on foot, pushing the fridge using a wheelbarrow. When they arrive at the second checkpoint that separates them from home, the same two soldiers are waiting to practice more humiliation, as they want to know why Yuosef bought the fridge, and what is inside it. After this bitter situation, they asked him to leave with his fridge through the metal detector gate. As it is not possible to do, a conflict ensues. Yousef and the soldiers start exchanging screams, before they raise their arms at him. At this moment, Yasmine pushes the wheelbarrow across the road, and the father follows her, and with this breakthrough, the film ends.

The Palestinian appears in all the scenes as a victim of the occupation, its circumstances and procedures. Despite that, the character showed courage and steadfastness in several situations. The end scene carried an implicit message that new generations can find new ways to confront the occupation and continue life despite the tyranny of the occupation.

To conclude, "The Present" clearly holds the Palestinian identity and reflects the Palestinian reality. Through its simple plot, the film tells the story of a normal day in the life of a Palestinian family, and shows how much the Israelis interfere in the lives of Palestinians and how "the other", through its various policies, controls Palestinians' lives in all its details.

Nabulsi's film represents the Palestinian character as a natural character with normal human characteristics. In most of the scenes, the Palestinian characters carried positive qualities such as strength, courage, kindness, and attachment to family and homeland, while the characters carried negative characteristics in one or two of the scenes, represented by weakness and hesitation.

While the character of the Israeli "other" appeared flat, inhuman, distant from the scenes, in the army's uniform and carrying weapons. The film showed the Israeli character as an offender in most of the scenes and focused on the Palestinian as a victim of the occupation's actions. Also, the film reflects the Palestinians' desire for a normal life. As well as their resistance to the policies of the occupation on a daily basis. In one of the deepest scenes in the film, little Yasmine played the lead role by holding the cart carrying the refrigerator and taking it to the street to pass alone amid the screams of the soldiers and their inability to stop her.

The characteristics of hostility, confrontation, and challenge dominate the relationship between the "self" and the "other" in all of the scenes, as it appears most of the time as a colonizer obsessed with the idea of domination, control, and humiliation.

#### **4.3.5 Pomegranate and Myrrh. The Story of a Feminine “Self”**

Najwa al-Najjar's first feature film, *Myrrh and Pomegranate* (2009), was released after she established a global presence with a series of documentaries, including "Naim and Wade'ah" and "A Boy Named Muhammad," as well as her short fiction film "Yasmine Toghanni," which won several international awards. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Arte TV, and North Rhine-Westphalia all contributed to the production of "Myrrh and the Pomegranate."

Al-Najjar is a Palestinian director and screenwriter who was born in Washington and studied filmmaking. She began her artistic career as a commercial director, then moved on to documentaries and short films, particularly after relocating to Jerusalem.

Al-Najjar tells the Palestinian story in "Myrrh and Pomegranate" with a new perspective based on details of daily life and the suffering of Palestinians under occupation, but she gathered several threads to weave her story, including national and collective concern, the issue of prisoners, the occupation's confiscation of Palestinian lands, and the dismemberment of cities, among other things. And while it touches on various linked and intertwined human characteristics, it also impacts on the individual dimension, society, culture, conventions, and traditions.

The film raises many questions about the stereotypical society's view of women in general and of the prisoner's wife in particular, where she bears the consequences of the prisoner's heroism in one way or another, while she lives the details of being an indirect "victim,"

of the occupation first and then of society second, and thus Al-Najjar returns to pose the problem of the priorities of the national struggle, which are national liberation versus social justice.

A moral dilemma is presented in the film, with newlywed Qamar exchanging admiration for dance teacher Qais while her husband is imprisoned in an Israeli prison. But it's also a story of personal and collective liberation: Qamar imposes her will on her family, so she can continue dancing even though it's not appropriate for the wife of a detained man, and the family resists the occupation's attempts to seize their land.

### **The Feminine "Self" vs the Patriarchal "Self" and the Colonial "Other"**

The film's events take place in Palestinian cities and villages, including Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Jerusalem, Gebya, Jaffna, and Deir Ghassaneh. It is made up of approximately 36 interconnected scenes. The Palestinian character appears in all the scenes, and the characters vary in gender and age, with women, children, and the elderly being represented. The Palestinian character appears as a main character in all scenes. Qamar, Zaid, and Qais are the main characters, with Umm Habib and Umm Zaid as secondary characters.

