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Re-Mediating the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Use of Films to Facilitate Dialogue

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RE-MEDIATING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT:

THE USE OF FILMS TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE

by

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Under the Direction of M. Lane Bruner

ABSTRACT

With the objective of outlining a decision-making process for the selection, evaluation, and application of films for invigorating Palestinian-Israeli dialogue encounters, this project researches, collates, and weaves together the historico-political narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the artistic worldviews of the Israeli and Palestinian national cinemas, and the procedural designs of successful Track II dialogue interventions. Using a tailored version of Lucien Goldman's method of homologic textual analysis, three Palestinian and three Israeli popular film texts are analyzed along the dimensions of *Historico-Political Contextuality, Socio-Cultural Intertextuality,* and *Ethno-National Textuality.* Then, applying the six "best practices" criteria gleaned from thriving dialogue programs, coupled with the six "cautionary tales" criteria gleaned from flawed dialogue models, three bi-national peacebuilding film texts are homologically analyzed and contrasted with the six popular film texts. This exercise is designed to implement a method for identifying "which, why, how, and when" filmic communication is best paired with dialogic communication to buttress the effects of Israeli-Palestinian Track II

peacebuilding mediations. It is proposed that a synergized approach of film plus dialogue will

contribute to the re-mediation of ethnonational imaginaries and the re-imagining of the violent

parameters of the conflict.

INDEX WORDS: Palestinian Cinema, Israeli Cinema, Film, Dialogue,
Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, National Identity

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INTRODUCTION

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In advocating the use of film to facilitate dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, this

work focuses on the potentially synergistic relationship between two types of complex human

communication -- filmic and dialogic -- that are currently being employed by peacebuilding

practitioners within the field of international conflict resolution. Over the past few decades,

various third-party mediators have invented successful methodologies for establishing dialogue

between parties in conflict; other professional interveners have achieved positive results by

creating programs for using arts, culture, and media as peacebuilding tools for reconciling former

enemies. However, with very few exceptions, peacebuilding practitioners are currently

overlooking the potential benefits of pairing filmic with dialogic communication. By exploring

the potential impact of such a synergized approach to communicative interventions within the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, new avenues may be opened for re-mediating the intransigent

qualities of ethnonationalist disputes around the world.

Due to their communicative qualities, film and dialogue have both been recognized as

sources of social, psychological, and historical information about the inhabitants of their

originating cultures. Formatively, they are each birthed by social individuals, and in this sense

are nurtured by collective environmental factors. They are then constituted through discourse

and instantiated by nonverbal patterns into verbal texts. The goal of this verbal-nonverbal

production is to communicate with individuals or groups of receivers. Film and dialogue are

thus intrinsically related through their theoretical commonalities, and are also extrinsically related through their practical applications. This multi-tiered relationship imbues them with an inherent compatibility in representing and evaluating the cultural identities and political ideologies that have constructed and perpetuated ethnonational conflicts worldwide.

Despite their commonalities, film and dialogue have obvious differences in their modes of production and reception. Filmic communication is co-created by filmmakers, screenwriters, actors, and crew during a particular period of production. It is then transmitted over an indeterminate period of time to various audiences in disparate locales. Its message is effectuated through a complex combination of verbal and nonverbal cues, including technological manipulations, visual imagery, movement, sound, music, characterizations, scripted or impromptu language, and intended/unintended meaning.

Dialogic communication, on the other hand, is co-created by persons who are generally in the same place at the same time, and its period of production roughly coincides with its period of transmission. Its message is effectuated through a substantially smaller repertoire of verbal and nonverbal cues, including voice-tone, body language, facial expressions, dress codes, vocabulary, accent, social status, and intended/unintended meaning. Unlike the filmic message, the dialogic message does not rely upon technological manipulation and generally lacks spatial movement, music, or visual imagery. Finally, the receiver's response to the production-transmission of dialogic communication is generally forthcoming immediately, whereas the receiver's response to the production-transmission of filmic communication is generally displaced in both time and space.

It is precisely this displacement, or cooling-off period, in the transmission and reception of filmic communication that has the potential to facilitate the dialogic communication that is

currently being fostered by peacebuilding mediators in the field of conflict resolution. Within a variety of settings, filmic communication could be employed as an open-ended conversation enhancer to relax a receiving audience. When people are not expected to elicit immediate verbal responses to a communication, they generally tend to be more receptive than when they feel compelled to quickly formulate a commentary or refutation. In Homi Bhabha's terms, a "*negotiation* rather than *negation*" is able to take place in a "hybrid moment of political change" ("Commitment" 117, 120). If filmic communication can be strategically employed for its "transformational value" (120) during peacebuilding interventions, its powerful visual and psychological effects could effectively dissipate mounting tensions, while providing an alternative venue for keeping communicative channels open at less stressful levels of engagement (see also Summerfield).

Up until the present time, both dialogic and filmic communications have had discrete, co-existing histories of public and private usage within the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; however, the use of dialogic practices has far outpaced the use of film. As the conflict has progressed over the past fifty years, Track II interventions (unofficial peace*building* mediations) have developed a symbiotic relationship with the Track I diplomatic efforts (traditional negotiations and peace*making* conducted through official government channels) that have received most of the media publicity. Unofficial peacebuilding dialogues have been directed toward three types of participants: second-tier political leaders respected by their communities; students and teachers from the kindergarten through university levels; and concerned citizens at the grassroots levels. The underlying motivations of participants involved in the political, academic, or community dialogues have either been based in secular/ intercultural worldviews (Abu-Nimer Dialogue, Reconciliation; Adwan and Bar-On "Learning,"

"Shared"; Bar-Tal; "From," "Nature"; Halabi <u>Israeli</u>; Halabi and Sonnenschein "Awareness,"

"Jewish-Palestinian"; Halabi and Zak; Kelman "Problem-Solving," "Reconciliation"; Maoz

"Experiment," "Power," "Participation"; Ross and Rothman <u>Theory</u>; Rothman "From,"

"Resolving"; Rouhana "Reconciliation"; R. Suleiman) or religious/interfaith worldviews (Abu-

Nimer <u>Conflict</u>, <u>Nonviolence</u>; Ateek; Gopin "New"; Hendi; Landau; Rosen "Dialogue,"

"Religion"; Tapper; Younan "Witnessing").

Peacebuilding non-profit organizations (NGOs), scholar-practitioners in the field of

conflict resolution, and religious participants in interfaith outreach have designed a variety of

Track II dialogic models that primarily target political, academic, or grassroots/ community

goals. In general, the political goals are directed toward reconciling specific issues

characterizing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The academic goals are directed toward

encouraging cross-cultural communication and inter-group contact, while the grassroots

community goals are directed toward building respect and friendship across religious, ethnic, and

social lines. In the secular arena, the political models have taken the form of interactive problem-

solving workshops (Kelman "Overcoming," "Acknowledging," "Social-Psychological,"

"Group," "Building," "Interdependence," "Transforming," "Contributions"; Rouhana and

Kelman; Rouhana and Fiske; Rouhana and Korper; Rouhana and Bar-Tal). The academic

models have been designed as short-term or long-term encounter groups for students or teachers

(Maoz "Multiple," "Power," "Participation"; Maoz, Steinberg, Bar-On, and Fakhereldeen.;

SFPeace; Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman; Sonnenschein and Hijazi; Steinberg and Bar-On;

Zak & Halabi). The grassroots models have been most frequently promoted as community

efforts for peaceful co-existence by NGOs with Palestinian and Israeli co-directors (Baskin and

Al Qaq; IPCRI; OpenHouse; ParentsCircle; PeoplesVoice; SulhaPeace).

In the religious arena, the political models have generally taken the form of interfaith summits where religious leaders come together to produce joint declarations for peace (Carey; Landau; Rosen). The academic models have provided training in interfaith dialogue and instruction in cross-religious spiritual beliefs (Hourani; Rosen "Religion"; Younan "Jews"). The grassroots models provide opportunities for community members from the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian faiths to engage in joint cultural celebrations, social events, and religious services (Gopin "New"; Hendi; ICCI; Jabbour; Landau; SulhitaYouth).

Unfortunately, practical measurements of success with these Track II interventions have been variable and elusive, with uneven impacts on three levels: the personal level of individual participants, the collective level of the competing groups, and the structural level of sociopolitical frameworks that define the two societies. It is in recognition of the unevenness of past successes in dialogue models that this proposal arises for employing filmic communication to buttress the lasting effects of dialogic encounters.

Overall, the employment of film within peacebuilding mediations has been slower to develop and is much less common than that of dialogue. A few reasons for the disparities are: limited interactions between independent filmmakers and peacebuilding organizations, financial obstacles, lack of technological infrastructure in meeting venues, lack of training in cross-cultural film interventions among Track II mediators, and an intrinsic privileging of dialogue as an ancient form of human interaction. Additionally, a sense of the slipperiness of filmic communication adds to difficulties attendant to its smooth incorporation into current peacebuilding models. Because of its hybrid nature as media and literature, filmic communication has political, social, and cultural aspects that are often masked or exaggerated, according to production and reception exigencies. The producers' motivations and the receivers'

perceptions are further complicated by generic expectations regarding the relative credibility of non-fiction (documentary) and fiction (feature) films.

Beginning with the anthropological documentaries of the early twentieth century and followed by the Nazi propaganda films of World War II, non-fiction films have been produced in fulfillment of nationalistic and political agendas; consequently, they have been regarded as realistic -- but motivationally suspect -- sources of information regarding their originating societies. Over the past twenty years, communication and film scholars have generated theoretical conversations regarding the modern conceptualizations of nation building and nationalism. Benedict Anderson has shown that "national imaginaries" have been framed through transversal, mediated messages originally based in "print capitalism" and "languages of power" (Imagined 45) that symbolically construct a collective consciousness. In Anthony Smith's more recent examination of the visual representations of national identity, he adopts an "ethno-symbolic approach" ("Images" 57), and asserts that cinematic texts, as preeminent components of First World visual arts productions, have served to enlarge the scope of their national memberships. He finds that cinematic productions have expanded the range of meaning in the "myths, symbols, traditions and memories" (57) of ethnonational identities by bringing them to larger audiences, pre-packaged in familiar oral and literary narrative traditions (see also National).

Smith joins a number of film scholars who have theorized that a particular country's collection of cinematic texts comprises its national cinema, or a set of material representations of the realities and desires of that country's collective visions and imaginings (Dissanayake; Hayward; McAlister; Schlesinger). With the advent of postcolonial cartographies and diasporic populations, the concepts of Third Cinema (Bhabha "Commitment"; Gabriel; Pines and

Willemen; Willemen), Transnational Cinema (Hedetoft; Wilson and Dissanayake), and Accented Cinema (Naficy) have been developed to describe the extra-national production of cinematic texts by filmmaking representatives of emerging and ruptured populaces. Thus, scholars of national, third world, and exilic cinemas have documented many examples of how films have been employed in building, maintaining, fragmenting, and subverting ethnonationalistic images and themes. Within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, film and literature scholars (Abdel-Malek Arab-Jewish; Ben-Shaul; Gertz "Myths," "Others"; Gertz and Khleifi; Loshitzky; Shafik "Cinema"; Shohat Israeli; Shohat and Stam) have identified stages in Arab-Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli filmmakers' rhetorical strategies that have corresponded to the development of the nationalistic political identities among populaces in the Middle East.

Today, national and international venues for mass media -- such as radio, television, theater, music, film, and the Internet -- are recognized as framers of sociopolitical issues and shapers of policy opinions in times of peace and war (Bar-Tal and Teichman; Gilboa Media; Hasian; Hass; Shinar; Shohat and Stam; Wolfsfeld News, Media; Zizek). Concomitantly, the ascension of mass media in the twentieth century has resulted in a growing recognition of media's role in the sensationalization of ethnonational conflicts around the world. This awareness of the media's potential for negatively impacting volatile situations by its tendency to report one-sided accounts of violence, to filter adverse news to nationalist loyalties, and to publish "security alerts" that foster fear and panic, has motivated international NGOs such as Search for Common Ground (SFCG) to create programs for using media, culture, and the arts in the service of peacebuilding mediations. Within the SFCG Arts and Culture Program, the promotion of peacebuilding films is one of twenty-four "operational methods" from a toolbox of "well-known conflict resolution techniques" that are being used by the NGO to mediate the

Israeli-Palestinian situation, among other ongoing ethnocultural conflicts (SFCG <u>Arts and</u>

<u>Culture</u>, <u>Toolbox</u>).

The American and European branches of the Search for Common Ground have been

sponsoring a Middle Eastern branch in Jerusalem since 1991. Throughout its existence, the goal

of the SFCG Middle East has been to present and maintain a counter-cultural viewpoint to the

prevailing climate of hostility and distrust that has characterized the history of the conflict. For

over a decade, the SFCG Middle East has been working on numerous media projects in Israel/

Palestine, targeting radio, television, theater, music, newspapers, and sports. Examples of SFCG

activities in the Middle East have included the publication of peacebuilding news stories, the

airing of cross-cultural radio soap operas, the production of inter-group television, music, and

theater, and the conducting of opinion surveys among the competing populaces (Kull "Potential,"

"Potential II"). Concurrently, it has been sponsoring dialogue workshops, conflict resolution

training, policy forums, community peace centers, and educational programs (SFCG <u>Arts and</u>

<u>Culture</u>). As a partner of the *Ma'an* network of independent Palestinian television stations, it has

been sponsoring television programs that feature themes of nonviolence. It also supports *Ma'an*

News Agency journalists with training courses on how to use new technology and how to

achieve balanced and objective reportage (SFCG <u>Capacity-Building</u>).

Recognizing the mediating influence of film in fueling ethnonational conflicts, SFCG

reasons that film can also be an important resource for promoting reconciliation between groups

with historical enmities. For the past five years, the NGO has sponsored a film festival in

Washington, DC. Following the festival, the films travel around the world, primarily targeting

universities with departments in Communications, Media, Filmmaking, Conflict Resolution, or

Peace Studies. The ongoing project is based upon the belief that "the power of film can be used

to develop greater understanding and tolerance and can contribute to defusing conflict rather than inflaming it" (Arts and Culture). The festival's goals are to popularize films that contribute to the prevention and reduction of global conflicts, to encourage filmmakers to produce texts that promote cross-cultural understanding and peaceful coexistence, and to move audiences beyond passive viewing into active dialogue. Toward these ends, SFCG sponsors a student filmmaker competition each year, and all viewings within the festival itself and the University Film Series are followed by speaker-led audience discussions.

The Common Ground Film Festival is probably the most developed and established venue for the promotion of peacebuilding films in the world. However, the Middle Eastern conflict is only one of a number of global conflicts which its film programs have been targeting. Additionally, those films dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that Common Ground *has* selected over the past five years have been heavily weighted in favor of Jewish Israeli and Jewish American directors. Consequently, it is important to canvas other efforts that have not been included in the Common Ground film festivals -- most notably, projects co-authored by various independent Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers and by alternate program venues. One such alternate program venue is San Francisco-based Link TV, a nonprofit satellite network that broadcasts a mixture of documentaries, global and national news, world music, and participatory programs which encourage cross-cultural dialogue and grassroots activities. For the past four years, its award-winning Middle Eastern news program, Mosaic, co-produced by Palestinian Jamal Dajani and Israeli David Michaelis, has been carried by seventeen cable stations throughout the Arab world, including the Palestinian territories. Most recently, Dajani and Michaelis collaborated on a documentary, Occupied Minds (2005), which will be analyzed in Chapter Six.

Up until the present time, mediation efforts have either focused on dialogue *or* film/media -- the two types of communication have largely co-existed in separate Track II diplomatic efforts, rather than having been coordinated for optimal results. In advancing the central proposition of this project, the following assumptions are being made: 1) Track II dialogic interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict -- including political problem-solving workshops, educational encounter programs for students and teachers, and grassroots dialogue groups -- are an essential aspect of peacebuilding praxis in the Middle East; 2) These types of unofficial mediations experience uneven success and are often hampered by the fact that Israelis and Palestinians have received nationalistic and prejudicial information about each other through cultural transmissions and mediated images; and 3) The resulting intractability of conflictive issues between the groups are theoretically susceptible to being re-mediated through the use of films that are made and produced for the purposes of facilitating dialogue interventions. These texts would serve to re-mediate and re-imagine the parameters of the conflict by emphasizing cultural commonalities, engendering empathic insights into "enemy" lives, advocating nonviolent means of responding to injustices, and fostering reconciliatory attitudes. It is hoped that the addition of such texts to current dialogue models would have a salutary effect in supporting peacebuilding mediations between the Israeli and Palestinian populations, and would increase the likelihood of counteracting the cycles of violence and revenge that now exist.

To advance the proposition that films can be used at various points of intervention to invigorate the dialogic practices that are currently employed by mediators in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a four-step process, proceeding from theory to practical recommendations, will be engaged. Chapter One will identify the competing Jewish and Arab historical narratives that have contributed to the emergence of the Israeli and Palestinian ethnonational identities. For

the purpose of documenting the changing nature of the competing narratives as they have interacted over time, the years of the conflict will be divided into the following time periods: Jewish Immigration and Settlement of Palestine (1890-1948); Arab-Jewish wars (1948-1980); Military Occupation/First *Intifada* (1980-1993); Oslo Peace (1993-2000); Second *Intifada*/Gaza Disengagement (2000-2007).

In Chapter Two, a brief history of the role that films have played in the rhetorical constructions of those identities will be examined, focusing on how the sociopolitical ideologies of the Israeli and Palestinian cinemas have contributed to the polarizing of ethnonational sentiments throughout the stages of the conflict, with particular attention to the past twenty years. Specifically, in order to explore the possibilities of a synergistic relationship between dialogic communication and filmic communication, this project is organized to reconstruct hermeneutic interpretation of film as dialectical conversations between Jewish/Israeli and Arab/Palestinian scholars who have been studying the sociopolitical relationships between filmic narratives and ethnonational identities. The framework will balance theoretical reliance on scholarly experts engaged in Middle Eastern, Israeli, and Palestinian cinemas. Following this review, Lucien Goldmann's theory and method of homologic textual analysis (as described in <u>The Hidden God</u>, <u>Towards a Sociology of the Novel</u>, and <u>Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature</u>) will be justified as being the appropriate model for the proposed case studies of Israeli and Palestinian films in Chapter Three. As will be shown, Goldmann's attention to the relationship among *text*, *inter-text*, and *context* aims to delve beneath the surface of the texts, exposing the ideological strategies inherent in the narratives, both to problematize symbolic constructions of Otherness and to provide cautionary markers for future ideational constructions.

Chapter Three will develop a comparative analysis of three case studies from the Israeli cinema and three case studies from the Palestinian cinema. By establishing a blend of homological and dialectical conversations between Israeli and Palestinian directors and their film texts, these case studies are offered as a representation of how ethnonational imaginaries have been promulgated through exclusionary cultural texts, and how these imaginaries might become less pervasive with the promotion of inclusionary cross-cultural texts. For the purpose of building upon Israeli and Palestinian film literatures that have previously been published, and in order to make fresh contributions to the scholarly conversations, the textual studies will concentrate on films that were produced and released during three recent time periods: 1993-1995, 2000-2002, and 2003-2006.

Chapter Four will outline the countercultural impact of unofficial peacebuilding efforts (Track II diplomacy) on the character of the conflict, and will present a thirty-five year historical overview of the theory and practice of dialogue workshops. Examples of the more successful political, educational, and grassroots models will be correlated with the goals of their secular and religious sponsoring organizations. The six secular and religious dialogue programs that will be highlighted in this chapter have survived and thrived throughout decades of turmoil in the political realm. As successful models of dialogic design, the programs share common characteristics that can be extrapolated to provide six "best practices" criteria for determining which types of film texts can best serve to promote dialogic communication. Additionally, the chapter will identify those few dialogue models where films are already being incorporated into the workshop designs and will canvass the studies of social psychologists to discern at which points of intervention films have the greatest chance of invigorating dialogic processes.

Chapter Five will examine the procedural and psychological obstacles that have historically prevented transformational dialogue from occurring in Palestinian-Israeli intergroup encounters. A failure to contextualize power asymmetries within the political conflict will be identified as the major procedural obstacle to dialogic communication; while collective memories, ethnonational identities, and cultural discourse will be invoked as the major psychological obstacles. Finally, six "cautionary tales" criteria will be extrapolated from the problems experienced by those flawed programs.

In Chapter Six, the lessons learned from these Track II interventions will be employed to guide the selection, evaluation, and application of film texts in future intergroup encounters. Through a holistic application of the six "best practices" criteria from Chapter Four and the six "cautionary tales" criteria from Chapter Five, the weaknesses and strengths of the dialogue programs will be parlayed to homologically analyze three peacebuilding texts with regard to their fulfillment of the principles of dialogical crafting in four areas: production design, thematic content, character portrayals, and textual discourse.

The goal of this process is to provide guidelines for identifying whether and how a film's design, content, and discourse are successful in re-mediating and re-imagining the parameters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These guidelines will aid in the creation of future peacebuilding Israeli-Palestinian films whose narratives and visual images trigger fresh responses to the relentless cycle of hatred and revenge. To actuate this method, three peacebuilding documentaries -- one 1995 independent release by a Palestinian and an Israeli filmmaker, one selection from the 2002 Common Ground film festival program, and one 2005 co-production from Link TV -- will be analyzed and contrasted with the six mainstream film texts from Chapter

Three. To enable a historically based conversation, the peacebuilding texts have been either produced or released during each of the previously demarcated time periods.

The purpose of this exercise is to more clearly identify *why*, *when,* and *how* films can enhance dialogue interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The goal is for a re-mediating of narratives and a de-biasing of attitudes to be achieved by using film texts to bolster the current dialogic practices being employed in Track II diplomatic efforts. By supplementing Goldmann's homologic method of analysis with dialogically-derived criteria for evaluating the peacebuilding potential of film texts, a new set of practices can emerge for using film and dialogue jointly to re-imagine the patterns of enduring rivalry that have persisted over the past century between the two groups.

In order to avoid endless debates between contrary positions held by inter-group and intra-group members, and to foster a spirit of peacebuilding dialogue, a balanced reliance upon Arab/Palestinian and Jewish/Israeli scholars will inform the theoretical arguments of the literature review and the textual analyses of the case studies. Since members of both groups have claimed "diasporic" identities (Boyarin; Boyarin & Boyarin; Galchinsky; Gluzman; Goldscheider; Khalidi; Peters; Rose States; Said Reflections; Sayigh Armed; Schulz Palestinian; Seed; Zureik), several different conversational streams will be established between those Jewish and Arab scholars who have lived most of their lives in the Middle East, and those who have largely resided in the U.S. or Europe.

Throughout this project, design methods will be applied that have been gleaned from successful dialogue workshops. Specifically, the method of including equal numbers of participants who are of equal professional/personal status will be followed to encourage dialogic symmetry in the inter-group power relationship. In response to Foucault's question -- "Who is

allowed to speak?" -- the Appendix will provide short biographies of the Arab/Palestinian and Jewish/Israeli authors who are "heard" within the context of the framing of the issues and the parsing of the textual case studies in each of the six chapters. Other voices that have inspired or substantiated the viewpoints of the main participants in the dialogue will be cited as peripheral authorities and will not be identified biographically.

The format will be similar to Jay Rothman's (Confrontation, Resolving) workshop design of moving the participants' discourse from confrontation to cooperation: the conflicting arguments will be presented, the inherent ideologies of each party's rhetoric will be acknowledged, and the possible avenues of reconciliation will be explored. In Chapters One through Three, the emphasis will be on dialectic communication -- logical argument and critical investigation -- between Israeli and Palestinian voices. After gleaning the principles from successful and unsuccessful dialogue models in Chapters Four and Five, a palimpsest of dialogic attributes will be overlaid on Lucien Goldmann's dialectic methodology -- as described in The Hidden God, Towards a Sociology of the Novel, and Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature -- to produce an enhanced homologic analysis of three peacebuilding films in Chapter Six. Along to road from confrontation to cooperation, the analytical methodology will include an objective balancing of discourse, identity, and power in evaluating the theories, texts, and practices operating within the realms of filmic and dialogic communication that have been directly informing the parameters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the past fifty-five years. Throughout this endeavor, I will be constrained by a reliance on English-language sources for books, articles, and interviews. Thankfully, many of the seminal works have been written in English, or have been translated into English from the Arabic and Hebrew. However, I recognize that language choice itself is an ideological factor in constructing any narrative. While

acknowledging the shortcomings and bias inherent in my approach, I hope that I may nevertheless make a significant contribution to peacebuilding theory and practice through this work. My original contribution will be to traverse an interdisciplinary path -- combining theories of textual analysis, film, communication, and international conflict resolution -- to arrive at a method for identifying "how, why, and when" films are best positioned to re-mediate ethnonational imaginaries and to promote dialogic communication between those who are residents of Israel/Palestine, whether in physical reality or emotional desire.

CHAPTER ONE

COMPETING NARRATIVES: THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF

ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN ETHNONATIONAL IDENTITIES

Surfeits of histories have been written on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The authors of

these histories have made conscious and unconscious choices -- based on sociopolitical and

ethnocultural affiliations -- to narrate selected events that support specific worldviews. In this

chapter, rather broad periods of time are culled for those developments which have been

adversely memorialized by Israeli and Palestinian historians through competing national

narratives. Each of these points is narrated from Israeli and Palestinian points of view in a

dialectic format. This format attempts to approximate a dialogue model in which each side gives

the other a respectful hearing. Although agreement has not been reached on many historically

contentious issues relating to the conflict, the acknowledgment of the existence of competing

narratives and the willingness to hear disparate interpretations of political watersheds is a step in

the direction of peaceful co-existence.

Just as written histories have promoted the construction of ethnonational identities, so

have the visual arts and media maintained these imaginaries to support hostilities in the political

arena. Therefore, a dialectic design of competing textual narratives will be extended to

Palestinian and Israeli cinematic texts in Chapters Two and Three. Throughout this project, the

goal is to move from confrontation to cooperation, theorizing that if the parameters of the

conflict have been defined by constructed histories and mediated ideologies, it follows that the

conflict is susceptible to re-mediating and re-imagining through peacebuilding interventions.

The Emergence of Israeli and Palestinian Ethnonationalisms:

Mythic Homeland as Antidote to Victimization and Exile

Palestinian Narrative

Edward Said (1985): "To the Palestinians, Israel is a Jewish state programmatically associated

with the systematic denial of Palestinian human, political, and national rights" ("Ideology" 52).

(2000): "For in fact the Jewish victims of anti-Semitism came to Palestine and created a new

victim, the Palestinians, who today are nothing less than the victims of the victims. Hardly

anything can mitigate the shattering historical truth that the creation of Israel meant the

destruction of Palestine. The elevation of a new people to sovereignty in the Holy Land has

meant the subjugation, dispossession, and oppression of another"("Nationalism" 433).

Israeli Narrative

Yossi Beilin (1998): "I think that if they [the Palestinians] understand the suffering of the other

side and the fact that the other side is not what they try to portray, the cruel Israeli soldier

beating a small kid, but the small kid himself who is surviving from the Holocaust, it would be

easier for them to understand that eventually we have to find a real compromise. If you are

asking me what I would like our own people [the Israelis] to understand, it is that a battered

child might be a beating father. And that is the most horrifying thing. You have it in many cases

in the world. And we are the battered child of the world, undoubtedly. We are one of the biggest

victims of the world, if not the biggest one. But it doesn't allow us, sometimes to think that

because we were such victims we can hit others" (IIS Conversations*).*

One of the key dialectics shaping the controversy between the Israelis and the Palestinians can be found in their mirrored narratives of mythic homeland as the antidote to victimization and exile. For the persecuted Jews, the horror of the Holocaust would be forgotten in the sweet fruits of Zion. The Jewish narrative -- "Anti-Semitism requires Zionism" -- positions a mythic homeland as the symbolic salvation of a people who have been exiled for 2,000 years in a world that has sought to destroy the Jewish race. While Jewish religious settlers justify their claims to the land as a God-given promise, the secular settlers rationalize their right of return as the world's payback for failing to prevent the extermination of 6,000,000 Jews during World War II. According to the competing Palestinian narrative -- "Zionism is Racism" -- the Jewish immigrants are armed invaders who have established exclusionary communities on the homelands that Palestinian families had inhabited for generations. The invaders' military aggression, supported with funding from powerful states, has enabled them to seize the Palestinian lands, destroy their traditional way of life, and cast them into exile from their homes.

Naturally, the competing narratives have co-evolved over time, and notable interactions have occurred. Important cultural tropes that were once considered to be the exclusive domain of the Jews have been expropriated by the Palestinians. Debates over identity markers such as diaspora, exile, victimhood, holocaust, martyrdom, and homeland have permeated the discursive boundaries, both by intention and coincidence. Consequently, the rhetorical positions of the Israelis and Palestinians have become relativized over the decades, from the sharing of their ancestor Abraham, to the use of the term "anti-Semitic" by the Palestinians, who are also Semites (see Said "Orientalism Reconsidered"). As one example of analogous narration, Patricia Seed's qualitative research has revealed that the customs of the 1948 Palestinian refugees in eulogizing the keys of their demolished homes and displaying them as family heirlooms, are

analogous to the practices of European Jews who carried their honored house keys when they were expelled from Spain in the 1400s ("Key").

A foundational counterpoint of the Arab-Jewish conflict has been the refusal of both peoples to recognize each other's right to identity and nationhood. Unfortunately, formative pronouncements by intransigent leaders have historically fueled the climate of fear and hatred that has perpetuated stereotypical prejudices on both sides. Egyptian president Abdel Nasser's oft-repeated declaration that the combined Arab forces would "drive the Jews into the sea" has been dramatically juxtaposed with Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's assertion that "there were no Palestinians" at the time the Jews began to reclaim the land of Israel in the twentieth century (Khalidi; Schulz Diaspora).

While ethnocentric positions among the Israelis and Palestinians have resulted in frequent stalemates interspersed with violent escalations, there are encouraging signs that the forward-thinking segments of both populaces are moving toward a two-state solution to the conflict. On the one hand, numerous failed pan-Arab efforts to defeat the Jewish state have seriously eroded most Arabs' non-acceptance of Israel's right to exist. On the other hand, official Israeli recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1993 Oslo Accords has dispelled most Jews' non-recognition of a Palestinian identity. This process of legitimizing acceptance is changing the face of the conflict in both name and character. The former "Arab-Jewish" nomenclature, which emphasized the armed aggression of the Arab multinational coalition against the Jewish immigrants, has now been replaced by the "Israeli-Palestinian" nomenclature, which recognizes the current military domination of the Jewish Israelis over the Arab Palestinians. Over the last decade, the violent disagreements between the two parties have been more centered on achieving mutual recognition than on maintaining mutual denial.

The historical progression from denial to recognition that has resulted from this co-mingling of competing narratives may be better understood by dividing the development of the conflict into five time periods: Jewish Immigration and Settlement of Palestine (1880-1948); Arab-Jewish Wars (1948-1980); Military Occupation/First *Intifada* (1980-1993); Oslo Peace (1993-2000); and Second *Intifada*/Gaza Disengagement (2000-2007). Within each period, the ethnonational identities of the Israelis and Palestinians have been interacting and realigning with each other, shifting in relationship to the evolution of their collective aspirations and ideological interpretations.

In a proactive attempt to bring dialogic practices into historical debates (at least at the theoretical level), This chapter will present the Jewish/Israeli and Arab/Palestinian narratives in a format that is patterned after dialogue encounters. The following practices will be adhered to as nearly as possible: 1) Equal space and weight will be given to both sides' narratives within each time period; 2) Equal numbers of participants of equal professional and/or personal status will be selected to speak from both sides; 3) Short biographies will be supplied in the Appendix in order to introduce the narrators and to authenticate their credentials; 4) Multiple voices from both groups will be heard.

The purpose of this design is to present a model of co-operation between Israeli and Palestinian scholars in the process of narrating and acknowledging their cultural histories and collective memories. Although the structuring of the design is somewhat artificial, it may be seen as a genuine first step toward the development of balanced narrations of shared events relating to the history of the conflict. Although hundreds of books have been written about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rarely have both sides' viewpoints been presented in a balanced manner; and where attempts have been made to do so, they have been clothed in irreconcilable

controversy rather than transformative possibility. The ultimate goal of this exercise is to reconcile the two groups' oppositional collective memories in such a way that injustices might be recognized, responsibilities might be accepted, trust might be established, and a future of peaceful co-existence might be envisioned.

<center>Jewish Immigration and Settlement of Palestine, 1880-1948</center>

Jewish Historical Narrative

Daniel Bar-Tal (1998): "The return of the Jews to Israel, after 2000 years of exile, to establish their own state in Palestine was inspired by the nationalist ideology of Zionism…On the basis of this ideology beliefs evolved which characterized the new-born state…Among them can be found references to the fact that the Jewish nation was formed in the land of ancient Israel; that during the long period of the Jews' ancient history Israel was their homeland; that during their exile Jews maintained close spiritual as well as physical relations with the land of Israel, continuously aspiring to return to it; and that the repeated experience of anti-Semitism in exile was a constant reminder of the need to secure existence of the Jewish people in their old homeland" ("Societal" 32-33).

According to Jewish biblical writings and oral histories, Zion is at once the entire Holy Land that God promised to the Jewish people, and the Mount of the fairest city on earth, Jerusalem. The crucial roles of the Land of Zion and the Mount of Zion, both in the collective memory of the Jews and in the objective histories of the state of Israel, have become intermingled with politics, religion, culture, and myth in the construction of the contemporary Jewish Israeli identity. The religious culture of Judaism, which dates back to Abraham's conversion approximately 4000 years ago, has been shaped by ceremonial observances and written interpretations (provided by learned rabbis who are respected Jewish scholars). With the

advent of the Zionist movement in Europe during the nineteenth century, the meaning of being

Jewish became infused with an ethnonational identity and a cultural secularity that, for many

Jews, trumped their religious affiliation (see Rose <u>States</u>).

Theodor Herzl, a Viennese journalist, was a primary advocate and shaper of the Zionist

vision. After witnessing the 1894 conviction of a Jewish captain, Alfred Dreyfus, by a French

military court, Herzl became convinced that even assimilated European Jews were not safe from

anti-Semitic persecutions. Although Captain Dreyfus's conviction for treason was later reversed,

Herzl saw Dreyfus's predicament as fearful evidence of the insecurity of the Jewish people's

acceptance within the European family of nations. Spurred to action by his realization, Herzl

dedicated himself to promoting the ideal of his people's right to a national commonwealth in

Palestine. As he raised financial and political support for this vision, the imaginations of

influential individuals were ignited, and they formed social organizations to assist in turning the

dream into reality. One of their primary goals was to raise funds for purchasing land in

Palestine, and for subsidizing future communal settlements. Within seven years after the

Dreyfus Affair, the Jewish National Fund had been established, along with a bank to administer

the financial activities of the Zionist movement. During this period, the first wave of Jewish

immigrants arrived in Palestine, fleeing from anti-Semitic violence in Russia and Romania

(Kimmerling).

The principal catalyst for the "mythological-historical origins of the Israeli state" was

found in the promise of Zion (Kimmerling 16). Taking Herzl's vision a step further, the Zionist

founders used "the religiously preserved collective memory of the ancient Holy Land" to

legitimize "the territorial base for their nation- and state-building efforts" (4). The individuals

and organizations promoting the Zionist dream developed a set of rhetorical strategies to

indoctrinate the settlers with pioneering spirits and collective goals. Thus, the settlers arrived

with an ideological like-mindedness that was primarily focused on their collective struggles for

survival as a Jewish commonwealth. According to historical Jewish narratives, the Zionists

found themselves in sparsely populated regions of bleak desert and malarial swamp, inhabited by

small disparate groups of nomads and peasants. Banding together into settlements, they drained

the swamps, planted crops, and irrigated the parched land, causing the desert to bloom. Enduring

great hardships, they forged a unity of Jewish brotherhood, and attempted to live in cooperation

with the few non-Jewish inhabitants they encountered.

The early Jewish settlers generally failed to recognize that their arrival might be

adversely affecting indigenous people groups. Consequently, memoirs of early Jewish

immigrants rarely mention the existence of Arabs at all -- "It is as if each Jewish colony was a

separate, self-contained universe, with nothing around it"(Morris, Righteous 654). This

psychological blindness, or "mental obliteration of the 'natives'" (654) was a defense mechanism

used for suppressing feelings of guilt while remaining faithful to the common cause. When the

Arabs began to react intolerantly and later violently to the growing threats to their security, the

Jews moved from defensive blindness into offensive justification. Over the history of the

conflict, both sides' attitudes would progress from mutual misunderstanding into Othering

mentalities and ethnonationalist hatreds.

In 1922, following the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed. At that time,

Palestine passed from Ottoman control to British colonial rule. The League of Nations granted a

mandatory charter to Great Britain, directing it to "'secure the establishment of a Jewish national

home and the development of self-governing institutions, and also to safeguard the civil and

religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion'" (quoted in

Kimmerling 28). The charter language was based upon the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which had been previously issued by the British government stating its support of a Jewish state being established in Palestine.

Constant conflict, on multiple levels between and among the British, Jews, and Arabs marked Palestine's twenty-six years as a territorial mandate. The British government, with a political leadership divided in its loyalties between the Arabs and Jews, vacillated in its policies from year to year. At times, it would bow to Arab pressure to restrict Jewish immigration into Palestine and would establish maritime blockades; those measures would then trigger Jewish military resistance. In at least one instance, British government officials signed guarantees of support to the Arabs and the Jews that were contradictory in terms. Finally, after the close of World War II, the United Nations General Assembly issued a partition decision which divided the territory into a Jewish state and an Arab state, with Jerusalem as an international city. The Arab Palestinian population, supported by Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, and Iraq, rejected the partition plan and prepared for war. As the British army withdrew on May 14, 1948, the Jews declared Israel to be an independent state and gathered their military forces to defend what they considered to be their rightful homeland (Kimmerling; see also Cohen, Zion).

Arab Historical Narrative

Rashid Khalidi (1997): "[T]he reaction of the Palestinian Arabs to modern political Zionism drew upon all these preexisting elements: religious attachment to what Muslims and Christians saw as a holy land, the conception of Palestine as an administrative entity, the fear of external encroachment, and local patriotism…[T]here was a widespread and sophisticated opposition to Zionism among educated, urban, and politically active Palestinians from a very early stage, [and] strong resistance to Zionism among the peasantry in areas where Zionist colonization led

to the displacement of fellahin *from their lands. All of this was reflected in the press, which had a broad impact on public opinion and helped to shape both Arab views of Zionism, and the conception of Palestine as a land under threat"* (154).

According to Palestinian historical narratives, the institution of the Ottoman Land Law in 1858 marked an important betrayal in the chain of events leading to the Arab-Jewish conflict. This law required a title of ownership for all land under Ottoman control, including the region of Palestine. Up until this time, the Arab peasants had lived and worked in the region without undue interference from the Ottoman ruler. Under their customs, land was not legally owned, but rather was inhabited and controlled by tribes. In an essential shift of power, the Ottoman ruler rewarded city notables and clan leaders with titles of land ownership. Land control thus shifted from rural chiefs with historical tribal loyalties to urban elites who were divorced from traditional practices. New taxes and loan structures served to indebt the peasants (*fellahin*) as a class and to imprint them with a landless, inferior status that they previously had not held. Legally identified as squatters or nomads, the majority of indigenous inhabitants were unprotected in their claims to their dwellings and lands.   Furthermore, absentee landowners without ties to the region were the major sellers of property to Jewish immigrants. Historical rights of Arab peasants to that region were thus ignored, to their detriment and dismay (Khalidi).

An equally important aspect of the controversies, crystallizing the centrality of the land disputes, was the impact of ethnocultural immigration on the composition of the region's population. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, and continuing throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the arrival of Jewish immigrants led to drastic material shifts in population demographics. While scholars differ on exact dates and numbers, they recognize three main waves of Jewish immigration leading up to the 1948 U.N. partition and the Arab-

Jewish wars. Approximately 25,000 settlers arrived in the first wave, from 1880-1903; this doubled the number of Jewish inhabitants in the region. Over 50,000 Jews arrived in the second wave, from 1904 to World War I, doubling the Jewish population again. By the 1930s, there were approximately 175,000 Jews and 850,000 Arabs living in the mandate of Palestine. During that decade, 200,000 more Jews arrived in the third wave of immigration, bringing the population distribution to approximately 380,000 Jews and 900,000 Arabs (Goldscheider).

Finally, in 1937, the continuing and growing Arab protest galvanized the British into restricting Jewish immigration. This decision engendered bitter Jewish outcry, since the immigrants in the 1930s were escaping Nazi annihilation. At that point, most Jews began to think of the Arabs as being allies of their enemies, the Nazis. Conversely, most Arabs began to think of the Jews as being allies of Western colonial powers and their oppressive, illegitimate political regimes. Over the next ten years, immigrants would continue to arrive, desperately risking British blockades and Arab resistance. By the eve of the U.N. partition, the changing population demographics had become highly threatening to the indigenous Arabs: In 1880, the Jewish settlers comprised about 6% of the total population and owned .3% of the land; by 1947, the Jewish settlers comprised about 33% of the population and owned 7% of the land (Kimmerling 35).

This treacherous combination of material losses, physical fears, religious/cultural differences, and competing political agendas led to the formation of antagonistic ethnonational identities. However, while the Jews were strengthened by their war for independence, unified under the flag of Zion and the nation-state of Israel, the Palestinians were weakened by their division into pockets of fighters and streams of refugees, fed by fearful rumors, disinformation, and the competing agendas of the surrounding Arab nations.

