



**An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**BETWEEN BORDERS AND SCREENS:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S
PORTRAYAL IN PALESTINIAN AND
ISRAELI CINEMA**

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**This Thesis is Submitted in Partial of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
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Dedication

To the women of Palestine, whose lives weave through the tapestry of struggle and
hope—

Your spirit is the heartbeat of this work,

Resilient as the olive trees rooted in ancient soil,

Courageous as the sun rising over a land marked by sorrow and beauty.

In every whisper of your stories and every echo of your defiance,

You carve pathways through the darkness,

Bringing light to where shadows have long concealed truth.

May this research stand as a testament to your unyielding strength,

A humble offering to the poetry of your lives,

And a celebration of the endless grace with which you defy the world.

Acknowledgment

I am deeply grateful to those who have made this journey possible and profoundly meaningful.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to my family, whose unwavering support and endless encouragement have been the foundation of this work. Your belief in me has guided me through every challenge and triumph.

To my mentors and advisors, your invaluable insights and constructive feedback have enriched this research beyond measure. Your dedication to fostering a deeper understanding of the intersection of gender and cinema has been genuinely inspiring.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the vibrant community of Palestinian women whose stories and experiences are the heart of this research. Your resilience, strength, and grace have inspired this work and illuminated the path for a richer, more nuanced exploration of our shared narratives.

Your support and camaraderie have been a source of strength and motivation to my colleagues and friends. Your intellectual curiosity and critical engagement have significantly shaped the direction of this research.

Finally, to those who have shared their time and stories with me, thank you for your trust and openness. Your voices are the cornerstone of this study, and your contributions are honored with the utmost respect and gratitude.

This work is a collective effort, reflecting the collaborative spirit and shared commitment to understanding and celebrating the diverse and complex realities of women's lives.

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

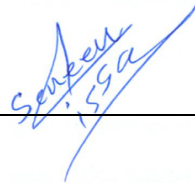
BETWEEN BORDERS AND SCREENS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S PORTRAYAL IN PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI CINEMA

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

Student's Name

Seneen Emad Izzat Issa

Signature:



Date:

15/05/2025

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Abstract

This thesis provides a comparative analysis of women's portrayal in Palestinian and Israeli Cinema, addressing their development of gendered identities within intercultural, social, political, and historical frameworks. It centers on *Huda's Salon* and *Salt of this Sea* in Palestinian cinema and *Seven Blessings* and *Zero Motivation* in Israeli cinema and focuses on the questions of agency, identity, and resistance. It seeks to understand the image of women in film who are creators and women who symbolize numerous problems of society, using the lens of feminist film theory. In this sense, women have been constructed in Palestinian films so that they would portray struggles in a battle for survival and nationalist ideologies. Israeli cinema, on the other hand, places the family in the center of society while using the soldier's ambition as a source of conflict and action. This thesis, therefore, argues that while gender identity in the film is depicted in a time of conflict, these films serve to strengthen and create new narratives surrounding gender roles and identity, making this an area of importance to the evolution of cinema in creating a sense of society as well as its beliefs in times of conflict.

Keywords: Palestinian cinema, Israeli cinema, women's representation, feminist film theory, intersectionality, male gaze, national identity, resistance, agency, cultural narratives, Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Chapter One

Introduction and Literature Review

The chapter establishes a framework for studying the Israel-Palestine conflict and determines the historical and sociopolitical conditions that allowed for the emergence of both communities. It investigates the origins of the conflict, the two contrasting national memories, and how these memories have persistently contributed to the social texture of both communities, especially in cinema. This chapter further highlights women's roles in film as an essential medium of creativity and self-expression, how national cinemas incorporate them, and what they reveal. This chapter explores these motifs and prepares the ground for a comparative¹ study of the image of women in Palestinian and Israeli cinema.

1.1 Background

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict, rooted in intricate pasts of nationalism, dispossession, and struggle, has produced unique social and political stories. This conflict goes back to the late 19th and early 20th-century nationalist movements that encouraged Jewish migration to Palestine and eventually led to the creation of Israel in 1948. This event, known to Palestinians as the Nakba, saw the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians, forming a foundational grievance that continues to shape Palestinian identity today (Pappé, 2006; Khalidi, 1997).

This has given way to similar, yet very distinct, sociopolitical tensions in both areas, characterized by continued occupation, border conflicts, and deeply rooted tales of persecution and survival. Israeli national identity focuses on "return to the homeland" and security against external enemies (Yehoshua, 2009). However, Palestinian identity coalesces around a discourse of *sumud*, or steadfastness, essentially one of continued resistance to occupation and the ongoing struggle for self-determination (Masalha, 2012; Said, 1992).

These conflicting narratives are reflected throughout both cultures in their various forms of expression, the most prominent being the movies, where directors create distinct

¹ For further reference, see H. Remak's definition of comparative literature: "the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression." While this study omits direct literary texts, it takes film as a form of narrative art within broader intercultural dialogue.

images of women to comment on more general social problems. Palestinian cinema tends to place women as the symbol of steadfastness, not just the suffering of the nation, but its defiance against erasure (Naficy, 2001). This reflects a broader trend in Palestinian films, which emerged in the 1960s and aimed to document and assert Palestinian cinematic representations of displacement, identity, and resistance in response to marginalization. One example of this is *Divine Intervention* (2002), directed by Elia Suleiman, and *Omar* (2013), directed by Hany Abu-Assad, which use satire, allegory, and drama to contradict hegemonic discourses and offer other ways of looking at the conflict (Dabashi, 2006). Through this lens, cinema serves as a form of cultural resistance and a platform for preserving collective memories and constructing national identities (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008).

Israeli film has also changed as a reflection of the shift in society's perspective of the national story. Early Zionist films depicted 'heroic' pioneers establishing a homeland, but the "New Israeli Cinema" movement of the 1980s began to take a more critical approach. Movies such as *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) by Ari Folman and *The Bubble* (2006) by Eytan Fox deal with themes of trauma and moral ambiguity and how the conflict has affected the individual and sometimes even challenges some of the base ideals of Zionism (Yosef, 2011; Shohat, 1992). As usual, women's representation in Israeli film is often limited to the roles of mothers or nation builders. However, the new wave of cinema has started breaking these patriarchal boundaries and denouncing state militarism, thus offering a more nuanced construction of women's societal roles (Morag, 2013).

The purpose of this research is to analyze the processes of subordination and differentiation of gendered identities as found in Palestinian and Israeli cinemas, with a particular focus on the representation of conflict and construction of 'the screen' as a domain of cultural struggle in which narrative of identity, resistance, and nation are performed. Through the analysis of these movies, this research demonstrates that the films are not only conveying stories but are helping to mold and challenge the social and political discourses of gender and identity in the context of the continual Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Under this specific framework of comparative literature, literary works are not examined as texts to be compared between cultures. Instead, the film theory of feminism and

cultural studies are synthesized in an interdisciplinary manner. H. Remak and the American school of comparative literature claim that one element of a comparativist study must consist of literature. Nevertheless, more advanced shifts in the culture and comparison studies perceive cinema as an important storytelling vehicle which can articulate a nation's identity, gender, or politics. This dissertation is also granted this scholarship with the argument of its treatment of cinematography as literature. The aim of the research is to analyze the politically motivated construction and representation of gender roles and identities in visual narratives by looking at film only.

In this study, no written literary texts are analyzed, but the films selected serve as narrative constructs. Their storytelling is conveyed through cinematic narration in imagery, spatial dimensions, rhythm, *mise-en-scène*, and editing. This constitutes a medium along which visual forms of prose convey narrative techniques. This also implies that traditional literary prose will not be the primary focus during the analysis.

As this research solely focuses on the analysis of films, it is necessary to highlight that this analysis does not rely on literary adaptations, since the comparison focuses on the use of gendered identity and politics within the storyline of the film and its visualization.

1.2 Problem Statement

Several scholars have been interested in the portrayal of women in Palestinian and Israeli cinema; however, that interest has yet to be limited (Yaqub, 2018; Drainville & Saeed, 2017). This study tries to add something to the existing scholarship by exploring the concepts of women in movies in this setting. The study has two specific aims: addressing the vacuum in the literature regarding the systematic examination of women's portrayals in film and considering the likely consequences of such portrayals for the prevalent social constructs about femininity within the setting of the conflict.

Although the function of cinema in building cultural narratives and social attitudes is absolute, investigations such as (Yaqub, 2018; Drainville & Saeed, 2017) reveal that much more effort is needed. The present study attempts an answer to the question of women's portrayal representation by evaluating visual and narrative as well as symbolic components in the movies that revolve around Palestinian and Israeli conflicts. The depictions of women are not merely artistic decisions for filmmakers; these can either reproduce or question the prevailing conventions and preconceptions (Yosef, 2017). The

objective of this research is to explore whether these portrayals of women move away from the cinema standard and develop alternative pictures of women, which in turn will impact the perception of women in the context of the conflict.

In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is rife with political and cultural frictions, the role of women in film provides a general overview of the society's state of affairs (Jamal & Lavie, 2023; Nashef, 2016; Steir-Livny, 2016). This study examines the construction of women in film and assesses the extent to which it reproduces or resists established gender norms and stereotypes, thus explaining their role in gender relations and societal conceptualizations. These issues being understood, this research influences sociocultural studies of war, film, and gender in the sense of bringing focus to women in many spheres over building and shaping values in the context of a geopolitical environment.

The field of comparative literature has focused on literary works of text as primary objects for analysis. Nevertheless, this study adopts a broader approach on "textuality" and aligns with previously mentioned definitions of literature that encompasses film texts as narrative forms. The films studied in this research perform some of the functions of literary texts. They construct cultural identities, narrate historical memory, and mirror ideological conflicts. Examining these films using feminist and postcolonial theories—typically employed in literary analysis—ensures the thesis remains within the boundaries of comparative literature while at the same time advancing its interdisciplinary development.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study's objectives are crafted to align with the research systematically towards achieving a comprehensive study of the images of women within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Palestinian and Israeli films:

1. Conduct a comparative study on the depiction of women in Palestinian and Israeli cinema.
2. Explore the association between the representation of women in film and the dominant socio-political discourse in that context.

3. Examine the portrayal of women in relation to the construction or deconstruction of gender norms in and through film.
4. Analyze the representation of women in relation to gender, class, and ethnicity within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What are the common and distinct ways women are portrayed in Palestinian and Israeli cinema?
2. In what ways do these representations impact or correspond to the socio-political discourse in the respective society?
3. Do these representations of women influence traditional perceptions of femininity, and what is the social impact?
4. In what ways do class and ethnicity combine with gender in the representation of women in Palestinian and Israeli cinema?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The research on the role of women in films produced within the frame of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is essential and valuable for several reasons. First, it addresses a significant literature gap by analyzing women's visual and symbolic representations in these cultural and political contexts. This research aims to understand how gender relations are constructed in the context of the conflict and, additionally, to determine how such images relate to popular masculine ideals.

This research discusses how women's portrayal formulates the national narrative and how national identity is developed through cinema in Palestinian and Israeli communities. The interdisciplinary outlook shows a great deal more regarding how women are represented through the lenses of gender, class and ethnicity and it also highlights the reality of women's experiences.

This work is relevant for understanding social transformation. Such discourses can uphold or undermine conventional notions associated with masculinity and femininity and thus engage in more nuanced gender-responsive discourses within both societies. The context

is needed because it illustrates how film authors use images, time, and social structures to portray the changing dynamics of cinema and culture.

1.6 Literature Review

This literature review will focus on the multifaceted portrayal of women in films produced in Palestine and Israel with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such examination relies on feminist film theory, cultural studies, and intersectionality to investigate gender in these films beyond the pictorial representation into the larger social, cultural, and political frameworks.

1.7 Previous Studies

Feminists such as (Modleski, 2015; Elsaesser & Hager, 2015) provide a perspective that cannot be ignored in understanding how women are portrayed. Modleski, in his analysis of Hitchcock, shows how women are images for the delight of a presumed male audience—this is a theoretical understanding of the 'male gaze'. This is another perspective that is built upon by Elsaesser & Hager, who focus on the more sensory, human aspects of the film. These theories are key in explaining how the Palestinian and Israeli cinemas uphold or critique these representations of women in the images and sounds throughout the films.

The concept of the 'male gaze' is further advanced by Oliver (2017), who argues that traditional cinema tends to offer a sense of voyeurism, which also places the camera at the service of a heterosexual male audience. Their bodies and facial features are often regarded as objects, either seen in long/medium shots or neglected, making women appear as mere background props on screen. These outdated conventions are crucial in shaping how reforms in the treatment and the role of women on screen are envisaged in modern society, with such imaging already commencing in the past.