While the Israeli character "The other" appears only in eight scenes as a male character, specifically soldiers in the army and settlers, with the exception of the Israeli lawyer sympathetic to Palestinians assigned to defend Zaid. All of the characters are in the youth category, and children and the elderly are completely absent. The Israeli character appears as a tertiary character in all scenes.

The film focuses on the Palestinian as a human being who is also a member of a family. It was seen in people of all ages and both sexes. For the majority of the movie scenes,

self-representation was at the center of the action. While it depicted the Israeli character as part of an institution, the Israeli army, or as part of the colonial settlement program, in the majority of the scenes in which he appears, the Israeli is armed.

The film's events begin in the present, with Zaid traveling to his wedding with his family in a car decorated with flowers. And his journey is not long—only a half-hour from Ramallah to Jerusalem. However, there is an Israeli border and a barrier between the two cities, on which young, arrogant Israeli soldiers are stationed, expecting to see permits to travel to Jerusalem. When the occupants of the vehicle are finally signaled to continue on their way, the groom's mother makes a scathing remark that it is custom and tradition that the bride travels with the groom and not the other way around. In this scene, the spectator sees the self-assured Palestinian personality, but it is peaceful with the occupation while being harsh towards Palestinians through a system of customs that govern social relations.

Everyone soon forgets about the inconveniences of the occupation and enjoys the wedding of Zaid and Qamar, which is fastidiously documented in the film. After a few days, the family participates in the olive harvest season, which depicts the peaceful Palestinian life and the farmer's connection to his land, as well as the Palestinian family's desire to live a normal life free of disruptions. The "normal life" continues as Zaid returns to the farm, while Qamar joins a folk dance troupe.

The Israeli army, on the other hand, violently begins the settlement process on Zaid's farm, confiscating it as a result of a stone-throwing incident near it and placing Zaid under administrative detention. Qamar is left to deal with the consequences of her husband's absence, as well as his family's rejection of her "dance" profession as unworthy of a

prisoner's wife! She defies this and returns to "dabke," but she is quickly drawn to the new choreographer, Qais, a Palestinian exile who has returned after 20 years.

Al-Najjar delivered an out-of-the-ordinary experience, prompting much debate and daringly and dramatically dealing with a wide range of themes. Especially in her interactions with the Palestinian women's characters, because she is a woman with her own aspirations, desires, and unique human experience, rather than the typical mother and patient wife who entirely supports the man. The director, on the other hand, depicted the symbolism of Palestinian suffering under colonialism, as well as the stealing of a people's collective will and political independence.

The Israeli character repeatedly appears, but from a distance, as settlers on Zaid's confiscated land and Israeli soldiers within it. The family hires an Israeli lawyer to contest the military authorities' decision to confiscate the land, and the legal proceedings are drawn out. And Zaid is in detention, subjected to the most heinous forms of torture and solitary confinement, but he remains unwavering in his refusal to sign the waiver they demand.

Because the Israeli character was armed in the majority of the scenes in which it appeared, it carried the character of strength and was characterized by weakness in fewer scenes, such as the scene of fear and the armed settler and his escape from the Zaid family. While the Palestinian characters appeared brave, particularly in scenes of Zaid's insistence on defying the occupation despite his imprisonment and refusal to compromise, and his family's refusal to accept the decision to confiscate the land.

The film emphasized the Israeli character as an oppressor and the Palestinian character as an oppressed of the colonizer's actions. Many scenes, however, highlight that Palestinians

continue to face colonizers' measures, and that confiscation of land, prisons, and settlers' attacks are met with challenge and resistance by Palestinians.

In most scenes, characteristics of hostility, confrontation, and challenge dominate the relationship with the other, as it appears most of the time as an enemy colonizer and an alternative to the Palestinian presence, while in a few scenes, he appears with the Israeli lawyer, a relationship of understanding and cooperation. Despite the mix of personal and general, the audience sees Najjar's characters as connected to the cause of the homeland and its concerns, preoccupied with and influenced by them, despite occasionally indulging in their personal concerns and interests.