From the beginning of the Arab-Jewish hostilities in the early twentieth century, the Palestinians had displayed less cohesiveness than the Jewish settlers, and were consistently disadvantaged by their lack of solidarity. Furthermore, they had significantly failed to mobilize nationalistic sentiments against Western colonialism in general, and were left behind by other Arab groups who were establishing independent Arab states such as Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. The Palestinian inhabitants had stronger divisive tendencies among themselves, and "demonstrated less ability to transcend local, family, and political rivalries and to unify their efforts against their common enemies" (Khalidi 25). Furthermore, other Arab groups tended to be led by more sophisticated urban elites who were able to legally protect their holdings. The Palestinians, however, were primarily led by uneducated "hill people" from the Nablus-Jerusalem-Hebron area. This area was less economically developed than the urban areas of the surrounding Arab countries, and its political leaders maintained "religious, clan, family, and parochial perspectives" (26) that were not easily adaptable to modern changes. As a result, their political hierarchy privileged the rural areas and disadvantaged the more commercially and intellectually viable urban areas of Jaffa and Haifa.

The Palestinian's lack of economic standing, coupled with a lack of political cohesiveness, and reinforced by the physical displacement of their population, led to a void of substantial leadership for the first half of the twentieth century. When a group of Arab peasants, led by Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassem, did rebel against British rule during the years 1936-39, the rebellion was crushed and the Sheikh was martyred. At that time, experiences of struggle and loss began to imbue a "folk nationalist discourse" (Schulz, Reconstruction 27) that would later grow into Palestinian nationalism. Disasters would continue to play a significant role in "the production of meaning" (44) for the Palestinian inhabitants.

Arab-Jewish Wars, 1948-1980

Jewish Israeli Narrative

Daniel Bar-Tal (1998): "The concerted attempts of the Arab states to annihilate the state of
Israel during the first 30 years of its existence, the Arab embargo on Israeli trade, and the
terrorist attacks on Israeli and non-Israeli Jews were all perceived by the Israelis as evidence of
their victimization. In this frame of reference, the four major wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, and
1973, as well as numerous military clashes, have been perceived as self-defensive actions. Arab
attitudes and behaviors were viewed as another direct expression of the world's hostility, and
Arab anti-Zionism, during the intractable conflict, was viewed as a continuation of old anti-
Semitism" ("Societal" 34).

      The classic history of the establishment of the State of Israel, as originally constructed by
a generation of Jewish-Israeli scholars who had personally experienced the Holocaust and/or had
fought in a series of Arab-Jewish wars, is imbued with the grandiose rhetoric of nation building.
The War for Independence of 1948 is considered to be the linchpin of a process that had begun
its modern phase sixty years earlier with Arab attacks on Jewish settlers, and would take thirty
more years of victories in the pan-Arab wars of 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982 to establish Israel's
ability to defend itself against military threats from the surrounding Arab populations. Shimon
Peres's <u>David's Sling</u> (1971) reinforces the popular sentiment that the Jews represented the small
shepherd boy David, while the combined Arab nations represented the giant warrior Goliath. As
the biblical tale recounts, David slew the armored Goliath with a rock and a sling, hitting him
squarely in the forehead and felling him to the ground. This biblically inspired reenactment of a
military victory by the "weak against the strong" is doubly reinforced by a physical and a
psychological homecoming: the modern *geographical* reversal of the Middle Eastern Jews' exile

to Babylon 2,000 years ago; and the modern *psychological* reversal of the Western Jews' being

tortured, expelled, and murdered by a series of Europeans, from the Spanish Inquisitors of the

fifteenth century through the German Nazis of the twentieth century.   Consistent with this

construction, the home-comers' armed expulsion of the unwanted interlopers (the non-Jews), and

the military triumphs of the Jews over the Arab enemies, are seen as reasonable tributes to the

nonviolent Jewish families who were stripped of their businesses, homes, and possessions (even

their hair and their gold teeth), and who meekly went to their deaths packed into cattle cars and

gas ovens.

Thus, the first generation of Israeli historians has been unequivocally supportive of the

Zionist vision, which they believe to be absolutely necessary for the physical survival of the

Jewish people. In their scholarly accounts, this survival is effectuated through the heroic

leadership of larger-than-life individuals who, like the biblical Queen Esther, were called to great

sacrifice in the time of the Jewish people's imminent destruction. In this vein, Shabtai Teveth's

Moshe Dayan: The Soldier, the Man, the Legend (1973) recounts the heroism of the legendary

general who saved the Jews from annihilation at the hands of their Arab enemies; while Teveth's

subsequent book, Ben Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War (1985), lauds the

persistent vision of the statesman who enabled Israel to take her rightful place in the community

of nations, overcoming the treachery of the Palestinian enemies within their midst. Many Jews

in Israel and the diaspora continue to support this viewpoint to the present day, citing ongoing

evidence that the Palestinians have consistently sided with the enemies of the Jews, from Adolf

Hitler in the 1940s to Saddam Hussein in the 1990s.

In 1967 -- after being attacked by Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon -- Israel conquered the Sinai

Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. Over the next

thirty-five years, the Israeli government would launch a program of incentives for settler expansion into these areas. The new settlements were comprised of a mix of orthodox families who were acting under religious imperatives, and secular families who were acting under financial imperatives. Each settlement would require its own military guard -- either to protect the settlers from the nonviolent incursions of displaced Palestinian families who often attempted to return to harvest their fruit trees and agricultural lands -- or to defend the settlers from the violent retributions of militants who bitterly opposed the taking of their properties. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) protection extended to policing the roads that the settlers would travel for business and pleasure, and resulted in the establishment of military checkpoints for all Arab travelers. The political justification for the settlement expansion would be cloaked in the guise of national security, while the moral justification would be invoked as a fulfillment of God's promise to return the Land of Zion to the Jewish people.

While the Sinai Peninsula was returned in Egypt in 1979 in exchange for a cold peace, the remainder of the captured territories was annexed to Israel proper, and came under military administration as the Occupied Territories. By the 1980s, the physical and psychological consequences of maintaining a long-term military occupation over a hostile population had conclusively fragmented the hegemonic Zionist vision, and Israeli society became politically divided over the meaning of national security and the treatment of the Palestinian people.

Arab Palestinian Narrative

Rashid Khalidi (1997): "In 1948 half of Palestine's 1.4 million Arabs were uprooted from their homes and became refugees while the traditional Palestinian political and social leadership was scattered and discredited. In addition, the political structures this class had dominated were pulverized, not to be replaced over a decade and a half, during which time there existed a

leadership vacuum…In the Palestinian case, repeated crushing failure has been surmounted and survived, and in some sense has been incorporated into the narrative of identity as triumph… This narrative of failure as triumph began during the Mandate, but reached its apogee in the years after 1948, when it was picked up and elaborated by the grassroots underground Palestinian nationalist organizations that would emerge and take over the PLO in the mid-1960s" (22, 194).

In Arab literature and discourse, the establishment of the state of Israel is referred to as *al-Nakba*, the Catastrophe. One of the most important symbols of this "catastrophic shattering" was the slaughter of 200 residents of the village of Dair Yasin by the Jewish *Irgun* forces in April 1948. This event terrified the inhabitants in other villages, causing them to flee before the advancing Israeli forces. Many times, Arab villagers were urged to safety by officials who assured them that they would soon be able to return to their homes once the Jews were soundly defeated. Of equal importance in creating the Palestinian refugee crisis was a series of forced expulsions by the Israeli military, coupled with atrocities carried out against women and children in villages that had not previously been voluntarily evacuated (Khalidi). The conclusive defeat of the combined military forces of the Pan-Arab alliance had the effect of reversing the Palestinian majority status in the territorial mandate -- only about 150,000 Arabs, as opposed to 650,000 Jews, became Israeli citizens. Thus, within a period of about fifty years (1888-1948) the ethnocultural composition of the indigenous population was transformed.

The 1948 experience of defeat and exile, exacerbated by subsequent vindictive treatment at the hands of the Israelis and the callous indifference of the pan-Arab world, "cemented and universalized a common identity as Palestinians" (Khalidi 194); those who remained *inside* the state borders were divided from their families, transferred out of their villages, and viewed as a

despised minority by the Jewish majority; those who fled *outside* the state borders were uprooted

from their homes, left without sources of food, and divorced from their traditional lives. Both

the defeated and the exiled populations shared a collective consciousness of trauma that would

eventually transcend their physical locations. This collective identity, however, would remain

quiescent for the next ten years, due to the diasporic segmenting of Palestinians into refugee

camps and the surrounding countries, coupled with the intentional and unintentional segmenting

of those who would remain in various areas within the state of Israel.

In 1959, radical students from Cairo and the Gaza Strip, among them Yasser Arafat,

formed the organization, *al-Fatah*. The group's name, a reverse acronym for the Palestinian

National Liberation Movement, marked an ideological shift from pan-Arabism to Palestinianism,

with statehood as the political goal. Following the pan-Arab defeat in the 1967 war against

Israel, the Palestinian refugees became determined to turn their humiliation and loss into

assertiveness and action. Dissociating themselves from the pan-Arab alliance that had not only

failed to protect their interests, but had repeatedly weakened their political standing with the

Israelis, the Palestinian leadership of the PLO merged with the leadership of the Palestine

Resistance Movement to pursue a popular war of liberation. This revolutionary ideology of

armed struggle would serve to "embody a Palestinian narrative of selfhood and history" (Schulz,

Reconstruction 35). The twin pillars of this narrative were "failure as triumph" and "defeat as

victory": the Palestinians' ability to survive against repeated assaults became romanticized in a

commitment to armed struggle, a "heroic perseverance against impossible odds" (Khalidi

195). Yezid Sayigh describes the resistance movement:

> Military action confirmed that the Palestinians, to themselves above all, were
>
> active participants in shaping their own destiny, rather than passive victims…

> [T]he excessive hyperbole and symbolism only went to show that military action
> served a different function entirely: to consolidate a national myth and imagined
> community (<u>Armed</u> 27).

However beneficial this culture of resistance and sacrifice might have been to Palestinian pride, the Israelis perceived it as proof that Palestinians were terrorists rather than freedom fighters, and disparate factions rather than a nation of refugees. The revolutionary ideology also encouraged the perception of Palestinian national identity as a reactive strategy to the emergence of Jewish nationalism, rather than as a communal imperative. Most importantly, Israelis were convinced that the chief motivation of Palestinian identity claims was a politically sophisticated ploy for depriving them of their mythic homeland, painfully re-won by conquering their foes.

<div align="center">Military Occupation/First Intifada, 1980-1993</div>

Palestinian Narrative

AlJazeera.net (2003): "The Intifada *(or popular uprising) marked a new era in mass resistance in Palestine, signaling an end to years of passivity. Lacking the necessary arms to face the Israeli military, people in the occupied territories invented their own ways of fighting back. Many young men took to wearing masks and ambushing the Israeli army with a rain of stones…The military operations and stone-throwing were backed by a network of well organized strikes, the boycotting of Israeli goods, closures and demonstrations" (<u>First</u>* Intifada*).*

Palestinian discourse described the first *Intifada* (which can be translated as a feverish shudder or a trembling) as "the eruption of a volcano" and "an earthquake of the land" in leaflets that were distributed by three Islamist groups: the UNLU (Unified National Leadership of the Uprising), *Hamas*, and Islamic *Jihad* (Schulz, <u>Palestinian</u> 127). Over a period of six years, the civil uprisings were organized through the mass-mediated dissemination of leaflets informing the

people of future collective actions against the Israeli military and government. These actions were based in a "combined strategy of 'limited violence', using stone-throwing and Molotov cocktails, large-scale confrontations with the IDF, mass demonstrations and civil disobedience, including strikes, closure of shops, non-cooperation, in some areas a refusal to pay taxes" (Schulz, Palestinian 134). The three political-religious groups, who were all vying for grassroots support to challenge Yasser Arafat's Palestinian leadership, reinforced the drive for solidarity through an emphasis on education and charity throughout the Gaza and West Bank communities.

As ideological encouragement, the popular leaflets interpreted the meaning of past events in glorified allegory and romanticized language. The revolutionary discourse emphasized the people's heroic perseverance against impossible odds and reconstructed failed events as narratives of triumph. The construction of Palestinian nationalism was mediated through the contemporizing of three archetypal identities: the peasant, the guerilla-soldier, and the martyr. These core identities would enable the Palestinian people to move from humiliation to empowerment, from defeat to triumph (Schulz Palestinian, Reconstruction).

Depicted as a "magnificent, relentless struggle against injustice and occupation" (Palestinian 134), the *Intifada* invested its participants with a pride in being Palestinian, and enabled them to rally around a victorious narrative of the conflict. The united front marked a distinct shift from previous fragmented responses to the Zionist vision that had been propelling Jewish nationalistic aspirations since the early twentieth century. Under a burgeoning collective solidarity, the Palestinians were being strengthened at the same time that the Jews were being weakened by growing political and religious divisiveness. To cement the ideological reversal, media broadcasters described footage of Palestinian boys slinging rocks at the IDF soldiers as "the Palestinian David against the Israeli Goliath" (Shuster). Adding fuel to the fire of Israeli

political upheaval, it was during this time period that Israeli Arab citizens began conceiving of themselves as Palestinian nationalists who lived within the borders of the state of Israel. Setting aside their survivors' guilt, they sought solidarity with Palestinians living in the administered territories, and joined in a glorification of the refugees' struggle and resistance. At the same time, these "inside" Palestinians felt empowered to be more outspoken in their condemnation of Israeli government policies that relegated them to inferior sociopolitical status on the basis of their ethnicity.

Israeli Narrative

Shimon Peres (1993): "We were forced to cope with unrelenting Arab hostilities, and to enforce law and order in territories settled mostly by embittered Arabs. It is easier to respond to a direct attack from an enemy than to deal with a people who have lost their land but not their honor. In addition, our collective conscience troubled us: we were in conflict with ourselves, not only with our neighbors. Throughout history, the Jewish people have recoiled from ruling others. Our forefathers never had colonial aspirations or missionary tendencies, nor do Israelis today…We could have saved ourselves and the Palestinians six years of Intifada, *and the loss of much human life, had the former head of the Likud-run government not undermined the agreement I had worked out with King Hussein of Jordan" (New 16).*

The time period of 1980-1993 marked a decisive shift in the monolithic nature of the Zionist national program, and gave rise to voices of dissent in all of the state's ideological institutions: the popular media, academia, government, and the military. Within the political realm, internal divisions worsened considerably, with advocates of Israel's most powerful liberal party (Labor) positioned against supporters of its most powerful conservative party (*Likud*), particularly in respect to proposed solutions for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Bipartisan

recriminations were fueled by events such as the Palestinian massacre at the *Sabra* and *Shatila* refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982, which occurred during the Israeli military occupation of Beirut. Although the massacres of the Palestinian refugees were carried out by Israel's allies -- Lebanese Maronite Christian militias -- the events triggered an Israeli government investigation into the lack of intervention by the IDF forces which had ostensibly been guarding the camps at the time. In 1983, Likud Defense Minister Ariel Sharon was found to be personally responsible for the massacres by an Israeli investigative commission and was removed from his government post.

In 1986, the Israeli *Knesset* (Parliament) passed a law banning Israelis from making contact with any member of the Palestine Liberation Organization, arguing that the PLO was a terrorist organization seeking to destroy the state of Israel. The law was a defensive reaction against internal threats to the hegemonic Zionist vision, and sought to criminalize opposition to the nationalist priority of promoting a united front to the enemy and the world. Concomitantly, it cemented the default position that the Palestinians did not exist as a legitimate entity and had no official representation ("There's no one to talk to and nothing to talk about"). In effect, it caused Israeli citizens who desired to engage in peacebuilding efforts to risk imprisonment for their activities, thus intensifying political rancor on both sides.

Within the academic realm, a second generation of Jewish scholars began developing a more critically nuanced and more balanced examination of the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first scholar to be recognized as a "new historian" was Benny Morris, who, after researching some previously classified documents that were released to him personally by the Israeli government, published an account of the 1948 creation of the Palestinian refugee problem that contained critical discrepancies with the cherished rationalizations of previous Zionist

narratives (Birth, Birth Revisited). Morris and other new historians had been shaping these more

critical viewpoints during their mandatory military services in the war with Lebanon in the

1980s, and in the occupations of Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem since the 1967 wars.

Although Morris's incipient research paved the way for the more radical "post-Zionist"

intellectual movement (which largely rejects the foundational justifications for Zionism), he has

been consistently excoriated by those scholars for excusing and/or justifying Israeli policies that

have contributed to the intransigence of the refugee issue. Since the late 1980s, the post-Zionist

scholars have escalated their attacks on Zionism, situating it within a broader context of

European colonialism, Western Orientalism, divisive ethnonationalisms, and human rights

abuses (Gerber; Ophir; Pappe; Segev; Sternhell). While there are substantial political divisions

within the ranks of the new historians, and their conflicting agendas have led to scholarly articles

steeped in emotional rancor, they all seek to balance an unquestioning acceptance of Zionism

with more nuanced evaluations of its effects on the Palestinian people (See also Said "Zionism").

Consequently, in addition to their internal critiques of each other, they have endured external

criticism from all sides: Israelis have accused them of being unpatriotic, self-hating Jews;

Palestinians have accused them of perpetuating oppression by claiming to speak for the

oppressed, and for not going far enough in their declarations against oppressive Israeli policies.

The sociocultural dynamics of the First *Intifada*, as revealed in video footage taken by

news correspondents and broadcast world-wide, revealed asymmetrical battle formations

comprised of heavily armed and armored Israeli adult soldiers firing rubber bullets at defenseless

stone-throwing Palestinian boys wearing street clothing. National soul-searching and critical

controversies increased accordingly among the Israeli populace, as evidenced by Peres's quoted

narrative above, which blames the First *Intifada* on Prime Minister Shamir and the *Likud* Party's

right-wing policies. Peres -- who considers himself a political moderate within the Labor Party -- is positioned in a similar manner to Morris, who considers himself a scholarly moderate within the league of historians. Analogously, Peres has been vilified by militant Zionists for being a "starry-eyed liberal," and has been condemned by Palestinian radicals for supporting Israeli expansionist policies that preclude essential tenets of self-rule and homeland.

In a 2002 interview with National Public Radio's diplomatic correspondent Mike Shuster, Morris supports Peres's narrative with the opinion that the First *Intifada* led to the breakdown of Israel's unity government in 1990: "Labor reached the conclusion that one cannot suppress the *Intifada* and must give the Palestinians some form of statehood because the *Intifada* cannot be beaten just militarily. Whereas the *Likud* preferred basically a military solution" (Shuster). This political divisiveness permeated throughout Israel's ideological institutions, with some IDF officials siding with Labor's claims that the popular uprising could not be suppressed by a military solution alone (Beilin Path). After six years of violence, with over 1,000 Palestinians killed and 16,000 imprisoned (AlJazeera.net First), the Israeli political impasse and Palestinian armed struggle gave way to cautious optimism that an end to the conflict could be in sight.

<div align="center">Oslo Peace, 1993-2000</div>

Israeli Narrative

Yossi Beilin (1998): "We revolutionized the attitude of both sides to each other by this handshake [between Rabin and Arafat]. And the fact that there was mutual recognition after so many years of animosity…was a big achievement. Another achievement was the establishment, on the ground, of a Palestinian entity. For the first time it was an autonomous entity conducive to a Palestinian state. And that trend is irreversible…Never say, 'I won't meet the other side.'

Never say, 'The other side has nothing to tell me.' Never say, 'The other side has no justice.'

Say, 'It is a must *to talk to the other side.'"(IIS* <u>Conversations</u>*)*.

The decade of the 90s was a time of encouragement and despair, of progress and setback for both Israelis and Palestinians. 800,000 Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union brought the population of Israel to over six million people, with Israeli Arabs numbering approximately one million. Tensions were high in the West Bank and Gaza, where Jewish settlers numbered around 160,000, and 1.5 million Palestinians were being ruled under military occupation (Goldscheider). Both sides were hopeful of reconciliation when Yitzhak Rabin was elected Israeli Prime Minister in 1992, promising implementation of Palestinian autonomy within a year.

The 1993 Oslo Accords consisted of a Declaration of Principles laying out a ceasefire agreement, along with arrangements for withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, Jericho, and parts of the West Bank. Also, Rabin and Arafat exchanged letters of mutual recognition, with Israel acknowledging the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, and the PLO acknowledging the legitimacy of the nation-state of Israel. Crucial issues -- the status of Jerusalem, the return of refugees, the removal of settlements, the fixing of borders, and the establishment of a Palestinian state -- were left for future negotiations (Beilin <u>Touching</u>, <u>Path</u>).

While both populaces experienced a general euphoria over the prospects of peace, serious problems crippled the process from the beginning. From the Israeli point of view, the dramatic increase in terrorist attacks following the signing of the Oslo Accords was a major source of fear and anger. An outpouring of rage and mistrust was directed toward Arafat -- who failed to implement his pledge to renounce the use of terror by Palestinian militants -- and toward Rabin, who failed to provide citizens with the promised increase in personal safety and national

security. Rabin came under vituperative attack from secular separatists and religious

fundamentalists, culminating in his assassination by an Orthodox Jew on November 4, 1995.

During the initial mourning phase after Rabin's assassination, the stunned Israeli populace

bonded with a sense of national solidarity and popular support for continuing Rabin's legacy for

peace under Peres's interim leadership. However, political and religious differences reasserted

themselves, and a morning-after backlash occurred in 1996 when Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu

was elected Prime Minister. The national mood swing was propelled by an unprecedented

number of suicide bombing attacks: From 1992-96, over 300 Israelis died from terrorist attacks -

- a number that was approximately equivalent to total Israeli deaths from bombings over the

previous twenty-five years (Katz).

Following Netanyahu's election and Israeli military retaliations against Palestinian terrorist

groups, the number of terrorist attacks decreased; however, the gulf between Arafat's

Palestinian Authority government and the Israeli government continued to widen. Although

Netanyahu and Arafat did sign the much-criticized Wye River Agreement in 1998, and the PLO

did officially renounce the anti-Israel clauses in its Charter, the original Oslo timelines for final-

status negotiations were substantially abandoned. In 1999, Labor's Ehud Barak succeeded

Netanyahu, and expressed willingness to proceed with a final-status agreement. However, final

status talks with Arafat became deadlocked over the amount of West Bank territory to be

restored -- Israel believed its offer of handing over ninety-five percent of the West Bank and

Gaza to Palestinians for the formation of a Palestinian state to be generous, while Palestinians

believed they should not have to accept less than one hundred percent of the West Bank and

Gaza because the total of both territories only comprised twenty-two percent of what was

originally Palestine. In 2000, when the Clinton-sponsored Camp David peace summit between

Palestinian and Israeli leaders ended in a deadlock over competing claims to Jerusalem and the issue of Palestinians refugees, the momentum for a final-status agreement collapsed.

Palestinian Narrative

Yezid Sayigh (2002): "The Oslo Accords were not a peace treaty: in other words, they did not determine what the final peace was going to look like between the two sides. There was no agreement..that there would be ultimately a Palestinian state and independence was not explicitly on the agenda…The status of Israeli settlements built in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem and in areas occupied by Israel in 1967 was also left open…The status of East Jerusalem in particular..was left open...The final status of the territories, of water resources, of control over borders, of control over population registries, of land use – all these issues ultimately were left for later negotiation…This explains a lot about why the [second] Intifada broke out and evolved in ways that are violent and are, to my mind, self-defeating, dysfunctional, and counterproductive. Because ultimately what the Palestinians want is a peace deal with Israel that allows them to get sovereignty over their lives, over their territory"(Confronting).

During the decade of the 90s, internal dissatisfaction with the PLO leadership grew among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and in the diaspora. Leading the voices of Palestinian-Americans, Edward Said was especially critical of Arafat's signing of the Oslo Accords, and decried the deleterious effects of the peace process on the daily lives of the Palestinian refugees. The power struggles between Arafat's *Fatah* Party and the more militant *Hamas* Party, which had been ongoing for the past thirty-five years, intensified accordingly. In interviews with *Hamas* supporters, Helena Schulz has found that they have generally blamed Arafat and the Palestinian Authority government for corrupt leadership and failure to attain nationhood, holding them responsible for keeping the Palestinian people in misery. Claiming

that their groups represent the majority voice of Palestinians, *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* have been intent on radicalizing resistance to Israeli occupation and promoting incidents of international terrorism (Reconstruction).

As it became clear that the limited autonomy granted to the Palestinian Authority was failing to halt the expansion of Israeli settlements and to improve the daily living conditions of the Palestinian refugees, problems of internal division accelerated. From 1994-2000, unemployment in Gaza and the West Bank rose, while the per capita gross national product decreased, along with the life expectancy of the inhabitants. At the same time, the Jewish population in the Territories doubled in size and the number of military checkpoints increased correspondingly with the need to secure the settlements. Frequent closures of the Territories exacerbated the restrictions on the Palestinians' ability to move from one neighborhood to another and to conduct their daily lives (Beilin Path: Sayigh Confronting).

In 1996, Edward Said charged: "[W]e have lost the moral strength of our position on Palestine" (End). In numerous interviews and essays, Said excoriated Arafat as a corrupt despot who had repeatedly lied to his people, stifled dissent, allowed torture in the prisons, suspended due process of law, and institutionalized government patronage (see End; Singh and Johnson). Said's accusations were substantiated by numerous investigations of embezzlement and diversion of funds in the years leading up to Arafat's death in 2004. Beginning in 1997, an auditor's report found that forty-three percent, or $326 million, of the PA's annual budget was missing. In 2003, an International Monetary Fund audit found that up to $900 million had been redirected into Arafat's private accounts. That same year, *Forbes Magazine* listed Arafat as the ninth richest head of state in the world. In 2004, the European Union's anti-fraud office began

auditing the PA's accounts after Israelis claimed that E350 million in aid had disappeared, and that a portion had been applied to financing terrorist operations (Klein).

Said's criticisms of the Oslo peace process, however, were not confined to allegations against Arafat and PA officials. He repeatedly condemned the Israeli government for attempting to legitimize its oppressive and violent human rights abuses under a cloak of moral and political righteousness:

> Labor and *Likud* leaders alike made no secret of the fact that Oslo was designed to segregate the Palestinians in noncontiguous, economically unviable enclaves, surrounded by Israeli-controlled borders, with settlements and settlement roads punctuating and essentially violating the territories' integrity. Expropriations and house demolitions proceeded inexorably through Rabin, Peres, Netanyahu, and Barak administrations, along with the expansion and multiplication of settlements (200,000 Israeli Jews added to Jerusalem, 200,000 more in Gaza and the West Bank), military occupation continuing and every tiny step taken toward Palestinian sovereignty – including agreements to withdraw in miniscule, agreed-upon phases – stymied, delayed, canceled at Israel's will (<u>End</u> 361).

After seven years of worsening economic and social conditions for the Palestinians, marked by increased suppression of individual rights and the stifling of daily commercial life, the Palestinians under a false self-rule concluded that the peace process was a disaster.

In September 2000, immediately following Arafat's refusal to agree to the Clinton Plan's proposal for joint stewardship of Jerusalem and its sacred sites, Ariel Sharon announced he would be visiting the Temple Mount/*al-Haram al-Sharif* with a party of *Likud Knesset* members

and 1,000 police. A proportionate number of Israeli Arab *Knesset* members and civilian
protesters faced them off at the *al-Aqsa* mosque. The resulting clash led to about forty people
being wounded, and provoked, in the days following, a series of violent confrontations with
Palestinians that led to the death of twelve civilians (AlJazeera.net Second; Beilin Path). The
Second Uprising, or *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, was born.

<div align="center">Second Intifada/Gaza Disengagement, 2000-2007</div>

Opposing Israeli Narratives on the Second Intifada

Ehud Barak (2002): "In fact, it's not an Intifada*; it's a terror campaign. The first* Intifada*, I was*
then commander of Central Command, commanding the West Bank basically. And I know to
what extent the first Intifada *was a popular uprising. This is not a popular uprising. It's a*
deliberate terror campaign in order to intimidate Israel and to change the image of the conflict
after his [Arafat's] diplomatic defeat at Camp David"(Frontline).

Commandos' Letter (2003): "Out of concern for the future of Israel as a Jewish, Zionist,
Democratic state, and out of fear for its moral character, we declare that: We shall no longer
lend a hand in the occupation of the territories. We shall no longer take part in the deprivation
of basic human rights from millions of Palestinians. We shall no longer serve as a shield in the
crusade of the settlements. We shall no longer corrupt our moral character in missions of
oppression. We shall no longer deny our responsibility as soldiers of the Israeli DEFENSE force
(CourageToRefuse).

When the Second *Intifada* erupted, the majority of Israelis reacted in hopelessness and
fear, swinging the political pendulum back toward a military mandate to protect their personal
safety and national security. Ariel Sharon, nicknamed "the Butcher" by Palestinians for his role
in the 1980s Palestinian refugee massacre in Lebanon, was elected Israeli Prime Minister in

2001. Instituting a series of harsh military measures in response to the "terror *Intifada,*" Sharon authorized an increase in assassinations of Palestinian militants, a more aggressive policy of house demolitions, a forceful re-occupation of nearly all areas previously evacuated as part of the Oslo peace, and the construction of a security fence to separate Israeli settlements and Palestinian villages. Within the West Bank, the placement of the separation wall would unilaterally confiscate additional Palestinian homes and lands, effectively setting the boundaries of the state of Israel without negotiation with the Palestinian leadership. Sharon and Arafat had been arch enemies for decades; while Arafat encouraged and funded the terror attacks, Sharon toyed audibly with the idea of assassinating him, and opted alternately for house arrest and laying siege to his compound in Ramallah. Once again, the dominant Israeli orientation became, "There's no one to talk to and nothing to talk about."

Operation Defensive Shield was launched in 2002, following a series of terrorist attacks that claimed over 125 Israeli civilian lives. IDF forces were directed to find and eliminate terrorist headquarters and bomb-making facilities. The directives led to controversial incursions into the West Bank and Gaza; a nine-day pitched battle at the Jenin refugee camp resulted in 56 Palestinians and 23 Israeli soldiers being killed (PalestineFacts). During this period, dissension in the military grew to serious proportions, with the formation of the Courage to Refuse movement (About Us). In 2002, a small group of IDF reservists published the Combatants' Letter, which declared that they would no longer serve military duty in the Occupied Territories. The letter would gather 635 signatures over the next three years, and would be followed by similar Pilots' and Commandos' Letters in 2003 (CourageToRefuse).

Exhibiting an ideological re-appropriation of the meaning of Zionism, the *refuseniks* believe that Zionism is imbued with a moral imperative that is inherently incompatible with the

oppression of another people and the deprivation of human rights. This imperative is held in direct repudiation of the blindness that originally enabled Zionist settlers to appropriate the land of Palestine without recognizing the existence of native inhabitants, and that enabled a "refus[al] to acknowledge the violent force of Zionism's nationalism and the Arab nationalism it would provoke" (Rose, Question 62). Their courageous refusal to participate in the military oppression of a civilian population has marked them as "'ideological criminals'" who have been court-martialed and jailed for their betrayal of what is thought to be the collective welfare (Question xiv).

Although the "military-cultural complex" (Kimmerling 3) has continued to define Israeli national bureaucracy, popular dissent has been growing over the past six years. Educators, religious leaders, journalists, authors, filmmakers, bereaved parents, local officials and NGOs have joined forces with the *refuseniks* in raising voices of dissent in Israeli education, media, arts, and culture (see Carey and Shainin; Hass; Ophir "Time," Response). In 2004, as Israel was exhibiting many symptoms of a crisis in national consciousness, two events occurred: Sharon announced his intention to unite Israeli political parties under a program to disengage IDF forces from the Gaza strip; and Yasser Arafat, the father of Palestinian nationalism, died of natural causes. While a faction of religious settlers strenuously objected to the Gazan settlements being vacated, Israelis as whole were able to embrace Sharon's plan to disengage -- it garnered both a popular and official majority acceptance. In a further quenching of partisan flames, Arafat's death ended a vociferous national debate over his potential as a negotiating partner, and paved the way for the democratic election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to leadership of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in January 2005. One of Abbas's major assets was a long track record of peacebuilding efforts with Jews in Israel and throughout the diaspora. As far back as

the 1970s, Abbas had proposed that *Fatah* members establish relations with pro-peace international Jewish groups. During the 1980s, he continued to engage in dialogues with Peace Now members and Oriental Jews in the U.S. and Europe. In the 1990s, as a participant in the negotiations for the Oslo Peace Accords, he established cordial relationships with Israeli officials, including Shimon Peres and Yossi Beilin (Abbas). His working relationship with Beilin culminated in the co-authoring of the 2003 Geneva Initiative, a model final-status agreement, which has since been mailed to every household in Israel/Palestine (Beilin and Abed Rabbo). Abbas's election gave Sharon a negotiating partner. Within a month, the two leaders had met at Sharm al-Sheik, Egypt, had shaken hands, and had reaffirmed their commitment to a final-status agreement within a two-state framework.

On January 5, 2006, Sharon suffered a major brain stroke that left him in a coma. The following day, American Christian evangelist Pat Robertson suggested to approximately one million viewers of his "700 Club" television show that Sharon's fate was the result of his decision to withdraw the Israeli military from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank. Robertson analogized Sharon's stroke to the 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, charging that both leaders had both suffered divine retribution for "dividing God's land":

> I would say, 'Woe unto any prime minister of Israel who takes a similar
>
> course to appease the [European Union], the United Nations or the United
>
> States of America'….God says, 'This land belongs to me, and you'd better
>
> leave it alone' (CNN).

Despite Robertson's statements, the reality of Sharon's fate did little to stem the momentum for a final-status agreement among the Israeli population. Sharon's powers were immediately transferred to Deputy Prime Minister/Finance Minister Ehud Olmert, who was "widely seen as

one of Mr. Sharon's closest allies" and "unequivocally supported Mr. Sharon through every step of the Gaza evacuation process" (BBC Profile). Calling for new elections on March 28, 2006, Olmert became the first candidate to run and be elected as Prime Minister under the auspices of the centrist *Kadima* party. Olmert and Sharon had formed *Kadima* in November 2006, following the *Likud* leadership's rejection of Sharon's intended policies for military withdrawal from Palestinian lands. The *Kadima* party's less reactionary rhetoric resonated with the Israeli populace: The party won the most Knesset seats in the 2006 elections and is now the senior coalition partner in the Israeli government.

Unfortunately, however, the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza had the effect of decreasing the distance from which Palestinian militants could launch projectile missiles on Israeli civilians living near the Gazan border -- thousands of *Qassam* rockets would be launched during 2006. A pivotal event occurred on June 26, 2006 when a contingency of combatants from three militant Palestinian organizations -- the Popular Resistance Committee, *Hamas*, and the Army of Islam -- infiltrated Israeli territory through an underground tunnel. Attacking military targets, the Palestinians engaged Israeli soldiers in a battle which left two dead on each side and culminated in the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier. The IDF responded with Operation Summer Rain, a series of aerial and ground attacks intended to result in the retrieval of the soldier. To this date, the soldier is reportedly alive, but has not been returned (IDF).

While the Israeli government has been involved in military action at its southern border with Palestinians and at its northern border with *Hezbollah* (Lebanese militants supported by Syria), the Palestinian government has been engaged in violent factional disputes within its own territory. These woes have had the effect of hampering both populations' focus on the peace process. However, a December 2006 joint poll by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the

Palestinian Center for Policy and Research have found that 58% of Israelis and 81% of Palestinians support a "comprehensive settlement [for a two-state solution] over an interim political track." The Palestinians are somewhat less united on the parameters of that settlement, with 48% of the populace supporting the Geneva guidelines. However, the Israelis are fairly consistent in their vision for peace, with 52% supporting the Geneva guidelines (HUJI).

In February 2007, the joint Israeli-Palestinian OneVoice Movement presented a videocast at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The dual broadcast featured hundreds of youth surrounding Palestinian Director Nisreen Shaheen in Ramallah and Israeli Director Adi Balderman in Tel Aviv. Shaheen proclaimed to the assembled leaders, "The time has come to listen to the voice of the moderate majority, and to prevent violent extremists from hijacking our lives, the lives of millions of Israelis and Palestinians.... We will not accept any more excuses or delays." Balderman urged, "If the millions of moderate Israelis and Palestinians each take a small step, we will unleash the power of the people and reclaim our lives." Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni both responded favorably to the youths' pleas, with Abbas declaring, "I am fully convinced that in spite of all the difficulties, peace is possible," while Livni asserted: "We must make a promise and fulfill…the vision of two states living side by side in peace" (CGNews). With moderate voices taking the world stage and majorities of both populations in favor of a peace settlement along the Geneva guidelines, the climate in 2007 appears favorable for peacebuilding mediations to increase the momentum toward a settlement of the conflict.

Opposing Palestinian Narratives on the Peace Process

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (2005): "We are sticking to the Road Map with its three basic clauses. The first covers the creation of an independent, viable Palestinian state, co-

existing with Israel. The second clause deals with the end of the 1967 occupation. And the third

clause describes the conditions for a fair solution to the refugee problem…East Jerusalem is

occupied. But al-Quds al-Sharif, as we call it, should be our capital, while West Jerusalem

should be that of the Israelis. We don't want to divide Jerusalem. We could even imagine there

being a joint city administration… What right does Israel have to build settlements on our land?

Even the wall that leads across Palestinian land is illegal and will bring neither security nor

peace. We cannot build a viable state with a country that is disintegrating into small

pieces…Israel finally has to recognize that we are surrendering a large part of historic Palestine

and instead are accepting just 22 percent in order to make a historic peace"(Doerry)

Palestinian Opposition Leader Mustafa Barghouthi (2005): "I do not think Abu Mazen can

achieve much with the Israelis. The show in Sharm-al-Sheik was an indication of that. Israel

refused even to declare that it would implement the 'road map.' The negotiations that are

happening now are going in the wrong direction. They're repeating all the mistakes that

happened in Oslo and after Oslo. Basically, Israel is not giving up anything; it is

reconsolidating its occupation in the form of apartheid" (Bishara).

Commentators on the origins of the Second *Intifada* generally advance partisan-infused

accusations regarding responsibility for the stalled peace process, the dire socioeconomic

conditions of the Palestinian refugees, and the violence at the Temple Mount/*al-Haram al-Sharif*.

Palestinian scholar Helena Schulz claims that domestic politics have played an important but

overlooked role in the course of events. She explains that the Arafat loyalists, who are generally

the older generation, have been displaying a revolutionary mentality with a military-command

discourse. They were primarily supportive of centralizing power in Arafat's hands and have

been willing to postpone the implementation of democratic rule until a final-status agreement is

signed. Their style of government has been characterized by "authoritarianism, centralization, personalism, neo-patrimony, violence, lack of rule of law, and arbitrariness in decision-making" ("Al-Aqsa" 22). Also, many of the loyalists have spent time in exile and have been somewhat disconnected to daily life in the refugee camps.

Conversely, the younger reformist generation has had a "struggle mentality" and has adopted a civil-resistance discourse of participatory democracy. They have generally been born in the refugee camps, have developed a "native political style" as stone-throwers during the First *Intifada*, and have been imprisoned in Israeli jails (33). Raised in the streets, they have been more public and open in their decision-making, and have viewed democratization as an essential ingredient in the ongoing struggle. Liberation from Israeli occupation and building a democratic Palestinian society have been seen as complementary goals. A chief representative of the younger reformists has been Mustafa Barghouthi, who was marginalized within the *Fatah* movement and decided to form the *Mubadara* Party in 2002. As a result of his history of anti-Israeli activism and his role as a chief instigator of Palestinian violence during the Second *Intifada*, Barghouthi reports that he was arrested and beaten by the IDF eight times during his six weeks of campaigning for Prime Minister in 2005 (Bishara).

Mahmoud Abbas easily defeated Barghouthi in the 2005 elections, garnering 80% of the vote. However, despite his popular mandate, Abbas was unable to quickly clean up the corruption and favoritism that had plagued the *Fatah* administration for decades. Normal living conditions continued to worsen within the Palestinian territories, with Reuters recently reporting that over 500,000 Gazan and West Bank civilians (in addition to 4 million refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories) are dependent on international food aid and health care (AlertNet). In January 2006, the *Hamas* party (which does not recognize Israel's right to

exist as a Jewish state and is legally defined as a "terrorist organization" by the US, the European Union, and Israel) swept the first democratic Palestinian parliamentary elections. Ismail Haniyeh, the spiritual leader of *Hamas* and the Dean of Islamic University, was propelled into the position of Prime Minister in March. His election prompted Israel, the US, and some European countries to enact punitive economic sanctions against the Palestinian Authority (PA) government. Furthermore, Israel has recently threatened to assassinate Haniyeh if the kidnapped Israeli soldier is not returned. With Abbas retaining his post as the President of the PA, there has been a year-long power struggle between supporters of *Hamas* and *Fatah*. In January 2007, Abbas called for the establishment of a national unity government and arranged to meet with Haniyeh in Gaza. However, *Fatah* security forces discovered that bombs had been planted en route, and Abbas was forced to return to Ramallah without meeting the Prime Minister (Shaked).

Abbas and Haniyeh finally met in Mecca, Saudi Arabia on February 8, 2007 and signed an agreement distributing power between *Fatah* and *Hamas* officials. Prompted by an offer of one billion dollars from King Abdullah if the two parties would form a unity government, the leaders agreed to allocate nine ministries to *Hamas*, six to *Fatah*, four to representatives of other Palestinian factions, and five to independent figures. Haniyeh will retain the position of Prime Minister, while the Deputy Prime Minister will be a member of the *Fatah* party. The Foreign Affairs portfolio will be given to an independent legislator with close ties to both parties. Abbas will retain the title of President (Chairman) and will preside over the departments of Health, Transportation, Public Works, Agriculture, Social Welfare, and Prisoners Affairs.