In contemporary feminism, the availability of intersectionality allows to focus on how gender as a social category is connected with race, class, and ethnicity in forming women's history and narratives. As Sutherland & Feltey (2017) argue, an intersectional feminist perspective is necessary to analyze Palestinian and Israeli films. In this context, the question is pursued, inquiring whether the representation of women in films endorses the stereotypes or subverts them by displaying their realistic depictions amidst warfare.

This approach enables the heterogeneity of women to be represented and explores their accounts as not simply uncomplicated but challenging the boundaries of what is expected from women of their race.

The intersection of cinema studies and theories related to the post-colonial discourse is equally vital for analyzing identity and power issues in Palestinian and Israeli cinema. It is also beneficial to assess Edward Said's Orientalism theory to determine whether these films are functional in perpetuating or challenging Orientalist views and if Palestinian and Israeli cinema reinforce or challenge such representations. For example, (Ball, 2012; Soleimani Sasani, 2021) ask the question as to whether images of film from the region participate in the articulation of national identities or challenge the colonial representation, providing clues to the complex interrelationship between film and cultural politics.

The contribution of culture to film analysis, specifically Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, is that it engages with audiences and how they interpret such cultural products. As per Drainville and Saeed's (2017) paper, filmmakers 'encode' meanings in movies for the audience to 'decode' the way society sees them culturally. This audience reception approach provides a richer groundwork for an exploration of how Palestinian and Israeli spectators read representations of women, especially in the socio-political context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sutherland & Feltey (2017) look at how different audiences receive these representations, and thus, the social influence of film images of gender roles in this conflict-ridden environment can be studied.

Developing an understanding of Palestinian and Israeli cinema participation cannot happen without addressing the intersection of cinema studies. This assertion is particularly true when women's representations are analyzed. Mrenmoi (2022) also points out that to comprehend the complex series of identities associated with women, one needs to consider the intersection of gender with race, class, and ethnicity. This paradigm makes it possible to address the issues of women's involvement in creating Palestinian and Israeli cinema and build an understanding of the women in question's social reality, who are located in and experience multiple contexts. Analysis of such intersectional identities brings out the diversity and complexity of women's experiences that are often oversimplified in the portrayal of women in the mainstream media.

Yosef's (2017) focus is on contemporary Israeli women's cinema and how relevant sociopolitical reasons shape the visibility of gender differences within the trauma that is being dealt with. In turn, Jamal & Lavie (2023) concern themselves with the ethical issues that Palestinian models take into account when acting in the Israeli cinematography. This kind of development suggests the difficulties that minority voice artists have to cope with in the framework of the cultural industries. These studies investigate the history of narrative images in art with its film parts, which are most often dedicated to disempowerment as well as the loss of faith and hope.

Investigating emotions within a territory also provides some extra dimension to the unique styles of this part of the world. Yaqub (2018) focuses on the beginning of Palestinian cinema during the times of the revolution and gives ample information that helps to substantiate the development of themes in Palestinian movies. Broadening Nashef's (2016) analysis of Hany Abu-Assad's works, how, in the film, the right to bear the national identity of Palestine is stripped off people, and what the Palestinian filmmakers skirted around—the dominant representations. These studies view cinema as a resistant culture: the oppressed tell their stories by manipulating the dominating narratives.

Ben Labidi (2021), on the other hand, cites the term “cinema of the oppressed” as an important reference point in his analysis of Palestinian and Israeli cinematic works concerning resistance. The transformative scope of cinema demonstrates that women in these films can become more than mere subjects but agents of social change. Women energized by the protagonists of the films that transgress societal boundaries will dispel and reorient gender narratives, and cinema will be a medium of female empowerment. Cohen's (2016) “Israeli-Palestinian Literature as History: Interpreting Literature and Film” studies how Orientalism, poetry, and biopolitics are presented in the culture and how film can withstand these repressive forms using strong narratives and symbols.

Through this literature review, the author traces the role of film as an integral part of cultural and political disputes, with a specific focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. Considering several theoretical approaches, this review offers a wider framework for the analysis of gender construction in the specific sociopolitical setting of Palestinian and Israeli cinema. Television, women's images in these films especially, become an

important instrument for the study of complex gender relationships developed under conditions of historical provocations and conflicts. Such a comparative work brings about a dramatic contribution to feminist and cultural studies. It only serves to provide a deeper perspective of how films are used or shaped concerning the social ideals and aspirations of the people relative to the context of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle.

1.8 Conclusion

The cinematic culture and social systems are not as simple as binaries, especially narrating stories of women and their representations in Palestinian and Israeli films. In this regard, it is evident that films are not merely narrating a story but also an intersectional space where culture, politics, as well as gender are functioning (Abu-Lughod, 1998; Shohat, 1989). More often, Palestinian films depict struggles of occupation focusing on resistance, survival, and identity, casting women at the focal point of both the national and personal movement (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008). On the other side, the Israeli film industry depicts the nature of its own geopolitics while avoiding the greater picture of Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its broader dynamics (Shohat, 1992).

At the same time, however, representation and popular decodes of gender through cinema have been articulated in such studies (Mulvey, 2013; Yosef, 2011). The feminist perspectives were crucial for understanding the agency of women and how they dealt with social and institutional circumstances within two different cinematic cultures (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008). There are still many unanswered questions, such as the effects of gender and culture on other comparative studies.

Chapter Two

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach to looking at women's portrayals through the lens of Palestinian and Israeli films. Using this methodology aims to qualitatively explore film images within a wider scope of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

2.1 Research Design

The present study utilizes a comparative qualitative research framework based on feminist film theory and cultural analysis. In this context, the comparative approach moves beyond the mere consideration of the relation of likeness and divergence between films to focus on how gender roles and identity along with resistance are constructed in and through two national cinemas—Palestine and Israel. The comparison is thematic, visual, and ideological, drawing on Laura Mulvey's male gaze and later feminist scholarship, intersectionality, and postcolonial thought. With these aids, the research seeks to understand how films reinforce or contest prevailing socio-political narratives.

2.1.1 Feminist Film Theory

Feminist Film Theory of the '70s and '80s examines the gendered stereotypes in film and seeks to demolish the patriarchal image and role of women in the film in favor of new, more equitable standards. A concept outlined by Laura Mulvey, the 'male gaze', is a starting point in these studies where societies and their views of male ideology are represented in the context of film. The male gaze describes how women are often presented in mainstream cinema from the perspective of the heterosexual male audience. This gaze is reinforced by filmic techniques that focus on the female form and frequently relegate women to the passive (Oliver, 2017; Mulvey, 2013; Mulvey, 2013).

This research combines feminist film theory with analyzing women's portrayals in Palestinian and Israeli films, inquiring if the movie challenges or upholds the male gaze. It is crucial to investigate how confident and specific film choices may conform to or contest the established gender roles (Elsaesser & Hagener, 2015). Even though feminist film theory has transformed into a more intersectional one, it remains a loose umbrella term because gender was never feasible as an exclusive analysis category. Instead, it must be integrated with other social hierarchy categories – ethnicity, class, race, etc. Also, the

intersectional approach, as Sutherland & Feltey (2017) define it, will be utilized in determining how women are represented in the Israeli and Palestinian cinemas in these relatively complex levels of social identities, particularly the ethnically charged Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Not only that, but the theory also accounts for the fact that cinema can subvert socially constructed gender roles, and filmmakers could sometimes offer images of strong, complex women that contradict the male gaze (Freeland, 2017). This particular study will see if Palestinian and Israeli films contest such representations and if they offer a more nuanced and liberating image of women. Concerning visual and narrative strategies, this thesis seeks to contribute to the feminist discourse on cinema by examining how the role of women is represented in films set against the backdrop of political instability and active conflict.

The scope of this investigation is anchored to a distinct set of cinematic texts devoid of corresponding literary counterparts. The analysis places emphasis on how gendered identities and political themes are visually represented and constructed through the narrative in film. Moreover, this study does not include literary texts, but considers films as rich cultural narratives, films, and applies interdisciplinary comparative methods that encompass visual representation within the framework of sociopolitical identity construction.

In summary, the method integrates comparative analysis (cross-national and cross-cultural) with close reading of film texts utilizing feminist and intersectional theories to visualize, thematize, and symbolically critique feminist intersections. This guarantees that the comparative approach goes beyond description and merges deep analysis with theory.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Film Selection

The Palestinian films being discussed in this research include *Huda's Salon* and *Salt of this Sea*, while the Israeli films include *Seven Blessings* and *Zero Motivation*. The films were all chosen for having a specific representation of women within the Palestinian and Israeli socio-political context. While there is a remarkable amount of diversity in the genres and themes of all the films, there is a common inclusivity in the ranging

experiences of women—showing how women experience suffering and how multiple identities are constructed through occupation and struggle for nationhood and identity. These films have been chosen to answer the social and cultural issues surrounding the context as well as capture the representation of women’s agency, resistance, and roles within society.

Huda's Salon and *Salt of this Sea* are both Palestinian films that analyze women’s agency within the framework of the Israeli occupation. *Huda's Salon* focuses on a character who is trapped in a cycle of betrayal and resistance and brings to the fore the surviving strategies and moral predicaments women encounter in wartime contexts. *Salt of this Sea* deals with Soraya, a Palestinian American woman, returning to Palestine in search of her grandfather’s money which symbolizes a more intimate struggle of reclaiming one’s roots and identity within the context of overpowering political narratives.

Seven Blessings and *Zero Motivation* are Israeli films which highlight women’s issues set in the traditional and the military frameworks. In *Seven Blessings*, the female main character is shown grappling with her family and cultural expectations, showcasing the impacts of custom, femininity, and identity. *Zero Motivation* as a military satire showcases Israeli women in the military from a more humorous yet critical lens about gender dynamics in the armed force society.

Although these four films stem from different cultural and national settings, their adoption is valid regarding the common examination of women’s position in societies marked by conflict, nationalism, and occupation. This thesis is an attempt to analyze the narratives of both Palestinians and Israelis in order to discuss the figurative representations of women as constructs of opposition, endurance, and social order. The films also illustrate the varying constructions of women’s agency—victims versus resisters—thereby enabling an analysis of the intersections of gender, identity, and power within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

This strategy enables one to appreciate the dual nature of cinema as a means of entertainment and a potent influence in transforming social attitudes toward women, especially in relation to war, conflict, and peacemaking. This analysis attempts to illustrate the value of film as a means of nation-building and, especially, ethnicity and gender formation in spaces of conflict and suffering.

2.2.2 Data Sources

Primary data includes visuals and narrative content of the selected films, including characters, dialogues, camera work, and themes. Feminist film theory and film studies in general concerning Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers become secondary sources in this research, including focusing on women's issues. The study has also borrowed from cultural studies in assessing the reception of the audiences and how the viewers from both societies may understand the representation of women in motion pictures.

2.3 Data Analysis

The analytical framework adopted for this particular thesis combines different strategies to capture the nuances of women's imaging in Palestinian and Israeli cinema. These films are located within the realm of the Israeli Palestinian conflict and therefore, there is a need to understand the multifaceted and broad scope of how gender, identity, resistance, and power dynamics are interwoven. For this purpose, this study employs a mixture of different approaches including thematic analysis, characterization, visual tropes, feminist and male gaze theory, intersectionality.

This thesis applies thematic analysis as described by Braun & Clarke (2006) which entails marked interpretation and analysis of patterns of meaning (themes) across the data. Within the context of this study, the data comprises of cinematic texts, and the themes pertain to gendered resistance, agency, identity, and power. Thematic analysis is more than content description; it queries how some meanings are woven together, repeated, and framed ideologically within narratives. As such, the study does not simply describe content such as violence or oppression, but explores how these elements operate thematically within the narrative logic of each film and its surrounding culture.

Each of the analyses provides insight on the dominant socio-political context around which the films were produced, and shaped women's representation in these films. Thematic analyses examine the dominant narratives and overarching themes presented in the films, and particularly, how the identity of the female protagonists are constructed and deconstructed within these narratives. Characterization and visual tropes are concerned with the construction of the actresses portraying the female roles and examine their portrayals as active participants or victims within the national and personal conflicts.

In this analysis, “narrative image” describes how the visual elements of a film—camera techniques, framing, lighting, and mise-en-scène—express narrative meaning in a film beyond dialogue and action. It arises from the notion that film is not just an occurrence but a collection of images organized systematically to depict a story. The “narrative image” signifies a form of visual encapsulation that portrays an image infused with ideological, emotional, and cultural complex layers.