The film concludes with a scene of Qamar dancing with the band in the amusement park to a display called "Myrrh and Pomegranate." One of the machine games that spins, indicating that life goes on in Palestine.

Although it is critical to address the human side of the story, as well as the wife's difficult human and life circumstances, as Najjar did in focusing on social issues in support of the Palestinian narrative, the more socially sound the society, the more capable and closer to national liberation it will be.

In general, the Palestinian characters have positive attributes such as strength, courage, kindness, and a sense of belonging to their homeland, while the characters possess negative traits such as weakness, cruelty, cowardice, hesitancy, and self-interest in only a few scenes. While the Israeli character was not shown in a positive light, it remained aloof, secondary, and lacking in kindness, and it was frequently depicted in a negative, cruel, and cowardly light.

It may be claimed that Najjar's film depicted the Palestinian as a natural figure with regular human qualities and a natural blend of virtues and vices. This is a far cry from the popular perception of the Palestinian as a hero. While the Israeli soldier remained a flat, unhuman figure remote from the action, dressed in an army uniform and armed with army weaponry.

#### **4.3.6. Wajeb, the Palestinian Self in Two Generations**

Wajib (2018) is Palestinian director Anne-Marie Jacir's third feature film, following "Salt of This Sea" (2008) and "When I See You" (2012), as well as a variety of short films, the most well-known of which being "As if We Are Twenty Impossibles." The film received an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Film. It's a collaboration between a number of organizations, including "Palestine Films" and "Metaphora," with contributions from Palestine, France, Colombia, Germany, Norway, and Qatar.

Jacir is a Palestinian poet and filmmaker who was born in Bethlehem in 1974 and lived in Palestine until she moved to the United States of America to pursue her education. She obtained her MA in Film from the Department of Film Arts at Columbia University in 2002. Since 1994, she has worked in independent cinemas.

Wajib is a road film shot in Nazareth and presented in a black humor style, which complements the story's complexities and paradoxes in Palestine. The return of Shadi the engineer from Italy to assist his father, Abu Shadi, in the preparations for his sister Amal's wedding, reveals the socially and politically complex layers of reality.

Shadi, his father, and his sister are the three major characters, with secondary characters such as Fadia, Abu Rami, and Salma rounding out the cast.

### **The Pragmatic vs. the Idealist Self**

The dialogue between the father and son, who spend the majority of their day distributing invitations to the daughter's wedding, reveals a lot about the two characters' thoughts and family history, and reflects the struggle between two generations who are almost incompatible in almost every way, all within the framework of a dark comedy. The spectator will detect a discrepancy between the characters' thoughts and actions. Shadi, the idealistic young man, desires to live outside Palestine without making any effort to change, but his "realistic" father is sticking to being within, despite social restrictions and the presence of the occupation.

The film is distinguished by an elegant dialogue that emerges from recurrent debates between Shadi, who returns from exile with modern and idealistic views, and Abu Shadi, who is devoted to his hometown and its traditions. Shadi criticizes social patterns in his community, from the piling of trash in the streets to the interaction with its occupants. Abu Shadi is continually chastising his son for his lack of "common sense" in his appearance and for having a girlfriend.

This scene illustrates a battle between two selves from two generations: the pragmatic self, the father, who wants to continue living normally despite the occupation's presence, and an idealist self, the son, who is unaccustomed to the occupation's existence despite having been born with it. Another scene in which Shadi is astonished and concerned by the sight of Israeli soldiers in military uniforms at a nearby table in a prominent Nazareth restaurant demonstrates this.

Shadi's proposal to invite a singing group from Ramallah to perform at the wedding instead of the unpleasant "family singer," from his perspective, highlights the close bond

between the younger generation of Palestinians from the occupied interior and their counterparts from the West Bank.

Moving away from slogans and direct statements, the film's director used comedic dialogue to portray the political and social facets of life in Nazareth. The self's relationship with the other is tangled, and the other is seen as a threat. When Abu Shadi hit a dog with his car, he showed signals of horror until we thought he had hit a person, then drove away swiftly, explaining to his son, "Do you know what it means to crush an animal in the nation, and an Israeli dog as well?"