Israeli and US officials were dismayed that *Hamas* did not agree to abide by the "Quartet Principles" previously set by the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations as pre-requisites for a *Hamas*-led Palestinian government to receive international

funding and diplomatic recognition. These principles require *Hamas* to commit to a course of nonviolence, to recognize the state of Israel, and to abide by previous agreements between the PA and Israel. However, the fact that the two parties did agree to end internecine fighting and to work toward consolidating national unity is a step in the right direction (Abu-Toameh).

The substantial financial support from Saudi Arabia to the PA unity government is linked to King Abdullah's desire for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The King recently stated that "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be solved by Arabs alone" and that Arabs should not allow other countries to regulate "our issues and become stronger through them" (AlJazeera Saudi). In 2002, the King proposed an Arab Peace Initiative that called for Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967 and the return of the Palestine refugees in exchange for diplomatic recognition of Israel by all Arab countries and normal trade relations with all Arab countries. Although this plan is unlikely to be considered by Israel, it does indicate that the pan-Arab countries are now at least theoretically willing to accept the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state. To this date, Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have not resumed, and none of the proposed peace plans or initiatives is on the table.

<div align="center">Past Histories, Present Memories, and Future Reconciliation</div>

Israeli Narrative

Daniel Bar-Tal (2000): "The reconstruction of the past is an important part of reconciliation, because the collective memory of the past underlies much of the animosity, hatred, and mistrust between the parties. The collective memory of each party views the past selectively in a one-sided manner, focusing mostly on the misdeeds of the other group and its responsibility for the conflict, and on the glorification and victimhood of the ingroup. The new beliefs formed in the

reconciliation process should present the past in a balanced way and in a more objective

manner" ("From Intractable Conflict" 359).

Palestinian Narrative

Amal Jamal (2000): "The Zionist narrative shapes the connection between the Israeli identity

and the physical human environment and embodies images of the Palestinians. Accordingly, the

power relations between the two sides are expressed not only through economic exploitation and

physical coercion, but in cultural and symbolic terms… In this context, the struggle for

recognition does not end with the acquisition of formal independence and a new economic order,

but involves dismantling the symbolic relationship that has formed over the years between the

Israelis and Palestinians. Recognition of the equal worth of the Palestinians entails not only

some acceptance of their narrative, but also transformation of the Israeli self-narrative and

separation that is not mere evasion of assuming responsibility for the past" (Jamal 39).

     In 2005, Beilin and Abbas co-authored an essay explaining their position on Sharon's

separation fence, and used the occasion to remind all parties that their model agreement, the

Geneva Accord, provides for negotiated borders that consider the safety and security needs of

both peoples:

> The Gaza disengagement and unilateral West Bank barrier construction
>
> are connected …We are not against a physical as well as a political border,
>
> and fences may make for good neighbors. But not when the fence is in the
>
> neighbor's garden. It is an agreed border regime that will look after both peoples
>
> ...In the Geneva Initiative, we reached an agreed border -- the detailed maps can
>
> be viewed at www.geneva-accord.org -- based on the 1967 lines with minor

mutual modifications, and a land swap that addresses both Israeli and Palestinian

needs…It is in the interest of both our peoples to end this conflict -- and soon

(Beilin and Abbed Rabbo).

Beilin and Abbas represent substantial segments of the Israeli and Palestinian populations who believe that it is possible for both groups to end the conflict and to co-exist peacefully in separate nation-states. However, despite strong motivations for both populations to end the conflict, they simultaneously continue to hold mirrored doubts and fears regarding the long-term viability of the two-state solution.

The Israelis' survival fears are vested in three major threats: animosities from surrounding Muslim countries, looming security and demographic issues with the Israeli Palestinian population, and the ongoing assimilation of Jews into the diaspora (Smooha Model). In a mirrored narrative, the Palestinians' survival is threatened by three similar forces: the militaristic-political agendas of the U.S. and Europe in the Middle East, the encroachments of Zionist policies on Palestinian lands and culture, and the ongoing assimilation of Palestinians into the diaspora (Said "On Lost Causes"). These real and symbolic assaults on the ethnonational identities of the two groups have led them to adopt mirrored "siege mentalities" that fortify, as we have seen, an ongoing "clash of narratives" (Rouhana and Bar-Tal) about political events and their ideological interpretations. The historical narratives of each group are based on selectively chosen events, biased interpretations, supportive embellishments, and the distortion of unfavorable components of the story. The discrepancies in these clashing narratives of shared historical events enable each group to maintain certain beliefs as the Truth and to refrain from examining or even acknowledging alternative information (Bar-Tal and Teichman). The doubled siege mentalities provide each side with an exclusive sense of legitimacy and

entitlement, while at the same time an exclusive sense of victimhood and power asymmetry in relation to the Other (Rouhana and Bar-Tal).

In order for these psychological beliefs and attitudes to become codified as collective memory, a process of "narrative freezing" must occur, where group members are motivated to ignore de-legitimizing information and to seek out corroborating information (Bar-Tal and Teichman; see also M.L. Bruner). Accordingly, the elaboration of information must be rhetorically imagined and visually promoted through venues of public discourse, religious and educational institutions, and channels of media communication. Within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the favored modes of public political discourse have been mass demonstrations and street protests, which are often characterized by a marginal nonviolence that readily becomes violent and confrontational. Both sides' secular and religious educational institutions have "indoctrinate[d] children to a rationale that justifies the use of power to subjugate the enemy" (Adwan and Bar-On, "Shared" 515). Selective framing of the issues, which serves to deepen the polarization of attitudes on both sides, has been channeled through the mass media -- including leaflets, cassette tapes, television, radio, newspapers, the Internet, and film (Bar-Tal and Teichman). Throughout the history of the conflict, these Israeli and Palestinian venues have, to a far greater extent, been directed toward perpetuating fear and violence rather than toward promoting trust and reconciliation between the two parties.

While the motivating ideologies of mass mediated texts as "producers of consensus" and "manufacturers of consent" (Herman and Chomsky) are politically salient during times of peace, they become of paramount importance during times of prolonged violent conflict, when citizens are under intensified pressures to participate in synergistic, ethnonational imaginings (Drzewiecka; Hallin and Gitlin; Hasian; Katriel). Many researchers -- including psychologists,

educators, communication scholars, and peacebuilding mediators -- have focused on the importance of mediated images in the perpetuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Bar-Tal and Teichman; Caspi and Limor; Gilboa; Hasian; D. Kuttab; Liebes and Curran; Peri; Rouhana & Bar-Tal; Shinar; Wolfsfeld "Promoting," News, Media). Gadi Wolfsfeld has argued that the journalistic media "can either reinforce or deflate images of the enemy, spread optimism or pessimism about the chances for peace, strengthen or weaken the public's willingness to make compromises, and increase or decrease the legitimacy of the ruling government" ("Promoting" 219). Due to a prevailing attitude that "sensationalism sells," the Israeli and Palestinian media have most often been focused on the melodramatic aspects of the conflict, with "disaster marathons" of extended news coverage being given to Palestinian terrorism, Jewish religious extremism, and emotion-filled pictures of grief, horror, and mayhem. This "show business logic of winning " (Liebes and Curran) in the commercial media has generally fueled the flames of anger and hatred on both sides of the conflict.

In demonstrating how the media has contributed to the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Rouhana and Bar-Tal have identified four "coping mechanisms" that have been codified into societal beliefs during the years of conflict: "Our goals are just. The opponent has no legitimacy. We can do no wrong. We are the victims" (765). These beliefs are maintained and reinforced through "cognitive and motivational processes" shared by individuals and groups that seek symbolic "closure" or security under threatening conditions. Consequently, the groups under threat of violence are psychologically motivated toward "biased selection of information,.. biased interpretation [and] biased elaboration" in order to justify "a favorable self-image and a diabolical enemy image" (766). During the course of the conflict, these underlying motivations

and justifications have been operating concomitantly in the production and reception processes of popular discourse and mass media in both societies.

As communicative vehicles that are imbued with characteristics of both mass media and popular discourse, the Palestinian and Israeli cinemas can be important cultural texts for the framing of political issues, the construction of national narratives, and the reinforcement of collective memories (Dissanayake; Hayward; McAlister; Naficy; Schlesinger; Shafik; Shohat; Shohat and Stam; Smith).   Whether framed within "objective" documentary style or "subjective" fictional format, the popular narratives encoded in the films can be used as incitements for violent revenge, or as pleas for peaceful reconciliation.

Within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, film and literature scholars (Abdel-Malek; Abdel-Malek and Jacobson; Avisar; Ben-Shaul; Gertz; Gertz and Khleifi; Hafez; Loshitzky; Naficy; Shafik; Shohat; Zanger; Zuhur) have identified stages in each cinema's rhetorical strategies that have corresponded to the development of the nationalistic political identities among populaces in the Middle East. Consequently, the following two chapters of this work will examine the extent to which the Israeli and Palestinian cinemas have historically perpetuated sociopolitical ideologies of ethnonationalism, and will analyze the relationship of popular filmic narratives to the co-evolution of competing narratives within the development of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Then, the parallel development of Track II dialogue interventions will be canvassed in Chapters Four and Five, with a view toward discovering those elements of existing dialogue models that most appropriately lend themselves to defining the attributes of a dialogically crafted peacebuilding film. Finally, in Chapter Six, three peacebuilding films will be homologically analyzed and compared to the national films from similar time periods.

Conclusions drawn from this exercise will result in a number of criteria being advanced for determining how a re-mediating of narratives and a de-biasing of attitudes might be achieved by using dialogically crafted films to facilitate those dialogue interventions currently being employed in Track II peacebuilding mediations.

CHAPTER TWO

PERPETUATING THE CONFLICT: THE PROMOTION OF ETHNONATIONAL

IMAGINARIES IN THE ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN CINEMAS

While Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers have historically perpetuated divergent

narratives and oppositional worldviews in their visual communications of the parameters of the

conflict, film and literature scholars from both sides have agreed that, overall, their respective

cinemas' rhetorical strategies have corresponded to the development of ethnonationalist

identities among each population. Recognizing that a country's cinema is imbued with

characteristics of mass media and popular discourse, it follows that the correspondences flow

both ways and reinforce each other -- on the one hand, cinema often engages current political

controversies and reinforces cherished collective memories; on the other hand, the construction

of national narratives may be influenced and aggrandized by widely acclaimed film texts.

This chapter will first analyze the relationship of popular film narratives in both societies

to the co-evolution of competing narratives within the development of the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict (as delineated in Chapter One). Recognizing the inherent inequalities that exist between

Israeli and Palestinian cinemas in regards to quantitative numbers, scope, funding, and

production, distinctions will be acknowledged in regard to the macrocosmic structures defining

their societies. In an attempt to overcome these discrepancies for the purposes of establishing a

cross-cultural dialogue, the qualitative design of the chapter will engage an equal number of

equal-status Israeli and Palestinian film/literature scholars in conversations with their society's

material texts. Then, Lucien Goldmann's theory of homologic analysis will be proposed as an appropriate method for revealing the sociopolitical ideologies inherent in cinematic texts authored by Israel and Palestinian filmmakers over the past few decades. In Chapter Three, Goldmann's theory and method will be applied -- within a dialectical format of critical argument and investigation -- to three Palestinian and three Israeli mainstream film texts. The method of textual analysis will seek to determine whether and how the six films have contributed to the production of ethnonational imaginaries surrounding the conflict.

A Brief History of the Israeli and Palestinian Cinemas:

Textual Struggles and Oppositional Worldviews

1. Israeli Cinema

Nurith Gertz, Israeli literature and film scholar: "Whatever we call them, narratives or myths, they articulate the common and shared worldview of a given society, provide legitimacy to its social order, foster integration between its members, and lead them to action. In order to do this, they often construct imaginary views of the world…[A] culture is a totality composed of the systems operating within it, all struggling for power, prestige, and hegemony. The texts formed in – and by – a society are weapons used in these struggles" (Myths 1, 2).

Israeli cinema, as a barometer of "identity politics" (Loshitzky), has undergone a series of evolutionary stages that have developed in conjunction with Israeli ethnonationalist narratives validating the establishment and survival of the Jewish homeland. During the infancy of the state, government funding was "invested" in the dissemination of ideological messages that justified and romanticized the establishment of a Jewish Israeli society. The cinematic arm of this acculturation program was, ironically, patterned after Nazi propaganda films that had validated a German worldview which excluded the existence of the Jewish people.

Coincidentally, those Jews who survived the Nazi extermination camps and then rejected the life of the diaspora in favor of a return to the homeland became important cultural icons in Israeli cinematic narrations. This Jewish struggle to forge a collective national identity has informed film texts that struggle between the ideologies of universal humanism and religious traditions, between Zionist socialism and democratic individualism, between a besieged collective and peaceful coexistence. For the immigrants viewing the films, their processes of enculturation were aided by a cinematic mythologizing of the new roles of the *Sabra,* (native-born Israeli Jew), *kibbutznik* (member of a collective settlement), and soldier within Israeli society, and by the integration of the Hebrew language as a socializing force for unity (Gertz Myths; Loshitzky; Shohat Israeli).

These cinematic texts reinforced the rationale for the adoption of new roles as part of an ideological war for the survival of Jews worldwide. Within the film narratives, the chosen myths are presented in binary terms: "the few against the many, West versus East, 'sons of light' versus 'sons of darkness', and 'a people that dwells alone' against 'the family of nations'" (Gertz Myths, 1). These binaries construct a worldview which defines the "new" Jew of Israel in opposition to the "old" Jew of the diaspora by privileging violence over meekness, segregation over assimilation, and a fruitful future over a sterile past (Gertz "Others"). Inevitably, the grandiose films of emergent statehood from the 1950s and 60s embodied "an unproblematized nationalistic spirit, pitting heroic Israelis against dehumanized Arabs" (Shohat, Israeli 5). Cultural productions of the era, including such films as Thorold Dickinson's Hill 24 Doesn't Answer (1955), Larry Frisch's Pillar of Fire (1959), Baruch Dienar's They Were Ten (1961), Peter Frey's The Hero's Wife (1963), Alexander Ramati's Rebels Against the Light (1964), and

Mauricio Lucidi's <u>Five Days in Sinai</u> (1969) are permeated by the political identification of a "nation under siege" (Ben-Shaul).

The political realities that structured the identity politics of besieged Jewish Israelis during these decades were historically contextualized in a series of pre-statehood ethnic clashes, followed by intensified anti-statehood attacks from surrounding Arab nations, who were championing the cause of "driving the Jews into the sea" and securing Palestine for the Palestinians alone. The Jewish siege mentality, which had been born in a crucible of religious persecution rooted in antiquity, had experienced a renewal in the World War II concentration camps. It flourished once again during the 1948 War for Independence, which resulted from Arab refusal to accept the United Nations partition of British Palestine into two separate states. Reinforced through Israel's political alignment with France and Britain (in their failed 1956 Sinai Campaign attempting to overthrow Egyptian president Abdel Nasser), it was re-contextualized by the 1967 war against Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan -- a war which ended with Israel occupying the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai, and Golan Heights. Intermittent military activities continued up through a 1973 attack by the Egyptian and Syrian armies, resulting in an Israeli victory. However, Israel's heavy causalities served to further harden the anguished populace's anti-Arab worldview.

Leading up to the 1970s, a "transition from heroic-nationalist films to personal cinema formed part of a general *Sabra* fatigue with explicit ideology" (Shohat <u>Israeli</u>, 204). Native-born filmmakers were replacing foreign directors, and long-time residents were replacing the recently arrived immigrants who had previously produced Israeli cinema. Directors such as Ephraim Kishon (<u>Shallah Sabbati</u>, 1964), Moshe Mizrahi (<u>The House on Clouch Street</u>, 1973) and Nissim Dayan (<u>Light out of Nowhere</u>, 1973) introduced new social and individual themes that typified

the growing complexities of Israeli society, especially the growing tensions between the

Germanic *Ashkenazim* (the Eastern European Jewish upper class) and the Iberian *Sephardim* (the

Southern European Jewish lower class).

Israeli film productions were also undergoing important structural changes in terms of

national financial assistance and opportunities for artistic license. Films such as Uri Zohar's

Hole in the Moon (1965) and Boaz Davidson's Snail (1970) paved the way for experimental

subversions of classical Zionist narratives. In 1977, a filmmakers' consortium began lobbying

government officials for the funding of personal films that would neither be ideologically nor

aesthetically bound by dominant commercial conventions. A Fund for Encouragement of

Original Quality Films resulted in 1978, which would provide one-half the production costs for

six films a year. This funding promoted an Israeli "New Wave" cinema which, while falling

short of *avant-garde* cinematography, did manage to "create a nonconventional filmmaking

symbolically linked to the Israeli cultural context" (Shohat Israeli, 185). The personal films of

this time period explored tensions between individual freedoms and collective pressures, either

by focusing on introspective, isolated individuals within a closed society -- as in Dan Wolman's

Floch (1972), Yaki Yosha's Rockinghorse (1978), and Michal Bat- Adam's Moments (1979) --

or on confrontational individuals externalizing their marginalization within a social organization,

as in Uri Zohar's Big Eyes (1974), Yehuda Ne'eman's Paratroopers (1977), and Ilan

Moshenson's The Wooden Gun (1979).

Coincidentally with the introduction of this new funding platform, 1977 marked a

political shift in the Israeli government's policies towards the occupation of the Palestinian

territories, as the conservative *Likud* party came into power after seventy years of leadership by

the liberal Labor party. The *Likud* greatly expanded Jewish settlements in Gaza and the West

Bank while simultaneously intensifying retaliatory measures against Palestinian para-military

infrastructure in Israeli and Lebanese refugee camps. Going into the second decade of the

occupation (1977-87), protest films often scripted a hopelessly doomed partnership between

Arab and Jewish protagonists who act in solidarity against Israeli government forces and

Palestinian terrorist organizations, only to be crushed under a fearsome system of violent

repression (Ben-Shaul).

      Nurith Gertz has argued that the nascent political cinema fueled by the *Likud's* 1977 rise

to power became consolidated as a venue for dissident voices after Israel's disastrous Lebanese

War (1982-85) -- whose outcome has been compared to the "lose-lose" resolution of the US-

Vietnam War:

> In the 1970s and 1980s both literature and cinema served as the voice
>
> for a disillusioned and enfeebled intelligentsia, allowing it to express
>
> its anguish and anger over the collapse of the cultural world that had
>
> nourished it and over the loss of its status. Both of these systems
>
> attacked the Zionist national security narratives during these years,
>
> each in its own way and in the light of its own possibilities – literature
>
> first, as the trendsetter, and cinema in its path" ("Security" 209).

Facing a newly forged political partnership between the lower classes and the national-religious

right, the liberal intelligentsia was forced to retreat into the areas of art and academia, consoling

themselves with membership in social protest movements and authorship of counter-texts that

struggled against the dominant nationalist narratives.

      In the 1980s, Israeli cinema entered an era of "Palestinian Wave" films that promote "a

more nuanced and even demystificatory portrayal of some of the negative consequences of

militarization" by depicting the sociopolitical dynamics of a "dominated people" interacting with a "colonizing society" (Shohat Israeli 5, 253). Such films as Daniel Wachsmann's Hamsin (1982), Uri Barbash's Beyond the Walls (1984), Shimon Dotan's The Smile of the Lamb (1986) and Rafi Bukai's Avanti-Popolo (1986), Haim Bouzaglo's Fictitious Marriage (1989), and Eran Riklis's Cup Final (1992) present the narratives from an Arab point of view and utilize Arab-Israeli actors who speak Arabic, emphasizing the "bilingual and bicultural dimension of Palestinian existence in Israel" (253). While these constructions of positive Palestinian images are a significant improvement over the earlier heroic-nationalist portrayals, Shohat charges that the films often mask central issues of asymmetrical power in the racial hierarchy of Israeli society.

According to Shohat, the Palestinian Wave films politically focalize their filmic narratives from the point of view of the *Sabra* protagonist. These films continue the Jewish discourse of victimization by representing Israeli peacemakers as martyrs caught between two violent forces: the Arab terrorist fighters and the Israeli military occupiers. While the filmic discourse ostensibly confronts the Israeli establishment, the oppressed Palestinians are cast in a secondary role to the *Sabras* who are championing their cause. Nitzan Ben-Shaul concurs, commenting that despite the leftist politics of most Israeli filmmakers, none of their films in this period mentions a Palestinian state. To Ben-Shaul, this omission indicates a tacit acceptance of the Israeli government's agenda to de-nationalize the Palestinian refugees, even if the filmmakers were critical of those humanitarian abuses that marked the civil and military programs instituted for that purpose.

Yosefa Loshitzky's study of Israeli film, which was published over a decade after Ella Shohat's book, furthers Shohat's examination of "Personal Cinema" of the 1980s and 90s.

Loshitzky focuses on private issues of forbidden love between Arabs and Israelis, which she sees as a "distanciation device" for confronting the public issues of the conflict (114). Such films as Daniel Wachsmann's <u>Hamsin</u> (1982), Nissim Dayan's <u>On a Narrow Bridge</u> (1985), Michal Bat-Adam's <u>The Lover</u> (1985), Amnon Rubinstein's <u>Nadia</u> (1986), Yehuda Ne'eman's <u>Streets of Yesterday</u> (1989), and Gideon Ganani's <u>Crossfire</u> (1989) serve to negotiate larger social meaning through the microlevel of human relationships. However, unlike contemporaneous literary works which had begun envisioning Arab-Jewish coexistence within a framework of a two-state solution, the filmic narratives inevitably end in the tragic downfall of the cross-cultural love relationship.

Apparently, the political heavy-handedness of Israeli films in the 1980s caused a rupture with the viewing public that could not be easily repaired. Cinema scholars have argued that the failure of filmmakers to offer constructive solutions to the societal issues they were critiquing was a contributing factor leading to a breach of solidarity with Israeli spectators. Filmmakers were accused of indulging in ethnic self- hatred "in the guise of political message" (Avisar 136), and Jewish audiences in Israel and the diaspora reacted by boycotting the movies. Prominent filmmaker Amos Gitai is one of the few Israeli directors who unrelentingly maintained a critical stance during this time period, with such films as <u>Wadi 1981-1991</u> (1991), <u>Birth of a Golem</u> (1991), <u>Golem, the Spirit of the Exile</u> (1992), and <u>Golem, the Petrified Garden</u> (1993). However, Gitai produced these critiques during a decade of self-exile in Paris, where his relationship with outside audiences was secured by the international recognition he had previously received for his body of work.

During the time period of the First *Intifada* (1987-93), the Gulf War (1990-91), and the Oslo Peace Accords (1993-95), successful Israeli films tended to avoid national ideology;

instead, they forefronted "routine and normality as objects of desire" (Gertz <u>Myths</u> 135).

Women directors who focused on the mundane details of daily life became more highly regarded in the commercial market. For example, Ayelet Menahem and Nirit Yaron's <u>Tel Aviv Stories</u> (1992) profiles three outspoken and independent women who navigate their emotional feelings; <u>An Imagined Autobiography</u> (1994) is Michal Bat-Adam's introspective endeavor as writer, director, and protagonist. The most commercially successful film of 1994, Eytan Fox's <u>Song of the Siren</u>, portrays a female Tel Aviv advertising executive who is contemptuous of the traditional macho values woven into Israeli society. With more of a masculine edge, a focus on interpersonal relationships is maintained in such films as Assi Dayan's <u>Life According to Agfa</u>(1992) and Savi Gavison's <u>Lovesick in Neighborhood Gimel</u> (1995); while Eran Riklis's <u>Zohar</u> (1993) relates the life story of a successful *Mizrahi* singer, Zohar Argov, whose career ends with a drug overdose. Such cultural texts are centered around Jewish interpersonal relationships, rather than in the externalities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Following Rabin's election as prime minister in 1993, filmmaker Amos Gitai returned to live and work in Israel. Perhaps predictably, his 1998 endeavor, <u>Day After Day</u>, revisits the Personal Cinema's forbidden love relationship, as a metaphor for his own conflicted relationship with his country of birth. The narrative portrays an older married couple, Hannah and Yussef, who have been married for fifty years (the age of the state of Israel at the time of the film's release). Unlike previous forbidden love films, <u>Day After Day</u> depicts a couple that has successfully transcended the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, their unusual union fails to imbue their offspring with a robust psychology: metaphorically, their son Mussa/Mosh is a sterile hypochondriac, signifying "the impasse Israel had reached during the time of the film's production and the dead end of the peace talks with the Palestinians after Yitzhak Rabin's

assassination" (Loshitzky 151). As a "hybrid hope" of Palestinian-Israeli reconciliation, Mussa/Mosh is inadequately endowed by his genetic inheritance and is incapable of coping with his social environment. In this way, Gitai is simultaneously envisioning and deriding the existence of a workable bi-nationalism in Palestine/Israel.

Entering the present decade of the 2000s, Israeli filmmakers have begun attracting larger audiences by replacing their "former bitter critical tone and narcissistic detachment from the local reality" with more "compassionate attitudes towards the characters and their settings" (Avisar 142). The advent of these less condemnatory films has resulted not only in greater commercial success for Israeli filmmakers, but has also encouraged a revitalized public debate over collective values. In addition to Joseph Cedar's films, (which will be discussed in Chapter Three), examples of films that have enjoyed financial rewards and critical praise are: Nir Bergmans' Broken Wings (2002) and Savi Gavison's Nina's Tragedies (2003), which explore two families' efforts to cope with the sudden death of a love one; and Giddi Dar's Ushpizin (2004), which examines an ultra-orthodox couple whose religious faith is tested by some unexpected guests of dubious character. Avi Nesher's Turn Left at the End of the World (2004) is a socially conscious comedy dealing with problems encountered by newcomers attempting to integrate into an Israeli small town. Eytan Fox's Walk on Water (2005) is a critically acclaimed thriller which "examines significant cracks on the image of the Israeli *Sabra* hero" (Avisar 143), raising issues of race, sexuality, and violence within a nuanced narrative.

According to Ilan Avisar, the most recent crop of mainstream Israeli films have completed "a full circle from initial nationalistic propaganda to apocalyptic visions of national disintegration" and are now "seeking a constructive and fruitful dialogue with Israeli viewers by exploring different aspects of national culture" (143). Inevitably, a portion of the popular

offerings have dissipated into entertaining distractions, while some falter in attempting to ignore a history of violent conflict by presenting personalized worlds defined by a "capitalism, urbanism, and private hedonism" (Avisar 139) that is stripped of both nationalist ideologies and cross-cultural influences. However, a number of Israeli filmmakers are currently searching for a new direction that will support a national consensus for an end to conflict. Clearly, the outcome of this process of negotiation is still open to question.

Israeli cinema, which originated mainly as an ideological tool to support ethnonationalist narratives of military security against violent intrusions, has slowly evolved into a vehicle of social commentary that supports introspective narratives about the society's intra-ethnic, sexual, materialistic, and religious tensions. However, this voyage has been fraught with controversies and interspersed with uneasy truces. In the decades-long process of exposing and discarding the most egregious ideological mandates, the older mandates have been replaced with more subtly prejudicial, and therefore, more dangerous worldviews that re-imagine Israel as a soul-searching democratic society rather than as a flawed ethnic democracy with inherent racial asymmetries.

This brief history has shown that Israeli cinema has continually promoted ethnonational imaginaries that have contributed to the seemingly intractable nature of the conflict with the Palestinians, and that those filmmakers who have attempted to present alternative worldviews have been so heavy-handed and insensitive to their publics' psychologies that their texts have been dismissed out-of-hand as attacks against national survival. A primary argument of this analysis is that a more dialogic and less confrontational approach to filmmaking, coupled with the adoption of more collaborative and less rebellious attitudes by the filmmakers themselves, would lead to, at the least, an opening for a shift in national perceptions, and at the most a reevaluation of national attitudes and identities.

Turning to a brief history of Palestinian cinema in the next section, it will be seen that since its inception, Palestinian filmmaking has always been inextricably bound with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Birthed in the trauma of the 1948 war for Israeli independence, and developed as an organ of civil protest, Palestinian cinema has become a major vehicle for bringing the cause of national self-determination to global attention. Due to a lack of government funding and the nonexistence of local commercial venues and a paying native audience, Palestinian films have been mainly produced for international audiences. However, this has not prevented from Palestinian filmmakers becoming embroiled in controversial disputes with their pan-Arab and western audiences. Perhaps unavoidably, Palestinian cinema can best be described as a cinema of conflict.

2. Palestinian Cinema

Kamal Abdel-Malek, Palestinian literature and film scholar: "So the Palestinian poses a challenge to the Israeli tormentors and his fellow Arabs as well. As a refugee living on Israel's borders and a co-claimant to the same land Israel now occupies, he is a constant reminder that a settlement of the conflicting claims has to be reached. As a producer of unclassifiable Arabic texts, he taxes the abilities of the critic, Arab and non-Arab alike, who is sometimes at a loss as to where to place these texts in the literary classificatory grid" (Arab-Jewish 144).

It is arguable that Palestinian filmmakers, as a whole, have consistently produced self-representative films in direct reaction to their nemeses, the Zionist occupiers of their land. Ostensibly, as each group has textually valorized its entitled ethnonational identity at the expense of the enemy Other, both cinemas have been replicating the cycle of revenge that has characterized the violent conflict for over fifty-five years. Franz Fanon, a Martinique psychoanalyst who worked with Arab mental patients in French Algeria, has theorized that all

postcolonial peoples have hybrid identities that are caught in historical discontinuities during times of movement toward political self-determination. In the first phase of "de-colonialization," a colonized people must retrieve their repressed histories; this phase is marked a "passionate search for national culture" accompanied by "essentialist rhetoric" (209). In later phases, the development of ethnonational identities can move into more nuanced, less reactionary forms of social interaction and production. The Palestinians, having been colonized in succession by the Ottoman Empire for over 400 years, the British Empire for thirty years, (and some would argue, the Israeli government for over fifty-five years), have been engaged in a rhetorical search for their national culture concomitantly with their development of a corpus of cinema texts.

As a "stateless" cinema, Palestinian filmmaking has tracked a non-institutionalized production trajectory than has historically differed from the Israeli cinema. Since full-length Palestinian films were not produced until the 1980s, the Palestinian cinema has had about thirty years less time than the Israeli cinema to evolve in its artistic and political content. Purely on the materialistic level, the Palestinian cinema has been disadvantaged in its development, while the Israeli film industry has received continuous funding from official government channels. The discrepancies between the two cinemas are particularly evident in the number of films which comprise each of the corpuses -- over 500 Israeli films have been produced over the past fifty years, while less than 100 Palestinian films have been produced over the same time period (Shohat Israeli; Shafik Arab).

Throughout its nascent stage, Palestinian cinema has always reflected the complex morass surrounding the political status of the Palestinian people. While the technical qualities, artistic methods, and literary structuring of Palestinian films are becoming more sophisticated, political exigencies have militated against the normal development of cultural textualization

within established societal norms. Up until the present time, the cinema largely has remained an "exilic" phenomenon (Naficy "Recurrent"). Film scholar Viola Shafik characterizes Palestinian cinema as being "deprived of its own industrial infrastructure," "of a native audience," and "of any cultural or commercial distribution system" (Shafik, "Cinema" 522). Due to the lack of public and private infrastructure for filmmaking and viewing in the Palestinian territories, native filmmakers generally must secure international funding and international distribution for their films.

The types of hardships encountered by Palestinian directors is exemplified by the common biographies of the three most famous and successful Palestinian filmmakers -- Michel Khleifi, Elia Suleiman, and Hany Abu-Assad. All are Israeli citizens who were born in Nazareth; they emigrated from Israel as young adults and studied filmmaking in a Western country; and they are currently part-time or full-time European residents who enjoy international recognition of their craft. Their personal histories have offered them privileges which have enabled them to secure international funding for their projects and to represent the cause of the Palestinian people at film festivals worldwide. Thus, to produce Wedding in Galilee (1987), which won six international awards, Khleifi secured private and public funding from Israel, France, and Belgium. To produce Divine Intervention (2002), which also won six awards, Suleiman received private and public funding from Israel, France, Germany, and Morocco. To produce Paradise Now (2005), which won twelve awards and an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film, Abu-Assad secured private and public funding from Israel, France, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Although all three filmmakers have spent extended periods of time in Israel/Palestine establishing programs for cinema studies, producing local television documentaries, and teaching at universities, they have nevertheless been criticized for being estranged from their native roots

and the daily hardships of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In addition to being weighed down by financial burdens in amassing funding for their "stateless" projects, they are often subjected to physical danger in the process of filming on location in Israel/Palestine, and subsequently bombarded with verbal attacks from Arab and/or Jewish critics over the content of their narratives. These filmmakers' experiences highlight how the contextual violence of the physical conflict with the Israelis, coupled with the emotional controversies surrounding the content and status of their films, exact a heavy price for the participation in the historical development of Palestinian cinema.

Because of major discrepancies in the genealogical and macrocosmic structures defining each society's film productions and viewing audiences, on some level it is unfair to compare the Palestinian and Israeli cinemas. However, there must be points of parity between participants in a dialogue before relationship building can begin to take place. If adversaries continue to claim preferential treatment for their material and/or psychological disadvantages, they will neither be able to adopt a more cooperative mindset nor to envision the possibility of collaborative artistic efforts. It is in the spirit of imagining a movement toward bi-national Israeli-Palestinian film texts that this historical comparison of cinema-inspired ethnonational ideologies is being attempted.

The first amateur Palestinian films appeared during the 1940s, documenting prevalent social issues among the indigenous population under the British Mandate, and chronicling biographies of native political figures who had championed the people's causes during times of occupation. After the pan-Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, which resulted in members of *Fatah* and the PLO being exiled to Jordan and Lebanon, the tradition of exilic Palestinian filmmaking began. Built on the twin pillars of Palestinian national identity -- honor and sacrifice

-- short films of the 1970s focused on the established themes of social injustice and revolutionary fervor, with such titles as The Guns Will Never Keep Quiet and The Guns are Unified (Shafik, "Cinema" 519). One series of short films dramatized the lives of Palestinian prisoners inside Israel, while another series revisited the histories of Palestinian figures who had famously fought against colonial invaders. Although short films documenting life in the refugee camps and chronicling para-military campaigns were produced for fifteen years, Israel's 1982 invasion of Beirut halted this type of cinematic endeavor and the majority of archived films were destroyed during the bombing raids (Abdel-Malek; Shafik Arab).

A "post-revolutionary" Palestinian cinema officially emerged during the 1980s, with Michel Khleifi filming his first documentary, Fertile Memories (1981), in the West Bank and his first feature, Wedding in Galilee (1987), in the Galilee and West Bank. After his initial film, Khleifi was joined in creating a fledgling "cinema of displacement" (Naficy) by Palestinian American Mai Masri and her Lebanese husband, Jean Chamoun, who produced Under the Rubble (1983), a documentary about the 1982 Israeli invasion of Beirut. In 1988, Palestinian-Lebanese-British artist Mona Hatoum filmed Measures of Distance, documenting her family's reunion in Lebanon after being twice displaced by ongoing wars between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Michel Khleifi's Fertile Memories and Wedding in Galilee established a precedent of inspiring ethnonational mobilization by explicitly connecting a mythical past to a present struggle for recognition. Co-authors Nurith Gertz, an Israeli film scholar, and George Khleifi, a Palestinian film scholar-actor-director-producer, observe that subsequent Palestinian films have expanded upon Khleifi's sociopolitical collaboration of the "past-present" and "local-national" dialectics:

While they depict the local space, centered on and around the family home and

the village or town in which the heroes' daily lives come to pass, they also portray

a national place that encompasses the horizon of what is considered the

'Palestinian space'. On the one hand this space is divided between families,

villages, genders and classes, while on the other it is unified around memories

of a common, national past, the one that preceded the war of 1948 and the

creation of the state of Israel. This past serves as an object that although lost,

continues to exist in the films through the depicted space" (Gertz and Khleifi 318).

The co-authors explain that "inside" Palestinians such as Michel Khleifi -- who spent his youth

in Nazareth -- commonly have a repertoire of visual, tactile, auditory, and olfactory memories of

their family lands and communities. Thus, filmmakers with "inside" childhoods are capable of

artistically constructing a holistic, unified space that legitimizes the identities of their fictional

and non-fictional characters. On this level of cohesiveness, films by these directors serve as the

placeholders of a visual space that encompasses a fading past, a vivid present, and a future

reclamation. Such spaces of the past may take the form of dream sequences, symbolic flashes of

remembrance, or lengthy nostalgic reminiscences by older family members. Vivid spaces of the

present may be couched in ridicule or despair, yet they all chronicle claustrophobic, unattractive

environments that are violently invaded by young Israeli soldiers with clean faces and harsh

methods. Glorious spaces of the future are celebrated as being absent of military oppression and

are imagined as the fulfillment of liberatory yearnings.

Film scholar Hamid Naficy concurs that Palestinian cinema texts are characteristically

constructed in a dialectical format. Naficy uses Mikhail Bakhtin's term "chronotrope" in order

to focus on the representations of time and space that unfold within the cinematic discourses of

narrative and setting; he identifies an "open-closed" dialectic which privileges "chronotropes that link the inherited space-time of the homeland to the constructed space-time of the exile and diaspora" (Accented 152).   Spatially, this entails using "open chronotropes" of the past that remember a homeland of natural beauty, cultivated landscapes, welcoming houses, and communal tranquility. Juxtaposed are the "closed chronotropes" of the present which express imprisonment, claustrophobia, impoverishment, violence, and military occupation. Temporally, openness is psychologically structured as "continuity, introspection, and retrospection," while closure is emotionally structured as "pursuit, entrapment, and escape" (153). Within the framework of this time-space dialectic, the physical destruction of the historic homeland is symbolically equivalent to the psychological defilement of the contemporary human being.

Although Gertz and Khleifi agree with Naficy's evaluation that "chronotropes of imagined homeland" have imprinted Palestinian films produced since the "displacement of Palestinians and emplacement of Israelis" (Naficy Accented 152), the co-authors conclude that this type of past-present dialectic has experienced rifts in the hands of "outside" Palestinian directors who have found it difficult to make any present connection whatsoever to an imagined holistic past. Displaced filmmakers who were raised in refugee camps have only "inherited" memories of their family lands and communities from the stories of their parents and/or grandparents. These filmmakers with "outside" childhoods are prone to artistically constructing fragmented, disjointed spaces that de-legitimize the identities of their characters and documentary subjects. Often, their texts are devoid of any past or future depictions; they relentlessly focus on present miseries, humiliations, and sufferings.

During the 1990s, a substantial increase in the number of documentary texts being produced by filmmakers with "outside" childhoods established Palestinian cinema as a forum of

struggle for national recognition. The displaced filmmakers' frame of reference -- their status as refugees -- is centered in a void of nationality that has stripped them of their ethnocultural foundations. Such films as Hanna Elias's The Mountain (1991). Hannah Musleh's We are God's Soldiers (1993), Rashid Masharawi's Long Days in Gaza (1991), and Abdel Salam Shehadeh's Little Hands (1996) focus on the lives of children, women, and men in the camps of Gaza and the West Bank. These films narrate the themes of disaster, exile, poverty, lost homes and lands, waiting for return, and human rights abuses, as viewed through the sociocultural parameters of gender, age, and economic status (Abdel-Malek).

Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi identify writer-director Rashid Masharawi as the most prominent representative of this younger generation of uprooted Palestinian filmmakers. Born in the Shatti refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, Masharawi's parents were displaced from the town of Jaffa, near Tel Aviv. When he was twelve years old, his father became incapacitated, and Masharawi moved to Tel Aviv to work to support his parents and six siblings. After being employed in the restaurant and building trades, he was hired to construct movie sets; this experience eventually set him on a path to study filmmaking in the Netherlands. Masharawi's corpus of work -- a collection of ten shorts, documentaries, and features that are largely filmed in the refugee camps of the Occupied Territories -- chronicle the barren confines of shrinking spaces and ruined landscapes. In such films as Curfew (1994), Haifa (1995), and Stress (1998), Masharawi's characters are imprisoned in dead-end situations that are devoid of safe refuge and speak of eternal desperation. Robbed of their private family lives and public social lives, they are trapped in a relentless downward spiral of daily existence that prevents the envisioning of either an idyllic past or a hopeful future (Gertz "Stone").

The decade of the 1990s also marked the forging of a kindred struggle for national recognition among "inside" filmmakers -- those who possess Israeli citizenship but often live in voluntary exile and share a sense of displacement with the refugee filmmakers. Their major frame of reference is centered in a hybrid nationality that has supposedly privileged a false civic identity (Israeli Arab) over an authentic ethnocultural one (Palestinian Arab). Such films as Elia Suleiman's Homage by Assassination (1990), Chronicle of a Disappearance (1996), and The Arab Dream (1998); Nizar Hassan's Independence (1994); and Ali Nassar's The Milky Way (1997) focus on the divided identifications of Palestinian families who have the legal right to live within the state of Israel but are torn apart by their loss of dignity, respect, and hope. These films narrate the themes of military occupation, checkpoints, border crossings, psychic oppression, and civil rights violations (Abdel-Malek).

Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, "inside" Palestinians who were living in the diaspora produced texts that chronicled their sadness during visits to the homeland and their frustration in being unable to return to an idyllic past. Such films as Enas Mudhaffar's Together We Were Raised (1999), Mai Masri's Frontiers of Dreams and Fears (2001), Saed Adoni's The Last Frontier (2002), Hicham Kayed's Jaffa Sugar (2002), and Saed Adoni's Number Zero (2002) juxtapose an idealized life of loving family-togetherness with real circumstances of rupture, isolation, panic, fear, and sorrow that characterize their families today. The fragmented condition of their families is consistently related to the wars and acts of violence that have fueled the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; ethnonational imaginings are based on a future that is free from military interference in individual/communal lives.