The research focuses on the storytelling functions of the photograph’s border by its division with respect to frame composition and viewing angle concerning the subject matter as to how the spectator is introduced to a particular image of feminism, social order, identity politics, and hierarchy of power. Such idea connects to feminist theory of the gaze, mainly Mulvey’s (2013) gaze analysis, as well as postcolonial theory which interrogates whose narratives are rendered visible and whose are omitted. The study painstakingly scrutinizes selected scenes to uncover the construction, limitation, or visual resistance of women’s agency in narrative images.

2.3.1 Analysis of Palestinian Cinema

The study of Palestinian cinema centers on the themes, characterizations, and visual motifs in films like *Huda's Salon* and *Salt of this Sea*. In these films, through complex characters, women become symbols of national resistance and identity. They do not only remain as single women facing the challenges but as women who bear the symbols of a national struggle against the occupation.

This critique draws from feminist film theory and seeks to understand how these films do or do not ‘satisfy the male gaze,’ from where women are often portrayed as possessing agency instead of being seen as sexual objects. Also, feminist frameworks accentuate how Palestinian women experience multiple heritages and compounded forms of oppression arising above sexism, ethnicity, and socioeconomic deprivation.

2.3.2 Analysis of Israeli Cinema

The Israeli films *Seven Blessings* and *Zero Motivation* represent women and how they can maneuver within the boundaries of Israeli societal expectations of gender roles. The thematic analysis focuses on traditional gender norms and the tension between

individuality and societal duty, particularly in family life and military service contexts. These characters liberate and imprison a society torn between the traditional and modern.

Using feminist film theory, the analysis reveals the male gaze and how it constructs images of women, only allowing the female to be the object of the gaze, thus relegating women to the status of objects in the domestic or public sphere. Intersectional analysis reveals ethnic and class-based hierarchies, especially among Ashkenazi and Mizrahi women, to demonstrate how social stratification impacts representation.

2.3.3 Comparative Analysis

In addressing the two cinemas, there was a clear contrast in the representation of women between the Israeli and the Palestinian cinemas. Palestinian films seek to emphasize women as ideal national persistences, whereas Israeli cinema tends to encircle women with ideals of obedience and traditional roles. Palestinian women are always presented as icons of collective identity and resistance, and Israeli women are often the symbol of personal ambition and individuality. These themes of agency, visual representation, and gender roles in militaristic and patrilineal contexts are the focus of this comparison. Additionally, the visual portrayal of the female body varies, with Palestinian cinema often emphasizing agency and Israeli cinema more frequently engaging with objectification, underscoring different approaches to gender representation within each cultural context.

For instance, as portrayed in *Salt of this Sea*, Soraya is shown as a tenacious woman seeking to reclaim her identity and defy both political and patriarchal systems of oppression. Under occupation, women are still portrayed as having agency, though the choices they face, like in *Huda's Salon*, are morally ambiguous. Unlike the previous examples, Israeli cinema, as in *Seven Blessings*, seems to sustain an objectifying view of women and regressive gender roles. Mintz observes that women are often confined to clichéd portrayals — mothers, brides, or submissive figures enduring life in a patriarchal world. (Yosef, 2011; Shohat, 1989) provide supporting evidence, arguing that mainstream Israeli cinema has neglected the portrayal of women's agency by subsuming them into predetermined narratives of nationalism or family.

2.4 Comparative Narratology

Though the study does not engage with any particular works of literature, it falls under the umbrella of comparative narratology, a genre that arose in the mid-1990s thanks to scholars like José Ángel García Landa and Susana Onega (2020). Comparative narratology expands the scope of classical narrative theory to include non-verbal, visual forms, particularly film. This perspective enables scholars to explore storytelling across different media—for example, how a novel “tells” a story through language, in comparison to how a film “shows” a story through images, sound, and montage.

Within such a framework, cinematic storytelling is not regarded as secondary or derivative, but as a parallel, equally intricate systems of narrative. Elements of the narrative such as the narrator, perspective, dialogue, temporality and focalization have their cinematic counterparts as well. These parts are referred to as camera movement, *mise-en-scène*, framing, editing, sound, and even the positioning of the viewer. They serve identical purposes to the literary techniques for constructing personas, articulating conflict, communicating themes, and evoking emotions in the audience, whether they be readers or viewers.

Consequently, the analysis presented in this thesis follows the reasoning of media narrative transfer. When study refers to terms like "narrative image" or "visual tropes," it means to denote images of more than aesthetic dimension which convey a story, create temporality, and organize meaning. These images are *ἄλκιμα* *qambana* not as simple images but processed as cinematic analogues to literary narrative techniques.

There is a chronological and a comparative time frame, with the first forming the basis for the second. The philosophy of film and comparative narratology serves this endeavor. It provides a rationale for considering cinema as a narrative such as literature, as a unitary construction without losing sight of other cultures—in this instance, Palestinian and Israeli. While the focus is narrow and the framework exclusively cinematic, tools of literary analysis (theme, structure, voice, gender perspective, cultural conflict) are applicable and used. This reasoning justifies the study's placement in comparative literature while also expanding its boundaries.

Chapter Three

Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to compare the perspectives of women depicted in Palestinian and Israeli movies using four cinematic works—*Huda's Salon*, *Salt of this Sea*, *Seven Blessings*, and *Zero Motivation*. Such films' narratives of women as characters, the chapter argues, can be situated in certain historical, political, and social contexts. Adopting a thematic perspective triad that incorporates feminist film theory, this chapter will try to unravel the complexities that define the female characters in these movies and their affirmation and challenges to broader cultural and historical narratives. This analysis also attempts to highlight the divergences in the ways Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers grapple with the intersections of gender, politics, and cultural identity, thus enabling a better understanding of the experiences of women as conceived in the cinematic traditions of these two, though distinct yet interrelated cultures.

3.2 Palestinian Cinema

In the case of Palestinian societies, the national causes seem to encourage extreme paternalistic nationalism, which tends to render the voices of women even more marginal while at the same time placing them into a particular set of symbolic frames. Women are not simply social actors who are preoccupied with love tension problems because they are the source of such tension and others' focus among the oppressed people. Combining politics with gendered activism or cultural persistence is a further thread that runs throughout the artworks. The representations are multifaceted as they challenge gender binaries but also highlight the resilience and autonomy of Palestinian women in the face of obliteration.

Women's active engagement with the occupation is foregrounded in both *Huda's Salon* and *Salt of this Sea*. The films focus on the occupation in terms of the oppression and silencing of women as a part of the grander scheme of political conflicts. Such narratives explore topics of identity, power, and defiance and succeed at providing a nuanced portrayal of how Palestinian women orient themselves within such an intricate life and broader society.

A. Huda's Salon

Huda's Salon, which was directed by Hany Abu-Assad, occupies a unique position in Palestinian cinema as it addresses, somewhat in a more overt sense, the Israeli occupation and its influences on Palestinian individuals and social interactions. It is set in Bethlehem and tells a very different story of betrayal about a hairdresser, Huda, who is an undercover agent for Mossad. Huda, for instance, blackmails Reem, one of her clients whose photo Huda has taken while setting her up, and threatens to show it to Reem's husband if she does not work for Huda as an informant. Such scenes illustrate how the occupation purports to inflict even the subtlest of details in the life of a Palestinian, a woman, for instance, even the aspect of family bonds in society.

One main motif of *Huda's Salon* is how the two women self-sacrificially battle betrayal and the constant threat of being overtaken rather than hate the occupation that hangs upon their heads like a sword. The experiences of Huda and Reem reveal how Abu-Assad speaks against the use of real politics and exploitation of social interaction concerning the impact of the occupation. In exploring these themes, the movie shows the not-so-obvious but omnipresent violence of occupation, invisibly dominating and splintering Palestinian society.

Huda's Salon exemplifies the portrayal of occupations and their impact on individuals and society in Palestine as a case study of the Palestinian cinematic representations. The theme revolves mainly around the subjugation of women, which is fascinating precisely because it illustrates the particular plights that Palestinian women experience under occupation, such as being forced into marriages and simply possessing no authority over their existence. The moral dilemmas posed by Huda's betrayal and the subtle depiction of collaboration under coercion offer a different perspective in understanding the social cleavages of occupation.

In this film, Palestinian women are typically depicted as modest, and nudity or sexual violence, especially when about Palestinians, are red lines. This decision has become very controversial because it brings up the issue of whether or not these images empower women by exposing their objectification or degrading them even more. These controversial elements invite reflection on whether these graphic depictions underscore

the dehumanizing effects of occupation or inadvertently reduce women's experiences to aspects of shock, complicating the film's political intent.

The discussions prompted by *Huda's Salon*, primarily the issue of how Palestinian women are represented in the movie and the questions the movie raised about cooperation with the occupation, serve as sites of debates within Palestinian society regarding the questions of identity, the concept of resistance and how both external and internal contexts influence individuals to make certain choices. This is a film about the intricacies of Palestinian identity politics – about 'living in the margins,' about the politics of survival with dignity, and the effects of 'the struggle' on individuals and their relationships with others.

One pivotal moment that stands out in the dim light of *Huda's Salon* instance, which spectacularly conveys the degree to which the occupation controls the psyche, is when Reem, captured by Huda, comes to and begins to notice that she is in danger of being exposed. The salon, a space that is traditionally feminine and associated with safety, is transformed into a space of betrayal and captivity. Close-ups of Reem convey her disempowerment and terror, reinforcing the argument that occupation militarizes even private, mundane settings. The absence of Israeli face for most of the film is, in a paradoxical sense, striking in light of the omnipresent Israeli control which is exercised through Palestinian collaborators such as Huda, illustrating Abu-Assad's concern with fragmentation from within directed from outside. In the words of Gertz & Khleifi (2008), Palestinian cinema often depicts the violence of occupation not on the battlefield, but rather through its violent intrusion into the most intimate aspects of personal and public life.

In contrast to losing their power in society, scholars considered how *Huda's Salon* defies the dominant stereotypes of Palestinian women in cinema. *Huda's salon* and its impact on thought is examined by Nashef (2013) who argues that in the work of Abu- Assad, there is a deviation where one finds suspicious female characters who are noted to be both the victims and agents of suffering imposed upon them. Huda is deemed as multilateral since though she is morally condemned for her betrayal, she is also presented as a woman formed by violence and structural hopelessness.

1) Cinematic Representations and Visuals

a) Thematic Analysis

Huda, a Palestinian woman who collaborates with Israeli intelligence, betrays her people under the Israeli occupation's deep-rooted psychological and social impacts, which the film *Huda's Salon* vividly portrays. The film illustrates a notion that spaces which we consider to be safe and private, like a hair salon in Bethlehem, in this case, Huda's Salon, can protected spaces become battlegrounds under unavoidable control. The aforementioned example of Reem demonstrates the erosion of trust occupied communities need within themselves (Gertz & Khleifi, 2008).

The character of Huda shows lost autonomy: her defiance manifests as preservation in life shaped by colonial violence. Contrarily, Reem, though exposed, does not abandon others, thus defying her vulnerability and personifying defiance as fidelity. Examining these two opposing decisions allows the filmmaker to showcase the effects of occupation on immorality and identity.

Patriarchy and colonial occupation are one of the core themes of the film, especially the way they politicize women's bodies and identities. *Huda's Salon* does not depict her betrayal of her people as treachery but rather under tragic circumstances wrought by systemic oppression, therefore portraying her as a victim of the oppression of colonial power (Nashef, 2016). Agamben's idea of bare life, wherein human agency is reduced to nothing under dire circumstances, is relevant here because Huda's life has become merely a matter of existence.

Huda's Salon explores the ideas of betrayal, coercion, and fragmented identities in the context of a politically charged Bethlehem hair salon. Through close-up cinematography and strong lighting, the film expresses the themes of surveillance and betrayal. Reem's character manages to hold on to some dignity under pressure; in turn, Huda's betrayal demonstrates how agency is distorted under colonial systems of control.

The framework proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) provides a useful distinction between the thematic patterns of internalized oppression and external domination. Reem and Huda operate as oppositional poles within a narrative that balances the ethical dilemmas of

survival. Reem's refusal to collaborate with the oppressors stands as a thematic declaration of integrity, while Huda represents moral decay.

The salon space, traditionally feminine and communal, becomes a zone of capture. This visual storytelling emphasizes how spaces meant for providing care can be taken over by state power, as Gertz & Khleifi (2008) argue concerning the ever-present occupation in Palestinian life.

A further theme is the politicization of femininity. Huda's active roles of forcing women into sexual encounters turns the body against itself and the nation—using the flesh as a weapon. This shows complex violence that is gendered, colonial, and psychological violence, thus rendering the film a multifaceted narrative of resistance and trauma, as analyzed by Nashef (2016) in his study of post-Intifada cinema.