The Israeli other character appears in only four scenes from the 39th film, all of which are secondary, but the Israeli character is mentioned in other situations. In each of the four scenes, the character of the "other" appears as a male character, notably within the institutions of the occupation army and the intelligence agency, and all of the characters are similarly limited to the youth category, with no representation of children or the elderly.

The apparent meaning of the film's title is "social responsibility," or the obligation of personally inviting relatives and friends to the wedding, which Abu Shadi is keen on as part of his desire to satisfy society, which the film portrayed more than once. The other "duty" illustrated by the events of the film is the responsibility that "Abu Shadi" carries in raising his children, remaining steady in his homeland, and suffering all the difficulties, in exchange for the wife's escape route of fleeing to live abroad.

In most situations, the Palestinian character looks to be part of a family and exhibits feelings such as love, longing, and envy, but the Israeli character appears flat and

distant—the spectator doesn't even hear their voice. The major characters express their scorn for the character of the priest, who works with the occupation at one point.

Shadi forces his father to talk on the phone with the father of his girlfriend, a leader in the Liberation Organization, so "Abu Shadi" lies and conveys to him the image of Palestine in its romantic form, as it is in the refugee's imagination with its orange trees and sea in another scene that shows the personality's contradictions. Despite the fact that "Abu Shadi" had questioned the man's patriotism in a previous scene, the Palestinian who remained on his land sympathizes with the Palestinian who has been deprived of his homeland at this moment, erasing 70 years of divisions caused by Israel.

The film's director succeeds in painting a vivid picture of Nazareth's neighborhoods and alleyways, as well as its social activities, dialect, politeness, and sometimes social hypocrisy. She was also able to employ the father-son relationship between her performers in a way that resulted in naturalistic, non-artificial moments. What expressed the Palestinian character as a natural character with normal human traits were positive traits like strength, courage, kindness, and attachment to the homeland, while bad traits like weakness, cruelty, cowardice, hesitancy, and selfishness were carried by the characters.

While the other character seemed to be an Israeli as a flat, unhuman figure far from the scenes, dressed in an army uniform and with an army weapon. Despite being touched in some manner by the conditions of life inside Israel, the Palestinians appeared to continue resisting the colonizers, preserving and attempting to sustain their identity. As a result, the features of hostility overwhelmed the self-other relationship over coexistence.

#### **4.4 Funding Sources and "Self/ Other" Representations**

Money, or the "production budget," is a crucial factor in the film industry because it influences the idea, script, crew, and audience, all of which contribute to the film's success. Following the Oslo Accords, the PLO and its institutions weakened, resulting in a drop in official and political interest in film production. As a consequence, the filmmakers began exploring for other sources of funding, aware that whoever pays the money may have an impact on the concept.

Film scholars disagree on whether the national content of Palestinian films, including the image of the self and the other, is influenced by the various financiers, whether the funding body is a local, official, private sector, or political party, and whether the funder is an Arab or foreign funder, and finally an Israeli funder, especially for Palestinian films produced within the 1948 borders.

According to Alaa Karajeh, a film researcher and writer, foreign funding had no effect on the identity of the Palestinian film as a whole or the reality of the Palestinian narrative, with the exception of some films that presented the idea of coexistence with the occupation through human relations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. Its impact, she claims, is not comparable to Palestinian films' success in international festivals, because it all depends on the Palestinian director's responsibility and vision, despite the challenges she or he faces within globalized artistic production networks.

Foreign funding should not be equated with a lack of moral commitment to the Palestinian cause, according to Karaja, despite the stage's fragility. While some have been able to obtain funding without making concessions while standing behind foreign funding, she

asserts that this is difficult and does not apply to everyone, and that it does not completely eliminate the impact of funding linkage and its reflection on the identity of some films.

Saeid Abu Mualla, a film researcher and writer, also believes that the impact of funding on films is indisputable, because those who provide money often impose their conditions, directions, and vision. In an interview with the researcher, Abu Mualla describes two types of influence: The first is a direct effect, in which the film's script is subjected to requirements, additions, or exclusions when presented as a project to funding bodies (whether they are cultural centers, international institutions, or international festivals), and this is done for a variety of reasons, some of which are technical, dramatic, some of which are related to the marketing, festival access, and the completion of the funding journey.