In her comprehensive study of pan-Arab visual arts, including Palestinian films, Sherifa Zuhur acknowledges the value of the metaphorical dimension in its ability to dramatize political

realities through irony, pathos, symbolism, and surrealism. Beginning with Egyptian director

Youssef Chahine's corpus of social-artistic critical works, a pan-Arab tradition of neo-realistic

cinema has become an accepted venue for framing narratives of populist consciousness in

politically repressive situations. Films that challenge existing political structures have emerged

as an acceptable medium of artistic critique "that may reflect state boundaries, or defy them, thus

providing means of defusing public frustrations" (14). "Inside" filmmakers Michel Khleifi, Elia

Suleiman, and Hany Abu-Assad are among the few contemporary Palestinian directors who have

built upon this tradition in their production of political/symbolic/surreal feature films. However,

rather than being honored for their social consciousness, artistic expression, and talented

dedication to these cinematic traditions, their texts are frequently misunderstood or vilified by

their pan-Arab audiences, who are accustomed to viewing documentaries chronicling the one-

sided oppressions visited upon the powerless Palestinians by the powerful Israeli military.

For a variety of financial, artistic, and political reasons, the vast majority of Palestinian

directors have remained committed to producing ultra-realistic documentaries that portray

narratives of victimhood in harsh settings of misery, violence, and despair. Such films as

Hannah Musleh's I am Little Angel (2000); Mohamed Soueid's Nightfall (2000); Mohamad

Ayache's Umm Jabir (2000); Sobhi al-Zobaidi's Light at the End of the Tunnel (2000), Looking

Awry (2001), and Crossing Kalandia (2002); Tawfiz Abu Wael's Waiting for Saladin (2001) and

Diary of a Male Whore (2001); Hazim Bitar's Jerusalem's High Cost of Living (2001); Alia

Arasoughly's This is Not Living (2001); Ghada Terawi's Staying Alive (2001); Mohamed

Bakri's Jenin, Jenin (2002); Abdel Salam Shehada's Debris (2002); Rashid Masharawi's Ticket

to Jerusalem (2002); Hannah Alias's Roadblocks (2002); Lianna Badr's Zaytounat (2002) and

The Green Bird (2003); Suha Araraf's Ramallah Shortcuts (2003); George Musleh's Tear of

Peace (2003); and Dahna Abourahme's Until When (2004) challenge the Israeli occupation, decry the humiliating and brutal behavior of the Israeli settlers and soldiers against innocent Palestinian civilians, and generally dehumanize the Jewish Israeli in a similar manner to the historical dehumanization of Arabs in Israeli cinema.

The thematic content of the "inside" and "outside" filmmakers' texts has most commonly intersected within the genre of the Palestinian "Roadblock" movies of the 2000s. These films attest to the "threatened, narrowed, or reduced" living spaces of this time period: "the public space is blocked, the private space is missing or destroyed, and the only place left intact is the border…The borders have thus become a sign of oppression characterized by an Israeli definition of Palestinian as a non-existent, split or broken identity" (Gertz and Khleifi 319, 320). A favored setting for this type of film has been the A-Ram Roadblock outside of Jerusalem; it is featured in Elia Suleiman's Divine Intervention (2002), Hany Abu-Assad's Rana's Wedding (2002) and Ford Transit (2002), and Rashid Masharawi's Ticket to Jerusalem (2002), among others. These films document the psychological aspects of the checkpoint experience -- which include the infliction of personal humiliation on Palestinians by impersonal Israeli authorities -- and the practical aspects -- which include the inability to conduct business, travel to work, visit family members, or attend academic and cultural events. The psychological and practical ruptures are intensified at times of celebration -- when participants in special family events are unable to cross through checkpoints -- and at times of illness, when access to hospital services is blocked. These ruptures are illustrative of the psychological and practical impediments to the construction of a cohesive Palestinian ethnonational identity.

While Palestinian cinema has already begun moving away from the essentialist rhetoric of its early propaganda videos of the 1940s-1970s into a post-revolutionary stage of artistic

production in the 1980s-2000s, its texts are still firmly embedded in reactionary (anti-Israeli) forms of production and content. Ideologically, at this juncture, all Palestinian films share a common political purpose: to instantiate and validate a coherent Palestinian national identity. They are designed to visually communicate the Palestinian case to the jury of the world, to call for a verdict of injustice, and to urge for a judgment in favor of national self-determination. Toward this purpose, native filmmakers have exploited cinema's potential for conveying the spatial qualities of displacement, journeying, and border crossing, as encoded in the temporal qualities of alienation, disappointment, and yearning. Through their textual struggles to promote ethnonational imaginaries, Palestinian filmmakers have attempted -- some more successfully than others -- to balance the political goal of Palestinian territorial ownership with an artistic goal of transcending cultural boundaries.

This brief history provides convincing evidence that, for the foreseeable future, Palestinian filmmakers will remain embroiled in a conflicted negotiation of popular and political sentiments. In order to legitimately analyze material texts that reflect such a volatile combination of political goals and popular culture, it is necessary to adopt an appropriate methodology that acknowledges the genealogical connections between the artistic creations and the macrocosmic structures defining their producing societies. Additionally, chief analytical components of textual interpretation should recognize that mediated representations of sociopolitical systems are cultural vehicles for the negotiation of real and metaphorical conflicts. The following section, therefore, will describe Lucien Goldmann's analytical method of homologic analysis, identifying it as an appropriate framework for categorizing films that have projected stereotyped images of the enemy Other, or conversely, have promoted introspective debate among group members.

Following an introduction to Goldmann's method in the section below, Chapter Three will engage that methodology in a homologic textual analysis of three Israeli and three Palestinian films that have been chronologically paired for the purpose of optimizing contextual and intertextual comparisons. In Chapters Four and Five, insights gleaned from these textual studies will then be compared and contrasted with an examination of successful and unsuccessful dialogue interventions in the history of the conflict. Finally, the hypothetical criteria for defining dialogically crafted film texts will be proposed in Chapter Six, and the homologic textual analyses of three peacebuilding films will be conducted to determine in what ways dialogically crafted films might re-mediate and re-imagine the intractable aspects of the conflict.

<center>Goldmann's Homologic Analysis: Theory and Method</center>

Ella Shohat's study of Israeli cinema (1989): "As a kind of bridge between text and context, Lucien Goldmann's notion of 'homologies' between narrative structure and historical moment…is useful to this study, enabling me to draw parallels between filmic microcosm and social macrocosm" (<u>Israeli</u> 10).

Sabry Hafez's study of Arabic narrative discourse (1993): "Goldmann's demonstration of the 'interrelationship of structure and function' is of vital importance to this study, since its elaboration of the changeability and continual formation and deformation of structures explains the inner mechanism of the process…operative in the genesis of narrative discourse" (<u>Genesis</u> 20).

Nitzan Ben-Shaul's study of Israeli Cinema (1997): "My comprehension of the importance and function of the state apparatus and the probable homologous cognitive and textual replication of processes related to the state apparatus, is indebted to Lucien Goldmann's analyses of textual productions" (7).

As evidenced by the above quotes, a number of Jewish and Arabic film and literature scholars have previously recognized that Lucien Goldmann's theory and method are leading sources for understanding the relationship between the nature of an artist's narrative discourse and his or her producing society's political structures (Ben-Shaul; Hafez; Shohat Israeli). In particular, Israeli film scholars have found that Goldmann's concepts recognize the essential connections between a society's history, politics, and material texts. Within the macrocosmic realm, the importance that Goldman places on the relationship between texts and their contexts speaks to the exigencies of creating cinematic texts within the context of conflict. Additionally, the cause and effect of the text-context relationship becomes particularly salient where the two cinemas have contributed to the promotion of ethnonational imaginaries that have fueled the conflict occurring at that macrocosmic level.

On the microcosmic level, the personal struggles that filmmakers face in voicing their artistic visions as representatives of their populations have often been interlaced with challenges of authenticity from the viewing audiences. From the Palestinian point of view, a hierarchy of respect (based on reverse classist distinctions) affords an "outside" Palestinian filmmaker living in a refugee camp the most cultural validity, followed by an "inside" Palestinian from Nazareth, and trailed by a "self-exiled" Palestinian living in Europe. From the Israeli point of view, the most respected films have often been those that raise peripheral questions about the national imaginary while deflecting attention from the central issues of racial hierarchy which permeate the *Ashkenazi*-led mandate for a Jewish national homeland. A further linking of film texts to their political context occurs due to Israeli cinema being historically conceived as a nationalist endeavor funded primarily by the government. These material connections between the filmmakers and the sociopolitical structures that enable them to produce their artistic creations

are well understood by Goldmann, a Jewish exile whose biographical narrative shares identity

characteristics of displacement and alienation with those of many Israeli and Palestinian

filmmakers.

Lucien Goldmann was a Jewish Romanian intellectual whose youthful ideology

combined communist politics and German philosophy. After fleeing to Paris to escape the Nazi

occupation of Romania during World War II, he became increasingly critical of communism but

was never able to renounce it entirely; his literary publications continued to focus on revealing

the dialogical-dialectical interactions between art and politics. His major theoretical contribution

in the field of literary analysis is a method of interpreting a society's cultural texts that is

primarily grounded in a complex extrapolation of Wilhelm Dilthey's historical hermeneutics,

Georg Lukacs's philosophical constructs, Karl Marx's political structures, and Jean Piaget's

anthropological categories (Cohen Wager; Boelhower).

The concept of "homologous structures" is an element in Goldmann's philosophical-

anthropological-sociological method of conceptualizing the structural and subjective relationship

between a society's collective worldview and the cultural texts of its individual artists.

Goldmann sees the individual artist as a historical subject who produces and transforms the

historical structures that are represented in their totality as a society's portfolio of cultural

creations. This totality is constructed at three levels of consciousness: the real or conscious

level of textual embodiment, the symbolic or unconscious level of the work's imaginary

universe, and the ideal or collective consciousness of the producing society (Boelhower).

Goldmann's use of the descriptive adjective *homologous, or homologic,* derives from

scientific terminology used to describe biological, chemical, genetic, or mathematical

correspondences that are "similar in position, value, structure, or function" ("Homologous").

Goldmann's chosen term reflects his goal of scientifically validating an intellectual approach of explaining and understanding artistic texts:

> [F]acts concerning man always form themselves into global significative structures which are at once practical, theoretical, and emotive, and…
>
> they can be both explained and understood only in a practical perspective based on the acceptance of a certain set of values" (Hidden 7).

These value sets are components of a society's worldview, which is a composite of socio-historical facts, collective beliefs, and culturally conditioned ideas. Goldmann uses the term "trans-individual subject" to elaborate on the common mental structures that individual artists develop as a result of their common social backgrounds. Thus, cultural texts are trans-individual creations because they represent the societal worldview of the artist -- an "ensemble of aspirations, sentiments, and ideas which unites the members of a group" (Hidden 26). Additionally, the artistic texts produced by members of different social classes within a society further reflect a cultural coherence derived from the unifying collective consciousness of each particular class.

Cultural texts can only become authentically individualistic to the extent that the artists are freed from the shackles of a dominant ideology that is "reifying, quantitative, mediated, and 'unhealthy.'" (Cohen Wager 255). To re-phrase Goldmann's observations in contemporary terms, artistic texts that propound the dominant ideology have fallen prey to the "talking points" of government officials and exhibit a non-critical acceptance of mass-mediated information. Authentic artistic creations, by contrast, are "'natural' and 'healthy', qualitative and immediate" because they promote a sense of the cooperative communal ideal (Cohen Wager 255). In contemporary terms, artistic texts that reflect grassroots consciousness are genuinely creative

expressions by individuals who reflect the aspirations of a community spirit. Goldmann's

ultimate homologous relationship of form/structure resides in the artist's quest for the whole

person. In this quest, Goldmann sees a dialectic being enacted between the real and the possible:

> It is often stated that the work of art permits man to become aware of himself.
>
> I would push this even further by stating that it is, first of all, a phenomenon
>
> that allows man to become aware not only of what he is, but also of what he
>
> can become -- his aspirations and possibilities (Essays 119).

The realization of dreams, possibilities, and aspirations is particularly relevant to the current

project of critically analyzing the role of Palestinian and Israeli films in fueling the growth of the

conflict. Furthermore, Goldmann's process of homologic analysis is constructed in language and

concepts that resonate with the major issues underlying the Israeli-Palestinian hostilities:

political ideologies, collective consciousness, and classist worldviews (see Cohen Zion, Wager).

His methodology is theoretically based in a hermeneutical perspective that places cultural texts

in conversation with other artistic creations as well as with the sociopolitical events that have

shaped a society's national ethos. His approach also recognizes how dominant power structures

produce sociocultural experiences that give rise to new perceptions of group identity.

Since Goldmann's theories have undergone numerous critiques from neo-Marxist and

post-structuralist scholars during his lifetime and after his death thirty-five years ago (see

Bourdieu; Eagleton; Glucksmann; Heller; Jameson; Jay; Mayrl; Weimann; Williams), it is

efficacious at this point to briefly describe the nature of the criticisms and to justify my use of

Goldmann's method of literary analysis as the fundamental informant for my close textual

readings of Palestinian and Israeli films in Chapters Three and Six. Upon canvassing the wide

range of criticisms attacking various aspects of Goldmann's writings, it is apparent that

Goldmann's cross-disciplinary mentality has generated outrage among intellectuals from an astounding number of academic fields. He has been branded as insufficiently empirical by sociologists, overly mechanical by neo-Marxists, insufficiently psychoanalytical by literary analysts, overly simplistic and reductionist by philosophers, insufficiently pessimistic by critical theorists, overly enamored of modernism by classical Marxists, and insufficiently modern by post-modernists! It may be opined that Goldmann's major "flaw" was his ability to transcend intellectual norms and engage in cross-pollinated thought forms. It is noteworthy that in the midst of many of the critical essays, the authors admit that one of Goldmann's theoretical concepts has lasting value *when updated or interpolated* into those author's cosmologies. Thus, Fredric Jameson and Pierre Bourdieu adapt Goldmann's concept of homologies (see <u>Political</u> and <u>Rules</u>), Jurgen Habermas expands upon Goldmann's fascination with Piaget's genetic structuralism (see Jay <u>Totality</u>), and Raymond Williams extols Goldmann's development of the theoretical connections between sociology and literature (see "Literature").

William Mayrl, one of Goldmann's advocates, praises the value of Goldmann's contributions within broad-based intellectual debates:

> [B]y providing a self-consciously sociological articulation of an orientation
> which heretofore has been worked out largely by philosophers, aestheticians,
> and political activists, Goldmann has enabled interested social scientists to
> evaluate a Hegelian-Marxist perspective in their own terms. In effect, he has
> brought dialectical philosophy and non-critical sociology into dialogue on the
> field of empirical social research (41).

Mayrl's use of the term "dialogue" is especially pertinent to the underlying thesis of this project: Certain film texts can be used to facilitate dialogic communication between Palestinian and

Israeli participants in mediated group encounters. Toward identifying *which, when, why,* and *how* to identify and employ such texts, Goldmann's propositions will be acknowledged as "general orientations for social inquiry" (Mayrl 25) into the textual analyses of mainstream and peacebuilding films that have been authored and produced within the sociopolitical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the following chapter, the film texts of three Israeli and three Palestinian directors will be chronologically paired and homologically analyzed in relationship to their *Historico-Political Contextualities*, their *Socio-Cultural Intertextualities,* and their *Ethno-National Textualities*. This process of analysis is designed to expose the social and cultural choices the filmmakers have made in attempting to fulfill their roles as authentic artistic representatives of their societies, and how their film texts have interacted with historical and political contexts in promoting ethnonational imaginaries that have been fueling the cycle of violence between Israelis and Palestinians. The six chosen films include a selection of narratives on inter-group relations and intra-communal relations within a variety of generic conventions, including dramatic, comedic, and romantic. The six filmmakers include a selection of venerable and up-and-coming directors.

At first glance, the sociocultural pairing of the three Israeli directors (Rami Na'aman, Joseph Cedar, and Eitan Gorlin) and the three Palestinian filmmakers (Michel Khleifi, Elia Suleiman, and Abu Hany-Assad) may seem somewhat disparate, in that the three Israelis are all first-time directors with little or no international recognition, while the three Palestinians have accumulated substantial filmographies and are all internationally recognized for their cultural influence. However, there are several justifications for this structural engineering: 1) the discrepancies in the amount of funding available to the Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers

becomes less pronounced by pairing newcomer Israelis with established Palestinians; and 2) both groups of directors are somewhat alienated from the hegemonic power structures of their respective societies -- the less established Israeli filmmakers are virtually unrecognized as authentic producers of Israeli cultural texts, while the internationally-based Palestinian directors have been challenged as less authentic producers of Palestinian cultural texts than residents of the Palestinian territories and/or Israel. Paradoxically, in this particular situation, by establishing conversations between Israeli newcomers and Palestinian venerables, the goal of maintaining a more balanced dialectic is maintained.

The procedural decisions in choosing this particular set of directors and films have been based on objective and subjective criteria. Objectively, a number of Jewish and Arab scholars have previously published critical works on Israeli and Palestinian films, and I have desired to avoid a repetitive litany of their studies. Since their publications have primarily examined films produced during the late 1940s through the early 1990s, I have chosen to concentrate on more recent productions. Qualitatively, it appears that films produced in the decades of the 1990s and 2000s have been affected by the macrocosmic peace process, and have largely moved on from essentialist stereotyping toward an acknowledgement of the necessity for recognizing national self-determination for both the Israelis and Palestinians. This evolution in en-textualizing the parameters of the conflict is more amenable to maintaining the overall structural design for promoting dialectic communication between filmmakers. Furthermore, my decision to narrow the time periods in order to maintain contextual, intertextual, and textual conversations between contemporaneous Israeli and Palestinian works is facilitated by a canvassing of more recent films. Quantitatively, I have been constrained by three facets of availability: whether the film is available with English subtitles, for purchase in the US, and at an affordable price.

As described, my selection of representative filmmakers and artistic texts maintains the highest possible relevance to the parameters of this project, and coincidentally overcomes several critiques of Goldmann's method. To avoid Bourdieu's charge that Goldmann's sociology of literature "ignores the *refraction* exercised by the field of cultural production" (383), I have traced each filmmaker's trajectory within the class of his or her peers, as well as the thematic interaction of each text with other films being produced contemporaneously. To avoid Glucksmann's charge that Goldmann rigidly applies certain concepts to "determine both what is considered to be a valid literary work and the type of analysis" (55), I have included filmmakers who have been alternately acclaimed and/or vilified by critics and/or popular audiences, and have chosen a variety of texts that have been virtually unnoticed and/or highly awarded in diverse cinematic venues around the globe. Additionally, I have included diverse film genres (textual types) and have emphasized multi-layered analyses that recognize nuanced variations in the *intra*-group and *inter*-group critiques by the representative Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers.

My overall purpose in artificially creating dialectic encounters between three sets of Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers contributes to a qualitative "proof of concept" for a core hypothesis of this project -- within every historical and political context, the individual artist chooses whether to adopt, co-opt, or re-imagine the sociocultural influences of the hegemonic power structure (see Hall "Introduction," "Cultural"). In situations of ongoing ethnic conflict, the artist further chooses whether to engage, ignore, or re-mediate the ethnonational worldview that is promulgated as the hegemonic rationale for perpetuating the conflict (see Bar-Tal and Teichman). Using a homologic methodology that compares film texts from a fairly narrow period of production -- specifically in regard to their engagement with contemporary issues of national culture --enables the underlying motivations for artistic choices to become more

transparent. This type of analysis opens possibilities for seeing how microcosmic choices have the potential to move from confrontational dialect to co-operative dialogue within the filmmaking medium, thereby opening possibilities for peacebuilding interventions to have a cross-pollinating effect on the macrocosmic political context.

CHAPTER THREE

TEXTUALIZING THE CONFLICT: A HOMOLOGIC ANALYSIS OF

THREE PALESTINIAN AND THREE ISRAELI FILMS

This chapter will position a selection of mainstream films along a continuum of mediated

national narratives surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Adhering to Goldmann's

methodology of structural correspondences, three Palestinian films will be paired with three

Israeli films and subjected to a three-tiered homologic structuring of context, inter-text, and text.

The first sub-heading of each set of films -- *Historico-Political Contexuality* -- will encapsulate

the surrounding historical and political events and briefly reference their impact on each pair of

film productions (fuller descriptions of these time periods may be revisited in Chapter One).

This exercise speaks to Goldmann's emphasis on the importance of contextualizing the

production of a society's artistic texts.

The second sub-heading of the analyses -- *Socio-Cultural Inter-textuality* -- will collate

the social influences of the filmmakers: their professional backgrounds, their relationship to

other contemporary filmmakers, and the nature of their textual engagement with issues of

national culture. Identifying the relationships of the filmmakers to their bodies of creative

productions, to their peer groups, and to their audiences will speak to Goldmann's emphasis on

the importance of class genealogies in determining socially conditioned value sets which

contribute to an individual's artistic choices. The social status of the filmmakers will be

constructed through a gauging of the extent of their professional experience and standing, as well

as their critical and popular approval. Then, the interaction between the film texts with other

contemporary films and their makers will be explored, noting the micro and macro levels of

engagement with issues of the day surrounding national culture. At this juncture, for purposes of

comparing and contrasting the filmmakers' artistic choices, the voices of other Israeli and

Palestinian filmmakers will be heard.

The third sub-heading of each set of films -- *Ethno-National Textuality* -- will identify a

number of discursive methods that the Palestinian and Israeli directors employ to portray their

characters' worldviews, particularly in relationship to their ethnic affiliations and desires for

national self-determination, as enacted within the protagonist-antagonist paradigm of the

narratives and the victim-perpetrator paradigm of the conflict. This exercise speaks to

Goldmann's emphasis on the role a society's collective consciousness plays in shaping an

individual's worldviews and the ideologies underlying one's artistic choices.

At the conclusion of this chapter, all six films texts will be canvassed for their primary

and secondary allegiances to worldviews that have perpetuated the conflict. By viewing the

methods and themes chosen by these six filmmakers for promoting ethnonational imaginaries

within their respective texts, and then by chronologically pairing them in dialectic relationship

with each other, observations can be extrapolated for evaluating how these texts are similar to, or

different from, those film texts from the same historical period that are aiming to promote

peacebuilding worldviews. In Chapters Four and Five, the commonly shared characteristics of

successful and unsuccessful dialogue models will be used to theorize criteria for defining

whether a film is dialogically crafted. The successes of the Chapter Four models will be

incorporated into "best practices" criteria for proposing how film texts may most effectively be

crafted to communicate dialogically with their audiences. The failures of the Chapter Five

dialogue models will be used as "cautionary tales" when analyzing the dialogic potential of three peacebuilding film texts in Chapter Six. The objective of this process is to validate criteria for identifying whether a peacebuilding film's design, content, and discourse are successful in re-mediating and re-imagining the parameters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Finally, guidelines will be extrapolated for selecting, evaluating, and applying different types of films texts to a variety of dialogue interventions.

Rami Na'aman's The Flying Camel (1994) and Michel Khleifi's Tale of Three Jewels (1994)

1. Historico-Political Contextuality (1993-1995)

Michel Khleifi, Palestinian writer- director of Tale of the Three Jewels: "The message here is that we Israelis and Palestinians know that eventually we will make peace and coexist together. The question, however, is why don't we do that now? Why do we have to go to the point of death in order to reach peace" (Alexander 32)?

Rami Na'aman, Israeli writer- director of The Flying Camel: "I started this film on an ideological point of view -- the fact that Israelis and Arabs live on a mutual piece of land…It is an optimistic story, that people can get along, that if you bring political problems down to the human level, you can find a basis for understanding" (Abdel-Malek 140).

During the time that The Flying Camel and Tale of the Three Jewels were being produced and released, Israelis and Palestinians were experiencing intense vacillations of emotion, from optimistic highs with the 1993 signing of the Oslo Accords to pessimistic lows with the 1995 assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. In 1994, the peace process was moving forward: The two sides had agreed to become negotiating partners and signed the Cairo Agreement, guaranteeing an Israeli military withdrawal from about sixty percent of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho. Further Israeli withdrawals were anticipated during a five-year period in which a

permanent resolution would be negotiated on the issues of Jerusalem, settlements, Palestinian

refugees, and Palestinian sovereignty. Yasser Arafat made a triumphal return to Gaza City to

lead the Palestinian Self-rule Authority (PA) after nearly twelve years of exile. Israel and Jordan

signed a peace treaty ending the conflict between the two countries that had dated back to the

war of 1967. In December, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Yasser Arafat were awarded the

Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1995, Arafat and Rabin continued negotiations, signing the Taba agreement in

Washington, DC. The document expanded Palestinian self-rule in the territories and provided

for democratic elections to be held. A week later, on November 4th, Rabin was assassinated.

Although Laborite Shimon Peres attempted to steer Rabin's course, the political coalition

splintered and Peres lost the support of the electorate; a downward spiral of violence began that

eventually would escalate into the Second *Intifada* (PBS).

Unavoidably, Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers of this period relate to the same stages of

the larger conflict with diverse narratives, according to their individual status within their

professions (referencing Goldmann's microcosmic geneology), and their societies' respective

positions on the timeline of achieving self-autonomy (referencing Goldmann's macrocosmic

structure). As a telling commentary on the differing impacts of historico-political

contextualizations, Khleifi has described his film as being produced in the period between the

two *Intifadas*, while Na'aman has described his film as being produced during the hopeful

beginnings of the Oslo peace process. Khleifi recounts the impact of historical events on the

production of his film:

> We shot <u>Tale of the Three Jewels</u> after the Oslo Accords and before the
>
> Israeli army pulled out of Gaza…We started shooting on Thursday and on

Friday the Hebron Massacre [when a Jewish settler killed 29 Palestinians

praying at a mosque] took place. The country was in an uproar; curfews,

demonstrations, deaths. The film schedule was cancelled and for 3 weeks

I doubted our ability to shoot at all. Just to travel 2 or 3 miles was an adventure.

Little by little we decided to stay and shoot the film in Gaza because it could be

made ONLY in Gaza.,,,It was difficult and at the same time magic (SFJFF,

Director Michel Khleifi).

If Na'aman had been shooting on location in Tel Aviv during this same time period, his

production schedule would have been relatively unaffected by the Hebron massacre in the West

Bank, and almost completely unaffected by the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip. The

dialectic between the Israeli production and the Palestinian production exemplifies first, how

competing narratives are informed by and inform worldviews, and second, how they are defined

by and define political contexts. Even though both films were produced in proximate locations

during the same historical period of time, the filmmakers experienced dissimilar events and

takeaway messages.

As will be seen in the sub-section below, a similar type of dialectic characterizes the social

and cultural intertexualities connecting Tale of the Three Jewels to contemporaneous Palestinian

films, as opposed to those connecting The Flying Camel to contemporaneous Israeli films.

Specifically in relation to the two texts' engagement with their respective national artistic

cultures, Khleifi's fictional text is fundamentally distinct in thematic content from the nonfiction

texts being produced by other Palestinian directors of this time period. Conversely, Na'aman's

textual engagement with Jewish cultural life is much more reflective of the direction that Israeli

cinema was taking in the mid 90s.

2. Socio-Cultural Intertexuality

Asher de Bentolila Tlalim, Israeli director of <u>Don't Touch My Holocaust</u> (1994): "It is the role

of artists-filmmakers to open a channel that politicians are trying to close" (JewishFilm <u>Galoot</u>).

Mai Masri, Palestinian director of <u>Hanan Ashwari: A Woman of Her Time</u> (1995): "What these

[Palestinian] filmmakers have in common is their search for a personal form of expression -

often critical, questioning, searching for a new language that reconciles artistic expression with

the often harsh and overwhelming realities surrounding them. They have not only attempted to

reclaim a lost past but to gain control over their own image and to begin to have a

voice"(Privett).

In terms of sociocultural differences between the two directors, the internationally

connected and renowned Khleifi is juxtaposed with the ethnonationally immersed and unknown

Na'aman. Khleifi is an experienced writer-director with a substantial filmography, while

Na'aman is a fledgling writer-director whose first film is <u>The Flying Camel</u>, and who has

produced one other feature film, <u>Magical Mystery Tour</u> (1998). As a relatively unknown

filmmaker, Na'aman has been interviewed only once in the US, and, to my knowledge, is

mentioned in one scholarly film analysis --Abdel-Malek's <u>Arab-Jewish Encounters</u>. (Emails to

Israeli film scholars have been unable to yield any information on Na'aman.) Khleifi's <u>Tale</u> won

three international awards at film festivals in France, Portugal, and Iran, while Na'aman's film

was merely nominated for one US award.

As the first Palestinian to produce a critically acclaimed full-length fictional film, Michel

Khleifi sets the standard against which Palestinian cinema is judged. Over the years, he has been

interviewed and quoted extensively by film critics in the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas.

In addition to <u>Tale of the Three Jewels</u>, he has produced three other feature films -- <u>Wedding in</u>

Galilee (1987), Canticle of the Stones (1990), and Order of the Day (1993) -- and three documentaries -- Fertile Memories (1980), Forbidden Marriages in the Holy Land (1995), and Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel (2003, co-directed with Eyal Sivan).

Khleifi has remained focused on male-female relationships throughout his career, exploring forces that antagonize and unbalance the traditional gender roles and/or romantic unions of his films' protagonists. In each of his films, Khleifi delves into physical and psychological inequities at the microlevels of human relationships, and unabashedly provides commentary on issues of power and exploitation at the macrolevels of Palestinian and Israeli societies. Beginning with Wedding in Galilee, which was filmed six months before the outbreak of the First *Intifada*, he has sought to challenge the "prevailing myth of virility" (Shafik Arab 197) in Palestinian society, rather than dwelling exclusively on the victim-perpetrator binary of the conflict.

The Galilee narrative is set in an occupied Arab village under military curfew. The mayor, desiring to hold an elaborate wedding for his son, requests approval from the military governor to break the curfew for the lengthy celebrations. The governor agrees on the condition that he and his staff be allowed to attend the wedding. The mayor acquiesces; however, his son is humiliated by the Israeli presence, fails to consummate the marriage on the wedding night, and blames his father for his sexual impotence (see Shohat *"Wedding"*). Khleifi's positioning of the Palestinian male as a "culprit and victim at once" is a thematic characterization he has re-visited in subsequent films, aiming to bring submerged intra-communal forces of social repression into the light of day (Shafik Arab 182).

Through his ethnocultural texts, Khleifi presents nuanced criticisms of his people's traditions -- criticisms that he hopes will invite a measure of self-introspection. Unsurprisingly,

Khleifi has been more appreciated by scholars, film critics, and international audiences than he

has by Palestinian or pan-Arab societies:

> They are afraid of me because I have a worldview that differs from theirs
>
> …For them, Palestine is a question of politics, propaganda, and ideology.
>
> They don't want people to examine what happened…[and] certainly not
>
> films that challenge society and call for a change (Alexander 33).

In general, Khleifi has taken an independent route which emphasizes cultural artistry above

political ideology. Because of his dedication to creating artistic texts, he is a premier insider of

the class of Palestinian filmmakers. However, his European residency distances him from the

intra-group daily interactions of Palestinians living in Israel/Palestine, and he is likewise

considered an outsider to the inter-group consequences of the conflict.

Thus, in relation to the engagement of Tale of the Three Jewels with the favored themes

of contemporaneous Palestinian directors, Khleifi's fictional text is fundamentally removed from

the content of nonfiction texts being produced during that time period. Two notable examples

are Hanna Musleh's We are God's Soldiers (1993) and Mai Masri's Hanan Ashrawi, A Woman

of Her Time (1995). Musleh's Soldiers focuses on the members of one Palestinian family whose

competing loyalties to warring political factions have destabilized the family dynamics. The film

documents a sibling rivalry that exemplifies the political factionism in the society at large: one

brother supports the moderate policies of *Fatah* and the other supports the violent tactics of the

Hamas militants.

Masri's Hanan Ashrawi is a biographical sketch of the sole female politician in the

Palestinian government, describing her negotiation of the roles of mother, writer, and prominent

activist in a time of changing traditional values.   In Khleifi's Tale, unlike Musleh's Soldiers,

Gazan families are portrayed as being internally cohesive in the face of military occupation. Khleifi's Tale is similarly juxtaposed to Masri's Hanan Ashrawi in that the families maintain traditional gender roles, with the women being home-centered and the men fighting the external battles.

Despite Khleifi's distinctiveness, however, his film does squarely engage with two of the most important Palestinian issues of the decade -- the Israeli military occupation of the Gaza strip and the plight of the Palestinian refugees. Khleifi, as a Palestinian with both Israeli and Belgian citizenship, could have filmed in a myriad of safer locations. Instead, he made a conscious political decision to wager his personal safety against the opportunity to create a cultural text in solidarity with the Gazan refugees. Likewise, the filmic narrative depicts the Israeli military occupation as being responsible for the refugees' squalid living environs, the curtailment of their freedom of movement, the disintegration of their family life, the inability of their men to work steady jobs, the lack of regular schooling for their children, and the constant threat of bullets flying in the streets. It can be argued that the liminality of Khleifi's personal engagement in the conflict enables him to portray injustices in a less bitter manner -- one that ultimately makes the Palestinian plight more accessible to outside viewers.

In terms of external connections to their respective cinema's contemporaneous works, Rami Na'aman's Flying Camel is much more reflective of the direction that Israeli cinema was taking in the mid 90s. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the majority of directors were moving away from political content to engage in reflections on interpersonal relationships, gendered identities, and Jewish cultural life. Na'aman's text fully engages in two important debates that were foremost in the national cultural consciousness during that time period. One major national controversy was centered on artistic and commercial attempts to assimilate the Holocaust into

Israeli popular culture: Asher Tlalim's 1994 documentary <u>Don't Touch My Holocaust</u> is a contemporaneous overview of the differing points of view on this topic. Since the Holocaust is often cited as *the* major ideological rationale for the necessity of a Jewish homeland, it has been collectively memorialized by Jews worldwide as a primary constituent of the "siege mentality" that has perpetuated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. <u>Don't Touch My Holocaust</u> documents contemporary intra-group challenges to those cherished memorializations.

A second national controversy of the time was centered around charges of class and race discrimination by the Iberian *Sephardim* and the Middle Eastern *Mizrahim* immigrants against the Germanic/Slavic *Ashkenazim.* Shmuel Hasfari's <u>Sh'Chur</u> (1994) is a cinematic response to Israeli *Mizrahi* ethnicity issues and the negotiation of their hybrid identities. The film is a fictionalized account of an Israeli Moroccan teen who attempts to come to terms with her family's use of traditional magic ceremonies. The text approaches cross-cultural differences from the viewpoint of less rigidly compartmentalized second generation Israeli youth rather than from the more dogmatic viewpoint of their first generation elders.

Na'aman's <u>Flying Camel</u> addresses Tlalim's <u>Holocaust</u> text controversy by depicting the protagonist, Professor Bauman, as a Holocaust survivor whose aristocratic demeanor and eccentric behavior characterize him as a displaced European. The professor's search for the pieces to the flying camel statue is a metaphor for his search for his lost European heritage and identity. Furthermore, the relationship between Bauman and his Arab helper, Phares, encompasses the national dispute over the link between Holocaust immigration and the appropriation of Arab lands to further the Zionist cause. As the story unfolds, it becomes apparent to the viewer (but ignored by Bauman) that Bauman's father was given "abandoned" Arab land by the Israeli government that had been unjustly seized from Phares's father.

Similarly, Na'aman's film addresses Hasfari's Sh'Chur text by characterizing his cultured protagonist as an *Ashkenazi* and his uncultured antagonists as a *Sephardi-Mizrahi* couple, thus engaging with Hasfari's dramatization of the differences in class status between the *Ashkenazi*, *Sephardi,* and *Mizrahi* Jews. These issues will be more fully discussed in the sub-section below.

Na'aman's artistic vision encompasses a number of clever and rich sociocultural commentaries on national issues and intra-group relationships with which he is personally familiar. Unfortunately, Flying Camel has neither been taken seriously by critics nor has it been well-distributed to popular audiences. Additionally, it has been generally ignored for its consciousness-raising potential. This could be due to prejudices against comedic interpretations of "serious" matters or Na'aman's lack of access to exhibition distribution. Analogously, Khleifi's deeply textured Tale of Three Jewels has been similarly underrated, especially in comparison with Khleifi's other more acclaimed and critically reviewed texts. This is possibly due to the film's religious-spiritual undertones that leave the viewer discomforted with many unanswered questions. Yet, as the following sub-section will show, Khleifi's text is a courageous and unprecedented exposition of Palestinian ethnocultural hierarchies that bears a complementary and synergistic relationship to Na'aman's artful caricatures of the Israel's own version of ethnonational prejudices. Although the two directors have disparate worldviews, biographies and filmographies, their artistic visions bear a closer relationship than would be expected.

3. Ethno-national Textuality

Amoun Sleem, a Palestinian Gypsy: "For me to be a Gypsy, like any minority in a small society, means to be without rights, discriminated against in Palestinian society, which tries to label us with the most negative image possible. We have even fewer rights than the Bedouin" (Lori).

Ella Shohat, an Israeli Mizrahi: "The Zionist denial of the Arab-Muslim and Palestinian East, then has as its corollary the denial of the Jewish 'Mizrahim' (the 'Eastern Ones'), who, like the Palestinians, but by more subtle and less obviously brutal mechanisms, have also been stripped of the right of self-representation" ("Sephardim" 39).

There are at least three marked similarities in the methods and themes chosen by Khleifi and Na'aman for promoting ethnonational imaginaries within their respective texts: Both stories are tales that freely mix reality and fantasy; both stories are propelled by the romantic/spiritual impulses of protagonists who struggle against their tendencies toward thievery and dishonesty; and both stories embrace a socially conscious evaluation of each society's issues with race and class.

The entire title of Na'aman's film is The Flying Camel: A Fantastic Tale of Impossible Oddities. This title at once positions the text in a tradition of "images of enchantment" (Zuhur) and partners it with Khleifi's Tale of Three Jewels. Synergistically, the texts reference historical allusions to the famed tales from The Arabian Nights (Haddawy and Mahdi), which have defined fantasy fiction since the fourteenth century. Both films use a mixture of realism and allegory to deliver their messages, conveyed with an innocent appreciation of the miraculous. Na'aman employs fantasy within the comedic genre to symbolize the bridging of interethnic conflict through cross-cultural friendships, while Khleifi employs fantasy within the dramatic genre to symbolize the bridging of war and death through spiritual self-awakening. Admittedly, the generic differences contribute to a measurable gulf of seriousness and weight in the two directors' use of the miraculous. However, despite the generic differences, both films' messages are extrapolated through a mysterious crossing of cosmic boundaries by individuals sincerely seeking to repair unbalanced aspects of their personal lives.

The enchanting symbol in Na'aman's film is the flying camel -- an iconic statue which was the actual trademark of the Tel Aviv Eastern Fair in the 1930s. A conversation between Bauman and Phares conveys the anecdotal history surrounding the origin of the statue. Bauman explains that a Jewish architect in Tel Aviv was planning the promotion of a proposed international trade fair and asked the Arab mayor of nearby Jaffa if he would like to participate. (Phares interjects: "Abu Bader! He was my mother's uncle!"). Bauman continues: "The Jaffa mayor scoffed: 'Have you ever seen a camel with wings? You'll have your exhibition when camels fly!'" The architect laughed and began thinking about the design possibilities inherent in this concept. Bauman concludes: "That same evening, he met my father, who drew the camel on a napkin."

Bauman enlists Phares's help in locating and reconstructing the severed pieces of the camel statue that had been designed by his architect father. Phares's two professions -- garbage collector and "almost-engineer" -- position him as an indispensable ally in collecting and engineering the reconstruction of the broken pieces. Despite the Professor's highly individualistic inclinations and condescending manner, he is obliged to maintain a relationship with Phares in order to accomplish his goal. Phares meanwhile devotes all of his remaining energies to convincing Bauman that the property he inhabits, which the Israeli government had given to Bauman's father, had been unfairly seized from Phares's father without compensation. The search for the camel is the uniting impetus of their cooperative relationship and of Bauman's eventual recognition of the truth-validity of a Palestinian historical narrative -- land given to Holocaust survivors was illegally taken from Arab refugees.

At the end of the film, a series of fiery explosions destroys Phares's construction scaffolding and catapults the winged camel into the air. A crowd of people watches with

dumbfounded expressions as the statue soars majestically through the night skies and over the horizon, out of sight. The scaffolding, which represents the prejudices and stereotypes that have constructed and propped up the Arab-Jewish conflict, is destroyed. The camel is freed to take a magical flight, creating commercial prosperity, cordial trade relations, and cross-cultural relationships in its wake.

Khleifi's enchanting symbol is an ornate antique necklace that is missing three of its red jewels. Like the camel, it is a symbol of past prosperity -- Aida's grandfather bought it for her grandmother when they were young lovers who desired to marry. Now, with the grandfather dead and the grandmother dying, the necklace is promised to Aida, a Palestinian girl who lives with her family in the Gaza Gypsy camp. Like the camel, the necklace is broken and needs to be reconstructed. Aida enlists the aid of Yousef, a Palestinian boy who lives with his family in the Gaza refugee camp, to help her replace the missing jewels. Aida promises Yousef that she will marry him when they are older if he can find the jewels and repair the necklace. Although Yousef passionately desires to succeed in his tasks and marry Aida, he has none of the skills or resources required to fulfill these desires. Unlike Phares, who is capable of locating and reconstructing the broken camel, Yousef is completely unable to accomplish his tasks. Although the jewels were actually lost by the grandmother in Jaffa when the family fled to Gaza during the 1948 war, Aida tells Yousef that they were lost in South America where the necklace had been previously purchased.