The film also addresses silence as complicity and resistance. The combination of the surveillance and control apparatus suffocating the space Reem occupies suggests a narrative whereby silence is commentary—of fear, of submission, and of moral fortitude. This enriches the psychological realism of the film and shifts the lens on fragility towards strength.

b) Characterization

In *Huda's Salon*, the filmmakers attempt to engage more with the relationships between gender, resistance, and survival with regard to the occupation. It is mainly about the two characters dominating the entire movie, Huda and Reem. The film emphasizes the differences in the perspectives of these women and their psychological and ethical dilemmas as a result of the occupation and the society in which they live.

Huda is also a complex character with self-defining moral ambiguities who, at first, comes across as an empowered beauty salon owner. The truth is, this empowerment is only superficial because she uses her beauty parlor as a cover so that she can work with Israelis, blackmailing Palestinian women to be informers. This kind of betrayal also shows how the different pressures of occupation can put a strain on the moral fiber of a person and push him/her into doing things that are detrimental to their society. Moore argues that such narratives construct women as postcolonial subjects lacking agency: female

characters are boxed into breach of the enduring freeze in the cooperation paradox; collaboration becomes subsumed under coercion and systemic design.

It is the life of Huda that portrays some of the most profound, painful, and tragic sacrifices that some people have to make in order to live through oppressive regimes where loyalty and ethics often have no clear line.

At one point, Huda takes advantage of a young woman named Reem, who is a mother who tries to take a break by drugging her and taking inappropriate photographs. Huda then uses these images to blackmail Reem into becoming a tissue assistant. This kind of treachery is an eye-opener that reveals the oppressive forces at play in the context. Huda's efforts to request the women to betray their people are not in vain; she is cruel, and now it is clear what this tribe turns out to be. Everything related to their identity has been diluted and decayed.

As the narrative of colonial occupation deepens within the characters in *Huda's Salon*, so does the exploration into how the occupation permeates into the lives of women and how colonial and paternalistic societies abuse and exploit them. Huda's behavior is a sensorial illustration of how occupied people become suspicious and turn into a subhuman that betrays his society. This fragmentation also serves the colonizers' interests because it diffuses collective resistance and sows internal strife. This encapsulates Shohat's (1989) take on Israeli-Palestinian cultural production and its cyclical nature concerned with internal disunity and monitoring, targeted particularly in relation to community cohesion through spatial and relational control of gender. Yet, the film also proves that even when the circumstances are too harsh, an individual, in this case, Reem, is capable of resisting and remaining intact without being worn out by betrayal.

c) Visual Tropes

Huda's Salon portrays women aesthetically using various techniques such as camera angles, lighting, and framing while simultaneously examining even the impact of occupation in women's life and the theme of power and control over them. Throughout the film, particularly in the salon sequences, the camera is placed close enough to the actors to almost make the viewer feel as if they are sitting too close for comfort; this type of camera position enhances the dramatic conflict and increases the sense of vulnerability.

Such as, when Huda drugs Reem and takes pictures of her- the close-up of Reem's face shows her fear and lack of control, and Huda's close-ups show her cold, calculatedness.

Lighting underscores character contrasts: Huda is often under harsh fluorescent lights, and the shadows make her seem more morally corrupt. By contrast, Reem is depicted in softer lighting, especially in scenes with her child, symbolizing her resilience and nurturing nature. Even camera angles express the balance of power; Huda is always filmed from a low angle to emphasize her authority, and Reem, on the other hand, is filmed from a neutral or high angle to show her weakness.

The salon, a girly place, is turned into an environment of treachery through the eyes. Mirrors and reflections of things are false anyway, and there are scenes where Huda takes a picture of Reem, which again plays into the falsehood of the beauty salon. That is playing with the eyes, though, messing with what has been considered safe feminine environments, and it questions the whole idea of gender and how it is used as a tool, even in these environments. Through these visual choices, the movie criticizes the gender politics of work, as Huda becomes the figure of corrupt power and Reem is weak but unyielding.

2) Application of Feminist Film Theory

A. Male Gaze

Feminist film theory, precisely Laura Mulvey's idea of the male gaze (Mulvey, 2013), informs much of the critique and inversion of the typical representation of women in film in *Huda's Salon*. Although the movie sometimes adopts the voyeuristic eye of the male gaze, it essentially contests this view by focusing on the experiences, agency, and resistance of its female subjects, especially under the circumstances of occupation.

The male gaze is the traditional way of viewing women as the objects of male pleasure and desire, of looking at them as the spectacle. This look can be seen in *Huda's Salon*, during which Huda uses and takes photographs of Reem. These are voyeuristic moments; the camera objects to Reem, especially in the blackmailing scene. However, the film does not use this objectification to titillate; instead, it exposes the exploitation of women's bodies as tools of control, critiquing the harmful nature of the male gaze.

The film's perspective is less about the men and more about the inner conflicts and women's lives. There is also a clear direction and focus, but this time, it's on the woman, overwhelmed with the pressure of Huda's blackmail, for instance, Reem's desire to control herself. And a place of betrayal, the salon, which has always been associated with beauty and care, held up an entirely different and rather negative discourse about feminine spaces being safe fenced-off sanctuaries as a multitude of transformations instead of the usual stereotypes.

The turning point in the film plot occurs when Reem decides to confront Huda after realizing her treason. The camera shots of Reem do not aim at Reem as an object of sexual desire. Instead, the view is on Reem's internal struggle with herself. This perspective change does not describe Reem simply as an object; rather, it allows the audience to understand Reem as a character.

The movie also breaks up the male gaze with Huda's character. Despite her manipulation of other women, Huda is not sexualized or objectified. The movie does not make her just an object of male fantasy but examines her actions and their implications and gives a harsh look at her character's moral corruption.

B. Intersectionality

In *Huda's Salon*, women look through the prism of intersection concerning gender, class, ethnicity, and cultural contexts, which define their place in the film. Sutherland & Feltey (2017) advocate that through the lens of intersectionality, the oppression of women, whether through patriarchy, class, or colonialism, becomes clearly woven together to construct the idea of women's agency in conflict areas, which is vividly observable in the characterizations of Huda and Reem in Abu-Assad's work. The role of these intersections is significant because they also give insight into what propels the characters and how the social order is configured in occupied Palestinian territories.

Drawing primarily from the oppression narrative that frames the plot of the film, gender advances class and ethnicity; hence, multiple layers of oppression exist in the lives of Palestinian women. The film illustrates that women in society are, in addition to ethnic identity, under the burden of class, which is more intense under occupation.

The class system indeed contributes to the experiences of the women differently. It is clear from the film that Reem has economic challenges, which implies that she has limited options. Because she works in the salon, which is a low-paid job with little security, it is in stark contrast to the position of Huda, who is subjugated not because of wealth but because the oppressors have controlled her. Therefore, Huda's treachery is not simply a form of patriarchy. Still, also class oppression for Huda is an opportunist who targets those women like Reem who are weaker and more in need. It could be said that Huda's callousness toward Reem was class oppression sanctioned by Huda's superior position, which is determined by class.

The salon itself, traditionally a space associated with femininity and care, becomes a microcosm of the larger societal structures that oppress women. The setting highlights the intersection of gender and class, where women's labor is commodified, and their bodies are objectified and controlled. In this film, it is quite revealing to show the moments where Huda is taking a shot of Reem; there's a blunt opposition that is evident to the camera where the salon appears to be a soft, feminine space, and the violent acts that occur internally. This contrast points out the oppression of women in a more intersectional sense, which is of their gender, class, and ethnicity in a setting meant to be protected and nurturing.

In addition, the film also explores how women who are situated within these intersections are limited in their struggles and are able to assert control. Reem's battle is chiefly with Huda and a multitude of forces that oppress her. Such dynamics are compounded by the responsibility to preserve her family, her honor, and the politics of an occupation. The scene when Reem looks at Huda is one of the best examples of the portrayal of the intersectional struggle; she fights for her emancipation as well as for her existence as a Palestinian woman in her society.

On the contrary, Huda's case shows how intersectionality can be perverted; Huda collaborates with the occupying forces. Even though Huda is also a Palestinian woman, Abla's collaboration with the occupying forces enables her to have power over women like Reem, whom she betrays. Huda's infidelity is an intrusion that trespasses gender, class, and ethnic boundaries, piercing through the very intersections that must have brought them together in bridging solidarity. The fact that there has been no sympathy

directed toward Huda's action of betrayal is a confirmation that her violation is an abuse of these hybrid identities and is indeed very painful.

B) Salt of this Sea

In Annemarie Jacir's 2008 film *Salt of this Sea*, the main character, Soraya, a Palestinian American woman, goes to Palestine to get her grandfather's frozen savings and to find herself and her heritage. Her quest for her grandfather's money turns into a thrilling escapade of robbery, fleeing across borders, and experiences with Palestinians and Israelis. It is a movie about identity, going back, resistance, and the trauma of exile, all against the backdrop of the Israeli occupation.

Salt of this Sea is an essential film in Palestinian cinema because it shows female agency, and it does so in a complex and realistic way, not just simply using women as the symbol of victimization at the hands of the occupation. The perceived position of a Palestinian woman in contemporary society differs from the insights provided in the mainstream discourse due to the character of Soraya presented by Jacir. This definition complements the understanding of gender, identity, and resistance in Palestinian cinema and allows the Palestinians to narrate their own stories.

1) Cinematic Representations and Visuals

a) Thematic Analysis

Annemarie Jacir's *Salt of this Sea* highlights the reclamation of identity through the diasporic character Soraya, whose travels through occupied Palestine illustrate the intertwining of personal and political dislocation. The film goes beyond content description to analyze symbols, such as Soraya's grandfather's frozen bank account, as markers of economic dispossession and historical erasure.

The film's confined, dimly lit spaces juxtaposed with open landscapes thematize freedom versus entrapment. Soraya's assertiveness defies the stereotype of Palestinian women as passive; instead, she embodies agency and resistance. As noted by Ball (2012) and Nashef (2016), Jacir portrays Soraya as politically aware and emotionally multifaceted, allowing her to subvert dominant narratives.

Women's collective action emerges as a sub-theme. Soraya's engagement with other women does not cast them as secondary helpers but as active participants in the battle. This supports Crenshaw (2013) on intersectionality where gender, nationality, and class converge to contour a subject's negotiation with power and resistance.

Another central issue is the gap between return and belonging. Soraya's character as a Palestinian-American puts her in a complicated position in relation to the homeland. She is both embraced and repudiated as an insider/outsider. The narrative builds tension between the return itself, which is often idealized, and the struggles of cultural reintegration, resonating with Said's (1999) reflections on exile, dislocation, and fragmented belonging.

In addition, the film draws attention to the generational divide regarding the conception of resistance. Soraya's anger toward the bureaucratic order, as well as the older generation's culture of passive endurance, reflects a thematic clash of memory and action. From this perspective, the film critiques nostalgic remembrance that serves as a trap—or paralysis—instead of invigorating action, revealing the ways in which memory can become a burden instead of an inspiration.

b) Characterization

The depiction of women in *Salt of this Sea* advances the further understanding of the examination of gender relationships in the Palestinian context as well as within the wider societal politics. Soraya, the protagonist, embarks on her journey for the sole purpose of recovering her grandfather's money; however, the plot thickens into a deeper level of struggle and self-search. Soraya, who ignores all gender stereotypes, takes her destiny into her own hands, fights against the evils of occupation, and is a case study of endurance and determination. In her analysis, Nashef (2013) notes Jacir's representation of Soraya goes against the stereotype of an Arab woman in cinema as she highlights her participation, action, and agency in politically active movements.

The film also depicts how strong and rebellious Soraya's friends who reside in the occupied area are. These women, who provide community unity and struggle against oppression, also provide challenge, sabotaging community unity. Also, the film contrasts and provides Soraya's character with other female characters who are in the performative

social order. It marks the boundaries put upon them, but it also demonstrates the power they have to hope and survive against all odds.

It stands in stark contrast to women's love, friendship, and even their struggles in armed conflict; the struggles are portrayed as never-ending, even amid the sociocultural and physical barriers imposed to support the Palestinian cause. *Salt of this Sea* deals with these issues and shows the active aspect of virgin women who work as plows and do not entirely succumb to their circumstances. This film vividly exhibits man-woman relationships as they rise in struggle, unity, and the emotions embodying many different forms.

C. Visual Tropes

The visual images of women in the movie *Salt of this Sea* also have an essential role in supporting or contradicting conventional sex roles. The movie uses camera angles, lighting, and framing to artfully and subtly illustrate the women in the film and their experiences.