According to Abu Mualla, the other form of influence is a form of self-censorship on the part of the Palestinian filmmaker. According to Abu Mualla, this is a general effect in which the Palestinian director or writer has begun to think in the same way as the financier, and this is something you can hear if you sit with a writer or a Palestinian director, which is related to the general Palestinian situation, in which funding projects are written based on the agenda of the supporting bodies.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

During the past two decades, the concept of the "self" and the "other" has been affected in Palestinian cinema by several political factors and their social and psychological repercussions on the Palestinian identity. This came through a more mature Palestinian cinema that has established itself on the international scene. Among its pioneers were directors who were educated abroad and who had contact with the world's professional

film industry and who transferred their experiences to Palestine, such as Elia Suleiman, Hani Abu Asaad, and others. The new cinema was characterized by showing the contradictions and complexities of Palestinian society through subjective experiences that can be drawn as a model or phenomenon at a general level. With the great development of self-representation, the representation of the other continued to appear flat, or perhaps unwilling to delve deeper into it.

Through the coding procedure, quantitative content analysis revealed that new Palestinian films place a higher focus on self-representation than on other-representation. In the sample films, self-representations made up 71% of the characters. In terms of quality, all of the main characters and the majority of the secondary characters were self-representations, while the other-representations were mostly tertiary characters. There were men and women, children, young people, and the elderly among the self-representations, which appeared to be diverse in terms of gender and age. The representation of the others, on the other hand, tended to be of middle-aged males who frequently served in the occupation army. On the other hand, there was no correlation between the character's appearance and its being a self or other representation.

In terms of positive traits such as ambition, intelligence, kindness, confidence, leadership, and courage, the quantitative content analysis process revealed that self-representations outnumber other-representations. The other representations, on the other hand, outperform the only positive one, strength. Other-representations outperformed self when it came to negative traits like lack of intelligence, cowardice, cruelty, and dependency, but self-representations showed significant repetitions of the traits of weakness and lack of ambition.

In terms of national values, the content analysis revealed that most representations of the Palestinian character are committed to the national cause, as they are aware of it, engage in peaceful or armed resistance, and show sympathy for their people. Regardless of the fact that the Israeli character appears to be going through a moral crisis, it accepts and engages in colonial violence. In general, the self-other relationship is marked by confrontation, dependence, dominance, and hostility, with a very limited presence of the concept of coexistence.

The qualitative analysis in the second part of this chapter, which used the critical content analysis method, revealed that the messages that the Palestinian filmmakers wanted to send were varied. Each of them raised important questions that lie at the heart of the Palestinian discourse, from searching for hope in the reality of defeat, through narrating history and dismantling the Palestinian experience. The attempt to humanize the story to address the Palestinian, Arab, and international audience by raising issues related to the social dimension of the national struggle, as the Palestinian films presented the Palestinian as a victim of his society, as a victim of colonialism. These films tried to get out of the ready-made templates as a contribution towards further research and experimentation in the narration of the Palestinian narrative.

In Elia Suleiman's "The Time That Remains," the moral struggle is between the steadfast but broken and defeated "self," who occasionally engages with the occupier, and the violent colonial "other," who is likewise weak in the face of Palestinian resistance. It also portrays the different methods in which Palestinian images oppose colonialism, such as through the use of weapons and stones, as well as through silence and sarcasm.

Hani Abo Asad's "Omar" concentrates on the conflict between the self and the other, which is the aggressive, manipulative enemy, on the one hand, and the struggle among the many selves: the pure heroic self, and the cowardly, betraying self, on the other. The film tackles a difficult subject: Palestinian cooperation with Israeli intelligence as well as the conflict that Palestinians face with themselves, their society, and the colonizers.

Farah Nabulsi's "The Present" portrays the classic Palestinian suffering of the oppressed "self" in the face of the oppressor "other," and it does so through a fast-smart and dramatic storyline. A direct statement that expresses the occupation's violence and the Palestinian representation of weakness, as well as a dedication to optimism in the face of adversity.

In her film "Pomegranate and Myhre," Najwa Al-Najjar delivers an unusual plot. Through the unexpected love story that occurred between the wife of a prisoner and a dancing coach, it deals with the battle between the feminine "self" and the patriarchal "self" and the colonial "other." The film also deals with the issues of detainees in Israeli prisons, Palestinian women and their suffering, land confiscation, and settlement.