Yousef's family exists at a subsistence level because his father is incarcerated in an Israeli prison. He has no money for a ticket to South America and no prospects of acquiring a passport. While the camel pieces are able to be found at different sites throughout Tel Aviv, the missing jewels are utterly out of reach in a far-off continent and completely incapable of being

found in an unspecified location. Yousef's quest is portrayed as an impossible situation that is

defined by false information, misguided romantic impulses, and unreachable goals. The missing

jewels are the driving force which cause Yousef to lie to his family and neighbors, stop attending

school, run away from home, and eventually get shot by Israeli soldiers. While the image of

enchantment in Na'aman's film symbolizes peace and prosperity, the image of enchantment in

Khleifi's film symbolizes disaster and impoverishment.

Prior to the dramatic denouement where Yousef is shot by the soldiers, he almost

suffocates in a crate of oranges where he has hidden, in hopes of being shipped off to the port of

Tel Aviv. In Yousef's dream-state between life and death, he is visited by his blind neighbor,

who he envisions as a sighted prophet. The prophet gives him three drops of blood in the palm

of his hand, saying that they represent "time, space, and the flesh" -- the three prisons in which

human beings are confined by the Creator, so that the soul will not separate from the body. The

drops of blood sparkle like red jewels, invoking the nail-holes in the hands of the crucified

Christ.

As Yousef begins walking in his dream-state, holding the drops of blood in his hand, he

is shot by Israeli soldiers who are fearful of his dazed demeanor and his unresponsiveness to

their commands. Although he appears to be dead, he recovers when his family and Aida arrive

moments later. As he speaks to his family, it is unclear if he has dreamt being shot or if he has

been resurrected after death. Yousef explains: "If I'd found the three jewels, it would have cost

me my life, the dream said." However, when he takes the necklace from his bundle, the missing

jewels have miraculously reappeared. He exclaims: "They were there all the time, but we

couldn't see them with our eyes, so the dream told me!" The message remains ambiguous, since

Yousef's dream reveals that the jewels were irretrievable by a human being and yet were never lost.

In both Khleifi's and Na'aman's films, a desire to reconstruct the enchanting symbol leads the protagonists and their helpers to engage in dishonest practices. Even though the filmic characters are pursuing the lofty goals of artistic wholeness and repair of a broken past, their methods of attaining these goals cause a dissembling of their spiritual integrity and a rending of the present fabric of their existence. In both the Israeli and Palestinian narratives, the main allies of the protagonists are instrumental in forging dishonest approaches to reclaiming the symbols: To achieve Bauman's goal, Phares conceives of and executes the plan to steal the camel's wings from their installation above the antagonists' restaurant; to achieve Yousef's goal, Aida lies about the jeweled necklace and steals it from her grandmother. The Palestinian boy (Yousef) and the Israeli man (Bauman) are each vulnerably acquiescent to their allies' dishonest methods because they are consumed with spiritual impulses for infusing their painfully fragmented lives with romance, beauty, and wholeness. Trapped in the embrace of their consuming desires, any method of repairing the enchanting symbol appears to be justified.

Ironically, the employment of dishonest methods succeeds in achieving the protagonists' goals, but with unintended costs and consequences. The flying camel is reconstructed in all its magnificence, but the fiery explosions -- caused by the antagonists' attempts to reclaim possession of their wings -- unintentionally destroy Bauman's living quarters and Phares' orange trees, and simultaneously launch the camel into the Great Unknown. The jeweled necklace appears to have been miraculously made whole, but Yousef and Aida have broken their families' trust, have abused their friends and neighbors, and have tainted the innocence of their budding romance. Both narratives have ambiguous resolutions regarding the physical fates of the

enchanting symbols. In <u>Tale</u>, the mixed message leaves the viewer uncertain whether the necklace is truly physically intact or is merely imagined to have its jewels restored. In <u>Flying</u>, the physicality of the newly reconstructed camel is superseded by the viewer's vision of its fantastic flight through the night skies, as it vanishes over the horizon.

A third commonality in the two filmic narratives is a dynamic confrontation of issues of race and class in the Palestinian and Israeli societies. The internal stratifications among the Gaza Strip inhabitants in Khleifi's film, and among the Tel Aviv inhabitants in Na'aman's film, are incisively woven into the storylines through the characterizations of their respective residents, whose interactions drive the plots. In <u>Flying</u>, the city of Tel Aviv is stratified along ethnocultural lines, with the *Ashkenazim* at the top and the Israeli Arabs at the bottom. In <u>Tale</u>, the Gaza strip is stratified along ethnosocial lines, with the home and business owners at the top, and the Palestinian Gypsies at the bottom.

Khleifi has stated that Aida, the Palestinian Gypsy girl, is "more of a fantasy figure" (Alexander 31) than a character modeled after a real person; however, his depiction of her family's segregation from the Gazan residents and refugees is a realistic portrayal. Originating from India, a thousand Palestinian Gypsies live in Jabaliya, a poor community in the north Gaza Strip. Although the Gazan Gypsies consider themselves to be refugees of the 1948 war, they are accorded a lower social status than the Palestinian Arab refugees. Amoun Sleem, a spokeswoman for the Gypsy community, charges that her people "are at the bottom of the social ladder, oppressed and humiliated…Palestinian society treats them as backward and retarded, and that's what they tend to feel about themselves" (Lori). Sleem reveals that the Palestinian slang for Gypsy is *Nawar*, a derogatory Arabic term meaning "black" or "uncivilized." The epithet, which is similar to the American use of the word *nigger*, is "traditionally accompanied by

spitting" (Lori). Khleifi obliquely acknowledges this discrimination when Yousef's mother warns him that Aida is "a Gypsy girl from a bad family."

Khleifi's Gazan community is portrayed as a divided society where Arab refugees, Gazan residents, and Gypsy refugees have limited interactions for specific reasons; the ethnosocial divisions among the three groups are clearly demarcated. Yousef, his mother, and teenage sister represent the Arab refugee families. Yousef's older brother Samir is hiding out with a gang of resisters and the father is in jail. By trapping wild birds, Yousef is able to provide a small amount of money for the household. Their living environment is characterized by dirt and rubble -- a depressing chaos that has been caused by a combination of Israeli military incursions and the inhabitants' inability to afford the construction of buildings.

The family of Salah, Yousef's friend from school, represents the Gazan residents, who are the most prosperous. Salah's father owns a house, a car, a large orange grove, and runs a profitable fruit exporting business. Their living environment is a more pleasant mixture of residential and commercial structures connected by roadways. Their "nearly normal" existence is repeatedly interrupted by military-enforced curfews and closures which abruptly bring their lives to a halt.

Aida and her family represent the Gypsy refugees. They live in a colorful nomadic environment with a closer relationship to nature and the countryside. Because they are generally apolitical and the men folk do not engage in violent resistance to the Israeli presence, their family is more intact than the Arab refugees. However, their social ostracism by the more prosperous Gaza residents, and also by the Arab refugees (whose broken families are in many cases more economically impoverished than the Gypsies) relegates them to the bottom rung of the ethnosocial hierarchy in the Gaza Strip.

In Na'aman's narrative, the protagonist Professor Bauman represents the privileged *Ashkenazim*. He is professionally educated, from a culturally enriched Germanic family background, and is a Tel Aviv landowner with a large sense of entitlement. His academic specialty is the *Bauhaus* International style of architecture, on which he lectured in the university until the onset of epileptic seizures forced him into retirement. In keeping with the comedic genre, the Professor is caricatured as a highly eccentric, stubborn, and opinionated misfit.

The restaurant owners who refuse to sell or trade Bauman the wings from the flying camel -- which they have installed in the marquee of their business entryway -- represent the less fortunate *Sephardim* and *Mizrahim*. The *Mizrahi* husband is short and dark-skinned, while the *Sephardi* wife is big and loud. Their male offspring are even more mismatched and unattractive: one son is extremely large and clumsy-acting, while the other son is extremely short and stupid-looking.

Phares and his co-workers represent the disenfranchised Israeli Arabs, who serve in the most menial capacities in Israeli society, while remaining segregated in their social lives and bitter in their worldviews of the Israelis' enrichment at the expense of their people's impoverishment. Phares is caricatured as an "almost-engineer" who is intelligent, multi-talented, and good-hearted, but due to his unfair abasement, must make his way through life by treading the margins of criminal behavior with crafty buffoonery.

Underlying Na'aman's comedic characterizations in <u>Flying</u> are real inequities in the weight of political, cultural, and social influence behind the "hegemonic voice of Israel." Shohat charges that despite the fact that *Sephardim* and *Mizrahim* form the majority of the Jewish population, their voices have been "largely muffled or silenced" by the *Ashkenazi* power elite (Shohat "Sephardim" 39). The language used by Shohat in describing the "structural

oppression" of the Iberian and Oriental Jews is markedly similar to the language used by Sleem in describing her minority Gypsy population as being "oppressed and humiliated" within Palestinian society. Both women activists are attempting to bring the plight of their people to the attention of the western world, in hopes that their cultural rights will be addressed in the educational systems and their political rights will be supported by governmental reforms.

By introducing nuanced ethnocultural and ethnosocial stratifications into their texts, both the Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers present introspective viewpoints on microcosmic community issues that are only tangentially impacted by the macrocosmic Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While neither narrative ignores the conflict entirely, the import of each film is in the realm of personal friendships, cross-cultural relationships, and romantic interactions. Khleifi does succumb to portraying the Israeli soldiers in a uni-dimensional manner -- each time they appear in a scene, they shoot Palestinians; however, the dominant message in Tale of the Three Jewels is that love conquers fear and death. Likewise, Na'aman does artificially avoid any scenes containing Israeli patrols, when in reality Tel Aviv is a common target for suicide bombers and is heavily policed by IDF soldiers. However, The Flying Camel artfully caricatures the Arab and Jewish populations of Tel Aviv with honest generalizations about their ethnic and racial prejudices towards each other and among themselves.

In the case of these two films, a homologic analysis reveals that the filmmakers have not unilaterally used their texts to further violent conflict, and the ethnonational imaginaries presented to the external world have been tempered with socially conscious criticisms of their internal worlds. Given the two directors' textual focus on racially charged issues relating to their respective intra-group cultures, it may seem extraneous to critique their textual engagement with the larger inter-group conflict. However, both filmmakers have easily fallen prey to supporting

ethnonational rhetorics in their textual choices. When Na'aman ignores the conflict entirely, he mirrors the "Life as usual" attitude of most Israelis, who may be personally unaffected by the larger issues of the conflict on a daily basis. While the overall social realities of Israeli life include vigilant surveillances, bag searches, military patrols, and suicide bombers, the populace has learned to engage in business as usual by emotionally disengaging with the daily suffering of the Palestinians.

Likewise, for Khleifi to portray the Israeli soldiers in a uni-dimensional manner is in glaring contrast to the richly detailed, psychologically complex narrative he presents of Palestinian Gazan residents; he easily falls prey to villianizing the enemy Other, which has been one of the hallmarks of the perpetuation of hostilities. While Khleifi has not engaged wholeheartedly in fueling the conflict, neither has he presented any voices that promote a peaceful settlement. Na'aman, on the other hand, comes closer to re-imagining the conflict through the friendship of Bauman and Phares. Each of the two men's talents and visions are enhanced by the other's; furthermore, the defining parameters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are realigned when the educated Jewish Israeli professor acts unwisely and the less educated Arab Palestinian laborer acts wisely. However, it can be argued that while the comedic genre opens doors to conviviality, it may be accused of trivializing the momentous task of peaceful co-existence.

In the next section, it will be seen that the Israeli director Joseph Cedar follows Na'aman's stance by ignoring the conflict and focusing on intra-group Israeli issues, while the Palestinian director Elia Suleiman follows Khleifi's stance by using fantasy to ridicule and defeat the Israeli soldiers. The films of both Cedar and Suleiman express ambivalence toward the possibility of improving social, cultural, and political conditions in their respective societies.

Joseph Cedar's <u>Time of Favor</u> (2000) and Elia Suleiman's <u>Divine Intervention</u> (2002)

1. Historico-Political Contextuality (2000-2002)

Joseph Cedar, Israeli writer-director of <u>Time of Favor</u>: "People have said to me, so where's your statement? Are you taking a side? And the very clear answer is, no…I'm not telling the audience what the right thing is...I couldn't end the movie with either a black or white resolution. I stayed away as much as I could from anything that's clear-cut" (Sklar 27).

Elia Suleiman, Palestinian writer-director of <u>Divine Intervention</u>: "Actually, it's not an accident that I don't draw any conclusions in the film. I'm simply raising questions. If I had an answer to even one image when I started making it, it would not be on the screen…[I]f a film succeeds, you're still watching it when you leave the theater; you're talking about it, processing it, feeling it, relating to it. So what I'm striving for when I make a tableau is for it to be open to a multiplicity of readings" (Butler 65).

Over the course of the production and release of <u>Time of Favor</u> and <u>Divine Intervention</u>, Israelis and Palestinians went from being negotiating partners to "enemies to the death." When Laborite Ehud Barak was elected Israeli Prime Minister in 1999, he had promised to make rapid progress toward peace with the Palestinians, the Lebanese, and the Syrians. Unfortunately, he was largely unsuccessful. Although Israel did make peace with Lebanon in 2000 by unilaterally withdrawing from the area it had been occupying since 1982, negotiations with Syria failed to make progress. The Clinton-sponsored Camp David peace summit between Palestinian and Israeli leaders ended in a deadlock over competing claims to Jerusalem, the amount of West Bank territory to be restored, and the right of return for Palestinians refugees. The Second *Intifada* began in 2000 when *Likud* leader Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount with 1,000 Israeli soldiers. This marked the first time Palestinian citizens of Israel had participated in

protests and demonstrations against Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. A few months later, Sharon was elected Israeli Prime Minister, promising "peace and security."

During 2001, *Hamas* terror attacks on Israelis escalated, with retaliatory occupations and re-militarizations of Palestinian towns, and the erection of new blockades to protect the expansion of Jewish settlements into the West Bank and Gaza. In 2002, following a large number of Palestinian suicide attacks on civilians, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank, increasing retaliatory measures with targeted assassinations, harsh curfews, and border closures. Israeli troops laid siege to Arafat's compound in Ramallah and engaged in the Battle of Jenin with Palestinian civilians. The cycle of violence and revenge was at its apex, with Palestinians and Israelis accusing each other of not being willing to make the compromises necessary for a two-state solution (MideastWeb).

A major distinction between Israeli and Palestinian films of this time period is that Israeli productions were recognized as being part of a national cinema, while Palestinian productions were labeled "diasporic," "exilic," or "oppositional" by various film scholors. Shohat and Stam have observed that such "fragmented forms" as those comprising the homeless texts of the Palestinian cinema "have come to homologize cultural disembodiment" (318). The turmoil surrounding the non-eligibility of Elia Suleiman's Divine Intervention as a Hollywood Oscar candidate is illustrative of the fragility of the concept of Palestinian nationalism during these years, and of the unexpected implications of its contested identities.

In 2003, a conflict erupted over whether Suleiman's Divine Intervention was eligible for an Oscar nomination as a Palestinian entry for Best Foreign Film.   Apparently, Bruce Davis -- the Executive Director of the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts, and Sciences -- discouraged

producer Humbert Balsan from submitting the film for consideration in the foreign film category. The reported reason was that, since Palestine is not a country recognized by the United Nations, it would be ineligible to compete for the Academy prize. Palestinian advocates quickly responded that Palestine is in fact recognized by the UN -- it has been accorded observer status since 1974 (Fahim).

Benjamin Doherty and Ali Abunimah assert that the incident "raises disturbing questions about how a film that is acclaimed and celebrated in the rest of the world, can be turned into an artistic refugee, just because it is by and about Palestinians" (Doherty and Abunimah). The writers argue that the Academy had formerly accepted films from countries and regions that are not members of the UN -- such as Wales, Puerto Rico, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Furthermore, Taiwan's Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon had won the Oscar prize for Best Foreign Film in 2001. Joining in the debate, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee put out an "Action Alert" for a letter-writing campaign to lobby for the film to be accepted as a Palestinian entry. However, the campaign was merely a consciousness-raising gesture, since the film was never actually submitted for the nominating process (ADC).

The acclamation and celebration to which Doherty and Abunimah refer in their article is an impressive roster of cinema awards for Divine Intervention. In 2002, the film won a European Film Award, a prize at the Chicago International Film Festival, two prizes at the Cinemanila International Film Festival, and two prizes at the Cannes Film Festival. Such international recognition is the current measure by which Palestinian films are judged: Since Palestine has neither a network of theaters nor an awards ceremony for its cinema, the existence of a national audience and/or a board of film critics are far from being realized.

Cedar's Time of Favor, on the other hand, has been a national success with Israeli popular audiences and film critics. In 2000, it received six Israeli Film Academy Awards for Best Picture, Screenplay, Actor, Actress, Cinematography, and Editing. Due to its box-office success, the text has been heralded as the spearhead of a new generation of Israeli cinema that embraces serious national topics without "battling with its audience" (Sklar 26). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Cedar is one of a growing number of Israeli directors who has recaptured the loyalty of popular audiences by exhibiting a less critical, more compassionate attitude towards his characters and their dilemmas; this change has generated a revitalized national debate over collective values and commemorative narratives. Although the controversial issue in Favor -- terrorist acts by religious fundamentalists -- is a subject that resonates also with American and European audiences, the film has not been accorded the international acclaim that its national awards might understandably presage.

Since the thematic content of Cedar's film ignores the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by displacing it with internecine warfare, it is susceptible to criticisms that have been similarly directed toward Na'aman's film: it perpetuates a "hear no evil, see no evil" complacency in the Israeli public sphere. The film's failure to engage in any meaningful interaction with the conflict or in Arab-Jewish relationships disqualifies it as a peacebuilding text. Suleiman's film, on the other hand, engages in one of the most controversial aspects of the conflict -- the proper extent of civil resistance against military occupation -- which does not presage well for a peacebuilding aspect to his text. In many ways, Suleiman's corpus tracks Michel Khleifi's focus on Palestinian *intra*-group problems, showing how they are tremendously exacerbated by the *inter*-groups issues fueled by Israeli ethnonationalist narratives and the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian

territories. Additionally, as will be seen, Suleiman explores aspects of subversive resistance that are at once glorified at the level of fantasy and caricatured at the level of realistic import.

2. Socio-Cultural Inter-textuality

Dan Wolman, Israeli writer-director-producer of <u>Foreign Sister</u> (2000): "There is a lot of unemployment among Israelis, who think certain jobs are beneath their dignity, but there is [also] a bad feeling about foreign workers who were brought in because they thought the Palestinians could not be trusted…On the one hand, [Ethiopian immigrants] were romanticized, and on the other hand, there was a lot of patronizing them as carriers of disease and as people who didn't know how to use toilet paper" (JewishFilm <u>Foreign Sister</u>).

Mohammad Bakri, Palestinian writer-director-producer of <u>Jenin Jenin</u> (2002): "The day will come when the Israelis will know that I was not their enemy, but their friend, by telling them to come back to that Jew who was weak and poor, so that they might stop making others weak and poor" (Assadi 43).

In identifying the socio-cultural inter-textualities held by Cedar's and Suleiman's films, it is important to establish the self-referential connections to each writer-director's filmography, in addition to the external connections to each cinema's contemporaneous texts. <u>Time of Favor</u> is Cedar's first feature film. Since then, he has written and directed <u>Campfire</u> (2004), which won five Israeli Film Academy Awards for Best Director, Picture, Screenplay, Editing, and Supporting Actress. In <u>Campfire</u>, Cedar continues his examination of tensions between the religious and secular segments of Israeli society by addressing internal issues within a religious West Bank settlement. The <u>Favor</u> and <u>Campfire</u> narratives are drawn from Cedar's own experiences of being raised in a religious family, attending *yeshiva* (religious school), serving as a paratrooper in the Israeli army, and living in a West Bank settlement. While Cedar carefully

neither supports nor opposes the religious settler movement, his portrayal of the settlement's acceptance committee in <u>Campfire</u> is far from favorable, and the film's bonfire scene is condemnatory of the settlers' repressive and hypocritical attitudes towards women. Predictably, secular Israelis "warmly embraced" <u>Campfire</u>, while religious conservatives felt "the sting of betrayal" and called for a boycott (Holden).

As attested by his national film awards and audience popularity, Cedar's subject matter in <u>Favor</u> is connected to an important intra-group debate of that time. In a 2001 interview, he highlights two "what ifs" that were high on the national anxiety index during the film's production:

> What would happen if an order were issued to evacuate the settlements?
>
> What would the religious soldiers do? The other question that comes up
>
> is, is there an individual lunatic in the army who has the equipment, who
>
> has access to whatever explosives he needs, who can use this access in
>
> a bad way (Sklar 26)?

In fact, since the release of <u>Favor</u>, the Israeli army did forcibly evacuate and dismantle a number of West Bank religious settlements, narrowly avoiding civilian bloodshed. This marks an important reversal of policy for the Israeli government -- one which is anticipated to continue causing civil upheaval for an indeterminate period of time prior to the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

In contrast to Cedar's smaller filmography, Suleiman's <u>Divine Intervention</u> is his seventh film. Previously, he has produced four documentaries: <u>Introduction to the End of an Argument</u> (1990, co-directed with Jayce Salloum), <u>Homage by Assassination</u> (1990), <u>War and Peace in Vesoul</u> (1997, co-directed with Amos Gitai), <u>The Arab Dream</u> (1998); a short docu-drama,

Cyber Palestine (1999); and a feature film, Chronicle of a Disappearance (1996). Divine

Intervention is a continuation of the autobiographically-based storyline that Suleiman began in

Chronicle of a Disappearance. Suleiman himself is the protagonist of both films; he portrays

E.S., a self-exiled Palestinian filmmaker who returns to his childhood village of Nazareth to visit

his parents. The five-year gap between the release of Disappearance and Intervention was due

partly to the death of Suleiman's father: Faud Suleiman was cast as himself in Disappearance,

while actor Nayef Fahoum Daher assumed his role in Intervention.

Although Disappearance and Intervention are visually and stylistically similar in their

technical presentations, literary narratives, cultural commentaries, and political subject matter,

their receptions by the Israeli and Arab publics have been diametrically opposed. When

Disappearance was shown at the Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia, it was vilified as a pro-Israeli

film. Arab critics misinterpreted the final scene, which showed E.S.'s parents dozing in front of

a television screen with the Israeli flag waving while *Hatikva*, the national anthem, played in the

background. As he explains, Suleiman intended this scene to be "'a total snub'":

> It's the fact that my parents don't give a damn about the Israeli flag, even
>
> when it's in their living room. Israeli critics said it was one of the most
>
> painful moments in the history of cinema against Israel. At the same time,
>
> critics in Arab countries misread the irony and called me a Zionist collaborator,
>
> and I couldn't go anywhere in the world with the film (Camhi).

After being shunned by Arab critics, the film was tabooed by potential exhibitors in the Arab

world. In Israel, however, it was a critical success. Conversely, Intervention "received a

rapturous premiere in November [2002] in Ramallah," yet was shunned by Israeli theaters

(Camhi). Additionally, pro-Israeli American viewers have attempted to have <u>Intervention</u>

banned in the US (Ali).

Although Suleiman's interviews are focused on his methods of artistic expression and the

liberation of the spectators' imaginations, he inevitably becomes embroiled in political

controversies. By submerging himself in the craft of filmmaking, Suleiman has attempted to

redirect attention away from politics and towards shared meaning. However, this has proved to

be an elusive aim, especially since those aspects of his films that have tended to please Israelis

have been offensive to Arabs, and vice versa. As offensive as Suleiman's <u>Intervention</u> may be to

some Israelis, his camera eye is less harshly critical of the Israeli military occupation than

contemporaneous films by the majority of Palestinian directors. Two notable texts of this time

period are Mohammad Bakri's documentary <u>Jenin, Jenin</u> (2002) and Rashid Masharawi's feature

<u>Ticket to Jerusalem</u> (2002).

Mohammad Bakri, an Israeli Palestinian from Galilee, had enjoyed an illustrious career

as a film actor prior to assuming the director's role. Having participated in thirty films over a

period of thirty years, Bakri had been well respected in the world of Israeli filmmaking, and had

been well received by popular audiences. Most recently, he was nominated by the Israeli Film

Academy for Best Actor in <u>Desperado Square</u> (2000). However, since the release of <u>Jenin Jenin</u>,

Bakri has become "virtually blacklisted in Israeli cinema" (Assadi 41). The format of the

documentary is Bakri's solicitation of the testimony of Palestinian inhabitants of the Jenin

refugee camp, following a civil uprising against Israel's Operation Defensive Shield in April

2002. The military offensive -- which the Israelis have justified as a search for terrorists and

their weapons stashes following the death of 135 Israeli civilians in suicide bombings by

Palestinian terrorists in March 2002 -- has been viewed as a series of unjustifiable war crimes

and human rights violations by the Palestinian population. According to Bakri, his documentary is the first Israeli film to be banned due to its political content, a decision which he sees as a misguided attempt to ignore Israel's role in causing the desperate living conditions of the Palestinian refugees.

Rashid Mushawara's Ticket to Jerusalem, filmed during the Second *Intifada,* is set against a background of "unending disaster," a "vicious circle of dead-end situations," "house demolitions, injuries, killings," and "a feeling of inescapable imprisonment" (Gertz, "Stone" 27). The protagonist is a Palestinian refugee who attempts to drive from Ramallah to Jerusalem in order to arrange a screening of children's cartoons. A Roadblock movie decrying the effects of the Israeli military occupation on the daily lives of West Bank residents, the film is one of the bleaker representatives of a genre of cultural texts that equate the "condition of shared anxiety" at boundaries and intersections of authority as the "quintessential Palestinian experience" (Khalidi 1). Other texts within this genre include Suleiman's Disappearance and Intervention, as well as Abu-Assad's Ford Transit and Rana's Wedding (discussed in the next section).

At the same time that most Palestinian directors were politically focused on the causes and effects of the Second *Intifada*, most Israeli directors were engaged in wooing their audiences with socially conscious, yet emotionally palatable narratives examining Jewish ethnonational culture. Benny Torati's Desperado Square (2000) is a melodramatic story about a community of Greek Jews living in the *Hatikva* Quarter of Tel Aviv. The narrative involves an inter-generational controversy over the reopening of a family movie theater with a showing of a sexually charged Bollywood film. Desperado won five Israeli Film Academy Awards in 2001: Best Director, Supporting Actor, Music, Costume, and Art Direction. Dan Wolman's Foreign Sister (2000) tackles the issues of racism and immigrants with a narrative about a relationship

between an Ethiopian Christian woman who is illegally working as a maid and the Israeli Jewish woman who hires and befriends her. Wolman, who has directed forty documentaries and thirteen movies over the past forty years, won the award for Best Film at the Jerusalem Film Festival.

Both Cedar's <u>Favor</u> and Suleiman's <u>Intervention</u> are synchronously reflective of contemporaneous texts within their respective cinemas and of their personal experiences attendant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In <u>Favor</u>, the director's resonance with <u>Desperado Square's</u> inter-generational controversy is evident in the dramatic interaction between Rabbi Meltzer and his rebellious daughter Michal. Cedar reports that his own sojourn in a religious settlement led him to question "the high price the younger generation is paying for their parents' adventure" (Filmbug). Cedar also dramatizes personal relationships across secular-religious divisions in Israeli society in much the same vein as Wolman's <u>Foreign Sister</u> tackles personal relationships that transcend the divisions between legal residents and the illegal immigrants who have replaced Palestinian workers in menial jobs.

In <u>Intervention</u>, the director's resonance with humiliating experiences at <u>Ticket to Jerusalem's</u> A-Ram military checkpoint is evident in the blocked interaction between E.S., who is living in Jerusalem, and his girlfriend (Manal Khader), who is living in occupied Ramallah. One of the signature sequences in the film reconfigures their blocked checkpoint experiences in a wordless collision of womanly determination and military might. Suleiman reports:

> I wrote this scene ten years ago, inspired by a moment when Manal and I
> had a rendevous to have a coffee in Jerusalem. She wanted to defy the
> checkpoint and a soldier pointed a rifle at her. She said, 'Go ahead and
> shoot. I'm crossing.' They didn't shoot (Wood).

Suleiman interjects comic relief into this tense scenario -- as Manal boldly strides past the checkpoint's watchtower in a mini-dress and high heeled shoes, her forceful defiance unexpectedly causes the tower to completely collapse, sending the Israeli soldiers plummeting to the ground in the wake of her determination.

Even though they have suffered from the Israeli occupation, Suleiman and his girlfriend both possess rights and privileges that are not available to the <u>Jenin Jenin</u> West Bank refugees. Painfully aware of the disparities between the "inside" and "outside" Palestinian groups, Suleiman has written: "We Palestinians living in Israeli…act as if we were closet-case Palestinians…It is our sisters and brothers [in the West Bank and Gaza] who keep reminding us of our silent and tragic existence" (<u>Excerpts</u> 2). Throughout <u>Divine Intervention</u>, Suleiman silently mirrors the frustrations of the "inside" Palestinians (represented by E.S), and the "outside" Palestinians (represented by Manal Khader) who are unable to come together across the boundaries that keep them physically and psychologically divided.

As will be discussed in the following section, the textual choices made by the Israeli director and the Palestinian director in their two films reflect the differing ethnonational orientations to the conflict that each of their populations was experiencing during this time period. The textual differences will be shown to maintain continuity with their divergent contextual and inter-textual alliances, as exhibited by three oppositional components: the potent activity of the male protagonist in <u>Favor</u> as opposed to the impotent inactivity of the male protagonist in <u>Intervention</u>; the overt use of realistic dramatic strategies in <u>Favor</u>, as opposed to the subtle use of surrealistic comic techniques in <u>Intervention</u>; and the complete absence of Palestinians in the Israeli film, as opposed to the omnipresence of Israelis in the Palestinian film.

3. Ethno-national Textuality

The Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement (2003): "Long Term Objectives: 1. Liberating the Temple Mount from Arab (Islamic) occupation. The Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque were placed on this Jewish or Biblical holy site as a specific sign of Islamic conquest and domination. The Temple Mount can never be consecrated to the Name of God without removing these pagan shrines...3. Rebuilding the Third Temple in accordance with the words of all the Hebrew prophets...5. Making Biblical Jerusalem the real, undivided capital of the state of Israel"(Dolphin).

PalestineInfo (2003): "Al Aqsa was given as a name for the whole sacred Sanctuary, or Al Haram Al Sharif, including the Dome of the Rock…The holiness of Al Haram Al Sharif is owing to its connection with Islamic Faith as the first Qibla (House of Worship) and its being the third mosque after Al Ka'ba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and the Prophet Mohammed's Mosque in Medina…Its significance has been reinforced by…the night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and the ascent to the Heavens by Prophet Mohammed … Al Haram Al Sharif represents the heart of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict because of its religious significance for Moslems and of the Jewish claims of their alleged Haykal (Temple of Solomon) believed to exist underneath" (Al Aqsa).

Abdel-Haleem E'weis (2003): "Muslims strongly believe that Jerusalem and its surrounding neighbourhood is holy land which can never be given up because it is a part of their faith" (E'weis)

The popularity of Cedar's <u>Favor</u> with its Israeli audience is partially due to its genre as a dramatic action film. As discussed in Chapter One, the Zionist worldview promotes active nation building as an antidote to the Holocaust worldview of passive ethnic annihilation. While

the male protagonist Menachem's small measure of emotional sensitivity brings a tempering effect to bear on his traditionally macho *Sabra* character, he nevertheless personifies the trope of IDF military talent, intelligence, and determination. Cedar deliberately chose film celebrity Aki Avni for the role of Menachem because of his "star power" and his "embodiment of an Israeli hero" (Sklar 28). Throughout the narrative, the camera dwells on Avni's powerful and reassuring presence, conveying the impression that he is calmly centered in his personal and professional interactions.

A resident of a West Bank religious settlement, Menachem is chosen by Rabbi Meltzer to command a military unit that is to be exclusively comprised of other students from his rabbi's *yeshiva* (religious school). The rabbi uses his political clout to get Menachem's leadership of the unit approved by the military high command. The title of the film is drawn from the scene where Menachem is being blessed by the rabbi, while the students are dancing around in a circle and singing: "May this be a time of mercy and favor!" Due to their personal religious fervor and group dedication, the rabbi's trainees out-perform every other unit in the IDF. While Menachem's immediate commander trusts his loyalty and is extremely pleased with the trainees' performance, others in the military echelons and the secular *Mossad* (Israeli Secret Service) feel threatened by the soldiers' loyalty to the rabbi, and fear that Meltzer's control ultimately transcends the government's control over the unit's activities.

The tug-of-war between Israeli officials and Rabbi Meltzer is a realistic dramatization of the ongoing battles between the Israeli military/government apparatus and the orthodox nationalist rabbis who control their followers' personal loyalties and daily actions. In Cedar's storyline and throughout Israeli history, the secular-religious division within the Israeli military has been intimately connected to the secular-religious split in Israeli civil society, as exemplified

in divergent views over the meaning and purpose of the Temple Mount/*Haram al-Sharif*.

Political control over the highly controversial site and its Jerusalem environs has been a major

focal point of the conflict's intractability since the 1967 war. A long-publicized goal of Jewish

religious fundamentalists has been to rebuild the third temple there, and numerous attempts have

been made by Jewish terrorists to bomb the site and destroy the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque in preparation

for the proposed reconstruction.

In Cedar's script, Rabbi Meltzer urges his disciples to believe in a future "when there will

be tens of thousands of boys wanting to pray at the Temple Mount, then we won't be considered

crazies anymore, but as they say, 'the norm.'" When Pini -- Meltzer's prize disciple and

Menachem's close friend -- determines to realize his rabbi's vision by exploding a bomb in the

tunnels under the Temple Mount, Cedar is referencing the real event of Rabin's assassination by

an orthodox nationalist *yeshiva* student who acted to realize his rabbi's vision of destroying the

Oslo peace accords. Cedar's storyline exonerates Menachem when he prevents Pini from

detonating the bomb; however, in the process, Menachem loses trust in his rabbi, the military,

the government, and his personal goals.

Although the film is not explicitly autobiographical, Cedar is familiar with the true story

of a religious officer who was suspected of belonging to a terrorist group: "The idea for the

movie began with me trying to put myself in his shoes, and thinking how dramatic it would be

for a young, patriotic officer, one day, to become the enemy. To be put on the other side" (Sklar

27). Cedar's scenario engages ethnonational fears of suicide bombers, substituting Jewish

fundamentalists for Muslim extremists; however, his script then proceeds to excise the

Palestinian presence entirely from the narrative. The complete absence of Arabs is an

unfortunate reminder of discredited Zionist historical records which have denied the presence of

indigenous inhabitants in British Mandate Palestine and have declared that the Palestinians do

not exist as a people group. In Favor, the Arabs are similarly nonexistent -- the fundamentalist

enemy comes from within, the IDF soldiers are training for an undefined future war, and there is

no indication of a West Bank military occupation, of the existence of blockades or checkpoints,

or of any non-Jewish presence in Jerusalem. The controversy over rebuilding the third temple on

the Muslim-controlled Dome of the Rock is depicted as a purely internal affair between Jewish

religious extremists and Jewish secular officials. In juxtaposition with the majority of the filmic

script, which closely correlates to real events, this one-sided depiction is glaringly inaccurate.

   In light of the silencing of Palestinian voices in Cedar's film, and in a major portion of

Israeli movies during this time period, the stone-faced muteness of Suleiman's protagonist in

Divine Intervention: A Chronicle of Love and Pain is particularly appropriate in response to

current events. The overtly autobiographical storyline chronicles the life of E.S., a silently

suffering filmmaker living in a Jerusalem apartment. His impotent frustration with the stifled

existence of an "inside" Palestinian is conveyed through visual imagery, static camera shots,

repetitive framing, and gestures of self-satire. The apartment is a nondescript and claustrophobic

space defined by a wall plastered with yellow post-it notes. The wall is a multi-modal

storyboard for E.S.'s life and the film itself. One of the notes, which he replicates on his car

window for his girlfriend, declares, "I am crazy because I love you." The object of E.S.'s love is

a tough, attractive woman from the occupied town of Ramallah. Much of the storyline takes

place at the Ramallah-Jerusalem checkpoint, where the freedom of the lovers is taken away by

military restrictions on their movement. In an elaborately repetitive ritual, they meet in the

parking lot at the blockade, and sit in E.S.'s car, silently caressing each other's hands in a

symbolic sexual union that is both hauntingly erotic and hopelessly repressed.   As they sit

immobile, holding hands, they witness the "special treatment" that is arbitrarily meted out by the checkpoint guards to the hapless Palestinians desiring to travel from the West Bank to Jerusalem.

Unlike Cedar's Israelis who never confront the Palestinian presence in their daily activities, Suleiman's Palestinians are obsessed with the military occupation and Israeli control over their personal lives and their physical movement. E.S. is guilt-ridden by his inability to overcome his powerless position, and seeks to escape tragic despair by ridiculing the Israeli military apparatus in a series of scenarios that range from the absurd to the fantastic. In addition to using satire as a kind of "subversive humor," Suleiman carefully constructs a series of surreal "gags" that are interspersed throughout the film (Wood). Releasing tension within the politicized pressure-cooker of Palestinian existence, E.S. imagines and realizes a sweet revenge: Calmly driving in his car, after slowly eating an apricot, he tosses the fruit pit out of the window. Without warning, an Israeli tank situated on the side of the road explodes and disintegrates in a blinding flash of light. Unflinchingly, E.S. continues on his journey, maintaining his deadpan expression.

E.S.'s unfulfilled love life transcends a painful reality through three fantasy sequences that are the highlights of the filmic narrative. The first sequence, the defiant border crossing of E.S.'s girlfriend, is cunningly replicated by the airborne crossing of a red balloon bearing the visage of Yasir Arafat. E.S. fills the balloon with helium and releases it from his parked car, where it floats serenely over the checkpoint. In a fantastic voyage, the balloon navigates over the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, surveys its options, and comes to settle serenely on the sacred Dome of the Rock. While the balloon is distracting the Israeli soldiers at the checkpoint, E.S. and his girlfriend are able to enter Jerusalem together and spend the night in his apartment. In the morning, the woman disappears. Although E.S. keeps returning to the checkpoint parking

lot, she never joins him. The implication is that she has become sickened of life under Israeli military occupation and has determined to become a martyr for the cause of freedom. The final fantasy sequence, where she reappears as a magical whirling dervish, is the most visually exciting and the most controversial of the film.

As the sequence unfolds, Israeli soldiers are lined up, practicing their marksmanship by shooting at life-sized targets of a woman's body. E.S.'s *keffiyah*-wearing girlfriend suddenly materializes from behind the targets and steps in front of them, silently daring the men to shoot. In contrast to the beginning of the film, she has evolved from a sexy woman with a deadly stare, to a ninja warrior with an arsenal of weapons and heightened spiritual powers. She engages in a pitched battle with the soldiers, performing supernatural feats, dodging bullets and stopping them in mid-air. At one point, gold bullets form a halo around her head, evoking images of Christ's crown of thorns. With a slingshot and rocks, she prevails over the machine guns, conjuring the biblical David and Goliath, as well as the *Intifada* stone throwers. A gold scimitar, shaped in the outline of the Arab-realized Palestine, magically appears in her hands. She first uses it as a shield, and then throws it as a boomerang at an Israeli helicopter. Blasting apart the expensive military machinery, she reprises E.S.'s detonation of the Israeli tank, and her previous destruction of the border watchtower. Finally, with the Israeli forces in disarray, and her mission a success, she disappears in a cloud of smoke.

The coda to the film takes place in the Nazareth kitchen of E.S.'s mother, after his father dies. A gigantic pressure cooker is rattling on the stove. E.S. and his mother are seated on a bench, watching the pot heat up, produce pressure, and noisily release steam. His mother speaks the last lines of the film: "It's enough now; make it stop." E.S. continues to sit, motionlessly, silently, and impotently.

With irony, fantasy, and satire, Suleiman attempts to engender a revisualization of the present impasse in the sociopolitical status of his people. However, the route that he chooses is oppositional rather than conciliatory. In <u>Unthinking Eurocentrism</u>, Shohat and Stam describe the "alternative esthetics" of oppositional cinemas, citing the use of "the carnivalesque" and the "magical realist" strategies of visualization (292). Suleiman's <u>Intervention</u> is very much a part of this oppositional genre, employing "carnivalesque subversions" to blaspheme dominant cultural traditions. Although Suleiman tends to downplay the political aspects of his subversive humor, his protestations have served to placate neither the Arab nor the Jewish detractors of his methods:

> People sometimes ask me, 'How can you talk about a tragic situation with
>
> humor?' Well, that's exactly the place where we want to create some kind
>
> of lightness. It's not a political strategy, but it's a way of resisting any kind
>
> of dominance over my imagination. In fact, it's a form of liberation (Camhi).

It is difficult to reconcile Suleiman's method of imaginatively annihilating the Israeli military with a lighthearted attempt to bring about peaceful co-existence. At the core, Suleiman's supernatural solutions and divinely ironic gags are politically focused on creating a Palestinian state that is neither occupied by soldiers nor by Israeli civilians.

In summary, on the three dimensions homologically analyzed, the directors of <u>Time of Favor</u> and <u>Divine Intervention</u> adhere to an ethnonationalist stance throughout their texts. Cedar actively imagines an Israeli nation devoid of an Arab presence. Suleiman passively fantasizes his girlfriend single-handedly decimating the Israeli military forces (leaving a Palestinian nation devoid of an Israeli presence). Cedar's ethnonational critique portrays a societal rift between the secular and religious segments of the population that exists as an uneasy ceasefire, awaiting the

next round of violence. Suleiman's ethnonational critique visualizes a giant pressure cooker that is overheated to the point of explosion at any moment. Cedar's dramatic action depicts a frightened population that sees potential terrorists everywhere. Suleiman's comic satire ignores the existence of terrorists entirely, depicting a victimized population that is incapable of real action. Neither the realistic nor surrealistic narrative offers any solutions to the well-defined parameters of the conflict.