The emotional depth and problems of women in the movie are represented through close-ups and very personal camera angles. A good example would be the constant showing of Soraya's face to enable the hands of the viewer to reach out to the struggles and the strength of this woman. The camera work in question here also makes an important point: that of the individuality and self-determination of her character. This trait is often overlooked as women are portrayed as mere bystanders in the narratives of their lives.

The movie's lighting is also well used to show the female characters' internal and external conflicts. Darker scenes, usually set in more closed-off places, tend to be during tense or reflective times, while other scenes have much brighter lighting, and these scenes are usually hopeful or unifying. The stark lighting differences mark the separation of the characters' emotional terrains and their durability and fortitude when faced with unfortunate circumstances.

Salt of this Sea also highlights nontraditional framing in presenting female characters. For example, Soraya is often shown in defiant or activist poses, and this adorns her character, expressing her intentions and autonomy. Such treatment of women on screen does not conform to the traditional portrayal of women as secondary or sidelined but rather anchors

and places them at the helm of their respective stories and battles. From Modleski's (2015) criticism of mainstream cinema which routinely silences women's voices, Jacir's representation of Soraya stands out because she uses the camera to assert Soraya's subjectivity and her willful agency as a woman.

The film also subverts and inverts gender relations through montage. As an example, in Soraya's case, when she is amongst the other women, especially while in some of the scenes together, they are always set in some sort of group or pooling together. This almost brings out their feminine might and oneness, and alternatively, moments of separateness and conflict are shown to highlight the sociopolitical troubles of the female characters and demonstrate how differently they live and exist in occupied places.

Salt of this Sea employs visual stereotypes to support and reject conventional sex roles simultaneously. This movie uses close-ups, lighting, and angles to give a laced and sympathetic portrayal of the women. This approach highlights their struggles and agency and challenges conventional narratives about women in conflict and resistance, offering a more nuanced and empowering portrayal.

2) Application of Feminist Film Theory

A. Male Gaze

Salt of this Sea reverses Laura Mulvey's idea of the "male gaze" through the complex portrayal of Soraya, the main character. Unlike many other films, which objectify women through the eyes of men, this movie is about Soraya's will, Soraya's torment, and Soraya's struggle against a political system, not Soraya's body. The camera highlights Soraya's emotional and personal journey, often capturing her in moments of introspection or action, emphasizing her autonomy rather than reducing her to an object of desire.

This subversion is also supported by the film's framing and camera shots that favor Soraya's subjectivity. With close-ups and other "intimate" shots, the audience can more readily feel her pain and her passions (political and otherwise) and an attempt to delve into the workings of her psyche instead of merely admiring her form.

Also, the relationships between Soraya and the other female characters defy the objectifying gaze by depicting women as supportive and cooperative. These images

contradict the notion that women are merely spectacles or passive entities by portraying the power and intensity of female relationships.

B. Intersectionality

Salt of this Sea uses the complexities of gender, class, and ethnicity to develop the female characters. The movie uses Soraya, a Palestinian-American, to illustrate how these overlapping identities construct and confuse a woman's life in a politically vibrant atmosphere. Soraya's life goes beyond simply being a female to include the realities of her ethnicity and heredity—all experiences that shape the way she lives, relates, suffers, or even the chances she gets in the Israeli-occupied areas of the territories.

There are two main agendas within Soraya's narrative; the first is the interplay between race and gender. The protagonist, who is a Palestinian, finds himself in a gendered struggle, along with other Palestinians, for the repossession of their family land and dissipation of the social and political wrongs, due to the role her ethnicity plays in this struggle. It is not only gender, but ethnicity also ascribes to her identity and how others understand her and treat her. Her relative financial comfort as a diasporic Palestinian is strikingly different from the realities of other Palestinians, leading to class differentiation amidst the wider ethnic and gender oppression. Intersectionality, as Crenshaw (2013) argues, combines multiple systems of oppression like race, gender, and class, showing how each dimension adds a different facet to oppression. This understanding helps one elucidate the case of Soraya in relation to her hybrid identity and struggles.

Through these intersections, the movie explores the complexities of female experiences, contesting stereotypes. It highlights the necessity of examining the interplay of gender, class, and ethnicity in constructing women's agency and struggles in a social and political arena. *Salt of this Sea* provides a much more dimensional and comprehensive look at female characters and the factors shaping their lives and choices.

3.3 Israeli Cinema

The two Israeli films, *Seven Blessings* and *Zero Motivation* offer very different views of women's lives in Israeli society and the roles that they play within it, with the first examining the role of women in traditional families and the second the role of women in the military, and how the two conflict significantly with the women's dreams and goals.

Seven Blessings delves into the issues of family, traditions, and identity, while *Zero Motivation* offers a more comical, unapologetic perspective toward such issues in the context of women's issues in the inflexible structures of the army. These movies provide a very nuanced perspective into the construction and performance of gender as well as concerning the quest of one's subjectivity in a world that is suspended between two poles, that of the traditional and the increasing modern development.

A) Seven Blessings

Seven Blessings is directed by Ayelet Menahemi, and it is a heartfelt film that addresses the theme of family, traditions, and the being of women in Israeli society today. It is about a Mizrahi Jew woman who returns home to perform the last wishes of her mother, which was to hold the ceremony of Seven Blessings, and in the process, unravels all the family's soaked tensions, resentments, and secrets that lie underneath skin level. It explores themes like the clash between tradition and modernity, women's roles within patriarchal structures, and the impact of cultural and religious expectations on personal identity. Using the Mizrahi women and their struggles in trying to conform to societal pressures, the movie criticizes the gendered expectations placed on Israeli women, and this analysis allows the reader to see how Israeli film serves to simultaneously uphold and defy cultural norms regarding gender, identity, and tradition.

a) Thematic Analysis

In the film *Seven Blessings*, the main focus of the plot is the suffocating hold of tradition on women's agency in their families, especially for the Jewish Mizrahi. Marie's internal conflict—balancing a French upbringing with Moroccan heritage—serves as an entry point through which the film examines the limits of defiance within patriarchy.

Thematic interpretation shows that Marie's agency is further limited by her family expectations. The camera reinforces a passive portrayal of her in groups. Wonderfully costumed, the lighting cultivates an aesthetic of containment. Yosef (2011) critiques Israeli cinema for trying to confront the normative gender order, only to perpetuate it instead. This cycle can be observed in Marie's character arc, which resolves without meaningful change.

Moreover, the theme of performative resistance can be identified in Mama Gracia's character. Her surface level authority conceals a complete lack of reproductive power and social standing. It reinforces a thematic tension: while women can appear dynamic and central, construct framing renders them irrelevant and devoid narrative agency.

The film also addresses intergenerational trauma. Through rituals, food, and gender roles, trauma is transmitted not through spoken narrative but through repetition and silence. The seven blessings themselves become symbolic burdens rather than celebratory acts, echoing Shohat's (1989) critique of the mythologization of tradition in Israeli cultural narratives.

Another central theme is the commodification of female fertility. The narrative underscores how women's bodies are regulated and assigned value based on their capacity to reproduce tradition, both biologically and culturally. By portraying motherhood as a duty rather than a desire, the film questions the emotional cost of cultural continuity and exposes the transactional nature of familial legacy.

b) Characterization

In *Seven Blessings*, the female characters are depicted in a certain way that displays some aspects of gender relations, although their agency is more often than not portrayed in the context of patriarchal stereotypes where they are still viewed as helpless. Marie, the main character, is shown as someone who is trapped in the confines of societal norms and survives a past life filled with trauma in spite of having lived overseas. The quarrels she has with her mother or her aunt are such non-events that they are irrelevant in furthering her character expansion.

Marie's defiance seems temporary and in vain, further supporting the notion that women are bound to their cultural heritage and cannot indeed be who they are.

At first, Mama Gracia, Marie's aunt, seems to be the family's matriarch. However, her barrenness ends up making her character seem less than, a pathetic sort of character that enforces the ideas of society, the ideas that say that a woman is only as good as her ability to mother. This turn of events diminishes her character from a strong one to a pitiful one.

Traditional roles also bind Marie's mother and other female characters. They are mainly depicted as upholders of cultural standards, and their conflicts are not delved into much. Marie's mom, especially, becomes an obstacle instead of a character.

In general, *Seven Blessings* offers a narrow and unanalytical view of sexual politics. In the movie, the women are in this patriarchal society where they have no real power, and instead of the story questioning these roles, it justifies them. This portrayal gives the audience a backward image of sex, in which the women seem weak and inhibited, not truly powerful or rebellious.

c) Visual Tropes

In *Seven Blessings*, the representation of gender dynamics is quite conspicuous, but the film tends to perpetuate traditional norms through its visual choices. It appears that women are trapped in boxes or tilted angles that denote control and subjugation, in scenes where they are supposedly in command. Marie, the primary character, is also confined to medium close-ups and over the shoulders shots, which 'captured' her within cultural parameters. Rather than providing a sense of autonomy, the cinematography gives the contrary impression of defeat and disempowerment.

Feminine vulnerability is heightened by other decisions in the film, particularly lighting. Women's faces are illuminated from below eye level, rendering them pathetically unrecognizable in a dominantly man's tale. In most of the scenes with men, the lighting is always focused on the men and keeps the women almost like a shadow, implying that the women are less important or less influential.

Another thing the movie does through framing is to limit the women to domestic places (like the house or kitchen), which also supports the established roles of the sexes. The camera then dwells on these objects associated with housework and emphasizes the women's role in the home. When women leave these spaces, the camera tracks them voyeuristically, almost as if saying they are out of place in the public sphere.

Even the visual symbolism of the female characters is connected to their cultural heritage in a limiting way, focusing on the traditional attire that keeps them rooted in their prescribed roles. It is easy to see the male gaze in the movie because the camera treats the women as objects and always seems to find a reason to do closeups of their body parts,

leaving them not as characters but as physical objects. This supports Mulvey's argument of the 'male gaze', which claims that women are visually consumed for a male audience's pleasure using cinematic devices, restricting their agency within the story.

2. Application of Feminist Film Theory

A. Male Gaze

In *Seven Blessings*, the essential use of the "male gaze," as coined by Laura Mulvey, is a critical component in examining the film's representation of women, which pretty much reinforces traditional gender roles. Mulvey's theory states that cinema tends to objectify women for the male gaze so that instead of being three-dimensional human beings, they are visual objects. Throughout this movie, the camera often takes the point of view of a "peeping tom" male and focuses on the bodies of the females and how they are much more physical than psychological. This can be seen in the scenes that depict Marie in "feminine" clothing, and the camera frames her as something to be looked at and enjoyed, as opposed to a fully developed character.

And then there is the fact that the movie is set, which limits women even more to the home. Women are often portrayed in the "private sphere," usually the home, doing housework. The camera style, observational and distanced, implies that women are there to be looked at and not to be active participants in their stories, and this, in turn, means that they are passive and subservient. Another thing that the movie does is that it tells the story from the point of view of the men most of the time and uses them as a window through which to view Marie's story, and in doing so, it takes away from Marie's voice and her ability to be an agent in her own story.

Also, no opposing viewpoints could question or upset the male gaze in *Seven Blessings*. In narrative, female subjects are hardly ever allowed to assert themselves or look back; they are always the object of the gaze, the looked at, the passive within the story of the male. Rather than providing a feminist analysis, the movie uses conventional film practices that support patriarchal constructs. So, in this light, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* is an example of Mulvey's theory because it uses its visual style and narrative choices to reinforce the male gaze and, ultimately, make the women into objects in a man's world.

B. Intersectionality

In *Seven Blessings*, the depiction of women is not merely a gendered issue but also one of class and ethnicity, and these distinctions play an integral role in the social hierarchy. On the other hand, the movie, instead of subverting the stereotypes, reinforces them and the separation between women of different economic and racial backgrounds.

Class distinctions in the film are stark. The girls from more privileged backgrounds, like Marie, are portrayed as very well-mannered and reflective, and their hardships all seem to be about who they are, not about what they lack in terms of material possessions. They have "emotional" problems as if to distance themselves from harsher realities. Women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, however, are depicted in a much more functional way- as caretakers or workers. It focuses on their outer turmoil and economic reliance, minimizes their inner lives, and enforces classist stigmas that the only thing they are suitable for is servitude, not their dreams.

Even the portrayal of the women is affected by race; Ashkenazi Jewish women evoke much more sympathy, and their problems are more "universal," while the Sephardic, Mizrahi, and immigrant women are marginalized. These characters usually only get supporting roles in family and society, and their cultural identities are marked "exotic" or "lower. The movie makes their practices seem exotic and simply ethnic, not dealing with the complexities of the individual.