Annemarie Jacir's film "Wajeb" depicts the conflict between two generations' selves: the ideal self and the practical self. That is, through a dialogue between a Nazareth father and son, which depicts the complexities of Palestinian existence in Israel, identity crises, societal issues, and intergenerational conflicting values.

In its classic concept of a heroic resistor, Khaled Jundia's "Imad Aqel" deals with the basic conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed self. The film promotes itself as an extension of revolutionary cinema, in terms of content, ambitions, finance, and limited distribution, and provides an exclusionary political narrative that does not qualify it to present the Palestinians worldwide.

## **5. Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The study posed a number of questions aimed at examining how new Palestinian cinema deals with the concept of the self and the other, including how prevalent the self-and-other dilemma is in new Palestinian cinema. Also, what are the characteristics of the self and other representations? What is the understanding of self-other relationships? Have political changes influenced how these images are portrayed? Is there a significant variation in how directors perceive the "self" and the other based on where they come from as well as the funding parties?

This chapter summarizes the findings of the analytical process, including coding and critical analysis, in an attempt to address the previous questions and then offers recommendations.

### **5.2 Discussion of the Results of the Study**

The findings of the study revealed that, in comparison to the Israeli character (the other), the new Palestinian films paid greater attention to the Palestinian character (the self). Only 21% of the characters in the sample films were Israeli, whereas 71% of the characters were Palestinian.

After the second intifada, the new Palestinian cinema appears to be preoccupied with reflecting the concept of the self and the other, no less than its interest in it since its inception before the Nakba to challenge the Zionist project and in the revolution cinema of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

The contemplator observes that these cinematic models allow the self's voice to communicate what is behind its surface: worries, frustrations, and hopes. Furthermore, in Palestinian films, a new phenomenon has arisen: self and other criticism. The self is not the only victim, and the other is not the only perpetrator! As illustrated in the film *Pomegranate and Myrrh*, the self is also a victim of the self, which may represent society, its norms, and traditions. As a result of society and the occupation's participation in women's oppression and constraints on their independence.

These cinematic models also allowed for a shift away from idealism and toward realism. The observer can see the broken Palestinian character in their scenes, tired of the harsh daily life that Palestinians live without embellishment or exaggeration. As in "The Present," which describes the "path of pain" that many Palestinians must travel every day to work in Israel and return to villages cut off by checkpoints.

On the other hand, the audience gets the impression that the Palestinian is a typical human being who is both strong and weak at times. When the Palestinian character on screen was the invincible sacrificial guerrilla hero in the Revolution films, these films removed the heroic robe "the self" wore, to become instead a normal character with advantages and disadvantages. In "Omar," the self betrayed, their comrades lie and deal with the enemy against the best interests of their country.

These films highlight challenging questions concerning the practicality and cost of armed struggle, such as in the film *Omar*, where the three friends' operation results in their deaths. Films also attempt to rebuild the historical Palestinian narrative, sometimes satirically, like Elia Suleiman did in the past, mocking the Arab defeat in Palestine.

Despite departing from stereotypes when dealing with the "self," the analyzed cinematic models remained stuck in stereotyped perceptions of the other. The other, dressed in army fatigues and wielding a weapon, appeared from a distance. The majority of the other characters appeared to be soldiers committing violence against Palestinians.

The films depicted a variety of self-models, such as the self that is giving or selfish, ambitious or depressed, or the self that rejects, accepts, or cooperates with the colonizer. While there is only one model of the other, the colonizer, the adversary, is the one who engages in violence against the self!

The other is frequently represented as a tertiary character in the six films studied. The Palestinian representation, on the other hand, varied amongst men and women, children and the aged. While the gender diversity in Israeli characters was fairly limited, with male characters accounting for 90% of all appearances, Israeli characters were limited to the middle age range, with the elderly appearing only rarely and no children appearing at all.

The analysis revealed that there was no substantial difference in appearance between the self and the other, since both sides' characters appeared to be largely good-looking in similar proportions. However, in terms of psychological characteristics, Palestinian representations occurred more frequently with positive attributes, with kindness, intelligence, and ambition being among the most common positive personality traits. And the Israeli representations only repeated a small percentage of them. In terms of negative attributes, the other's representations exceeded the self's personality, although the ego appeared to be weaker than the other.