The final pair of films analyzed in the following section exemplifies the most current type of interactions that Israeli and Palestinian cinematic productions are having with contemporary sociopolitical events. In the Israeli narrative, director Eitan Gorlin investigates how the violence of the conflict can unexpectedly, yet predictably, interfere in the Israeli public's attempts to erect an illusive barrier of normalcy around their lives. However, the screenplay is devoid of engagement with, or even recognition of, the possibility of peacebuilding interventions at the grassroots level. In the Palestinian narrative, director Hany Abu-Assad powerfully presents arguments explaining, if not justifying, the inevitability of suicide bombing as a solution-less protest to the dehumanizing effects of the Israeli occupation upon the daily lives of male Palestinians. Obliquely, peacebuilding alternatives are referenced within the text, and then derided as impotent gestures of futile hope.

Eitan Gorlin's The Holy Land (2003) and Hany Abu-Assad's Paradise Now (2005)

1. Historico-Political Contextuality (2003-2006)

Hany Abu-Assad, Palestinian writer-director of Paradise Now: "The only thing I'm trying to do is tell the story of my culture – my narrative, my history. I don't think it can play a role now, but maybe in ten, fifty years. Maybe Paradise Now can be a small piece in the puzzle of history. It

could move you, but it's not forcing you to change your ideas. I want to allow you to just

experience a moment of life with someone else" (Sichel).

Eitan Gorlin, Israeli writer-director of <u>The Holy Land</u>: "Each of these characters has something

in them that I've felt or experienced…I think Mike's Place offered a certain sort of hope. It was

a place that people could come and sort of forget their tribal differences…I think now, there's

been so much blood spilled, and problems with the leaders involved that perhaps there will be

peace, but not tomorrow. It's going to take a very long time" (Savlov).

The years during which <u>The Holy Land</u> and <u>Paradise Now</u> were produced and released

were witnessing a gradual de-escalation in the conflict, characterized by the general war-

weariness of both populations. Alternating steps of progress and setback in the peace process

were made. On the side of progress, Mahmoud Abbas, a proven "partner in peace," was

appointed Palestinian Prime Minister by Arafat in 2002, and a Jewish settlement near the city of

Hebron was peacefully dismantled. For the first time, Sharon stated that the "occupation" of

Palestinian territories could not "continue endlessly." The details of the US Road Map for Peace

were released, and Arab leaders at an Egyptian summit announced their support of the plan,

promising to cease the funding of terrorist groups. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Fatah agreed to a

three-month ceasefire. However, a major setback occurred two months later, when Islamic Jihad

and Hamas claimed joint responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed twenty Israelis.

Mahmoud Abbas pledged a crackdown on militants, but was forced to resign his post when the

Palestinian Authority refused to lend its police support (MideastWeb).

In 2004, Arafat died at the age of 75 in a hospital near Paris. The International Court of

Justice ruled that Sharon's separation wall -- a security barrier that had been unilaterally erected

by the Israeli government to establish *de facto* state boundaries for both Israel and Palestine --

violated international law, and ordered it to be altered. The Israeli Supreme Court agreed, ruling

that portions were illegally erected on Palestinian lands. In 2005, Israel removed all Jewish

settlements and military equipment from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements.

Although this marked a major Israeli policy reversal, the Palestinians interpreted the

disengagement as a retreat due to the success of their violent resistance; consequently, they

increased terrorist activity to pressure Israel to disengage from the entire West Bank and East

Jerusalem. Mahmoud Abbas was elected President of the Palestinian National Authority, but he

postponed Palestinian legislative elections amid growing concern that the militant Hamas

political party would beat Abbas's moderate Fatah party in the elections (MideastWeb).

In 2006, Abu-Assad's Paradise Now received an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign

Film, apparently as a result of intense lobbying pressure from its American distributor, Warner

Independent Films. Although the film did not receive the Oscar prize, it scored an important

victory when introduced by actor Tim Robbins as a film from the Palestinian territories.

Unfortunately, the subject matter of the film came under condemnation from Arabs and Jews

alike, who gathered over 35,000 online signatures protesting the Oscar nomination and asking

for the film's removal from the competition. When the petition was delivered to the Academy

offices two days prior to the awards ceremony, a spokesperson was quoted as saying: "It would

be physically impossible [for disqualification] to happen between now and Sunday and beyond

that, we're not going to disqualify films because some people don't like the content" (Jablon).

The Oscar controversy is one of an array of opposing forces that had worked against the

production and recognition of Paradise Now. When the film was being shot during the Second

Intifada in Nablus -- an occupied city in the West Bank -- the cast and crew worked under

conditions that included tank maneuvers, gun battles, rocket attacks, land mine explosions, and

curfew regulations. After warring Palestinian political factions discovered that the films'

protagonists were two young suicide bombers, their competing rumors alternately vilified the

production as pro- or anti- suicide bombing, eventually culminating in the kidnapping of location

manager Hassan Titi by one group which demanded that the production leave Nablus. Abu-

Assad successfully appealed to Yasser Arafat to secure Titi's release, replenished a number of

vacated crew positions, and then moved the filming location to Nazereth and Tel Aviv to

complete the project (WarnerBros).

Director Eitan Gorlin encountered fewer problems while filming The Holy Land on

location in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Subsequently, however, he did experience difficulties in

justifying the content of his text, which pairs an ultra-Orthodox youth with a Russian non-Jewish

prostitute in an emotionally tense prodigal son love story. Initially, the Jerusalem Film Festival

rejected the inclusion of his film in its program, and following one US screening a Jewish

audience member "called him a plague worse than Arafat for the Jews" (Judell). Gorlin, who

was raised in an American orthodox family and emigrated to Israel with his parents as a

teenager, reports that his film has been well received in America by "young *yeshiva* students"

and "the Russian community in New York" (Savlov). Answering attacks regarding the subject

matter, he claims that many critics "are those who hold on to the image of 'The Holy Land'

regardless of the reality of what's going on" (TalkToday). Although Gorlin shares a similar

background with American Israeli director Joseph Cedar, his film has enjoyed superior American

distribution to Cedar's Favor and Campfire, while being virtually ignored by the Israeli Film

Academy and Israeli popular audiences, who have conversely showered Cedar with praise.

In the following section, it will be shown that the subject matter of The Holy Land is

clearly engaged in an inter-textual conversation with favored sociocultural topics of Israeli

filmmakers during this time period. However, it is Abu-Assad -- who has received the most

balanced recognition from Jewish and Arab audiences (whether of vilification or praise) -- whose

filmic narrative comes closest to an inter-textual conversation which crosses the boundaries of

the conflict.

2. Socio-Cultural Intertexuality

Keren Yedaya, Israeli writer-director of Or (Mon trésor) (2004): "I want to dedicate this film,

from the bottom of my heart, to all the people who are not free, to all those living in slavery. I

hope that with this prize [the Cannes Film Festival's Camera d'Or], we can construct a home

for all women who want to get out of prostitution. It's very difficult for me to say that because I

come from Israel and we are responsible for the slavery of 3 million Palestinians. I love Israel; I

love my country. But, please, there are many people in Israel who are fighting this occupation,

help them, help the Palestinians" (CannesFilm).

Dahna Abourahme, Palestinian writer-director of Until When (2004): "Set during the current

[Second] Intifada, this documentary follows four Palestinian families living in Dheisheh Refugee

Camp near Bethlehem. Fadi is thirteen and cares for his four younger brothers; the Hammash

family pass on the lessons of life with humor and passion; Sana is a single woman who endures

long commutes to do community work: and Emad and Hanan are a young couple trying to shield

their daughter from the harsh realities of the occupation. They talk about the past and discuss

their future with humor, sorrow, frustration, and hope" (FalafelDaddy).

The filmmakers Eitan Gorlin and Hany Abu-Assad are dialectically positioned in a

similar manner to the two sets of Israeli and Palestinian directors previously discussed in this

chapter -- Na'aman/Khleifi and Cedar/Suleiman -- in that Gorlin is a fledgling filmmaker, while

Abu-Assad is the most famous Palestinian director in the world. The Holy Land is Gorlin's first

and only film, while Paradise Now is Abu-Assad's fourth endeavor. On the one hand, The Holy

Land has been well received internationally, having won the Slamdance International Film

Festival Grand Jury Prize for Best Feature Film and the Avignon/New York Film Festival award

for Best Feature Film. On the other hand, Paradise Now has garnered a substantially larger

number of awards: the USA Golden Globe and USA National Board of Review Best Foreign

Language Film; the European Film Best Screenwriter; the Independent Spirit Best Foreign Film;

the Netherlands Film Festival Best Film and Best Editing; the Vancouver Film Critics Circle

Best Foreign Film; and the Amnesty International, Reader Jury, and Blue Angel awards at the

Berlin International Film Festival. In regards to the sociocultural themes that each director

shares with representative films of the same time period, both Gorlin and Abu-Assad engage in

inter-textual conversations with contemporaneous filmmakers. However, Gorlin is largely

invested in religious and immigrant issues that are easily divested from the conflict, while Abu-

Assad is both internalizing communal issues and externalizing the Palestinian political cause to a

global audience.

The sociocultural subject matter of Gorlin's film -- the influx of non-Jewish foreign

workers, among them Russian prostitutes -- resonates with previous Israeli releases such as Dan

Wolman's Foreign Sister (2000) as well as contemporaneous films such as Keren Yedaya's Or

(Mon trésor) (2004). Yedaya's narrative follows Or -- a Tel Aviv high school student -- who

unsuccessfully strives to prevent her mother from returning to a life of prostitution. The

filmmaker is a politically active supporter of ending the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and

implementing a Palestinian state. At Yedaya's Cannes Film Festival acceptance speech, she

likened the slavery of prostitution to the enslavement of Palestinian civilians under military law.

Gorlin's text likewise engages with a number of contemporaneous Israeli films that depict issues

relating to orthodox and ultra-orthodox Jewish families and their communities, among them

Giddi Dar's Ushpizin (2004) and Cedar's Campfire (2004).

In recent years, a number of Israeli films, such as Nurit Kaydar's and Erin Riklis's

Borders (2001), Ram Levi's Close, Closed, Closure (2002), and Yoav Shamir's Checkpoints

(2003), have joined Palestinian texts such as Dahna Abourahme's Until When (2004) in

coalescing around a visible, emotionally forceful icon of the West Bank and Gaza occupation --

the military checkpoints. Abourahme's film documents the story of Sanah Salameh, a mental

health project coordinator for Palestinian refugees in the Hebron area. Due to closures and

detours between Hebron and the Dheisheh Camp, Salameh's daily commute is oppressively

lengthened and distorted according to the whims of the Israeli military command.

Abu-Assad has consistently engaged with these iconic checkpoints in his films -- Ford

Transit (2002), Rana's Wedding (2002), and Paradise Now (2004) may all be categorized as

Roadblock movies. Using a blend of dramatic and documentary footage, Ford Transit chronicles

the journey of passengers in a public transportation van who are attempting to travel from

Ramallah to Jerusalem. Notably, Ford Transit is one of two Palestinian films -- along with

Muhammed Bakri's 1948 (1998) -- chosen by the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israeli

(ICCI) for its pilot project, "Understanding One Another: The Use of Film for Coexistence

Education" (discussed in Chapter Four). The ICCI study recommends the use of the Ford Transit

narrative for the purpose of aiding Israeli students in visualizing the effects that military

restrictions on freedom of movement have had on the economic, personal, and psychological

aspects of Palestinian civilian life.

Abu-Assad's Rana's Wedding fictionalizes the impact of the occupation on a young girl's

quest to locate her boyfriend in East Jerusalem and marry him within a ten-hour deadline. The

director challenges the power of the restrictive barriers by defiantly scripting Rana's marriage

ceremony at the site of the A-Ram Roadblock: "When the abnormality of barriers and occupation

becomes an everyday reality, normal things like love and marriage turn into fiction. This is life in

Palestine now. I wanted to challenge it through cinema" (Abu-Assad *Rana's Wedding:*

Director's Statement). Paradise Now continues the barrier theme with a tangential focus on the

futile absurdity of the checkpoints: In a series of roadblock encounters throughout the narrative,

the innocent Palestinian civilians are constantly being harassed and impeded by the checkpoint

soldiers, while the guilty suicide bombers entirely avoid the checkpoints when entering Tel Aviv

from Nablus. Paradise Now maximizes the internal-psychological impact of the roadblocks as

oppressive, humiliating, and confining; at the same time, the text minimizes the external-physical

impact of the roadblocks as effective deterrents to violent incursions over Israeli borders.

Both Gorlin and Abu-Assad have stated that the goal of their films is to enable the viewer

to experience varying sociocultural aspects of life in Israel/Palestine. Their texts are

authentically descriptive of specific segments of Israeli and Palestinian societies; however, the

dominant social issue of Holy Land is the impact of prostitution on Israeli culture, which is of

more peripheral concern than the dominant social issue of Paradise Now -- the impact of military

occupation on Palestinian culture. Comparing the use of ethnonationalist characterizations in

The Holy Land and Paradise Now, two similarities are prominent in the screenplays. Both texts

are driven by the ethnonationalist characteristics of two compatible male personas engaged in a

triangular relationship with a tragic female figure who destabilizes their dominant worldviews.

Both texts privilege the roles of photography and videography in mediating the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict through visual imagery. One glaring textual difference in the two

screenplays is Gorlin's somewhat superficial acknowledgement of the unpredictable incidence of

suicide bombings in Israel, as opposed to Abu-Assad's in-depth engagement with the underlying motivations of young male Palestinians who choose a suicidal path of resistance to the military occupation.

3. Ethno-national Textuality

Said, Palestinian suicide bomber in <u>Paradise Now</u>*: "A life without dignity is worthless. Especially when it reminds you day after day of humiliation and weakness…If you're alone, faced with this oppression, you must find a way to stop the injustice. They must understand that if there's no security for us, there'll be none for them either…Even worse, they've convinced the world and themselves that they are the victims. How can that be? How can the occupier be the victim? If they take on the role of oppressor and victim, then I have no other choice but to also be a victim and a murderer as well."*

Irit Linor, Israeli Film Critic: "And since all the participants in the film repeatedly emphasize that all peaceful Palestinian efforts at solving the problems of occupation and ethnic cleansing have failed, and that there is therefore no alternative but to conduct suicide 'operations,' the film's subtext suggests a solution to the problem: mass murder. And so we can rightly call <u>Paradise Now</u> *a Nazi film: it spins a thin thread of understanding for those who have resorted to desperate measures to solve the problem of the constant, unremitting evil of the Jews"*
 (Linor).

Sasha Sonsova, Russian prostitute in <u>The Holy Land</u>*: "Men in the Middle East are primitive, stupid. They treat women like dogs. I hope the Jews and Arabs kill each other until nobody left."*

Gorlin's and Abu-Assad's film share an authentic, realistic construction of archetypal characters in Israeli and Palestinian societies today. Their narratives revolve around three main

personas -- two men and one woman -- who represent conflicting ethnonationalist beliefs and traits. In Holy Land, the protagonist Mendy is an orthodox Jewish Israeli who has been straying from his religious studies in a desire to experience life outside of the strictures of his parents' worldview. Mendy arrives at The Love Boat nude bar in Tel Aviv, where he encounters Sasha, a Catholic Russian prostitute, and Mike, a non-religious Jewish American expatriate. Mendy immediately falls in love with Sasha, is fascinated by Mike's worldly charm, and is jealous of Mike's dual friendship-business relationship with Sasha. Hoping to fulfill his undefined longings, Mendy convinces his parents to allow him to study in Jerusalem. Instead of living at the *yeshiva*, he accepts room and board from Mike in exchange for working at Mike's bar. Mike's Place offers a mix of live music and English conversation, attracting an eccentric crowd of Arab, Christian, and Jewish visitors, recent immigrants, and long-time residents.

Mendy's character is autobiographically derived from Gorlin's personal background, and Mike's character is based on Gorlin's friend and employer -- a Canadian war photographer who owned a Jerusalem bar during the 1990s. According to Gorlin, Sasha's character is reflective of the "mosaic of Israel," which now includes 1,000,000 Russian immigrants, a portion of whom are engaging in underworld activities such as gambling and prostitution (TalkToday). Sasha personifies the practice of female slavery in Israel -- the owner of The Love Boat has paid her air passage from the Ukraine and is supporting her living in Tel Aviv in exchange for all the money she earns prostituting herself at The Love Boat every night. In order to prevent her from running away, her employer retains her Ukrainian passport.

As a result of their family backgrounds and life experiences, Mendy, Mike, and Sasha represent starkly divergent ethnonationalist beliefs. Mendy has been taught that Israel is God's holy land, Jerusalem is God's holiest city, and the purpose of life in the Holy Land is to study the

Torah and love God. Mike is a member of Jewish culture but does not adhere to Jewish religious beliefs. His experience as a war photographer has convinced him that Israel is a vibrant, complex, and dangerous place that is violently explosive; and he primarily views Jerusalem as an exciting nexus of ethnic cultures that is remote from American sensibilities and conducive to a bohemian lifestyle. Sasha disdains the holiness that enthralls Mendy and the volatility that attracts Mike. Within her foreign worldview, she enjoys the benefits of Mike's friendship and sees Mendy as a possible gateway to America, her desired destination.

Unlike Gorlin, Abu-Assad has not personally encountered people who personify the three main characters in Paradise Now. Said and Khaled are close friends who have lived their entire lives under military occupation in Nablus. Their freedom of movement has been so restricted that they have never breached the town's guarded perimeters other than to receive medical treatment at a nearby hospital. The major difference in social status between the two youths is that Said's father has been executed by Palestinian militants for his activities as a "collaborator" with the Israelis, while Khaled's father has been crippled by Israeli soldiers for his participation in the First *Intifada*. Suha, Said's love interest, was born in France and raised in Morocco. Her international upbringing and European education have imbued her with lofty ideals of nonviolent protest, as well as a realistic assessment of the inability of the Palestinians to overcome the powerful Israeli Defense Forces. Suha's high social status is a function of her position as the daughter of a leader of Palestinian resistance who was killed by the Israeli military. Her father's death has resulted in his family being accorded the highest honor of martyrdom in the Nablus hierarchy; however, she reports to Said that she would rather have her father's presence than his honor.

Even though Abu-Assad has neither lived in Nablus nor known any suicide bombers, his narrative feels intensely realistic, in part because of the careful research conducted by Abu-Assad and producer Bero Beyer over a period of six years. The co-writers' investigations included interviewing families and friends of suicide bombers who had succeeded in their missions, as well as reading official Israeli reports from cases where bombers had been foiled, arrested, and interrogated. In a series of interviews following the film's Oscar controversy, Abu-Assad claims that his research revealed that suicide bombers are neither "brainwashed automatons" nor "religious fanatics." Rather, they are humiliated young men whose "biggest motivation is the feeling of impotence" (Riding).

Abu-Assad calls himself a "'privileged Palestinian' for reasons of birth, class, and location" (Rich). However, he also recounts an episode in which he was humiliated by a soldier at the Kalandiya checkpoint near Jerusalem, and experienced an epiphany of understanding that caused him to empathize with a suicidal psychology of hatred and rage. "'I realized', Abu-Assad explains, 'that when a man systematically goes through such humiliation, he chooses to kill his own impotency'" (Riding). This realization has led Abu-Assad to argue that suicide bombing is not a terrorist act, but rather a "counter-terrorist act" in response to the "terrorism" of the Israeli military occupation (Hofstein). Wherever his personal sympathies lie, Abu-Assad dramatizes the conflicted relationship of Said, Khaled, and Suha through life or death scenarios that neither provide cavalier excuses nor definitive rationales for those who resort to suicide missions as a form of resistance to Israeli military occupation.

Although Gorlin's and Abu-Assad's topical contents are radically divergent, both directors acknowledge the power of photography and videography in mediating the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict. Abu-Assad punctuates <u>Paradise Now</u> with visual imagery that emphasizes the message proposed by the fictional narrative. Through Said's and Khaled's characters, Abu-Assad dramatizes the first task of a suicide bomber: to "perform" a martyr speech on videotape, following a pre-established set of procedures. With a Palestinian flag as a backdrop, the martyr wears a *keffiyah* draped over his shoulders like a prayer shawl. Holding an Uzi machine gun in one hand and a prepared speech in the other, he reads a religious/political/personal message. Additionally, the martyr is photographed for posterity and is assured that his family and friends will receive copies for display in their homes and businesses. Abu-Assad interjects wry humor when the video camera fails to properly record, and Khaled is instructed to "do a second take" of his speech.

Once Said and Khaled have videotaped their speeches and have had their photographs taken, they are clothed in their bomb vests and sent on their mission together. Unexpectedly, they become separated outside of Nablus. When Said returns to Nablus to search for Khaled, he encounters Suha, who insists -- to his dismay -- that they go together to repair his broken watch. While they are in the repair shop, Suha is shocked to see martyr videos for rent or purchase. Said's embarrassment is palpable, as he has just completed his own martyr video that has not yet been released. Suha becomes more disturbed when she learns that the martyr videos are shelved alongside of collaborator videos, which bear the taped confessions and recantations of traitorous actions by Palestinians prior to their execution by community militants. This ironically humorous scene is co-opted by the film's final scene of Suha, sadly viewing Said's martyr photograph and turning it face down on her kitchen table.

Gorlin's <u>Holy Land</u> also forefronts photography and videography in the filmic message, although in a less prevalent manner. Mike's Place is decorated with a selection of Mike's

photographs that are designed to establish an atmosphere of jovial camaraderie; the camera's eye

notices the photographs the first night Mendy arrives at the bar. When Mendy is waiting for

Mike to arrive home, he opens a desk drawer and finds a collection of pictures documenting the

violence between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians during the First *Intifada*. Mike

instructs Mendy: "Pictures -- they never lie. The powers that be, they thrive on lies. That's why

the only way to beat them is through the truth.'' Later in the narrative, the potential profitability

of home video productions is dramatically underscored when the sleazy owner of The Love Boat

agrees to give Sasha her passport in exchange for her participation in a pornographic film. The

practiced ease with which he videotapes her sexual degradation underscores the use of

videography to perpetuate the psychological dominance of power hierarchies, whether political,

sexual, or commercial. Mike's statements, while self-serving and clearly debatable, undeniably

emphasize the importance generally assigned to the visual image as a truth document.

In The Holy Land screenplay, Gorlin imbues Mike's Place with a relaxed atmosphere

where patrons can "bond over a beer" without dwelling on ethnic, religious, national, and social

distinctions. However, even though the bar is offered as a safe haven from the external conflict

(all guns are checked behind the counter), the jovial camaraderie of international bonhomie is

edged with desperate uncertainty and unanswered questions. Gorlin capitalizes on this

metaphorical seepage of desperation through his depiction of Razi, a Palestinian Israeli who is

one of the bar's regular patrons.

Razi earns his living by offering middleman services for a myriad of commercial

transactions between Arabs and Jews, from real estate to illegal drugs. Mike introduces him to

Mendy as "the only Arab I know who loves [Bob] Dylan." Razi's friendly, helpful demeanor is

connected to his anticipated business dealings; his priorities are obvious when he interrupts

social conversations to answer his two cell phones. When Mike becomes financially strapped, Razi offers to act as his middleman for a drug deal. The next day, Sasha and Mendy innocently accompany Razi and Mike to a Bedouin encampment outside of Jerusalem to purchase marijuana buds. Unwittingly, Mendy is drawn into a fatal series of encounters with a green backpack.

The first time the viewer sees the backpack, Razi is carrying it away from the Bedouin encampment. Mike hands Mendy the pack, saying, "I think it's better if you and Sasha go back to Jerusalem together. Me and Razi have a few more things to take care of." At that point, Mendy, Sasha, and the viewer are unaware that the pack is filled with marijuana buds. In the next scene, Mendy sets the pack down on the sidewalk while he assists Sasha into a taxi. Immediately, a woman starts screaming, "What's going on here? Whose bag is that?" Mendy claims the pack and the woman continues berating him: "What's wrong with you? Don't you realize you're in Jerusalem? I don't understand people like you!" She is referring to Israeli prohibitions against unattended packs and packages, which may contain terrorist explosives.

The woman's anger is based on internalized ethnonational assumptions that the parameters of the conflict commonly include terrorist bombs being detonated inside the city of Jerusalem. Mendy's apolitical upbringing has divorced him from this set of realities. Thus instructed, he continues on, delivering the pack to Mike's apartment. However, when Mike and Razi are unable to sell the drugs immediately, Mike asks Mendy to hide the pack in an abandoned village outside of Jerusalem. Again, the reason for the ruins is implicit in the history of the conflict: The Arab-Jewish wars resulted in the forced and/or voluntary exile of Palestinian residents from the countryside surrounding Jerusalem.

A few days later, Mike asks Mendy to accompany him to the hiding place in order to retrieve the pack. Presumably, Razi and Mike have succeeded in finding a buyer for the

marijuana. Mike brings the pack to Razi, who then takes it to a secluded place within the city proper. Setting the pack on the ground, Razi empties the marijuana buds and begins slitting the inside lining with a knife. He then extracts a small bomb device. This is the first time that the viewer realizes the backpack contains drugs *and* explosives. Razi opens the lid to a large wooden barrel, and an Arab boy pops up. Razi asks how he is doing and reminds him that this is the most sacred day of his life. The implication is that the boy has been recruited as a suicide bomber, and Razi is the boy's handler.

Meanwhile, back at Mike's apartment, Mendy and Sasha are in the process of ending their relationship. Sasha wants to marry Mendy, who is half-American, and leave together for the US, away from her prostituted life and Mendy's religious family. Mendy distrusts Sasha's motives and convinces himself that she does not love him and is using him to escape the slavery of prostitution. Shedding tears, Mendy packs his suitcase and boards a bus to return to his parents' home. In the final scene, the Palestinian boy follows Mendy onto the bus -- an unstated, silent explosion occurs off-screen.

The denouement of the film is completely unexpected and shocks the viewer. In one interpretation, Gorlin is sensationalizing the act of the suicide bombing in a superficial manner. However, this interpretation is somewhat weakened by the fact that a terrorist bomb did actually explode and kill patrons in a Tel Aviv bar named Mike's Place after the filming of The Holy Land was completed, and multiple suicide bombers have targeted Jerusalem buses over the years of the conflict. The actualities of the conflict do encompass the possibility of bomb explosions as an ever-present threat to the Israeli civilian population. A second interpretation is that the bomb is a literary metaphor for Mendy's inability to return to his former religious, structured existence. Possibly, Gorlin intends both interpretations to be considered by the viewer.

Nevertheless, in attempting to maintain the element of surprise (which can be analogized to the surprise of the bus bombing victims themselves), Gorlin fails to adequately develop the rationale for Razi's involvement in subversive politics, and likewise fails to establish the justification for Razi's involvement in activities that clearly jeopardize a livelihood based on his trustworthiness as an Arab-Jewish middleman.

Unlike Gorlin's peripheral treatment of suicide bombings, Abu-Assad's film forefronts the issue. In personal interviews, Abu-Assad has sided with Israeli and Palestinian critics who have been maintaining that the victim-perpetrator paradigm -- a hallmark of the dominant Israeli security worldview -- is an insurmountable obstacle in achieving desired Israeli national goals. Arguing that a mindset of "us against them" will inevitably further the hostilities and endanger Israeli security, Abu-Assad advocates the slogan: "A secure Israel is achieved through a secure Palestine." The path to peaceful co-existence exists through a strengthening of common desires for lives that are free from violent attacks. Thus, Abu-Assad has referred to the actions of Israeli soldiers against Palestinian civilians as "terrorist" conduct which directly precipitates the "anti-terrorist" conduct of suicide bombers. This ethnonational rationale is epitomized through Said's declaration in Paradise Now: "They must understand that if there's no security for us, there'll be none for them either."

In Abu-Assad's screenplay, Suha represents the voice of reason. Having been raised in the diaspora, she has not personally experienced the restrictive, humiliating effects of military occupation over the course of her entire life, as have Said and Khaled. Furthermore, having received educational opportunities that were unavailable to Nablus residents and refugees, she is able to comprehend a macro viewpoint that is largely disassociated from the micro viewpoint held by Said and Khaled. While she identifies socioculturally as a Palestinian, she has not been

indoctrinated with the same ethnonational beliefs held by those Palestinian civilians living under Israeli occupation. Because she is romantically attracted to Said, her worldview is communicated through a series of conversations with him alone. However, her insistence that Palestinians have alternatives to engaging in an endless cycle of violence and revenge conflicts with Said's ethnonationalist indoctrinations regarding the futility of ending the occupation by peaceful means, coupled with his life experience of being treated like a caged animal. Said's declaration, "Life here is like life imprisonment," is a summary of his worldview.

The strengthening linchpin in Said's desire to die as a suicide bomber is his inferior status in Palestinian society as the son of a collaborator. Suffering under a double inferiority -- to the Israeli soldiers and their Palestinian resisters -- Said is unable to comprehend Suha's position. He attributes her privileged worldview to her social status as the daughter of a martyr and her economic status as the owner of a Nablus residence, and concludes that his double inferiority prevents him from sharing a life with her. Unlike Sasha, whose Ukrainian passport gives her the option of marrying Mendy and escaping to the US, Said is a passport-less refugee who has no possibility of marrying Suha and leaving Nablus or of entering another country.

After Said and Khaled become separated and while they are still clothed in their bomb vests, Suha discovers that the two friends are involved in a suicide mission. Reacting hysterically, she joins Khaled in searching for Said, hoping that she can dissuade both of them from carrying out their plans. As they are driving the streets of Nablus and circumventing various roadblocks, Suha engages in a heated argument with Khaled:

'Why are you doing this?'

'If we can't live as equals, at least we'll die as equals.'

'And if you kill and die for equality, you should be able to find a way to be equal in life.'

'How? Through your human rights group?'

'For example! Then at least the Israelis won't have an excuse to keep on killing.'

'Don't be so naïve. There can be no freedom without struggle. As long as there is

injustice, someone must make a sacrifice.'

'That's no sacrifice! That's revenge! If you kill, there's no difference between victim

and occupier.'

'One chooses bitterness when the alternative is even more bitter.'

Although Khaled does not ostensibly weaken in his viewpoint during the argument with Suha, he

quietly begins an internal questioning of his motives and enters into an examination of the

possibility of alternatives to their suicide mission. When Khaled finally finds Said lying next to

his father's grave, they both return to their handlers for debriefing. At that point, they are given

a choice of continuing with the mission or of returning to their homes. Khaled decides to return

to his home, while Said decides to continue the mission. Khaled unsuccessfully attempts to

dissuade Said from his goal, mimicking Suha's arguments:

'We kill and are killed, and nothing changes.'

'Not our death, but the continuation of resistance will change something. I have

no other option.'

'And if it doesn't change anything? Answer me. There are other means of

liberation and resistance.'

'Perhaps for others.'

Said is determined, with fatalistic finality, to carry out the operation. Eluding Khaled's efforts at

prevention, he boards a Tel Aviv bus filled with laughing young Israeli soldiers. In a mirrored

ending with <u>The Holy Land</u>, there is a silent, off-screen explosion as Said detonates his bomb vest.

During the course of <u>Paradise Now</u>, the viewer remains uncertain whether the two young men will "successfully" carry out the operation. However, the film's ending does not surprise or shock the viewer as it does in <u>The Holy Land</u>. Throughout the screenplay, Abu-Assad artfully lays the groundwork for Said's final decision and carefully scripts the opposing arguments through Suha's character, providing a flawed but comprehensible ethnonationalist rationale for Said's divergence from Khaled's ultimate rejection of their joint suicide mission. In a balanced and honest representation of the different political factions in Palestinian society and their respective positions in the ethnonationalist hierarchy, Abu-Assad attempts to trigger an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue that is based in a rejection of the victim-perpetrator paradigm as the defining rationale of the conflict. However, Abu-Assad's public statements and his filmic narrative support the worldview that Said's actions are a justified response to Israeli "terrorism," which alienates potential Israeli allies who oppose the military occupation, thus militating against the dialogue he ostensibly is encouraging. Apparently, Abu-Assad's even-handedness does not extend to any validation of the Israeli security rationale for the necessity of its occupation of Palestinian towns. Herein lies the greatest barrier against utilizing the vast majority of Israeli and Palestinian films for encouraging dialogue between the two groups -- despite the filmmakers' "best" intentions at even-handedness, they inevitably privilege adversarial ethnonational worldviews, thus antagonizing potential partners for future dialogic conversations and peacebuilding activities.

Cinematic Narratives and the Construction of Ethnonationalist Barriers to Peacebuilding

The foregoing homologic textual analyses of these six mainstream films have demonstrated how the Palestinian and Israeli cinemas have contributed to the promotion of ethnonational imaginaries that have aided in fueling the ongoing conflict. Although all of the six films present richly nuanced portrayals of various sociocultural aspects of their respective producing societies, they lapse into reification of the enemy Other in their personifications of out-group characters. The cinematic stumbling blocks are invariably constructed along ethnonationalist boundaries that are largely impervious to attempts at cross-cultural communication.

Tangentially, each text advances a number of direct characterizations and discourse in conjunction with indirect symbolism and metaphor as modes for conveying less confrontational avenues of Palestinian-Israeli co-existence: Suha's character in <u>Paradise Now</u> represents the Palestinian voice of reason; Mike's Bar in <u>Holy Land</u> is a "demilitarized zone" where Arabs, Christians, and Jews can socialize in safety; Pini's character in <u>Time of Favor</u> removes the spotlight from Muslim terrorists by depicting a Jewish religious extremist; the friendship of Bauman and Phares in <u>Flying Camel</u> envisions Israelis and Palestinians in personal and business relationships; the dream sequences in <u>Divine Intervention</u> and <u>Tale of Three Jewels</u> introduce alternative mental/emotional responses to the daily realities of physical violence. However, none of the texts seriously engages in a "neighborly reconciliation" or a "peaceful co-existence" worldview. Na'aman utilizes comedic caricature to even-handedly ridicule all of his characters, including the Israeli protagonist and his Palestinian helper. However, the plot is focalized from the Israeli point of view, and the neighborly reconciliation that does finally occur is mainly attached to the Israeli's goals rather than to the Palestinian's desires. Mike's Bar -- the "safe" haven in Gorlin's narrative -- is frequented by fanatics of all backgrounds who pretend to be

friendly while plotting each other's demise. Abu-Assad's character, Suha, argues against the use of violence, but does not vigorously promote neighborly reconciliation. Additionally, her main rationale is practical, not moral: She reasons that violence is futile because the Israeli military is more powerful than Palestinian resistance. Cedar's character Pini attempts to destroy a Muslim holy shrine -- his terrorist act is tied to a major dispute in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The dream sequences in <u>Divine Intervention</u> and <u>Tale of Three Jewels</u> all depict innocent Palestinian civilians magically triumphing over the evil Israeli military establishment.

Each of the six mainstream films en-textualizes Nadim Rouhana's and Daniel Bar-Tal's four "coping mechanisms" that have become codified into societal beliefs during the years of conflict: "Our goals are just. The opponent has no legitimacy. We can do no wrong. We are the victims" (765). Nor do they mount substantial efforts to counteract their respective populations' psychological motivations toward "biased selection of information,..biased interpretation [and] biased elaboration" in order to justify "a favorable self-image and a diabolical enemy image" (Rouhana and Bar-Tal 766). None of the texts considers the complex issues involved in the repatriation and/or reconciliation of the refugee and exiled Palestinians within Israeli society as it is constructed today. By embracing popular discourses that have contributed to the intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these films have served to strengthen sociopolitical ideologies of ethnonationalism.

It may be argued that it is inappropriate for national cinema texts to promote peacebuilding mediations between two warring populaces. Rather, they fulfill their purpose when they artfully chip away at various ethnocultural foibles that characterize their respective *intra-group* dynamics while making some attempt to present competing *inter-group* narratives in a less confrontational manner. All of the six texts succeed -- some more and some less -- in these regards, as discussed

in the previous sections of this chapter. However, given the historical and political contextualization of the films within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is not unfair to ask the question: What alternative worldviews might these mainstream films have presented in order to support a re-mediation of the conflict and/or to encourage nonviolent communication between members of the two groups?

As cultural texts for the framing of political issues, the construction of national narratives, and the reinforcement of collective memories, every Israeli and Palestinian film positions itself along a continuum of possible worldviews. Their rhetorical strategies can range from complete denials of existence of the other group, to hostile expressions of animosity, to stereotypical victim-perpetrator depictions, to characterizations of cold mistrust and/or ridicule, to the advocacy of tolerant acceptance, to the promotion of neighborly reconciliation, to the envisioning of peaceful co-existence. The filmmakers' cultural and political allegiances are visually communicated through their artistic choices in thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse.

Of the Israeli texts evaluated in this chapter, the primary position of the three directors is an allegiance to the "denial of existence" worldview. Na'aman's film takes a secondary position of promoting tolerant attitudes towards "inside" Palestinians (but lacks an acknowledgment of the plight of the refugee and exilic Palestinians). Cedar's film takes a secondary position of hostile expressions of animosity towards the enemy Other, but transcodes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into a religious Jew/secular Jew conflict. Gorlin's films takes a secondary position of ridiculing the effect of personal choices by exposing the follies of Israelis who believe that either mistrustful or tolerant attitudes can have any effect on the parameters of the conflict. Gorlin's

narrative then defaults to a fatalistic message that the conflict is what unexpectedly happens to Israelis as they go about their daily lives.

Of the Palestinian texts evaluated in this chapter, the primary position of the three directors is an allegiance to stereotypical victim-perpetrator narratives. Synchronously, all three directors hold secondary allegiances to hostile animosities, as characterized through discourses of ridicule or fantasy. Khleifi's film villainizes the Israeli soldiers who shoot an innocent boy; however, the boy's fantasy life resurrects his physical body. Suleiman's film silently ridicules the Israeli soldiers who are powerless to stop a determined Palestinian woman; their sophisticated weapons of warfare are fantasized as being magically capsized into heaps of rubble. Abu-Assad's film ridicules the effectiveness of Israeli roadblocks in preventing suicide bombers from crossing into Israel proper; his "outside" Palestinian protagonist justifies his supremely hostile act as a counter-terrorist response to the terrorism of the Israeli occupation. None of the directors has constructed overt representations of alternative worldviews that portray neighborly reconciliation and/or peacebuilding collaborations of Israelis with the "inside" and "outside" Palestinians -- although, in reality, these types of collaboration occur on a daily basis.

The conclusions reached through the foregoing homologic textual analyses bring us to the question: What are the defining criteria for identifying an appropriate film text that can be used for re-mediating the conflict and promoting dialogue between the two populations? In order to arrive at "best practices" criteria for defining the qualities of such film texts, the following chapter will present a historic overview of Palestinian-Israeli dialogue interventions that have demonstrably succeeded in re-mediating the conflict. Chapter Five will then examine the procedural and psychological obstacles to dialogue interventions that have traditionally resulted from failures to confront issues of power, identity, and discourse. The evaluation of those "best

practices" qualities, coupled with an identification of "cautionary tales" criteria from the unsuccessful strategies, will then be applied to arriving at a decision-making process for selecting, evaluating, and applying film texts to facilitate dialogue in Track II peacebuilding interventions.

In Chapter Six, these defining criteria will be used to enliven the homologic textual analyses of three peacebuilding films that were produced or screened during the time periods that have been bracketed in Chapter Three's pairing of mainstream Palestinian and Israeli films. Specifically, the peacebuilding films will be canvassed for their adherence to dialogic principles of production design, thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse. Finally, proposals will be made for identifying and utilizing popular and peacebuilding films within established and/or future programs of dialogic communication for the purpose of maximizing their potential transformative effects on the peaceful resolution of the external conflict.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSFORMING THE CONFLICT: DIALOGIC INTERVENTIONS

AS PEACEBUILDING MEDIATIONS

For the past thirty-five years, the influence of Track II dialogic interventions has been an ever-present, yet subdued, counterpoint to the vociferous clamoring of vengeful violence, hysterical grief, and fear-filled justifications that have characterized the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many different stakeholders, with an array of secular and religious worldviews, have invested their time and expertise in promoting nonviolent means of confronting the issues that have proven impervious to Track I diplomacy. The mainstream media, which has largely ignored the existence of Track II peacebuilding mediations, has traditionally emphasized the failures of Track I diplomacy by focusing its news coverage on violent events. Despite a lack of public acclaim, dialogue interventions have continued to be designed, attended, studied, and improved upon by politicians, academicians, and community leaders who believe that nonviolent communication can lead to peaceful resolutions of historic enmities.

This chapter will examine the historical patterns of peacebuilding dialogue interventions between Jews/Israelis and Arabs/Palestinians -- both the secular and religious models -- with a focus on theoretical design and practical procedures. Drawing upon the most prominent Israeli and Palestinian research findings, it will present a sampling of the stronger, more successful, ongoing dialogue models within the political, academic, and community realms, and will characterize the theoretical justifications for the experiential frameworks of each. Chapter Five

will then delineate the "cautionary tales" revealed in the problems experienced by some of the less successful dialogue models. In Chapter Six, lessons learned from these Track II interventions will be extrapolated for proposing how Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilding films may be most effectively crafted to communicate dialogically with their audiences.

In the first section below, three of the most prominent *secular* dialogue models -- the political workshops of Herbert Kelman and Nadim Rouhana, the educational workshops at the Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam School for Peace, and the grassroots Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum -- will be examined. In the second section, three of the most successful *religious* dialogue models -- the 2002 Alexandria meeting of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land, the academic workshops of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI), and the community programs at the House of Hope's Sulha Peace Project -- will be described.