This cross of gender, class, and ethnicity also determines power, with poor, ethnic minority women having the most obstacles to overcome. They do not have any central focus in the narrative and are mostly seen through the viewpoints of the more fortunate characters, making their voices seem even more marginalized. All in all, *Seven Blessings* upholds traditional hierarchies and stereotypes and does not effectively challenge the intersections that it has created, taking away from the complexity and agency of its female characters. As Shohat (2006) contends, contestants of Mizrahi ethnicity in Israeli media are routinely placed in an exoticized other category, their ethnocultural behaviors symbolically simplified as a tapestry of ethnic diversity lacking thorough examination or complexity.

B) Zero Motivation

1) Cinematic Representations and Visuals

Zero Motivation is a film written by Talya Lavie that mocks the lives of women and the existing bureaucracy on a remote Israeli army base. Most of the focus is on the difficulties with papers and the personal-level struggles of women. These are shown using satire, such as Daffi Srugis's desire to transfer to Tel Aviv or Zohar's desire to remain a virgin. It attempts to depict the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) in a milder tone but, unfortunately, focuses on a soldier's supremacy.

The critical perspective of the soldiers as mercenaries who serve in an occupied territory is lost behind the humor and personal dissatisfactions associated with the film. By reducing the focus of drama to simple drama, the film also fails to address the reality of military duty in the occupied territories. The characters' failure to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict limits their statement, as they do not take responsibility for their actions.

Zero Motivation, however, does not stand alone as it is in sync with many recent Israeli films. The trend is that a personal touch usually gets implemented, and then social issues, if any, must be addressed later. There is an effort to erase the effects of occupation and, in turn, provide a noble and glorified image of command of an army without being forced to face some stinging realities of being in a nation that frames the military as an occupying force. This true force is seen in the fact that the film marginally addresses the effects of the Israeli occupation anywhere in the work.

a) Thematic Analysis

Talya Lavie's *Zero Motivation* employs satire to reveal the bureaucracy, gender issues, and psychological burnout within the life of female soldiers. Instead of focusing on military violence or the occupation, the film is a critique of the absurdity of the army's internal logic.

Through Braun & Clarke's thematic approach, the film's episodic nature illustrates patterns of futile defiance and institutional erasure. Daffi and Zohar seek to regain agency over their lives, but their control is reduced to comic blunders. This supports Shohat's

(1989) observation that Israeli cinema depoliticizes the military framework, fixating on personal discontents.

This theme is reinforced through the film's visual language, as enclosed frames dominated by dull, grey colors paired with low lighting emphasize monotony and confinement. Here, Mulvey's (1975) gaze shifts focus; women are neither sexualized nor rendered invisible through center framing, narrative irrelevance renders them unimportant.

Another illustrative theme is emotional alienation. The characters' psychological disconnection from purpose and power—and their humorously framed anxiety—is a reflection of a broader critique of gendered institutions. The women are neither permitted to embrace heroic agency nor surrender to victimhood; rather, they inhabit a threshold space of utilitarian absurdity. This resonates with Sutherland & Feltey (2017) who describe intersectionality as the denial of coherent identity in oppressive structures.

Moreover, the film offers a muted critique of militarized feminism. *Zero Motivation* demonstrates the self-defeating nature of gender inclusion without structural alteration by depicting women engaging with a system that subordinates them and offers no alternatives. The film posits that transformation absent of meaningful representation becomes a hollow gesture in open emulation of neoliberal feminism, which misreads access for empowerment.

b) Characterization

Zero Motivation employs comical folly and satire to portray the women characters and the relations of disturbing masculine power within the Israeli army. Daffi, Zohar, and Rama are expressed through the different experiences, such as arms dealing, motherhood, and others, of the other women in the army.

This is where Nageema pursues Dagi, who appears in the form of Daffi and is played by Nelly Tagar. Daffi seems to be very keen on getting a transfer to Tel Aviv, as she is not pleased with her posting. The reason for her fixation with leaving the dreary and tiring work is disapproval of the little agency feminine entities in the military, given and close to the zero perception of the relevance of the tasks performed on a day-to-day basis. In

this regard, while such fantasies of living a rich and elaborate life in the city appear attractive, Daffi's obligations in the army present a completely different scenario.

Zohar, played by Dana Ivgy, is an even more complicated woman. She talks of being somewhat torn between her sexuality and her desire to serve, though such notions unfairly serve to romanticize women in service and the limitations placed on them. Zohar goes from energetic, young naivety into reality, where more often than not people are left unhappy and dissatisfied by the military system and its structures.

It is also clear that women leaders are scarce for structural reasons, as the women's figures in leadership positions are the founders of any woman commander in this role. Klein portrays Rama, an office commander with a commanding presence yet hindered by systemic barriers and distractions like female bone structures.

Every time she seeks respect and elevation in the ranks, she gets repulsed by the male officers' subversion, which is indicative of the gender struggles and power relations and of what women endure in the defense structures. As Zanger (2005) argues, women's representation within the Israeli military is often framed as reproducing preexisting gender biases, portraying women as suffering from emotional volatility or lacking competence in top positions.

Zero Motivation does all that with the said characters, critiquing gender roles inside the military and showing the frustration and complexities of female soldiers. Its satirical look at their troubles makes the movie confrontational because these are environments in which the challenges faced by women become magnified.

c) Visual Tropes

In *Zero Motivation*, women's depiction is directly patterned to the film's criticism of gender relations. The particular camera angles, the lighting, and the specifics of the framing collaborate to highlight the limitations and the roles that mildly targeted the female soldiers. The characters often get positioned on the frame at the forefront of tight and closed spaces such as the stuffy room or the deserted landscape. This drives home the leading themes of oppression and lack of freedom in the images they are fastened into. Those shots emphasize the physical and emotional constriction incumbent upon them by dint of their environment and military roles.

The lighting is subdued and practical, like military life—a monotony of dreariness. In contrast, characters like Daffi dream of life outside the military in bright, more dynamic colors, accentuating the chasm between what they wish to become and what life in the service is.

The very deciding factor of the women's non-masculinity is further impressed by the framing pursuits. Most of the time in the film, women are seen standing in the background operating menial jobs or hidden behind desks, thus helping to consolidate the message that they have a second-rate priority in the military structure. This form of sidelining is an extension of Mulvey's theory regarding spatial relations and cinema. These women are placed within a frame which reinforces their subordinate position within the narrative, even when an attempt is made to suggest they are the focus of attention.

In contrast, the shots of the male protagonists are mostly more action-packed types, bringing out their dominant roles. This disparity serves to subtly criticize the traditional perception of gender roles and the supposed inferiority of the role played by women. With these visual techniques, *Zero Motivation* criticized and enforced traditional gender norms, wielding a satirical but pointed commentary on the limitations placed on women within military environments.

2) Application of Feminist Film Theory

A. Male Gaze

In applying Laura Mulvey's concept of the "male gaze" to *Zero Motivation*, one finds that it is a film that subverts and adheres to traditional notions of gendered viewing only to provide a more complex critique of female representation in military settings. According to Mulvey, cinema commonly positions women as objects of male desire, while men are the active observers and possessors of the gaze.

Zero Motivation challenges the male gaze by focusing on female characters and their inner lives rather than their physical appearances. It doesn't make the camera linger over the women's bodies or sexualize them for the pleasure of the audience. Instead, it focuses on their dull experiences and personal struggles within the limits of military life. Objectification of the female characters by the camera is rare; it mostly favors a neutral

view to emphasize their frustrations and interactions in an isolating and bureaucratic environment.

The film's portrayal of women is not done to play to male fantasies but rather to give a critical view of their dissatisfaction and alienation. In its episodic structure, the narrative explores the complexities of relationships between the characters and their actions to cope with a bland and overpowering environment. This approach allows the audience to empathize with the characters' experiences much deeper, removing the objectification usually attached to the male gaze.

The film also partially recreates the conventional male gaze while offering its critique—although it is true that this can be seen particularly in the portrayal of the male officers. Indeed, men are often depicted in this film as condescending or dismissive in their interactions with female soldiers, reinforcing the positions of power they hold over the latter. The way in which women are portrayed, though unmitigatedly disparaging towards them, can be interpreted as having a sense of entitlement and objectification.

To express it another way, *Zero Motivation* engages with the male perspective in a more practical way by developing the female characters rather than relegating them to the role of sex objects. The inner conflicts experienced by the women and the conflicts resultant from their military service are set out in the film as a critique of the patriarchal model, which aims to disrupt the tendencies of objectification that the male gaze is premised on, yet at the same time reproduces through the depiction of men in power.

B. Intersectionality

The presentation of female soldiers and their experiences in *Zero Motivation* is informed by the intermeshing of gender, class, and ethnicity. Loosely based on a Southern Israeli military base, this movie employs humor to depict how these women's overlapping identities help shape their military positions and personal conflicts.

The film demonstrates the relationships between class and gender through characters such as Daffi and Zohar, who have different financial and social standings but are both alienated by the experience of being a soldier. Daffi's wish to move to Tel Aviv is rooted in her longing for a better and higher-class life, which supports the idea of a class split: the regions the women occupy and the opportunities they hope to find elsewhere. Such a

class divide explains the failure of the military system to take into account the individual's visions for self and the excessive mundane engagement to which such visions are pictured as relative to a woman's status in society.

Ethnicity also comes into the picture, as the Russian woman is not the only one who is identified among the female soldiers. Although the film does not explore ethnic considerations, these contexts help understand the exclusion experienced by women in the military, further noting the heightening of social relations in such spheres. *Zero Motivation* uses the intersection of gender, class, and ethnicity to illustrate the varying treatment of women within structured institutions such as the military based on their class and ethnic background. The film criticizes all those inequalities arriving with such intersections, focusing on the personal struggles of its female characters and evidencing broader social problems each has to struggle with. Crenshaw's (2013) framework of intersectionality captures the way such institutional contexts as the military exacerbate the marginalization experienced at the intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity, which is evident in the case of the female soldiers in *Zero Motivation*.

3.4 Comparative Analysis: Representation of Women in Palestinian and Israeli Cinema

There are huge differences between the portrayal of women in Palestinian films and that of Israeli cinema, which can be attributed to the varying sociopolitical contexts, cultural values, and narrative purposes specific to the film industry of the respective regions. The next segment addresses the contradictions in the representation of women's agency, oppression, and resilience in the Palestinian films *Huda's Salon* and *Salt of this Sea* and the Israeli films *Seven Blessings* and *Zero Motivation*.

While Palestinian cinema often imbues female characters with symbolic and literal roles in resistance, Israeli films frequently feature women negotiating the internal frictions between identity, tradition, and modernization within a militarized society. Both cinematic traditions address gender roles through such portrayals, although in focus and depth, they significantly diverge, making the representations of women complex and, at times, contradictory.

A. Resistance vs. Compliance: Themes of Agency and Oppression

In Palestinian cinematic representations, women represent the nation in struggle and survival, so they are the symbols and emblems of Palestinian resistance. For instance, *Huda's Salon* explores the impact of occupation on one's agency and relationships through the prisms of both Huda's betrayal and Reem's resistance. The movie applies feminist theory, specifically Laura Mulvey's male gaze, to the critical analysis of how women's bodies are co-opted for political manipulation in parallel to Oliver's (2017) analysis of female objectification in traditional cinema (senior-thesis-final). Reem's resolve in the face of Huda's coercion strengthens the symbolic role of Palestinian women as agents of resistance and embodies this tension between personal autonomy and political subjugation (Nashef, 2016). In contrast, Israeli cinema tends to depict women in search of their identity within both militarized and patriarchal structures. In *Zero Motivation* by Talya Lavie, female soldiers' bureaucratic futility is criticized under the guise of humor—the disillusionment with military life reflected in a mirroring of repressed feminine agency.

Even as Lavie's film moves toward comedy, it does not address the more significant consequences of Israel's occupation, thus creating a disconnect among characters beyond the societal roles that Palestinian films highlight (Jamal & Lavie, 2023). Such a thematic choice, reminiscent of what Drainville & Saeed (2017) argue, is a tendency in the Israeli film industry to assimilate conflict and disregard its context.

B. Symbolic National Identity vs. Personal Identity

Palestinian films have coupled women's experiences with national identity and collective memory, emphasizing their agency in preserving culture. Most significantly, *Salt of this Sea* narrates the journey of Soraya, a diasporic Palestinian, as a reclamation of her heritage and agency in an intertwining way that articulates gender, national identity, and resistance. This is consistent with Edward Said's Orientalism (Ponzanesi & Waller, 2012), challenging the colonial narratives of the erasure of Palestinian history.