Because the majority of the characters are soldiers who follow orders, the most common bad attributes in the other were cruelty, cowardice, and passivity.

And thus, the relationship with the other seemed tense, primarily as a confrontational relationship, followed by domination and dependency, or hostility between the self and the other representations, with coexistence between the two sides remaining rare.

The findings demonstrate that the primary representation of the self is its dedication to the Palestinian cause (75 percent), which is characterized by awareness of the issue and its involvement in resisting the occupation, whether violently or nonviolently, as well as sympathy for the Palestinian people. The majority of Israeli representations that agree or practice violence against Palestinians, on the other hand (96 percent), are consistent with the colonial project.

Despite the fact that the films went into detail about Palestinian society and life, the conflict with the occupation remained at the heart of the Palestinians' struggles in their various locations. Within Israel, in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. As a result, we see that wherever the Palestinians are located, it is the Palestinians with social problems and national concerns!

The researcher feels, however, that it is vital to examine Hamas' filmmaking experience, as the film "Imad Akl" represents a distinct model from the other films in the sample. It's difficult to place it among the new cinema films because it has many of the qualities of revolution cinema, such as being direct and including many slogans, as well as having limited production possibilities in terms of script, language, photography, and actor performance.

The researcher also argues that political changes around the turn of the third millennium, as well as other elements such as director experiences, have contributed to a shift in self and other representation from what was seen in revolution films. In the hunt for

Palestinian hope in the face of failures, the majority of the films include self-portraits. Following the Oslo Accords' failure to attain freedom and independence, and the official side's abandonment of armed action in favor of peaceful struggle, movies felt more liberated than grandiose slogans. Directors began looking for alternative sources of funding after abandoning the official side of film production and financing.

Furthermore, the film sample included six films by six different directors, three men and three women, from the West Bank and Gaza, as well as within the Green Line and from the diaspora. They all got their start in the film industry in the West. With the exception of the cinematic work produced in Gaza, the researcher noted that differences in their birthplaces, upbringings, and experiences had no impact on their work.

Despite the fact that the researcher finds that there is no significant variability in how the self and the other are presented in the sample films based on the different sources of funding, two film specialists told the researcher in interviews that funding has a direct or indirect impact on the national content in some cinema films from Palestine, depending on the source of funding.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The researcher suggests the following in light of the study's findings:

- Based on the first finding, which indicates that the concept of the self and the other are very present in Palestinian cinema, the researcher recommended that filmmakers be more conscious of representations of the self and the other while developing cinematic scenarios because they reflect the Palestinian people's collective narrative and influence their orientations in some way.

- Based on the second finding, which indicates that Palestinian representations had positive and negative characteristics like any other normal human. This is in contrast to what revolution films used to represent of the heroic guerrilla. The researchers recommended that this approach be continued because it is more accessible to a global audience and makes the Palestinian narrative more present than before.
- The researcher recommends investing in the film industry from Palestinian official bodies and the Palestinian private sector to provide cinema focused on national concerns, based on the findings that funding the cinema may have a direct or indirect impact on the national contents of the film.
- Based on the third finding, which shows that Gaza's film industry is far behind its counterparts. The researcher suggests investing in the development of cinema in Gaza in particular, as well as coordinating efforts to improve the capacities of Palestinian filmmakers in the Palestinian territories, Israel, and the diaspora.
- Based on the difficulties encountered by the researcher due to a lack of previous studies and literature in the field of research, the researcher recommends that, in light of the field's rapid development, new film studies topics be addressed, as well as connections made between them and notions of identity and political and social changes.
- Based on the fact that cinema is a powerful artistic tool in the world, the researcher recommends investing in film productions to preserve the Palestinian narrative and reflect the true image of the Palestinian self, as well as the truth about Israel's violence practices, whether by official or unofficial institutions.