While each of the secular and religious programs differs as to its longevity, mandate, and target audience, all of the projects share certain characteristics which contribute to their sustainability. They exhibit a quest for parity in the numbers and status of the designers, administrators, and participants of the programs. They are scrupulously co-directed by representatives from the groups participating in the dialogues. Their directors have researched the models that have previously existed and have carefully incorporated the lessons learned from past mistakes. Their designers are willing to buttress dialogue formats with experimental forms of visual communication, social interaction, and cultural collaboration. Most importantly, the projects all share the goal of transforming the parameters of the conflict to support nonviolent methods of reaching peaceful resolutions.

Dialogue Interventions: Three Secular Models

1. A Palestinian-Israeli Political Workshop Model

Nadim Rouhana and Herbert Kelman, co-facilitators of the Program for International Conflict

at the Harvard Center for International Affairs (1994): "Workshops enable the parties to

penetrate each other's perspective, gaining insight into the other's concerns priorities, and

constraints… They contribute to the development of shared visions of a desirable future…They

may generate ideas about the shape of a positive-sum solution that meets the basic needs of both

parties. They may also generate ideas about how to get from here to there -- about a framework

and set of principles for getting the negotiations started. Ultimately, problem-solving workshops

help begin a process of transformation of the relationship between enemies" (174-75).

Beginning in the early 1970s, Herbert Kelman's discussion groups were the first attempts at Track II dialogic interventions into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, then known as the Arab-Jewish conflict. Initially designed as one-time events taking place within an academic university setting, the model gradually evolved into ongoing "interactive problem-solving workshops" which were theorized as co-joining psychological theories of group processes with political science theories of conflict resolution ("Problem-Solving," "Overcoming," "Acknowledging," "Social-Psychological," "Group," "Building," "Interdependence," "Transforming," "Reconciliation," "Contributions"). Kelman hoped that "a task-oriented, analytical approach" to the workshops would be able to counteract the "accusatory, legalistic, and conflict-expressive atmosphere that usually characterizes interactions between conflicting parties" ("Problem-Solving" 79). The new political model drew on the work of John Burton (Deviance, Conflict) and Leonard Doob (Resolving), who had applied social-psychological approaches to the field of international relations. The goal for third-party interventions would be to enable participants to

set aside prejudices on the *personal* level in order to lay the foundations for peace negotiations on a *policy* level.

By the 1980s Kelman had refined his thinking on the dialogue model and was actively engaged in promoting an ongoing healing process between Israeli and Palestinian workshop participants. Calling his work "political psychology," Kelman had begun to focus on shared assumptions of national identities that were not being recognized by either party to the conflict. He identified a "zero-sum view" that was being held by the two national movements, both claiming the same land as their exclusive homeland:

> Each party perceives the very existence of the other -- the other's status
>
> as a nation -- to be a threat to its own existence and status as a nation…
>
> In their very different ways, both have lived on the edge of national
>
> oblivion...Each party feels that the ultimate intention of the other is to
>
> destroy it -- in fact, that its destruction is *inherent* in the other's ideology
>
> …Each party's need for assurances about its continued national existence
>
> is probably *the* central issue in the conflict...This issue is directly linked to
>
> what I see as the psychological core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
>
> ("Overcoming" 19, 20).

Kelman's recognition of an ideological pattern of mutual denial as the core issue of the conflict came during the period when Palestinians had begun labeling Zionism as a racist ideology, and Israelis had begun labeling the Palestinian Liberation Organization as a terrorist organization that threatened the security of the state of Israel. This "rhetoric of delegitimization" (21) towards each group's nationalist movement had the effect of increasing each party's fear of the other, of

communicating non-acceptance of each other's right to exist, and of providing justification to the international community for refusal to become negotiating partners.

By the mid-1980s, Kelman's antidote to the delegitimizing rhetoric had become the goal of eliciting "mutual recognition of the other's right to national self-determination on the land they both claim" (23). He proposed to accomplish this goal through continuing dialogue groups that engaged in a pre-negotiation process of unofficial diplomacy. These unofficial groups would ostensibly establish the fertile soil for official diplomatic negotiations to take root. Workshop participants would be carefully balanced with representatives selected from a pool of politically influential community leaders from both sides. These would include journalists, editors, professors, teachers, government advisors, and lower-level diplomats -- those who had the requisite personal motivation and public credibility to participate in a joint process that was aimed at producing concrete proposals for policy change ("Building").

Throughout the 1990s, Kelman extended the concept of a carefully balanced workshop design to include the group leaders as well as the group participants. Together with Nadim Rouhana (Palestinian, "Reconciliation"; Rouhana and Kelman; Rouhana and Fiske; Rouhana and Korper; Rouhana and Bar-Tal), who initially joined him as a doctoral candidate and later as a colleague from the Department of Psychology at Boston College, Kelman founded the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Harvard's Center for International Affairs. Rouhana co-chaired an academic seminar on International Conflict with Kelman at Harvard University and also began to co-facilitate the unofficial political discussions between the Israelis and Palestinians. By the time that Track I diplomatic talks were being held at Madrid in 1991, the Kelman-Rouhana workshops had become an incubator for "important substantive inputs into the negotiations" (Kelman, "Building" 215). When key members of a negotiating team that

authored the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords were tapped from the list of workshop participants, the unoffical process became convergent with the offical one (Rouhana and Kelman).

Rouhana and Kelman relate that the ongoing interactive workshops created a "political environment conducive to negotiations through the development of de-escalatory language based on sensitivity to words that frighten or humiliate and words that reassure the other party" (174). Through the practice of symbolic acknowledgments of each other's humanity, the group participants became less distrustful on the individual level and gradually became less fearful of acting conciliatorily on the group level. The goal of "mutual recognition of the other's nationhood and humanity"(Kelman, "Building" 37) was in fact accomplished in 1993 when Rabin and Arafat signed the Oslo Accords and the Declaration of Principles (DOP), establishing Palestinian self-rule over Gaza and Jericho. While the DOP did not guarantee an independent Palestinian state in the future, it did mark a fundamental shift in the past refusals of the PLO and the Israeli government to officially recognize each other as legitimate negotiating partners.

Kelman and Rouhana believe that the 1993 Accords were reached, in part, because the dialogue workshops had helped to develop cadres of leaders who had previously shared information, formulated new ideas, and were psychologically prepared to invoke a new political relationship. The interactive problem-solving groups, which had been unofficially engaged in peacebuilding efforts, served to develop a state of positive interdependence between the two peoples. This *micro*-process tended to counteract the state of negative interdependence that had characterized the previous *macro*-process attempts at official conflict resolution (Rouhana and Kelman).

Anecdotal evidence from group participants in the Track II workshops and the Track I negotiations have supported claims that the dialogic interventions maintained by Kelman and his

colleagues over the previous twenty years did exert a direct influence on the reconciliatory accomplishments of the Oslo Accords. The Kelman-Rouhana formula first aided in building new attitudes of empathy, inclusion, and respect within private settings. Then, in a fortuitous confluence -- a moment of ripeness -- these attitudes were directly translated into diplomatic agreements at the Track I level. In this sense, the political dialogue groups have been successful in their effect on the larger system by creating a peaceful coalition across lines of conflict (Kelman "Interdependence").

Subsequently, Israeli and Palestinian group participants who have since risen to positions of political power within their respective governments have maintained respectful and often cordial relationships with each other. However, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is far from resolved, and dreams of a two-state solution remain frustratingly unrealizable at the Track I level. Many participants in peacebuilding efforts are focusing their energies on the younger generation, reasoning that academic encounter models will help to move the two groups away from fearful stereotyping into cross-cultural relationships. The robust dialogue program at the School for Peace is described in the following sub-section.

2. A Palestinian-Israeli Academic Encounter Model

Rabah Halabi and Nava Sonnenschein, past directors of the School for Peace at Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam (2004): "Although the interactions and processes we are investigating in the meetings are at the group level, the changes in the end are individual…Because reality is asymmetrical, however, the change is not the same, not identical, for everyone. The Jews, as the dominant majority group, must cope throughout this encounter with being the rulers, with their feelings of superiority, with their patronizing attitudes -- as against their desire to be liberal and egalitarian and humane. The Arabs, as the weaker group, must cope throughout the encounter

with being oppressed, with their feelings of inferiority, with the internalization of their

oppression -- as against their desire to be free of that oppression and their aspiration for true

equality. It would seem that everyone must change, if in a different direction; indeed the

changing must be shared by both sides if they are to break free of the situation of oppression in

which both are partners, albeit from different sides of the barricade" ("Awareness" 53).

The School for Peace (SFP), which has been in operation since 1979, was formed as an

ideological arm of Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam, the first intentional Arab-Jewish cooperative

community in Israel. Initially envisioned as a forum for "peaceful coexistence" education, the

School joined a roster of bi-partisan programs funded by various worldwide nongovernmental

organizations, as well as the Israeli government. After struggling for approximately twenty years

with the coexistence model, the SFP facilitators subsequently altered their programs to more

adequately address two core issues that had been hampering the success of the workshops: the

failure of each group to grant legitimacy to the other, and the determination of each group to

maintain power control over the other (see Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman). The SFP staff

and leadership have found that the goals of the coexistence education model -- promoting mutual

understanding, reducing stereotypes, fostering tolerance, and enabling the formation of positive

inter-group attitudes -- have failed to acknowledge the asymmetrical power dynamics between

the two groups and their constituents (see also Abu-Nimer Dialogue, "Education"; Maoz

"Multiple," "Power," "Coexistence").

The theoretical grounding for coexistence education has traditionally been rooted in two

streams of social psychological research: contact hypothesis and inter-group psychology. At the

optimum level, coexistence models have attempted to incorporate Gordon Allport's checklist of

favorable conditions for inter-group contact leading to a reduction of prejudiced attitudes

(Nature), while simultaneously adhering to Yehuda Amir's caveats against unfavorable

conditions that may inadvertently strengthen interethnic prejudices or foster new negative

attitudes between individual group members (Contact). However, the goal of promoting

encounters that ameliorate rather than exacerbate existing interpersonal attitudes and

relationships has experienced uneven success in the SFP workshops over the past decades,

primarily due to the political ideologies enmeshed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see R.

Suleiman "Planned"; Halabi "Introduction").

According to Halabi, the current director of SFP, a confrontational approach that

acknowledges the existence of the asymmetrical power dynamics operant between the stateless

Palestinians and the stated Israelis provides a more direct avenue to effective dialogue. He

reports that in negotiating this type of ethnonational conflict, it is most efficacious to yoke the

construction of Palestinian national identity to its validation by the Israeli Other, and vice versa:

> After considerable trial and error, we created an approach to this work
>
> that sees the encounter as one between two national identities; the goal
>
> is to examine and construct one's own identity through the encounter
>
> with the other. The utopian alternative would have been to build bridges
>
> beyond nationality and aspire to a universal human society; this approach,
>
> alas, does not work in reality…Our considerable accumulated experience
>
> on the subject indicates that only when the Arab group becomes strong,
>
> shaking off the sediment of inferiority feelings and uprooting the internalized
>
> oppression, can it also help the Jewish group to free itself from being the
>
> oppressor; the ensuing dialogue between the two groups is more authentic
>
> and egalitarian ("Introduction" 8).

Halabi explains that while the cooperative approach to dialogue workshops has been constantly undermined by the groups' competitive struggles over "who is more humane" and "who is more victimized," a confrontational approach that forefronts the issues of political oppression and competing historical narratives has enabled the groups to arrive at stances of mutual recognition prior to attempting to communicate dialogically. By creating a safe space for confronting violent events that are occurring in the outside world, the SFP encourages participants to critically re-examine assumptions that they have previously taken for granted and to broaden their perspectives. Primarily targeted for high school and university students, the programs have also been extended to adults who are teachers, professors, administrators, and group facilitators. To date, over 35,000 people have participated in these dialogue encounters (SFPeace About Us).

As the SFP dialogue model has been revised and developed, it has become more closely correlated with the Kelman-Rouhana problem-solving workshops. At the present time, the School's three-day, small-group workshops for high school students are constructed around a simulated negotiation process directed toward the future relations of Arab and Jewish Israeli citizens. The students are aided in drafting a set of joint principles which attempt to address such issues as the definition of Israel as a Jewish state, the existence of a Law of Return, the observance of Israeli ceremonies and holidays, the promotion of official bilingualism, and the provision of equal access to political processes for Arabs and Jews. Additional similarities to the interactive workshops are the School's emphases on recognizing the importance of group and national identities, and on assuming that a humane macro-society can be co-constructed through of a process of ongoing dialogic micro-encounters (About Us).

Over the years, as the joint Jewish-Palestinian decision-making body of the School for Peace has studied and reported on their programs' successes and failures, they have altered their

design structure to bring their workshops more in alignment with the sociopolitical realities of

the external conflict (Halabi and Sonnenschein "Awareness"). This focus is consistent with their

assumption that the small group is a microcosm of reality, and that all elements of the whole

society are manifested in varying ways within the individual members of that society (Halabi and

Sonnenschein "Jewish-Palestinian").

Most recently, Halabi and Sonnenschein ("Jewish-Palestinian") have identified five

stages in the SFP workshop encounters. These stages are an expansion of earlier findings by

Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman ("Israeli-Palestinian"), and are also reported in Halabi,

Sonnenschein, and Friedman ("Liberate"). The first stage is a time of initial exploration and

declaration of intent, where the participants exhibit "good manners" and emphasize their

common humanity. However, this stage is invariably marked by a crucial difference in the intent

of the Jewish and Arab participants. The Jews seek to establish social relationships and

friendships with individual Arabs, while attempting to ignore the power realities outside the

group encounter. The Arabs are focused on their plight as an oppressed minority in the larger

society, and are primarily interested in finding Jewish advocates for their problems with the

Israeli government. This important discrepancy in the first stage of encounter has been

documented in numerous other Jewish-Arab dialogic encounters (see Abu-Nimer "Education for

Coexistence in Israel," "Education for Coexistence and Arab-Jewish Encounters"; J. Kuttab;

Rabinowitz; Zupnick).

During the second stage, the Arabs will initiate a consolidation into national groups,

becoming less individualistic and presenting a more collective front. They will assertively attack

the Jewish definition of an Israeli state and demand equal rights for all citizens. The Jews are

thus put on the defensive, and react by uniting collectively to counteract the Arab threats. At this

stage, the participants' dilemmas between personal expression and collective unity will often be negotiated within separately held uni-national group meetings (Sonnenschein and Hijazi). During the uni-national meetings, group members are able to disagree among themselves without appearing weak or divided in front of the opposing group. When they return to the jointly attended bi-national meetings, they are able to maintain a stronger, united stance.

In the third stage, the Jews will launch a counterattack that justifies their dominance over the Arabs, arguing for the moral superiority of the Jews, and extolling the benevolence of Jewish society. In contrast, they will challenge the humanity of the Arabs, criticizing the corruption, ineptitude, and violence of Arab society. The Arabs will stand firm in their solidarity, refusing to be disempowered or to be acquiescent as the "good minority." The fourth stage, which is the longest, results in a deadlock of anger, frustration, tension, and arguments. This deadlock is broken when the Jewish group begins to recognize that its majority national group, as represented by the Israeli government and military, has historically oppressed the Palestinian national group. At this point, an acknowledgment by the Palestinians of the Jews' victimhood as a result of the Holocaust can greatly expedite the movement into the fifth stage of dialogic communication (see Abu-Nimer; Halabi Dialogue). The final stage is marked by an open discussion based upon mutual recognition and respect. Having gained the acknowledgment they have sought from each other, the groups will become less defensive and collective-oriented, and the participants are then able to relate to each other as individuals who seek social relationship and friendship.

The School for Peace approach has been critically lauded by Arabs and Jews as the finest example of a bi-partisan educational program in existence, and it has been recognized for its important contributions to dialogue and peacebuilding interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict. As a privately funded organization, it has been able to avoid many of the pitfalls encountered by public school coexistence programs funded and controlled by the Israeli Ministry of Education (discussed in Chapter Five). In the sub-section below, the final secular model is described -- a bi-partisan community group with a history of crossover access into both the political and academic arenas.

3. An Israeli-Palestinian Community Model

Riyad Faraj, Palestinian member of the Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum (2005): "It was the first time in my life that I met, sat with, and listened to an Israeli that was suffering like me. I used to hear on the news or from friends who worked for Israelis about how Israelis had lost a family member. This was the first time I experienced seeing an Israeli emotionally touched by knowing that I had lost someone and so had he, and he was willing to sit with a Palestinian who felt the same way" (JustVision Portraits).

Ayelet Shahak, Israeli member of the Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum (2005): "The most interesting thing is to read the students' feedback [following school presentations by Arab-Jewish teams from the Bereaved Families Forum]. The students write that we confuse them, that we give them new information to think about, that we provide another point of view, that we change their minds, that we give them hope" (JustVision Portraits).

The Bereaved Families Forum is the operational apparatus of the Parents' Circle organization. During the ten years of the Forum's existence, about 500 Israeli and Palestinian families have joined this grassroots dialogue group. These families share two commonalities: they have lost an immediate family member as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and they accept the operating principles of the organization -- reconciliation and peaceful coexistence through dialogue and mutual understanding. Through its internal operations, the

Forum provides opportunities for members to establish and maintain supportive relationships on a personal level. Through its external operations, the Forum publicly promotes a peaceful political settlement, an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian villages, and a mutual respect for Arab and Jewish national aspirations. Its public activities include political lobbying, professional conferences, educational lectures and seminars, media events, community projects, press releases, written publications, and documentary films (Parents' Circle About Us).

Often, the members of various Arab-Jewish community dialogue groups have encountered difficulties in maintaining robust internal relationships when faced with the eruption of external violent events and escalating political hostilities (see Baskin and Al-Qaq; Hubbard "Face-to-Face," "Cultural," "Grass-Roots"; Halabi "Introduction"). Although the Forum's cohesiveness is often shaken by news of outside violence, its internal robustness is continuously fueled by its members' shared grief over their tragic losses and their fierce determination to honor their loved ones by ending future bloodshed. Even throughout the Second *Intifada*, when many Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding projects came to a halt, the Forum maintained focus on its main message: "We must stop the killing. We must find a way to live in peace with our neighbors." Clearly, the emotional impact of the families' personal tragedies has lent credence to their message; nevertheless, the moral justification for their position has not prevented advocates of the conflict from labeling them as traitors, cowards, and weaklings. While the Forum does hold grassroots meetings for adults at Israeli and Palestinian community centers, it primarily focuses its educational activities on the young people who are the future soldiers and resisters, and who hopefully have the greatest possibility of re-thinking their received prejudices.

Over the past two years, teams from the Forum have held more than a thousand sessions in Israeli and Palestinian high schools, reaching tens of thousands of students. Initially, the

presenters share their personal stories of loss, and discuss with the students the imperative of preventing future bereavement by working toward peaceful reconciliation. The emphasis is on the mutual value of narratives from both sides of the conflict. The model for the presentations is noteworthy for its inclusion of an eight-minute film, <u>Tears of Peace</u>, which relates the stories of an Israeli and a Palestinian father who have each lost sons to the conflict. Following the film, the discussion centers on the symmetry of grief across the two cultures and the commonality of desiring a shared compromise over "intractable" issues that have been fueling the conflict (<u>About Us</u>).

The Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum is a distinguished example of a peacebuilding non-governmental organization (NGO) that brings Israelis and Palestinians together for dialogue and cooperative ventures. This type of jointly administered NGO -- one that sponsors people-to-people (P2P) projects -- became a popular model in the 1990s, following the signing of the Oslo Accords. P2P projects have ranged from professional cooperative efforts to community advocacy groups; they are mandated to focus on different types of social or cultural goals that transcend the political conflict. These joint projects have included sports tournaments, health care initiatives, professional conferences, business ventures, environmental protection agreements, and construction efforts (Baskin and Al-Qaq).

While many of the P2P programs have faltered in the wake of Track I failures to implement a two-state solution to the conflict, the more robust programs have generally shared the following characteristics: 1) an adherence to equality and transparency between Palestinians and Israelis at the institutional level; 2) the signing of written agreements delineating the terms of the partnership beforehand; and 3) the establishment of mechanisms for parity in the funding and the awarding of contracts to both branches, with provisions for the Palestinian branch to receive

a larger portion of the funds when needed to maintain fiscal health (Baskin and Al-Qaq; see also

Maoz "Peacebuilding"). To a great extent, the Parents' Circle has adopted these characteristics

and has maintained itself as a meaningful P2P venue for its members and their vision of peace.

Track II dialogue venues such as the School for Peace and the Parents' Circle are truly successful

when they are able to carry on their mandates despite catastrophic events in the politically

infused macrocosm.

In comparing the visual communication practices of the three secular models that have

been described above, the Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum is the sole program that has

incorporated the use of film to promote dialogue. It is unrealistic, and probably undesirable, for

every dialogue intervention to incorporate a film component. Political models, for example, are

generally designed to produce written agreements that are signed and/or presented to Track I

diplomats; therefore, visual communication may not be germane to accomplishing political

dialogue goals. Most educational and community programs, however, would benefit from a film

component that is appropriately tailored to their target audiences and specific dialogue themes.

The School for Peace workshops, for example, have employed photographs as visual aids in their

programs to overcome negative stereotyping; it is proposed that dialogically crafted film clips

would have the potential to accelerate the students' learning curve. As another example, the

Parents' Circle's school presentations include a short film that narrates the stories of a

Palestinian and an Israeli father who have lost their sons in the conflict. To further develop this

practice, the Parents' Circle could expand their use of film at the adult level to promote

community dialogue.

Since movie-watching has traditionally been considered a social/communal activity, it

follows that grassroots dialogue interventions could provide acceptable venues for incorporating

a film component. Especially in the case of the Palestinian populace, which lacks an

infrastructure of commercial cinema theaters, the ability to gather at a social hall or community

center for viewing a film would be a tremendous draw for any dialogue program. The

international public and private organizations that are the primary funding sources for Track II

mediations could be solicited for financial support in providing a network of basic film venues in

the West Bank and Gaza. These venues might possibly become profitable if they could also be

rented for viewing popular films.

There is at least one indication that "dialogue plus film" may be a timely addition to

peacebuilding mediations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Interreligious Coordinating

Council in Israel (ICCI), a major proponent of interfaith dialogue and coexistence education,

recently published the booklet, Understanding One Another: The Use of Film for Coexistence

Education (2004). Their experimental program will be described in the section below. Keeping

in mind the largely untapped potential of incorporating films into existing Track II interventions,

it is the purpose of this research project to determine how to identify those film texts that

resonate with the "best practices" of the most successful dialogue programs in existence, and are

most congruent with the target audiences of the various organizations.

As explained in the introduction to the chapter, the secular dialogue interventions have

religious counterparts in the three areas of politics, education, and community activism. As

might be expected, many of the more robust interreligious programs have adopted a fluid

structure that is foundationally rooted in one of the three areas, but incorporates the other two at

various stages of involvement. Just as Kelman's political dialogue model played an important

role in invigorating subsequent educational and community models in the secular arena, so have

the educational programs of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI) substantially

influenced political and community models in the religious arena. For example, members of the ICCI were participants in the 2002 Alexandria Declaration, which is identified in the political dialogue model outlined below. Similarly, one of the ICCI's member organizations is the Sulha Peace Project, whose House of Hope is highlighted below as a successful community dialogue model.

As the following section reveals, all three interreligious models can serve to destabilize the traditional dialectic of the Muslim-Jewish conflict by introducing two additional stakeholders to the conflict -- Palestinian Christians and Palestinian Sufi Muslims. The resulting interreligious models tend to destabilize the "Us versus Them" binary of the conflict, and can provide new avenues for forgiveness and reconciliation to occur between the warring populaces.

Dialogue Interventions: Three Religious Models

Imam Yahya Hendi (2003): "Dialogue is to love as blood is to the body" (Interreligious).

Rabbi David Rosen (2000): "Dialogue is a pragmatic imperative for the well-being of society"(Dialogue).

Bishop Munib Younan (2003): "The three monotheistic religions need to find courageous ways and means to break the shackles of the vicious cycle of hatred and even to challenge the political structures. Trialogue should be a catalyst that looks at reality in an objective way and transforms the people for mutual recognition and the acceptance of each other's human, national, civil, political, and religious rights"(Witnessing 124).

While some secular commentators claim that religion has been an aggravating rather than a palliative influence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, other peace workers insist that interreligious dialogue is essential to bring about reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians, precisely due to the fact that religious ideologies inciting violence have permeated the causative

realm. Imam Yahya Hendi affirms that the fruits of religious convictions are found within the context of dialogic human relationships. Honest dialogue is a "communication in which we are informed, purified, illumined, and reunited to ourselves, to one another, and to God" (Interreligious). Hendi calls for adherents of the three faiths to honor their sacred teachings in living lives that respect and honor all cultures. Imam, Bishop, and Rabbi argue that instead of allowing the acts of religious extremists to define the conflict's atmosphere of fear and revenge, it is vitally important for peace-seeking Jews, Muslims, and Christians to affirm their commonalities as children of Abraham and to broadcast the seeds of nonviolent communication throughout the Middle East.

Echoing Bishop Munib Younan's plea for interreligious trialogues that promote love and acceptance rather than hatred and rejection, Rabbi Marc Gopin advocates "patient listening" as a powerful gesture that fills "the space of uncertainty" between enemies, while demonstrating "a stubborn determination to honour the best in an enemy's civilization." He asserts that such demonstrations of mutual respect could "start to create a tipping point of human relations" that would replace "a culture of demonisation" (New). It is especially important to instantiate dialogue with religious rituals that evidence forgiveness and with symbolic gestures that acknowledge a willingness to honor the others' pain and injuries. For example, the Jewish tradition of *teshuva*, the pre-Islamic Arab tradition of *sulha*, and the Christian tradition of repentance and forgiveness have been invoked as compatible religious teachings that have served to promote healing and reconciliation within a dialogic peacebuilding framework (see Abu-Nimer "Miracles," Nonviolence, "Religion"; Gopin "Forgiveness," Holy; Jabbour Sulha, Echoes; Younan Jews, Witnessing).

Structurally, Jewish-Muslim-Christian trialogues have had a destabilizing effect on the traditional binary opposition of the Israeli-Palestinian paradigm by incorporating Arab Christian voices into the intransigent areas of dispute. Contrary to popular belief, a measurable portion of the Palestinian population is Christian; however, over 50% of that population fled their homes during the War of 1948 and are now dispersed all over the world. In 1995, census figures for Palestinian Christians were reported as follows: about 50,000 were living in the Gaza and West Bank (2.2% of the Gaza-West Bank population), about 125,000 were living in Israel/Palestine (14% of all Israeli Arabs) and about 400,000 were living worldwide (6.5% of all Palestinians worldwide). The majority of Palestinian Christians belong to the Greek Orthodox Church (51%) and the Roman Catholic Church (32%) (Sabella).

These numbers indicate the existence of an overlooked Palestinian constituency whose interests are supported monetarily and promoted internationally by powerful Churches and their numerous congregants. Ideally, religious moderates can play an important role in the peaceful resolution of the conflict, and they should be enabled to counteract the trope of religious extremists dictating the parameters of the ideological issues. In the following sub-sections, three successful models for interfaith dialogic interventions will be examined and evaluated for characteristics that may assist in determining strategies for how film texts can be used to re-mediate the "Us versus Them" binary of the conflict.

1. A Christian-Muslim-Jewish Political Dialogue Model

Sheikh Tal Al-Sidr, Minister of State for the Palestinian Authority (2003): "We must work together, Palestinians and Israelis, to end the killing of innocents. I have proclaimed, for over ten years, that the Qur'an forbids the killing of innocent men, women, and children…But

condemnations of terror attacks are not enough. They will not bring the dead back to life. We

need to take action, not only speak out" (Landau 16-7).

At the political level, interfaith dialogue can align religious tolerance with democratic state

institutions. For example, one of the major issues impeding an Israeli-Palestinian adoption of the

two-state solution has been the failure to reach an agreement over the status and boundaries of

the city of Jerusalem, including control over holy sites revered by the three monotheistic faiths.

After conducting sociological research among Palestinian Christians worldwide, Bernard Sabella

reports:

> A majority of [Palestinian] Christians do not envision a real peace
>
> without finding a compromise solution on Jerusalem whereby the
>
> two national groups, Palestinians and Israelis, and the three religious
>
> groups, Jews, Moslems and Christians, will all feel comfortable and
>
> at ease in the city. This comfort and ease cannot transpire without a
>
> solution that will satisfy both the national and religious aspirations
>
> of each and every community in the city. It is only then that the city
>
> will truly become a city of peace (Palestinian Christians).

In January 2002, this recognition of the vital importance of a peaceful resolution to the status of

Jerusalem formed the foundational agenda for the First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious

Leaders of the Holy Land. A group of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish dignitaries from the three

Abrahamic traditions met in Alexandria, Egypt at the invitation of the then-archbishop of

Canterbury, Lord George Carey. The seventeen signatories of the Declaration included five

Sheiks, six Bishops, and six Rabbis, who were representing religious institutions based in the

Palestinian Authority, Israel, and Egypt (Carey; Landau).

After declaring that "killing innocents in the name of God is a desecration of his Holy Name," the signatories agreed on seven points: preserving the sanctity of the holy places within Israel/Palestine, ensuring freedom of religion, finding a just political solution, implementing a cease-fire, educating both sides in peaceful coexistence, reaching a peaceful reconciliation, and establishing a joint committee to carry out the recommendations of the Summit (Landau 51). While the participants have generally acknowledged that the Summit has had little noticeable effect on Track I negotiations since 2002, they nevertheless claim their Declaration to be a positive force for calming volatile activities within the political arena. Rabbi Rosen is insistent that an interfaith religious component is essential for providing "the psycho-spiritual glue" for a long-lasting, effective political settlement (Religion). Likewise, signatory Bishop Abu Al-Assad emphasizes the importance of moderate religious leaders "challenging the politicians to make wise decisions" (Landau 25), and he encourages Christian mediators to continue to pursue avenues for sponsoring Israeli-Palestinian Track II events. Signatory Sheik Tal Al-Sidr has made a series of speeches throughout Europe extolling the positive effects of the interpersonal relationships established through his interfaith dialogues with the Israeli Rabbis, and has repeatedly declared that Israelis and Palestinians must work together to bring about a peaceful resolution to their problems (Landau).

While the Summit participants are hopeful of bringing about a political settlement in the future, they are presently focused on expanding opportunities for interfaith coexistence education and community dialogue. In addition to working on the Alexandria committee established to promote the seven points of the Declaration, a number of the signatories are continuing to expand their involvement in the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI), which is

mandated to conduct public trialogue presentations and host community dialogue discussion groups.

The Alexandria meeting can be characterized as the first attempt at political outreach by religious leaders associated with the ICCI. Arguably, just as Kelman's political dialogue groups fed directly into the success of Track I diplomatic negotiations in the 1990s, so might future trialogues, propelled by the combined weight of popular opinion and ongoing religious and secular Track II peacebuilding mediations, feed into political negotiations in the 2000s. Such fortuitous confluences often occur in an unpredictable manner during unexpected moments of ripeness. Late twentieth century examples of dramatic and sudden ends to conflict, such as the fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989, the end of South African apartheid in February 1990, and the end of the Provisional Irish Republican Army's (IRA) armed campaign in July 2005 were all preceeded by decades of violence and the supposed failure of Track II mediations to substantially affect Track I political processes. The Berlin wall fell in 1989 following massive public demonstrations (both religious and secular). Members of the ruling East German Communist Politburo resigned and Germany was reunified in October 1990. South African apartheid ended in 1990 following five years of nonviolent demonstrations coupled with violent resistance in the townships (both religious and secular). South African President de Klerk lifted the ban on the African National Congress and freed Nelson Mandela from prison, paving the way for Mandela to be elected President in April 1994. The IRA laid down its arms in 2005 following many failed attempts at peaceful reconciliation (both religious and secular). The rapprochement between Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and British Prime Minister Tony Blair paved the way for a politico-religious coexistence framework that has since been ratified by

constitutional amendment through popular referendum (see BBC Timeline: Berlin Wall,

Timeline: South Africa, Quick Guide).

When each of these denouements unexpectedly occurred, they were catalyzed in a

moment of ripeness when weakened political leaders were deposed by popular opinion and were

replaced by peacebuilding leaders with grassroots support. It is hoped that this type of fortuitous

confluence will occur in Israel/Palestine. Meanwhile, the goal of Track II dialogue interventions

has been to use nonviolent communication as a calming influence on angry passions, as a

doorway to collaboration and friendship, and as a linchpin for popular support of a peace

settlement. The ICCI is at the forefront of interreligious efforts to ameliorate the conflict, and is

constantly seeking for innovative methods to improve the lasting impact of dialogue models. In

this leadership role, the Institute has recently tested a pilot project incorporating film viewings

into dialogue workshops. This project will be described in the following section.

2. A Jewish-Muslim-Christian Educational Dialogue Model

Rabbi Ron Kronish, founder of the ICCI (2002): "What will be needed in the future?

[A] massive educational campaign to change the hearts and minds of the people, on both

sides…This will not be easy, nor will it be quick. But I believe it will soon become the historical

educational imperative for our generation. We will be obligated to bring people together to

learn to live in peace…I believe that those of us involved in interreligious dialogue in Israel will

have a major role to play in this process" (Reconciliation).

The Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI) was founded in January 1991,

on the eve of the Gulf War. Its mandate has been to serve as a resource center and information

clearinghouse for its 70 interfaith member organizations, to sponsor community-based interfaith

dialogue groups, to promote regional, national, and international programs enhancing

interreligious education and intercultural understanding, and to facilitate communication between public officials and religious leaders in the Middle East. The ICCI Web Site, in addition to broadcasting upcoming and ongoing events and publications, is linked to the members of the umbrella organization, which include Jewish, Muslim, and Christian community programs, religious schools, museums, and peacebuilding NGOs.

The ICCI vision extends to promoting and supporting all three types of dialogic interventions -- at the political, educational, and community levels in Israel/Palestine (About Us). The ICCI has been the sponsor of a pioneering Jewish-Christian dialogue group with about twenty members -- the Jonah Group -- which is co-facilitated by Rabbi Ron Kronish and Bishop Younan. Over the years, the meetings have been bringing Israeli rabbis and lay educators together with Palestinian Christian clergy from Jerusalem and the West Bank, often in the midst of travel restrictions and closures imposed by the Israeli government. The participants see the Group as a vehicle for building bridges of trust and hope in the midst of a seemingly hopeless political situation. They have resolved to maintain dialogic relationships with each other as demonstration of unity against the prevailing climate of suspicion and estrangement between Palestinians and Israelis (Landau).

Beginning its third year of meetings, a Jewish-Muslim dialogue group is being co-facilitated by Rabbi Kronish and Mohammed Hourani. Hourani has been a peace educator in the public and private sectors, and currently directs the Desk for Dialogue and Teaching for Peace at the Shalom Hartman Institute, one of the ICCI member organizations. Monthly dialogue topics have focused on Jewish and Islamic teachings regarding controversial issues, such as justice, martyrdom, forgiveness, and revenge; Kronish and Hourani have also regularly held public interfaith dialogues at a large conference center in Jerusalem.

In the weeks following the signing of the Alexandria Declaration in 2002, Rabbi Kronish and Bishop Younan were invited by the Pope to attend the Vatican Day of Prayer for World Peace in Assisi, Italy. They joined over 200 religious leaders in praying for world peace and committing themselves to a ten-point program for working toward that goal. Kronish relates that two of the commitments adopted by the delegates highlighted the roles of education and dialogue:

> We commit ourselves to educating people in mutual respect and esteem,
>
> in order to bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence between
>
> people of different ethnic groups, culture and religions…We commit
>
> ourselves to fostering the culture of dialogue, so that there will be an
>
> increase of understanding and mutual trust between individuals and among
>
> peoples, for these are the premise of authentic peace (Reconciliation).

Kronish further recounts that following the Day of Prayer, he and Younan met Hourani in the United States for a lecture tour that represented an immediate implementation of their recommitment to interfaith education and dialogue. In his lecture presentations, Hourani asked for help from the US and other western countries in bringing about educational reforms in the Arab world in general, and in the Palestinian schools, specifically. He then called for a joint educational authority to be given jurisdiction over preparing a curriculum of shared histories that would "sow the seeds of trust between Palestinians and Israelis" (Hourani).

In asking for a top-down model to be instituted by the Israeli and Palestinian governments, Hourani is calling for a replication of a bottom-up model that already exists in joint education projects comprising a major portion of ICCI activities. In addition to its own programs, the Council currently supports a roster of intercultural and coexistence education

projects conducted by many of its member organizations, such as the Center for Pluralism and Nonviolence, the *Givat-Haviva* Jewish-Arab Center for Peace, Hand in Hand, the Galilee Foundation for Value Education, the Kibbutz Lavi Education Center, the Center for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage, *Shemesh*, the Shalom Hartman Institute, the Jewish-Arab Community Association, *Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam*, and the David Yellin Teacher's College. The Council also serves to coordinate programs offered by religious schools with interfaith curriculum and dialogue workshops, among them the Elijah Interfaith Institute, the Pontifical Biblical Institute, the College of Shari'a and Islamic Studies, the Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies, and the Yakar Center for Torah, Tradition, and Creativity (Members). This substantial roster of private and community-based educational programs targeting interfaith religious studies and/or intercultural studies has served to support and enhance the government-sponsored coexistence curriculum in both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and represents a significant contribution to the popular impact of programs designed to increase cross-cultural knowledge and understanding between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East.

One of the newest educational endeavors sponsored by the ICCI is of particular relevance to identifying the theoretical and practical aspects of using film to facilitate dialogue. Understanding One Another: The Use of Film for Coexistence Education is a recently published booklet based on a 2003 focus group comprised of two Jewish and two Palestinian members, and developed subsequently in experiential dialogue workshops facilitated by Amy Kronish. The trilingual publication (English-Arabic-Hebrew) provides synopses, evaluations, and discussion questions for ten selected films: four documentaries, three dramas, a compilation of seventeen short films, and two animations for children. The films are chosen for a variety of age groups, purposes, and settings, and are identified as being intended for uni-national or bi-national

audiences for maximizing dialogic opportunities among the Palestinian and Israeli viewers. Two of the films are nonverbal, one is in Hebrew only, and the remainder are verbalized and subtitled in either two or three of the languages. Some of the films' themes have been identified as follows: "Is reconciliation possible?" (Cohen-Gerstel <u>My Terrorist</u>); "Understanding the Pain of the Other" (Bakri <u>1948</u>); "Identity and its Concealment" (Noy, <u>Arlecchino: Behind the Masks</u>); and "Life Under Israeli Occupation" (Abu-Assad <u>Ford Transit</u>). These themes are explicitly directed toward the same controversial issues that have been the topics for interfaith dialogues sponsored by ICCI over the years, with the hope that the filmic narratives and images will trigger fresh responses to old questions about perpetuating the cycle of hatred and revenge.

In choosing films for their pilot project, the ICCI researchers selected a number of directly confrontational film texts (which they recommend for mature audiences and/or uni-national settings) and a number of indirect non-confrontational texts (which they primarily recommend for younger viewers and/or bi-national settings). The pairing of the texts with topics from past meaningful dialogue encounters is an important move to optimize the synergistic relationship between filmic and dialogic communication. Acknowledging the ICCI's vision in choosing Israeli and Palestinian directors whose films lend themselves to promoting dialogue, this research project incorporates references to works by five of the directors included in the ICCI roster: Anat Even, Amos Gitai, Yulie Cohen-Gerstel, Mohammed Bakri, and Hany Abu-Assad. Gitai's <u>Day After Day</u> (1998, 2006) is referenced in Chapter Two. Bakri's <u>1948</u> (1998) and <u>Jenin, Jenin</u> (2002), along with Abu-Assad's <u>Ford Transit</u> (2002), and Paradise <u>Now</u> (2002) are referenced in Chapter Three. Even's <u>Compromise</u> (1995, 2000), Cohen-Gerstel's <u>My Terrorist</u> (2002), and Bakri's <u>1948</u> are referenced in Chapter Six. Two of these films (<u>Paradise</u>

Now and Compromise) are homologically analyzed in detail, while the other films are canvassed

for their sociocultural intertextualities.

From this brief summary of the ICCI mandate -- with its educational projects that feed

into political and grassroots opportunities for dialogue and trialogue -- it is evident that there are

many opportunities for film to feed into existing programs for nonviolent communication and

collaboration. Additionally, it is evident that secular and religious programs share core

foundational goals for nonviolent resolution of the conflict. While secular models aim to provide

alternative worldviews to ethnonational prejudice and mistrust, the religious models aim to

provide alternative worldviews to religious fundamentalism and militant extremism. Especially

in the mutual targeting of the public school systems of both populations, the secular and religious

dialogue models have the potential to strengthen and invigorate current efforts to re-mediate

stereotypical attitudes inculcated by cultural traditions and nationalist memories.

In his book, Witnessing for Peace, Bishop Younan establishes principles for promoting

peace education through theological trialogue. He asserts that to achieve its goals, trialogue

must: 1) "work for change in the school curricula of both nations, so that national and religious

triumphalism are excluded, and mutual tolerance is promoted"; 2) "encourage education about

the three monotheistic religions, as they see themselves"; and 3) "break down stereotypes at a

grassroots level" (125-26). Basically, Younan is reiterating the goals of secular educators who

are currently working on textbooks that give equal voice and equal weight to the historical

narratives of both Israelis and Palestinians (see Adwan and Bar-On Learning, Shared; Scham,

Salem, and Pogrund). Additionally, he is acknowledging that while governments are responsible

for peacemaking agreements, it is the educators and their communities who are responsible for

the peacebuilding activities that ensure the success of an end to conflict.