In contrast, Israeli cinema concerns itself with questions of personal identity and the influence of traditional roles within a socio-political context, as in *Seven Blessings*. Ayelet Menahemi's film presents the protagonist Marie's struggles within her conservative Moroccan-Jewish family, portraying her as entangled in the weight of cultural and

religious obligations. Unlike Palestinian films, which politicize gender as part of national resistance, *Seven Blessings* isolates Marie's narrative, framing her conflicts as personal and familial. This focus aligns with Yosef's (2011) observation that Israeli films veer away from occupation or national identity discourse and often center on individual problems in a conventional environment. Unlike Palestinian films, which load women with national symbolisms, Israeli films situate them in individual or family narratives, thereby reducing the scope of their political agency.

C. Gender Roles and the Intersection of Patriarchy and Militarism

Both Palestinian and Israeli films represent patriarchal pressures, but they depict differently how women respond to those pressures. Palestinian films often represent such structures as compounded by occupation, depicting patriarchy as inextricably linked with outside forces that further restrict the agency of women. For example, in *Huda's Salon*, Abu-Assad depicts Reem's double bind within society and occupation, showing how patriarchal and colonialist pressures meet to squeeze the life out of Palestinian women (Yaqub, 2018). Framing women's experiences within the dual oppression—both national and gendered—has meant that Palestinian cinema often critiques not only local gender norms but also the complicity of these norms in perpetuating colonial power.

In films like *Zero Motivation*, these patriarchal structures are depicted in the microcosm of the Israeli military, where women's agency is represented as restricted not only by the military hierarchy but also by societal expectations.

Rama's frustrated attempts at asserting authority reflect gendered power struggles within a male-dominated institution, echoing Sutherland & Feltey's (2017) analysis of intersectional gender oppression. However, unlike Palestinian cinema, which represents women's resilience as intrinsically linked with political resistance (Morag, 2013), the female characters in *Zero Motivation* are those whose battles are sullied within the precincts of institutional issues without broader cultural implications. This focus on the internal dynamics of militarism and gender does reflect a thematic preference in Israeli cinema to explore women's struggles within domestic or institutional constraints and not as part of a collective struggle.

D. Visual Representation and the Female Body: Objectification versus Agency

The female body faces the camera in these cinemas, suggesting varying attitudes towards agency and objectification. Like *Salt of this Sea*, Palestinian cinema often employs approximations and personal angles to enhance emotionalism and focus drama on women's physical and ethical problems. Soraya, as seen through the lens of a moving camera, becomes more self-determined and defiant to the traditional depictions of the "male gaze" (Modleski, 2015).

This stance is consistent with Gertz & Khleifi's (2008) proposition on the use of visual language to assert the ability of Palestinian women to resist the dominant colonial narratives and their reductionist images. In *Salt of This Sea*, Soraya is captured in dynamic and forward-moving shots as she purposefully walks through checkpoints and makes eye contact with authority figures which reinforces her assertiveness. *Seven Blessings*, on the other hand, captures Marie within tighter and more intimate spaces around the kitchen or dining table. These areas are usually captured with a more static camera angle that restrict her dynamic movements which perpetuates her entrapment within predetermined family roles. These examples demonstrate the ways in which camera movement, framing, and positioning in space either uphold or challenge gendered conventions.

On the other hand, Israeli films like *Seven Blessings* have, in some instances, relied on conventional visual stereotypes, depicting women in the home environment or composing them in a manner that accentuates their inactivity. The authoring of the film *Seven Blessings*, in a series of close-up shots of Marie, positions her within the constraints of the family set-up, thereby emphasizing that certain traditions bound femininity. This visual treatment supports a male gaze narrative, as Mulvey (2013) described, whereby female characters become objects within the family or societal gaze, limited in agency. In the meantime, *Zero Motivation* uses framing to often place female characters inside claustrophobic military spaces to metaphorically express a lack of freedom. With its filling of satire, Lavie points out the absurdity of women's roles within the military without offering more extensive socio-political critiques that go with Shohat's (1989) observation of Israeli cinema's disposition toward masking deeper political issues through genre play.

The final central difference between representations of women by Palestinians and Israelis concerns how space—physical, social, and symbolic—is treated in the films. In *Salt of this Sea*, Soraya's movement across borders, checkpoints, and zones controlled by the state serves as a metaphor for reclaiming agency. Her forward or gaze-confronting walking Israeli officers in commanding tracking shots indicates her defiance toward spatial or ideological confinement. Her journey is literal and symbolic bodily as Gertz & Khleifi (2008) describe “resistance to spatial apartheid” in Palestinian cinematic representations forms. In contrast, *Seven Blessings* keeps its protagonist, Marie, locked in closed private spaces of the home—kitchens, dining rooms, and family rooms—domestic spheres which subjugate any active self assertion by an ordered oppressive family structure. This illustrates the differences between the overtly political and collectively mobilized framing of womanhood in Palestinian film versus the inward and often claustrophobic gaze on women in Israeli cinema.

This aspect can be further examined with the lens of ritual and repetition. In *Seven Blessings*, the title directly refers to a Jewish wedding blessing which must be repeated, symbolizing how traditions reinforce systems of patriarchy. Marie's conflict is not only with a conservative family, but with the uni-directional nature of these rituals that attempt to erase women's agency. The techniques used to frame these rituals—static camerawork, long takes, balanced compositions—contribute a feeling of entrapment. On the other hand, Huda's Salon places Reem in another closed off space, a beauty salon, but the spatial relations are inverted. The salon transforms into a site of women's corporeal politics where bodies are bargained with, blackmailed, and politicized. The violation of self transforms into a statement of patriarchal treachery and colonial voyeurism. Here, espoused by Sutherland & Feltey (2017), intersectionality becomes important: Reem's moral captivity escapes analysis devoid of the violent trinity of gender, patriarchy, and occupation.

What links together all the Palestinian films is not only the issue of politics but their woman-centered approach of depicting resistance, portraying women as subjects of struggle rather than objects of martyrdom. Unlike most cinema which eroticizes women's bodies with close-ups (as was noted by Mulvey in her gaze theory), *Salt of this Sea* applies the close-up shot to evoke emotional intensity and ideological clarity. Soraya's visceral expressions of frustration, yearning, and determined resolve are rendered as

manifestations of internal defiance rather than offered as fodder for voyeuristic enjoyment. This very starkly contrasts with *Zero Motivation* where Daffi and Zohar are usually shown in two-shot or over-the-shoulder framing that evokes a militaristic hierarchical and claustrophobic spatial regime. Their satire is both liberating and losing—liberating in the sense that it reveals the absurdity of life in a gendered and militarized society, yet losing because the critique slips away into the realm of the personal and the comedic.

This divergence reflects what Shohat (1989) refers to as cinematic regimes of visibility—how national cinema determines which women are shown and in what context. In Israeli cinema, visibility often means surveillance: women are only visible because they need to be controlled, judged, or disciplined. Women’s visibility throughout *Zero Motivation* suggests surveillance; it highlights the insipid and condescending processes endured at the hands of male officers. By contrast, Palestinian cinema affirms visibility to assert presence, ensuring that Palestinian women are not depicted as auxiliary but central figures to the national narrative. This complements Naficy’s (2001) concept of “accented cinema,” where women’s bodies are inscribed with cultural displacement, exile, and return.

Furthermore, satire in Israeli cinema functions as a double-edged sword. While *Zero Motivation* adopts a dark ironic tone in critiquing military life, the critique remains insular. Lavie employs humor to point out the absurdity of bureaucratic governance and the exercise of male power but does not link these critiques to broader colonial, nationalist, or gynocentric frameworks. It is this insularity that Morag (2013) identifies as the politics of avoidance within Israeli cinema—the refusal to connect gendered oppression to a system of political power. On the contrary, *Huda's Salon* does not offer any relief. Its tone is urgent, real characters are in danger, and moral complexities conflict stemming from life under occupation, not social awkwardness. This comparison illustrates how genre itself—comedy vs. drama—imposes feminist aspirations upon a given work.

A noteworthy difference is the depiction of motherhood across the films. In *Seven Blessings*, motherhood is both elevated and turned into a tool of oppression. The expectation to fulfill maternal roles is tied to ethnic purity, tradition, and the preservation

of culture. Marie's resistance is selfishly framed, and her wish to not comply means she will not bear expectations. Yosef (2011), for instance, interprets Israeli cinema as a culture of nationalist motherhood, where the woman is simultaneously caregiver and territorial defender dominator. On the other hand, motherhood in Palestinian cinema—when depicted—is seldom idealized. In *Salt of this Sea*, although Soraya is childless, her yearning for land and legacy casts her as a maternal figure towards national continuity. Through her refusal to marry or assimilate, she deepens her vow toward a more symbolic motherhood anchored in territory, not household.

An additional aspect to analyze is the use of language and accents in the films. For instance, Soraya's American accent gives her both insider and outsider status. Her ability to maneuver through Ramallah and Tel Aviv is metaphorical of linguistic identity—hybridity, fractured yet fortified by displacement. This is in line with Said's (1992) critique of the diasporic intellectual who exists and navigates outside a singular belonging. On the other hand, *Zero Motivation* illustrates ethnic stratification through character accents, particularly the mocking or pejorative treatment of Russian and Mizrahi women. The Israeli military emerges as a miniature model of larger ethnic oppressive structures, supporting Sutherland & Feltey's (2017) perspective on intersectional oppression. However, contrasting Palestinian cinema, there is an absence of focus on these ethnic tensions as primary narrative conflicts in Israeli cinema; they remain as subtext, not themes.

As a last comparative observation, consider the moral boundaries surrounding agency. Women's agency appears fraught and imperfect in Palestinian films. In Huda's *Salon*, Reem faces a moral bind in which any action she takes will violate either her principles or put her at risk. Her resistance is subdued, broken, and full of contradictions. Such contradictions subvert the dominant cultural narratives of "strong female characters" found in cinema.

As revealed in Crenshaw's (2013) intersectionality theory, agency needs contextual consideration, and in Reem's case, there are no safe choices. Conversely, in Israeli cinema, agency is often portrayed as individual, activism as personal rather than relating to structural critique. A character such as Marie may defy her family, or Daffi may decline a posting, but such acts are depicted as self-development rather than as challenges to the

system. Therefore, the Israeli female characters are granted greater comfort, albeit at the cost to their revolutionary potential.

The comparison brings to the fore not only the differences in Palestinian and Israeli portrayals of women, but also reveals the entirely different political grammars of resistance within which both cinemas operate. Women in Palestinian films are rendered as multi-layered agents within a broader narrative of occupation and decolonization. In contrast, Israeli films tend to individualize gender struggles, portraying them as matters of self-actualization and personal achievement rather than collective emancipation. These are not merely aesthetic differences; they are ideological, illustrating how national cinema can shape—and be shaped by—its conception of gender, power, and possibility.

3.5 Conclusion

In sum, Palestinian and Israeli cinemas stake very different, sometimes opposing claims to representations of women forged within their particular socio-political and cultural terrains. The feature of Palestinian cinema underlines women as symbolic agents of national resistance. It interweaves gender with identity and oppression. In contrast, Israeli cinema tends to reproduce women's struggles as either personal or institutional, sidelining broader socio-political narratives for domestic and personal conflicts. This comparative analysis will show how these cinematic traditions reflect and reinforce the divergent understandings of female identity, agency, and resistance and how Palestinian and Israeli films uniquely contribute to ongoing gender discourses in the region.

Chapter Four

Discussion

This chapter analyzes the comparative results from this study and discusses the ramifications of the images of women in Palestinian cinema versus Israeli cinema. This chapter delves into these issues through discussions of cultural symbolism, intersectional oppression, and the ramifications of visual representation, ultimately exploring how gender, identity, and socio-political discourses intersect in cinematic traditions. In this debate, Palestinian cinema portrays women as solid icons of resistance, and Israeli cinema tends to place women in more personalized and internalized conflicts. All of these cinematic methodologies ultimately support various social and political truths and, therefore, construct for the viewer certain perceptions of women's places, not only in these narratives but also outside of their frames.

This study adopts feminist film theory in analyzing the representation of women in Palestinian and Israeli films. To this end, while acknowledging this, there is a need to affirm clearly what is meant by feminist film theory and how it shall be used in the analysis of the aforementioned films in this study.

Feminist film theory is a critique of the portrayal of women in films throughout history, pointing out women's objectification, commodification, and passive status in the patriarchal film tradition. In the vanguard of feminist film theory is the male gaze theory, as posited by Laura Mulvey, which holds that mainstream film portrays women as objects of visual pleasure for a masculine viewer, reinforcing patriarchal conceptions of feminine sexuality and passivity.