- The researcher recommends using extracurricular activities to present and discuss Palestinian film productions in Palestinian schools with the goal of strengthening national identity and developing students' analytical abilities.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

Since the early 2000s, Palestinian filmmakers have pushed for high-quality films that depict the Palestinian cause. They developed films with more courage and a distinct cinematic perspective. They carried the Palestinian cause beyond the offices of political parties, turning it into a public-opinion issue inspired by the Palestinian people's traumas and collecting first-place awards at the world's most prestigious film festivals.

This study gave an overview of representations of the self (Palestinian) and the other (Israeli) characters in new Palestinian films. Based on the study findings, there has been a strong presence of the self-and-other dilemma. At a time when the films were breaking new ground by digging into the Palestinian character, they stayed stuck in the conventional by avoiding the Israeli character. Just like any human being, self-representations featured positive and negative characteristics, but the negative traits dominated the other's representations.

Furthermore, as a result of political changes and their social, psychological, and other consequences for the Palestinian people, the concept of self and other has shifted. According to the findings of the study, while the new generation of Palestinian filmmakers has become more liberal and experienced in choosing their subjects and the nature of their characters, shedding light on the Palestinian people's daily lives and social implications, the conflict with Israel remains the most pressing concern of Palestinian cinematic work, through which these directors reflect national concern.



2															
3															
4															

**4- National values**

Charac ter	Committed to the National Cause				Uncommitted to the National Cause:			
	Aware of the Palestinian cause	Resists Peacefully	Resists Armed	Feel with their People	Unaware of the Palestinian cause	Aware but Unconcerned	Collaborating with the Occupation	Resigned to the Reality
<b>1</b>								
<b>2</b>								
<b>3</b>								

**5- Moral Values**

Character	Consistent with the violence of the occupation		Inconsistent with the violence of the occupation	
	Practicing the violence of colonialism	Accepting the violence of colonialism	Rejecting the violence of colonialism	Resisting the colonial violence

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## المخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في مفهومي "الذات" و"الآخر" في الأفلام الفلسطينية وتحديداً تلك الأفلام التي تم إنتاجها ما بين 2009-2019 لفهم الرواية الفلسطينية حول ثنائية الذات الآخر، والتغيرات التي طرأت على صورة الذات والآخر، مع مراعاة التحولات الاجتماعية السياسية التي حدثت خلال العقدين الماضيين.

اشتملت عينة الدراسة على ست أفلام فلسطينية كان لها أثر كبير بعد الانتفاضة الثانية عام 2000. حاولت الدراسة من خلالها الإجابة عن مجموعة من الأسئلة أهمها إلى أي مدى تحضر ثنائية الذات والآخر في الأفلام الفلسطينية الجديدة، وما هي خصائص تمثيلات كل منهما.

اعتمدت الدراسة منهج تحليل المحتوى. من ناحية، طورت الباحثة أداة ترميز تعتمد على وحدة الشخصية. وعليه، تم استعراض العناصر المختلفة لعينة الأفلام من حيث الخصائص الديموغرافية والفردية للشخصية وكذلك القيم. من ناحية أخرى، اعتمدت الباحثة على وحدة المشهد باستخدام أسلوب تحليل المحتوى النقدي لربط الأرقام الإحصائية بكل مكون من مكونات الفيلم، وكذلك رؤية المخرج وخلفيته والإنتاج.

وجدت الدراسة أن هناك حضوراً قوياً لثنائية الذات والآخر في الأفلام الفلسطينية الجديدة. وأن هناك افاق جديدة للتعامل مع الشخصية الفلسطينية (الأنثى)، بينما ظلت تمثيلات (الآخر) عالقة في التقليد من خلال تجنب الشخصية الإسرائيلية. وأظهرت الدراسة أن تمثيلات الانا حملت خصائص إيجابية وسلبية مثل أي شخصية طبيعية، بينما هيمنت السمات السلبية على تمثيلات الآخر.

وأوصت الدراسة بالتطرق بحثياً إلى مواضيع جديدة في السينما الفلسطينية في ظل التطور السريع في هذا المجال وربطها بمفاهيم الهوية والتغيرات السياسية والاجتماعية. وكذلك أن يكون المخرجون أكثر وعياً بتمثيل الذات والآخر أثناء تطوير السيناريوهات السينمائية، لأنها تعكس السرد الجماعي للشعب الفلسطيني وتؤثر على توجهاته بطريقة أو بأخرى.