One central issue of feminist film theory is to reveal unproblematic male-made assumptions about women in the media. These assumptions are apt to manifest themselves in stereotypes that confine women to a single role, i.e., object of desire or passive recipient of male action. Objectification and commodification are typical effects of these uncontrolled assumptions wherein the body and lives of women are reduced to mere visual entities, most of the time functioning to service the plot and arousal of male characters or the male spectator.

But in the two Palestinian movies—*Huda's Salon* and *Salt of this Sea*—the unproblematic gender presumptions about women in most mainstream films are less apparent. Both of the films are firmly situated within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict framework, and women are not solely objectified or sexualized entities. Instead, the two films feature women who are directly engaged in resistance, struggle, and personal transformation in the broad socio-political sphere.

Reem is not commodified or objectified in *Huda's Salon* but is a complex character attempting to exercise agency within the oppressive conditions of occupation and domestic expectations. Women are not represented in the film through their objectification but through their moral choices and personal dilemmas in a highly politicized situation.

Similarly, in *Salt of this Sea*, Soraya is a woman whose self-determination and identity struggle are not located within the discourse of sexual or romantic desire, but as one of resistance against the larger forces of occupation and displacement. The film is about her personal struggle and agency in the recovery of her identity and not about her as a good for male consumption.

These films can be explained through the application of feminist theory that emphasizes the necessity of women's agency against occupation and action in the national and cultural political struggle of their countries. Palestinian cinema, in particular, is obsessed with the national struggle for identity and resistance more than reasserting the traditional Western cinematic constructions of women as passive objects.

In contrast to much commercial cinema built on commodifying women, women in the films are depicted predominantly as national identity symbols, resisting powers, and solidarity figures. The films dispense with gender stereotypical constructions by allowing agency to women and depicting them as leading characters resisting colonial power, as well as patriarchal society.

Thus, while feminist film theory is crucial to the study of the representation of women in films, in the case of Palestinian films, it must be mentioned here that the conventional modes of objectification and commodification conventionally deplored by feminist theory do not exist to any large degree. Instead, it is interested in women in nationalist

resistance and human sacrifice of occupation, where a more nuanced appreciation of gender in terms of long-standing conflict is required.

In *Huda's Salon*, a pivotal narrative frame is the moment Reem realizes that she is a victim of blackmail. The camera fixates on her in a suffocating close-up, her bewildered face juxtaposed against the salon's sterile walls. This moment does not simply evoke emotion; it tells a story. It articulates a history of betrayal, imprisonment, and disempowerment without the need for words. That still tells the story is a mark of artistry. Through this visual story, the audience absorbs the gendered violence of colonial occupation as something lived and intimate. The salon, which is, in general, a feminine space of nurturing, transforms into an apparatus of surveillance and control—a contradiction addressed in the argument by Gertz & Khleifi (2008) that Palestinian cinema tells stories through spatial metaphors and visual montage.

Similarly in *Seven Blessings*, the shot of Marie seated at the dining table, surrounded by family and dim lighting, recurs throughout the film. Each portrayal of her in this fixed harmoniously symmetrical setting advances the narrative of cultural strangulation and cyclical oppression. These are mute images that speak and still move the plot forward, highlighting the internal battle between self-assertion and submission.

4.1 Cultural Symbolism and National Identity in Women's Representation

Women's representation in film in Palestinian and Israeli cinemas serves as vehicles to examine cultural identity. However, the focus and framework are vastly different. In Palestinian films like *Huda's Salon* and *Salt of this Sea*, the female protagonists are used as emblems of national resistance. These images adhere to Said's theory of Orientalism (Ponzanesi & Waller, 2012), which states that cinema can oppose colonial discourse by providing alternative hegemonic representations of resistance. Palestinian cinema's focus on women as agents of resistance to both patriarchal and colonial oppression asserts a "true" Palestinian story that outside forces will not dictate.

On the other hand, Israeli cinema tends to isolate women's narratives as individual conflicts against family or institutional structures. As Yosef (2011) points out, this shift in theme indicates Israeli cinema's turn inward to more personal and domestic issues away from political involvement. As a result, Palestinian cinema tends to place women on a pedestal as icons of collective memory and perseverance. In contrast, Israeli cinema puts

women in a box, with the limits of their socio-political agency defined by their individual stories.

4.2 Intersectional Oppression: Gender, Patriarchy, and Occupation

Gender and political oppression are the key to understanding the lack of women in Palestinian cinema because not only is it a patriarchal society, but it is also an occupied one. That occupation makes the feminine struggle all the more difficult. Movies such as *Huda's Salon*, where Reem is shown as doubly oppressed by patriarchy and occupation. That fits nicely with Sutherland & Feltey's (2017) intersectional analysis of feminist cinema, which asserts that gender oppression must be examined in the context of intersecting power systems. Palestinian cinema tends to use this model to contest not simply gender expectations but the occupation's part in upholding patriarchal domination, and therefore, illuminates the subtle forms of control that arise out of such pressure (Yaqub, 2018).

Israeli film, on the other hand, examines gender oppression but rarely connects it to political occupation and instead portrays it mainly within a social or institutional framework. Lavie uses *Zero Motivation* to mock the military atmosphere because of the limited capacity of women in such a man-run organization. Still, the movie avoids the overall political purpose of the Israeli military. This is similar to what Morag (2013) refers to as an inclination in Israeli cinema to internalize conflicts, looking at gender roles only within the micro-systems such as the military or family and not at all in the broader socio-political context. By ignoring the broader intersectional politics, Israeli cinema tends only to allow women to play the roles of "institutional critic" instead of broader cultural and political discourses.

4.3 Visual Representation and the Power of the Gaze

The representation of female imagery in Palestinian and Israeli films reflects the two's different attitudes towards agency and objectification. Palestinian cinema, as demonstrated in *Salt of this Sea*, uses close-ups and intimate framing to highlight women's independence and emotional strength; these images are usually juxtaposed against images of women in constraint or subdued. These are "feminist" film choices in the sense of (Modleski, 2015; Elsaesser & Hagener, 2015), who believe that feminist film theory must be about representing women's agency visually in a way that contests the male gaze.

Palestinian directors often use these methods to portray women as strong characters who defy both sexual and colonial objectification.

While that is true of Israeli cinema's visual approach, it is frequently through the male gaze that reinforces traditional gender roles, especially in *Seven Blessings*. The constant representation of women in domestic spaces or through close-ups that draw attention to their passivity seems to fit into Mulvey's (2013) theory of the "male gaze," in which the female is not the subject of action but rather an object of spectacle. Lavie's *Zero Motivation* does play with some tropes in that it puts women in a militarized environment. Still, the satire only reaches so far as the institution, never delving into any honest commentary on women's roles in the broader society. This comparison shows how Palestinian cinema's use of visual storytelling invites strength. In contrast, Israeli cinema's use of conventional framing tends to keep the female characters in a box, literally and passively.

4.4 Resilience and Female Solidarity as Cultural Commentary

One of the most prominent thematic differences between Palestinian and Israeli cinema is the place of female solidarity. Palestinian films frequently depict women in solidarity, emphasizing the communal struggle against internal and external oppression. Soraya's friendships with the other women in *Salt of this Sea* reveal the strength and solidarity seen in Palestinian women's resistance. These representations align with Naficy's (2001) "accented cinema," which views diaspora cinema as a site of collective identity construction. Palestinian women in film, by their mutual suffering, embody the tenacity of Palestinian identity as a whole.

However, in Israeli film, the sisterhood is less important than the individual's struggles. *Seven Blessings* shows that Marie's disputes with her family are not combined but more solitary. *Zero Motivation* does have a sense of sisterhood among female soldiers, but this Sisterhood is not a rebellion but a competition and a limitation. This lack of collective protest is in keeping with Shohat's (1989) contention that Israeli cinema tends to concentrate on personal stories rather than collective action.

4.5 Implications for Gender and Cultural Narratives

Women are portrayed quite differently in Palestinian Cinema as compared to Israeli Cinema. This stems from varying concepts of gender, cultural storytelling, and the numerous socio-political realities and values which exist within a given society. Within Palestinian films, women's narratives are used to challenge the colonial and patriarchal structures and mosaic of discourse in order to construct identity transcending dialogue of resistance.

This perspective is very colonial in that it assumes that the representation of women in Palestinian cinema is a counter-hegemonic discourse that contests both cultural obliteration and political marginalization (Ball, 2012). In placing women as metaphors for national perseverance, Palestinian cinema calls for a more encompassing cultural and political identity centered around collective resistance.

Israeli cinema, however, places women in personal or institutional stories and many times skirts the issue of the occupation or how it has affected gender relationships. Although these movies do delve into issues of gender within the family and military, they are not nearly as socio-politically critical as Palestinian cinema is. This propensity is what Cohen (2016) calls a "compartmentalized" approach to studying gender and conflict, where women are analyzed in a vacuum outside the larger historical or political context. In not dealing with these intersections, Israeli cinema fails to examine the more significant ramifications of its sexed stories and, therefore, uphold the establishment.

4.6 Broader Socio-Political Implications and Future Directions

The representation of females in cinemas of not only Palestinian but also Israeli origin is not just about what is on the screen but carries a much larger socio-political meaning. Palestinian cinema, with its portrayal of women as icons of national identity and steadfastness, forces its viewers to reevaluate the effect of occupation on gender and social relations. This symbolic use of female characters in colonial narratives encourages global audiences to view Palestinian women as active agents in the fight for justice, challenging Orientalist depictions of women in the Middle East (Ponzanesi & Waller, 2012). As a result, Palestinian cinema has become a strong vehicle for women's advocacy in the local and international spheres.

Israeli cinema, on the other hand, tends to take a more internalized look at gender, dealing with personal struggles and domestic problems and altogether avoiding any of the more significant socio-political conflicts. While this is an excellent way to examine the issue of gender in Israeli society, it does not allow Israeli cinema to grapple with the intricacies of the region thoroughly. In skirting around direct contention with the occupation or its effect on gendered experiences, Israeli cinema may inadvertently perpetuate a culture of compartmentalization, one where personal narratives supersede collective resistance. Like Jamal & Lavie (2023) state, Israeli cinema's inclination to "privatize conflict" is part of a larger cultural unwillingness to grapple with the implications of occupation, which then informs the way an audience views the gendered narratives that exist within Israeli society.

Perhaps future research will delve deeper into these dynamics by looking at the way that up-and-coming filmmakers in both regions deal with gender and conflict, especially as social and political climates continue to change. As feminist theory and intersectionality continue to develop, perhaps future filmic representations will offer more nuanced, intersectional depictions of women's lives, dealing with the multiple levels of gender, identity, and socio-political conflict both within and without the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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جامعة النّجاح الوطنيّة
كلية الدّراسات العليا

بين الحدود والشاشات: تحليل مقارن لصورة
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الملخص

تقدم هذه الأطروحة تحليلاً مقارناً لتصوير النساء في السينما الفلسطينية والإسرائيلية، وتتناول تطور هوياتهن الجندرية ضمن أطر ثقافية واجتماعية وسياسية وتاريخية، كما وترتكز الدراسة على صالون هدى وملح هذا البحر في السينما الفلسطينية سبع بركات و الدافع صفر في السينما الإسرائيلية، حيث تلقي الدراسة الضوء على أسئلة الهوية والتمكين والمقاومة في هذه الأفلام، وتسعى إلى فهم صورة المرأة في الفيلم باعتبارها مبدعة وامرأة ترمز إلى العديد من مشاكل المجتمع، باستخدام عدسة نظرية الفيلم النسوية ودراسات ما بعد الاستعمار. بهذا المعنى، تم بناء المرأة في الأفلام الفلسطينية بحيث تصور النضالات في صراع من أجل البقاء والأيدولوجيات القومية. من ناحية أخرى، تضع السينما الإسرائيلية الأسرة في مركز المجتمع بينما تستخدم طموح الجندي كمصدر للصراع والعمل؛ لذلك، تزعم هذه الورقة أنه في حين يتم تصوير الهوية الجنسية في الفيلم في وقت الصراع، فإن هذه الأفلام تعمل على تعزيز وخلق سرديات جديدة حول الأدوار والهوية الجنسية، مما يجعل هذا مجالاً مهماً لتطور السينما في خلق شعور بالمجتمع وكذلك معتقداته في أوقات الصراع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السينما الفلسطينية، السينما الإسرائيلية، تمثيل المرأة، دراسات ما بعد الاستعمار، نظرية الفيلم النسوية، التقاطع، النظرة الذكورية، الهوية الوطنية، المقاومة، التمكين، السرديات الثقافية، الصراع الإسرائيلي الفلسطيني.