In evaluating the last example presented below -- a community level dialogue program sponsored by the Sulha Peace Project -- it becomes apparent that not only does the interreligious trialogue destabilize the "Muslim versus Jew" binary when it gives voice to the Palestinian Christian stakeholders, it also destabilizes the Muslim fundamentalist stereotype when it introduces the Palestinian Muslim Sufi stakeholders. Within the Palestinian Muslim religious leadership, the traditionalist *imans* follow the dominant Islamic law (*shari'a*), while the radical *sheiks* follow the mystic's path (*tariqa*). Although many imams tend to distinguish and often dismiss the sheikhs as being "less Muslim," the Sufis' commitment to a spiritual path of self-enlightenment is particularly conducive to Muslim-Christian-Jewish trialogue and colloboration (see Tapper).

3. A Muslim-Jewish-Christian Community Dialogue Model

Elias Jabbour, founder of the Sulha Peace Project (2005): "Sulha is an indigenous, Middle Eastern way of reconciliation. Our goal is to rebuild trust among neighbors, Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians, heart to heart, as a contribution to Peace in the Holyland. In these critical times, we feel there is a need for a safe place to hear and appreciate each other's stories, hopes, fears, traditions and cultures beyond a specific political agenda" (SulhaPeace).

In 1978, Elias and Heyam Jabbour founded the House of Hope International Peace Center in the Galilean town of Shefa-Amer/Shefar'Am. The population of the town is presently about 30,000 and is comprised of a mix of Arab Christians, Muslims, and Druze (a Shia Islamic religious sect who identify themselves as Arab Muslim Israelis or Syrians, but not as Palestinians, and who serve voluntarily in the Israeli army). The House of Hope was the first Arab-initiated center for peace in the Middle East, and for almost thirty years it has provided a forum for transformative dialogue, intercultural celebrations, and interfaith education (Jabbour

Echoes). Elias Jabbour, a Palestinian Christian, has contributed to peacebuilding activities in

diverse arenas: he has served in political and diplomatic posts as Deputy Mayor and Galilean

leader; he has taught in Israeli, US, and European schools and universities; he has designed and

implemented coexistence and interfaith workshops and educational programs and is one of the

principle proponents and practitioners of *sulha* -- the Palestinian tradition of peacemaking and

reconciliation (Jabbour Sulha).

Five years ago, the Jabbours founded the Sulha Peace Project, an active force for

community outreach, youth gatherings, spiritual workshops, and interfaith conferences. In

addition to building relationships with other ICCI member organizations in designing its local

youth programs, the Peace Project has been attracting international adult participants for its

spiritual workshops and peace conferences. The Project's Web site positions these

peacebuilding efforts as grassroots endeavors:

> Our intention is to spread our vision and our new language for peace
>
> throughout Israel and Palestine in institutions such as schools,
>
> universities, cultural centers, and high-tech companies…Ours is a
>
> grassroots effort to create trust from neighbor to neighbor,
>
> complementing the 'diplomatic channels,' so as to prepare the
>
> peoples in the area for peace 'from below' (SulhitaYouth).

The Project emphasizes the importance of community activism at the grassroots level by

coordinating workshops and conferences at revolving host sites. For example, the first Sulha

Youth Gathering (March 2005) was held at the Bedouin camp, Kfar Nokdim, in the desert near

Arad. Eighty Palestinian and Israeli teenagers from all parts of Israel/ Palestine came together

for a four-day workshop. For most of the youths, it was their first encounter with a member of

the other group. The meetings included interfaith discussions. prayer circles, and a silent peace walk through the desert (SulhitaYouth). Like the grassroots group, Parents' Forum, the Sulha Peace Project acknowledges the importance of visual communication in promoting dialogue by showing video clips of its community outreach projects at its interfaith sponsored events.

In addition to Jewish rabbis, Muslim imams, and Christian priests, the Sulha interfaith programs often include Muslim sheikhs, who lead spiritual dialogues and guided meditations based on Sufi traditions. Sufism, which has been called "the religion of the heart," emphasizes the realization of unity with the Divine through the cultivation of wisdom and purity within oneself. Many of its spiritual traditions (such as meditation, dance, music, and poetry) share commonalities with the mystical branches of the major world religions, including Judaism and Christianity (see "Sufism"). One of the Palestinian Sheikhs who participates in Sulha Peace celebrations is Abdulsalaam Manasra, the head of a Jerusalem Sufi order. Manasra and his family became internal refugees after the war of 1948, when they fled to Nazareth from Ein Dor. After two decades as a member of the Israeli Communist Party, Manasra came under the tutelage of Sheikh Al-Bardadi in Jerusalem, and renounced communism for the way of the Sufi. He began to value the power of religion above the power of politics, and committed himself to the cause of peace in the Middle East (Landau).

Sheikh Manasra lectures regularly at a number of Israeli universities and has co-founded an interfaith education program at the Yesodot Center for the Study of Torah and Democracy in Jerusalem. His Sufi order operates four mosques in Israel, and has plans to establish an Islamic school and community center in Nazareth for peace education. Manasra asserts: "'True peace has to be grounded in faith…It goes beyond the Abrahamic traditions to include all of humanity'" (Landau 31). As a peacebuilder, Manasra focuses on the common mystical traditions

at the heart of all religions --traditions which can build spiritual bridges of cooperation across the divides of conflict.

These three successful models of interreligious dialogue -- political, educational, and community -- correspond closely to the secular counterparts in their program objectives and goals. The secular and interfaith political models are directed at influencing the official policy level of peacemaking; the educational models are designed to effectuate peaceful coexistence through cross-cultural understanding and human justice; and the grassroots models are focused on providing needed services to the community and promoting community-based activism. However, the interfaith models tend to destabilize the historical binary narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by introducing two additional stakeholders in the outcome of the conflict: the Christian Palestinians and the Muslim Sufi Palestinians. The introduction of these voices into interfaith initiatives can provide a "rare window" for "rehumanizing the enemy," especially within the context of the respectful listening that characterizes transformative dialogic encounters (Abu-Nimer Interfaith). In any event, attempts to exclude one type of intervention (secular or religious) militates against the inclusivity that dialogue attempts to engender, and ignores a potential ally for political change.

All six of the secular and religious dialogue programs that have been highlighted in this chapter have survived and thrived throughout decades of turmoil in the political realm. As successful models of dialogic design, the programs share common characteristics that can be extrapolated to provide "best practices" criteria for determining which types of film texts can best serve to promote dialogic communication. These criteria are offered as guidelines for dialogue practitioners to use when interjecting films or film clips into bi-national encounters, and are neither intended to rigidly define the multi-faceted characterizations of each group's cultural

morays nor to over-structuralize the procedure by which particular films are chosen. The following six criteria have been gleaned from the designs of the six models: 1) A quest for parity in the numbers and status of the designers, administrators, and participants of the programs. 2) The importance of both sides being given the opportunity to formulate and speak their respective narratives, coupled with mutual respect for both sides' historical memories. 3) A willingness of both sides to engage in patient listening and the re-thinking of received social prejudices. 4) Mutual respect for the complex range of socio-cultural practices and values among members of both groups. 5) Openness by both sides to engage in interactive problem solving, business collaborations, and cultural exchanges. 6) A recognition that affirmative action may be needed to re-mediate ingrained power inequities and/or systemic funding disparities in the co-sponsorship of bi-national projects. In Chapter Six, these six criteria will used to evaluate the dialogic qualities exhibited in the structure, content, sponsorship, and production designs of three peacebuilding film texts.

As mentioned in the description of the ICCI's pilot film-dialogue project, popular film texts of contemporary Palestinian and Israeli directors are often concerned with issues and topics that traditionally have been addressed in dialogue interventions. Film texts and dialogue programs are thematically congruent in their attention to society-wide issues such as the military occupation, suicide bombings, and religious extremism, as well as to personal issues such as grief, anger, unforgiveness, and the reconciliation of individual and national identities. While the six mainstream films in Chapter Three all exhibit varying levels of textual engagement with these topics, they do so in manners which inflame passions and provoke controversies that are easily channeled into the familiar ethnonational rhetoric of the conflict.

In Chapter Five, the shared characteristics of a number of less successful dialogue designs will be extrapolated for identifying how popular films have largely failed to re-imagine the binary polarity of the victim-perpetrator paradigm. In the first section, the failure to contextualize power asymmetry within the political conflict will be identified as the major *procedural* obstacle to dialogic communication between Palestinians and Israelis. In the second section, the three-headed hydra of collective memories, ethnonational identities, and cultural discourse will be invoked as major *psychological* obstacles to dialogic communication. In the third section, conclusions will be drawn as to how to avoid similar pitfalls in authoring and/or selecting appropriate film texts for use in dialogue interventions.

Finally, in Chapter Six, the weaknesses and strengths of the dialogue programs will be parlayed to homologically analyze three peacebuilding texts with regard to their fulfillment of the principles of dialogical crafting in four areas: production design, thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse. The goal of this process is to provide guidelines for identifying whether a peacebuilding film's design, content, and discourse are successful in re-mediating and re-imagining the parameters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These guidelines will aid in the creation of future peacebuilding Israeli-Palestinian films whose narratives and visual images trigger fresh responses to the relentless cycle of hatred and revenge. At that point, we will be equipped with a method for accurately discerning at which points of intervention film can have the greatest chance of invigorating dialogic processes and will be poised to build on those few dialogue models where films are already being incorporated into the workshop designs.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROCEDURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSTACLES TO DIALOGIC

COMMUNICATION: CONFRONTING ISSUES OF POWER,

IDENTITY, AND DISCOURSE

Over the past thirty years, approximately forty-five international Jewish-Arab organizations have been engaged in sponsoring inter-group educational encounters in Israel/Palestine (Abu-Nimer "Education for Coexistence and Arab-Jewish Encounters"). While a few of these organizations have long records of successful dialogue interventions that have survived and thrived (see Chapter Four), the majority of coexistence programs have experienced substantial difficulties in realizing their visionary mandates; many have faltered and expired. Historically, procedural obstacles to dialogic communication (i.e. those stemming from flaws in the program design and/or administration) have been embedded in an artificial "dis-connect" between the politics of conflict and the development of coexistence activities in Israel/Palestine. Psychological obstacles to dialogic communication (i.e. those attendant to stereotypical misconceptions about the enemy Other) have fallen under three broad categories: competing collective memories, exclusionary ethnonational identities, and incompatible styles of cultural discourse. Thus, some of the program failures have resulted from systemic faults, while others have fallen prey to external historical legacies.

With the goal of identifying and ameliorating the underlying weaknesses in procedural designs of coexistence education programs, teams of Palestinian and Israeli social psychologists have been conducting research studies on inter-group encounters since the 1990s. These

researchers have consistently found that the major procedural obstacle to dialogic communication within the inter-group encounters has been the failure of the designers and administrators to contextualize existing Israeli-Palestinian power asymmetries within the macrocosmic political conflict (see Abu-Nimer; Maoz; Rouhana and Korper; Halabi and Sonnenschein; R. Suleiman; Steinberg). The first section of this chapter will summarize these studies and their conclusions, which will later be applied to evaluating the dialogic weaknesses in the procedural designs of popular and peacebuilding films in Chapter Six.

In the second section, the three-headed hydra of collective memories, ethnonational identities, and cultural discourse will be invoked as major psychological obstacles to achieving dialogic communication within inter-group encounters. Palestinian and Israeli scholars specializing in a cross-section of social science fields have theorized that participants arrive at inter-group encounters having been indoctrinated with familial and nationalistic ideological constructions of past events that have defined the parameters of the conflict for them on the personal and collective levels. When they attempt to dialogue with each other using the polarized rhetoric that they have been taught, their communication devolves into angry arguments or stony silences (see Gur-Ze'ev and Pappe; Rouhana and Bar-Tal; Suleiman and Beit-Hallahmi; Griefat and Katriel; Zeruvabel). The second section of this chapter will discuss and summarize these theories for their further application in evaluating dialogic weaknesses in the thematic content and textual discourse of popular and peacebuilding films in Chapter Six.

Power Asymmetry and the Politics of Conflict:

Acknowledging Procedural Obstacles to Dialogue

Shoshana Steinberg, Jewish Israeli educator-facilitator (2004): "As long as the conflict is still ongoing outside the group, dialogic moments seem not to be the desired goal to be reached, as the encounters are not isolated from the outside reality. However, one has to experience those

short moments of real meeting and of perceiving the 'other' as an equal human being in order to be ready to see the other's perspective, which is necessary for understanding and reaching an agreement" ("Discourse" 487).

Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Muslim Palestinian educator-facilitator (2004): "Dealing with the political realities and differences between Arabs and Jews is the most crucial element of the encounter process. Employing the harmony and intercultural approach during an encounter, which artificially detaches participants from the realities of their everyday conflict, may strengthen, rather than subvert, negative attitudes toward the other community once graduates return home" ("Education for Coexistence and Arab-Jewish Encounters" 420).

Following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, coexistence educational activities were instituted to engender support among the Arab populace for the patriotic goals of Zionism; thus the programs were largely socio*political* in nature. With the rise of Palestinian consciousness after the pan-Arab defeat in 1967, the Israeli Arab minority became a "window to understanding the Arab culture in general" (Abu-Nimer "Education for Coexistence in Israel" 237), and socio*cultural* goals began structuring the activities. Arab-Jewish dialogue workshops, popularized by Herbert Kelman's work and writings during the 1970s, became a routine ingredient of coexistence activities in Israel during the 1980s. Although the Israeli Ministry of Education received authorization and funding for the research, development, and proliferation of such educational packages, the majority of coexistence programs were initiated and implemented by NGOs supported by US and European funding (Rabinowitz).

During the 1980s, coexistence education took on an ideological urgency within the context of Rabbi Meir Kahana's racist political movement, which advocated radical separation through the expulsion of all Arabs from the state of Israel (Abu-Nimer "Education for Coexistence in Israel"; Rabinowitz). After three decades of Arab-Jewish wars in the Middle East, popular opinion surveys had begun indicating that Israeli youth perceived all Arabs as a "menacing and ill-intentioned collective," and that stereotypical biases were encouraging the withholding of civil and democratic rights from the Arab citizens of Israel (Rabinowitz 65-6).

With the goal of ameliorating the anti-democratic inroads of interethnic prejudice, the projects sought to "promote mutual understanding and tolerance, reduce stereotypes, [and] foster positive inter-group attitudes" by emphasizing the commonalities, similarities, and connections between the two groups of people (Maoz "Coexistence" 443).

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute was the major sponsor of the early coexistence education projects; subsequently, their procedural format became conceptually integrated into the programs officially sanctioned by the Ministry of Education's Unit for Democracy and Coexistence. Van Leer's project design was initially influenced by Kelman's political psychology methodology of interactive problem solving. However, the liberal policy shapers at the Institute believed that resolving political issues could and should only be the purview of government officials and diplomats at the Track I level; consequently, they advocated an "apolitical" stance that would enable individual group members to establish relationships on a personal level through their shared human characteristics (Rabinowitz). Theoretically, these relationships would be initiated within balanced dialogues of self-expression and respectful listening coupled with apolitical interactive problem solving, leading to an outcome where each side of the conflict would recognize and understand the other side's feelings, viewpoints, values, and experiences (Maoz, Steinberg, Bar-On, and Fakhereldeen).

Jonathan Kuttab, a Palestinian attorney and activist, was an early critic of the apolitical coexistence encounters. He has argued that by ignoring the political issues, the realities of the conflict, and the asymmetrical power relationship between the Israelis and Palestinians, a "false dialogue" was established that purported to be a "substitute for action aimed at empowering the weak and the oppressed to eliminate injustice" (87). Rabinowitz has agreed, charging that dialogic encounters within the coexistence programs had been operating as "a mechanism that reifies structural inequality and actively withholds real change" (78). When Palestinian and Israeli scholars began conducting qualitative research on the dialogue workshops during the 1990s, they identified a number of ill-conceived assumptions within the coexistence framework. In some cases, flaws in translating theory into practice may have led to an *increase* in

stereotypical prejudices and interethnic tensions as a result of inter-group interactions (Abu-Nimer Dialogue, "Education for Coexistence and Arab-Jewish Encounters"; R. Suleiman; see also Amir).

In a study conducted during the mid-nineties, Nadim Rouhana teamed with Harvard psychologist Susan Korper to evaluate the procedural format that was being employed in Israeli-Palestinian dialogue encounters sponsored by the Van Leer Institute. The researchers' primary goal was to assess the impact of structural power asymmetry on the processes of inter-group conflict resolution, through a qualitative methodology of administering pre- and post- workshop questionnaires to eighty-four dialogue participants. The published findings were critical of the application of Amir's contact hypothesis to the inter-group workshop design, concluding that a focus on three features of the interaction -- the equal status of the Arab and Jewish participants as citizens of Israel, the benevolent sponsorship of the Israeli government in promoting these activities, and the commonality of Arab-Jewish goals for peaceful coexistence -- had raised these fundamental issues:

> First, although under strict conditions some attitude change among
> participants might occur, the question remains whether the relationship
> between the societies are affected by such possible change without
> policy transformation outside the room… Second…For the Arab participants
> [the common goal] was likely to mean that their share of the resources
> should be increased and their collective needs and claims should be examined
> and responded to; for the Jewish participants it was likely to mean that the
> Arabs should stop 'making trouble' and contribute to a peaceful coexistence…
> Third, the institutional support was embedded in a major dilemma.
> Although the Ministry of Education supported projects promoting
> 'coexistence' and 'education for democracy', it did not state its support for
> unqualified equality between Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel (13-4).

Rouhana and Korper concluded that new intervention strategies must be incorporated into inter-group workshop designs. These strategies would acknowledge three contextual realities: 1) The Jewish Israelis are in a higher power position than the Arab Israelis; 2) State sponsorship of problem-solving workshops promotes the sociopolitical status quo; and 3) Ignoring the structural power asymmetry between the two groups may "perpetuate inequalities and therefore maintain the conflict" (15). The conclusions drawn from this study would serve to catalyze a contingent of Israeli and Palestinian educators and psychologists who would study, critique, and improve upon the design of dialogue workshops over the next ten years.

Prior to the Rouhana and Korper study, Mohammed Abu-Nimer had begun publishing articles on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the Middle Eastern and Islamic points of view ("Conflict Resolution Approaches," "Conflict Resolution in an Islamic Context"). Initially, as a Palestinian educator in Israel, Abu-Nimer had been certified as a workshop facilitator at the Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam School for Peace, where he led dialogic encounters for many years (Dialogue). Subsequently, he did graduate work in the US and became a professor in the conflict resolution field, gaining practical experience in facilitating dialogic encounters in ethnic conflicts worldwide. His research then broadened into interreligious peacebuilding activities, and he began designing, conducting, and studying interfaith workshops ("Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion," Reconciliation, "Miracles," Nonviolence, "Religion").

From a generalized perspective, Abu-Nimer has found that Western approaches to conflict resolution have tended to be more goal-oriented, with a focus on creative solutions to fix the problem itself, while Middle Eastern approaches have tended to be more centered on talking and listening, with a focus on negotiating solutions that are contextually consonant with societal norms. In order to set the stage for dialogic communication between Arabs and Jews, Abu-Nimer has proposed a sharing of principles between the two approaches; however, he seeks to converge at points of intersection rather than to attempt to import a foreign model. For example, the Middle Eastern approach could benefit "from adopting the western cooperative and

collaborative problem solving" techniques, while the Western approach could benefit from a strategy of creating "more involvement and interest of the society in settling the conflict" by engaging more community members in the processes of reaching agreement ("Conflict Resolution Approaches" 42*).* As a scholar, educator, and facilitator trained in both Middle Eastern and Western peacebuilding interventions, Abu-Nimer has been uniquely positioned to make significant contributions to improving the workshop designs of Israeli-Palestinian dialogic encounters, and has helped move the framework toward a more realistic appreciation of the contextual relationship between the politics of conflict and the structure of coexistence education (see also Halabi and Sonnenschein "Jewish-Palestinian"; R. Suleiman).

As discussed in the previous chapter, the School for Peace inter-group dialogues are a notable example of an educational program that, over the years, has been evolving from an interpersonal, apolitical coexistence format into a more politicized group-collective confrontational format. The School has continued to confront the effects of power asymmetries existing within the context of the conflict by placing more of an emphasis on language parity between Hebrew and Arabic (see Halabi and Zak), and by incorporating uni-national meetings into the scheduling of the bi-national dialogues. The separate meetings are dedicated to "encouraging group members to assert their collective identities"; these opportunities for "regrouping" have been particularly important for the Palestinians "in legitimizing those identities in the eyes of outgroup members" (R. Suleiman 335). Because the Palestinians belong to a social group with lower economic status and less political power than the Israelis, individual members have been more sensitive to perceptions of group disloyalty; therefore, they have generally been more disinclined to disagree among themselves during bi-national meetings. The uni-national meetings have served to empower the Palestinians by giving them a safe opportunity to argue without further weakening their group position vis a vis the Israeli majority (see Halabi and Sonnenschein "Awareness"). However, one possible disadvantage to this procedural element is the tendency for participants to remain anchored in "their rigid collective

perspectives" without being able to move into the interpersonal realm of cross-cultural

relationships (Steinberg 472).

Recently, a new type of workshop design for Palestinian-Israeli encounter interventions

has been emerging out of attempts to contextualize dialogic communication within the political

framework of the ongoing conflict. The concept for this emergent format grew out of a series of

German-Jewish inter-group workshops -- "To Reflect and Trust" -- that Dan Bar-On had been

conducting over the past decade with adult children of Nazi perpetrators and Holocaust survivors

("Children," "First," "Encounters," Bridging, "Will"; Albeck, Adwan, and Bar-On). The TRT

procedural format gives voice to the participants by acknowledging their personal stories as both

individual and collective narratives of a shared traumatic history. From the interpersonal

perspective, the goals of the storytelling approach are to promote empathic listening and

experiential understanding between the members of the two groups, and to acknowledge and

legitimize the collective history of each group (Maoz and Bar-On).   From the personal

perspective, these goals are effectuated by a psychological journey of "working through" (a term

originally applied by Freud to describe the one-on-one therapeutic process through which he

guided his patients), and subsequently adapted to the group counseling process through which

facilitators have guided survivors of social upheavals (Bar-On and Kassem).

In their co-facilitation of Palestinian-Israeli dialogue groups, Bar-On and Kassem have

addressed two avenues of working through: the group-collective confrontation of a shared

traumatic historical event and the individual-personal confrontation of unresolved pain and anger

from the "intergenerational aftereffects of this trauma" (290). This process of working through

entails a psychological de-linking or detaching of the past from the present. On both the

personal and group levels, the participants have committed themselves to transforming the hurt,

grief, and rage that they have "inherited" from their parents' generation into a more realistic and

constructive attitude toward their own present circumstances within the conflict.

Bar-On and Kassem recently conducted a qualitative study of a workshop that they had

co-designed and facilitated -- "Life Stories in the Service of Coexistence." Their procedural

format sought to incorporate and to improve upon methodology that was being used in Israeli university coexistence programs and the Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam workshops. Thirteen Jewish and twelve Palestinian university students met for a series of twenty-four bi-monthly meetings, five of which were uni-national. During the first uni-national meeting, each facilitator instructed their group members in ethnographic practices for transcribing interviews with parents and grandparents. The subsequent uni-national meetings were conducted as safe havens for group members to express their fears and concerns about current political events, and to reach collective determinations whether internal differences of opinion should be broached in the bi-national meetings. During the bi-national storytelling encounters, the participants primarily shared and discussed the oral histories they had collected from their parents and grandparents (Bar and Kassem).

At two of the bi-national meetings, guest lectures were given by peacebuilding practitioners. One of the guests, Shoshana Steinberg, had previously partnered with Bar-on in developing a discourse system for classifying inter-group conversation during Israeli-Palestinian dialogue encounters (Steinberg and Bar-On; Steinberg). Her presentation described seven speech categories that served to differentiate among types of discourse, with a developmental progression from "ethnocentric talk" to "dialogic moment." Originally, these classifications had been formulated as a research tool to aid in qualitative evaluations of discursive communication within inter-group encounters. However, in this situation, the information was presented as a "consciousness-raising" mechanism for enhancing participants' awareness of the extent to which their choice of discourse might hinder or support the growth of cross-cultural understanding and empathy. According to participants' self-reports, the presentation did help them gain clarity in "'accounting for events'" that took place within the meetings and in knowing "'what to look for'" in evaluating group discussions (Bar-On and Kassem).

Summarizing the successes and failures of the pilot project, the authors conclude that contextualizing the workshop within the political realities of the conflict and acknowledging power asymmetries between the two groups has both advantages and disadvantages in

overcoming procedural obstacles to dialogic communication. Disadvantageously, the storytelling format is a time-consuming and energy-draining procedure that requires a long-term commitment to the working through of deep-seated psychological issues. Advantageously, the sharing of oral histories succeeds in encouraging "the development of deep emotional involvement and a level of mutual trust" (301) between the two groups. In regard to the narration of the stories themselves, the co-facilitators have discerned that "only certain stories opened up an emotional and empathic dialogue" (300) among the participants. The Palestinians were most favorably responsive to Jewish narratives that highlighted internal dilemmas of the human condition that they themselves had experienced, such as rootlessness and lack of identity. The Israelis were most favorably responsive to Palestinian narratives that highlighted instances of personal oppression similar to their own, such as family ruptures and refugee experiences (Bar-On and Kassem).

Beneficially, shared personal histories have the potential to reveal the mutual victimhood embedded in the intergenerational aspects of the current conflict, and can give group members an outlet for acknowledging events of the past without further inflaming present occurrences. Detrimentally, violent political crises that happen during the storytelling workshop can contribute to the participants' feelings of rage, frustration, and hopelessness, thus justifying a focus on one-sided suffering. In the balance, though, the co-authors have concluded that the inter-group process of creating a "joint space" for accepting each other's painful narratives "helped filter out some of the frustration and helplessness that accompanied the external violent outbreaks taking place" (304), and encouraged members of both groups to reevaluate their received identities as the sole victims within the victim-perpetrator paradigm.

The procedural format of the Life Stories dialogue group has evidenced promising improvements over previous designs for coexistence education programs. Nevertheless, as Bar-On and Kassem recognize, the format is in its early stages of development and lends itself liberally to future adjustments. Conceptually, the introduction of filmic narratives into the storytelling format could aid in overcoming residual obstacles to arriving at dialogic moments.

For example, at points of verbal impasse between the two groups, a silent interlude for viewing film clips could stimulate reconciliatory discussion. Alternatively, at the problem-solving stage of the workshop -- which previously has involved mixed Arab-Jewish pairs in co-writing assignments -- an inter-group filmmaking project could construct a peacebuilding video of past, present, and future shared narratives.

Procedurally, film narratives could both shorten and enhance the time allocated for personal stories by summarizing those portions of collective histories that remain highly disputatious, thereby emotionally unfettering the oral histories from their most incendiary aspects. Additionally, the findings of the Bar and Kassem pilot project could be used to design dialogically crafted films that track the most favorable responses from both groups. (As previously noted, the study found that the Palestinian participants were most responsive to Jewish narratives that highlighted internal dilemmas of the human condition that they themselves had experienced, while the Israeli participants were most responsive to Palestinian narratives that highlighted instances of personal oppression similar to their own). The most efficacious film texts would employ procedural parity in the co-writing, directing, acting, and editing aspects of the production.

Before arriving at a fuller development of these concepts, the impact of psychological obstacles to dialogic communication -- collective memories, ethnonational identities, and cultural discourse -- will be evaluated theoretically and experientially in the second section below. At that juncture, specific flaws that have plagued dialogue programs will be culled that we can better target the weaknesses that will presumably hinder popular and peacebuilding film texts from being helpful in re-imagining and re-mediating the parameters of the conflict

Collective Memories, Ethnonational Identities, and Cultural Discourse:

Confronting Psychological Obstacles to Dialogue

Whether approaching peacebuilding interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a secular, religious, Middle Eastern, or Western perspective, researchers and facilitators have agreed on the importance of confronting the impact of collective memories, ethnonational

identities, and cultural discourse on the potential for transformative dialogue at facilitated inter-group encounters. The theoretical foundations for these issues are primarily informed by the disciplines of public and intercultural communications, sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, and education. Recent articles by cross-disciplinary Middle Eastern scholars have addressed the topics of *national memory* (Abdel-Nour), *national historical narratives* (Adwan and Bar-On "Shared", "Learning"; Jamal), *national identity* (Rouhana "Reconciliation"; Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman; Suleiman and Beit-Hallahmi), *collective identity* (Khadra Jayyussi; Maoz, Steinberg, and Bar-On; Rouhana "Palestinian"; Zaharna "Ontological"), *collective memory* (Bar-Tal and Teichman; Gur-Ze'ev and Pappe; Zerubavel), and *cultural communication patterns* (Feghali; Griefat and Katriel; Katriel; Zaharna "Understanding"). Understandably, Israeli and Palestinian research studies have historically privileged these topics as barometric indicators of the efficacy of the peacebuilding encounters being evaluated. In the three sub-sections below, scholars will define and exemplify the three interrelated obstacles to achieving transformative dialogue within the historical parameters of coexistence activities.

1. Collective Memories

Ilan Gur-Ze'ev and Ilan Pappe, Departments of Education and Political Science at University of Haifa (2003): "The destruction of the collective memory of the Other, through the construction of one's own, is a central element in the formation of national identities. Violence, direct as well as symbolic, plays thereby a crucial part, as collective memories are produced, reproduced, disseminated and consumed within concrete historical power relations, interests, and conceptual possibilities and limitations. In the case of Palestine/Israel, control of the collective memory is part of the internal and external violence each of the rival collectives applies to secure its reconstruction" (93).

   While individual and group memories all carry elements of the ideological reconstruction of past events, the overall impact of those memories on the goal of inter-group dialogue differs in complexity and scope. As Bar-On's continuing studies have revealed, collective memories of traumatic historical events are often emotionally inherited along with physically inherited genetic

traits, in the sense that they are passed down to successive generations through families' oral histories. The received narratives of the Palestinian and Israeli collective memories have become as inculcated as if they were recollections of personal experience; consequently, present attempts at dialogic communication are often adversely colored by ancestral memorializations of victimization, exclusion, and dispossession.

Buttressing those trans-generational Jewish/Arab collective memories have been the "master commemorative narratives" (Zerubavel) -- both Israeli Zionist and Palestinian nationalist -- that have re-presented historical events to legitimize each group's political aspirations and shared destinies. In order for these representations to flourish, they must be based on the suppression and denial of competing master narratives. Thus, a volatile combination of trans-generational and nationalistic commemorations have dictated the parameters of the conflict, while becoming intricately connected to notions of group survival: "In the case of Israeli/Palestinian coexistence, the struggle over control of the memory of victimization is a matter of life and death…" (Gur-Ze'ev and Pappe 93). These polarized characterizations have led to an intractable stalemate, with loyalty to the ingroup narrative esteemed as a survival imperative and acceptance of the outgroup narrative decried as a fatal disloyalty.

The historical truth values of the Jewish Israeli and Arab Palestinian national/collective memories have nowhere been more contentiously disputed than in relation to the origin of and responsibility for the Palestinian refugee situation (see Abdel-Nour; Abu-Sitta; Alpher and Shakiki; Aruri; Carey and Shainin; Hass; Masalha; Morris "Birth," "Righteous," "Birth Revisited"; Ophir "Response"; Pappe; Peres "New"; Said Reflections; Sayigh Armed; Schulz Reconstruction, Palestinian; Sternhell; Teveth Moshe Dayan, Ben-Gurion; Zeruvabel; Zureik). According to Fareed Abdel-Nour, a major stumbling block in resolving the refugee problem derives from the politicized blaming of each side by the other for the historical origins of the current situation. By insisting on the truth validity of each group's collective narratives which "remember" the circumstances of the Palestinian exodus in diametrically opposed versions, the two sides are ignoring the fact that political identification is inextricably bound to national

belonging. Adbel-Nour argues that unless the parties can utilize discursive strategies that accommodate the national identities of both collectives, they are deceiving themselves by believing that any solution can be politically acceptable: "[T]he height of political naivety would be to expect the participants in any national form of belonging to adopt a historical account that decimates the basis of their national solidarity" (357). In other words, any procedural compromise must be rooted in an expansion or complication of previously monolithic historical narratives. However, a perfect reconciliation of the two opposing narratives is an unrealistic goal that would only be possible if one national memory were to obliterate the other.

Just as Palestinian collective memory is memorialized in the disaster of rupture and dispossession experienced during the 1948 Israeli-Arab war, so Israeli collective memory is memorialized in the disaster of annihilation experienced during the Holocaust (1933-45). The numerical magnitude of the Holocaust, which destroyed half of the Jewish population worldwide, visited a monumental psychological toll on those who remained. Surviving family members have suffered from feelings of guilt, trauma and despair, while experiencing physical uprootedness and emotional estrangement from their original communities. Those who immigrated to Israel during and after World War II (over 200,000) substantially imprinted the formative ethnonational identity with a Holocaust consciousness. This consciousness remained heavily veiled for almost forty years, until psychotherapeutic efforts during the 1990s began freeing survivors to share their histories, often within dialogue group settings.

Not only were the immediate survivors traumatized physically and mentally for the remainder of their lives, they transmitted this sense of "unspeakable horror" and mourning to their children. Dina Wardi, a Jewish Israeli psychotherapist who specializes in treating the adult children of Holocaust survivors, has found that the second generation -- the "memorial candles" to the non-survivors – were often unable to normally construct their individual identities during childhood. This was due to their "lifework of establishing intergenerational continuity": an obligation to fill the void of death with the torch of their lives (35). Symbolically, the survivors'

children, who now have children of their own, represent the future hopes of the Jewish people: to re-establish and rekindle the family, group, and nation.

With the growing recognition of a Holocaust master narrative as an instrumental site in defining the Israeli ethos, group schisms have arisen within Israeli society over its ownership. Secular and religious groups have vied for control over national memorializations, contributing to ideological polarization over the dominant discourse of Israeli identity (Loshitzky). This often vociferous politicization of past suffering has inevitably led Palestinians to weigh in with charges that the Holocaust memory is being used to deflect attention from the present suffering being inflicted upon their people by the Israelis (Rouhana "Reconciliation").

The Holocaust itself is a ubiquitous topic of debate within dialogue workshops, since it is considered the primary justification for the Zionist movement and the need for a Jewish state. Palestinian participants often express bewilderment over the "Holocaust rationale" for Israeli acts of oppression, while the Jewish participants interpret the Palestinian lack of empathy as a sign of enmity (see Halabi Dialogue). Tellingly, many Palestinian educators and religious leaders now view an acknowledgement of the immense suffering caused to the Jews by the Holocaust as a pivotal issue in removing psychological obstacles to dialogue with Israeli citizens (see Abu-Nimer; Henyi; Said).

As discussed in section one of this chapter and previously in Chapter Four, an acknowledgment by representatives from both groups of their mutual victimhood is of key importance in moving the process toward dialogic communication. For the Palestinians, they seek Israeli recognition that many of their families lost their physical lands and personal rights when the Israelis gained their state in 1948, that Israeli soldiers have killed thousands of their civilian population, that large numbers of their people are currently suffering under Israeli military occupation, and that many more are unwillingly exiled in the diaspora. For the Israelis, they seek Palestinian recognition that many of their families lost their physical lands, monetary possessions, and personal rights during World War II, that millions died in the gas chambers, that many countries in the world refused admittance to Jews fleeing Europe during that time, and that

Jews justifiably feel threatened and outnumbered by Islamic Arab countries surrounding Israel. When individuals from each group respectfully listen to the others' personal and collective memories, and then acknowledge their mutual suffering, they are able to free themselves from the shackles of polarizing rhetoric.

According to a number of Israeli and Palestinian researchers, (e.g. Adwan and Bar-On; Maoz, Steinberg, Bar-On, and Fakhereldeen), there are encouraging signs that a "thawing of monolithic agendas" has been occurring over the past two decades; the prescription is to encourage nonviolent communication rather than violent reprisals. For this movement to occur, it becomes essential for both sides to acknowledge the existence of conflicting narratives and to attempt to listen to each side's version:

> [A]t the present stage of hostility and violence, the Israeli Jews and the
>
> Palestinians are not able to develop a joint narrative of their history
>
> (nor do we expect them to do so). Nevertheless, in the meantime,
>
> they could learn to acknowledge and live with the fact that there are
>
> at least two competing narratives to account for their present, past,
>
> and future (Adwan and Bar-On, "Shared" 514).

Co-authors Palestinian professor Sami Adwan and Israeli professor Dan Bar-on have experienced many instances in inter-group encounters where an agreement to listen respectfully is in itself an overcoming of a psychological obstacle to dialogic communication. Rather than remaining rigidly entrenched in binary opposition, the participants' open sharing of collective memories can lead to a "disarming" of warring historical narratives (Adwan and Bar-On "Learning"). The is the goal of Adwan's and Bar-On's recent joint project, the co-authoring and publication of the first bi-national history book on the conflict. The text features dialogically inspired narratives from both groups' perspectives and marks the first attempt at the simultaneous transmission of competing histories within the Israeli and Palestinian education systems. (This new approach to dialogic histories is exemplified in the narrative framing of the history of the conflict found in Chapter One).

Adwan and Bar-On's project is one of a number of programs which seek to re-mediate traditional uses of the enemy image to increase collective solidarity. For both populations, a process of re-imagining the Other can occur within the framework of dialogic histories. The hope is that the younger generations will be exposed to bi-national narratives that respect the non-exclusionary collective memories of both groups. In order for this new approach to succeed, educators and peacebuilding organizations must also confront those contemporary aspects of national consciousness that have played a significant role in vesting both populaces with ethnonational identities which psychologically militate against dialogic communication. In the sub-section below, the major interstices of those identity debates will be explored.

2. Ethnonational Identities

Nadim Rouhana and Daniel Bar-Tal, Departments of Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, and Education at Tel Aviv University (1998): "For each group, group identity – in this case, national identity – gains particular salience, because it is the central component in one's collective identity that differentiates the in-group from the out-group…Each group identity becomes dominated by a component that is not shared with the other and that is supported by additional symbols and meanings from the group's experience and history, thus accentuating the collective identity and increasing the inter-group differentiation" (767).

During times of relative peace, collective memories and narratives pivotally influence the social construction of group identity (J. Bruner); in times of inter-group conflict, warring collective narratives can create a "negative interdependence" between the two groups' ethnonational identities. As discussed in Chapter Four, Herbert Kelman has identified "the psychological core" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as being each group's fear that its continued national survival is solely ensured by the other group's destruction:

> Negative interdependence not only creates obstacles to conflict
> resolution and ultimate reconciliation but also makes it more
> difficult and costly for each group to establish its own identity.

It is not enough for it to demonstrate, to itself and to the world,

its own legitimacy, authenticity, and cohesiveness as a national

group; it has the additional burden of demonstrating the illegitimacy,

inauthenticity, and lack of cohesiveness of the other" (Kelman,

"Interdependence" 589).

Kelman's antidote is a re-imagining of Palestinian and Israeli national identities to affirm the "positive interdependence" of the two groups' security, survival, and prosperity. In the past, this ideal has neither been generally accepted nor acted upon by Track I policymakers. Among many of the complex reasons for the rejection of Kelman's "positive interdependence" platform have been the entangled composition of both groups' constructed identities and a lack of a unified vision among the political leadership of both collectives. The Israeli national identity has been forged and re-forged over a period of statehood that spans sixty years; the process has often been destabilized by an electoral system resulting in an uneasy coalition among special interest groups with non-collusive agendas. The Palestinian national identity has evolved and coalesced as a survival mechanism against the further splintering of their population after each military defeat; this process has been destabilized by a draining of the leadership pool and the lack of territorial borders. For the Palestinians, the major ethnonational identity issue has been the forced separation of the their population into Israeli Arabs -- those Palestinians living inside the borders of the state of Israel -- and refugees -- those Palestinian families living in Gaza, the West Bank, and the diaspora.

The collective identity predicament of those Palestinians living outside the state of Israel has been characterized by R.S. Zaharna, a Palestinian American professor of public communication and a Track I peacemaking consultant. Using theoretical language developed within the field of intercultural communication, Zaharna constructs a self-definition of Palestinian exiles as being aligned with a high-context, or collectivist, culture (see Gundykunst and Ting-Toomey):

Palestinian identity is embedded in the [cultural] context on two levels:

the identity of the individual is tied to the people, specifically the family,

and it is tied to the geographical region, specifically the land…It is for

this reason that one often hears the Palestinians equate their loss of land

to loss of identity. For the Palestinian, resettlement efforts, enforced exile,

or deportation strike at the core of the identity issue" ("Ontological" 92).

According to Zaharna, the cultural link between family, land, and ethnic identity originates as a dimension of collective identity formation, and continues to develop along the dimension of self-identity maintenance. Therefore, not only do ethnonational identity characteristics inform the primary psychological rationale for the Palestinian refugees' refusal to accept resettlement as a politically viable solution -- they also continue to supply obstacles to cross-cultural communication with the low-context (individualistic) culture of the Jewish Israelis (see also Zaharna "Understanding").

The "outside" Palestinians living in exile share many cultural aspects of collective identity with the "inside" Palestinians living within the state of Israel. However, the sociopolitical situation of the inside Palestinians is at once more privileged and more conflicted. The inside Palestinians have Israeli citizenship, while the outside refugees are bereft of state and nation. To further stratify those Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship, a portion of the inside families has not been displaced from their ancestral lands, while the greater portion suffered loss of land/identity when they were relocated to other towns or areas during the 1948 and/or 1967 Arab-Jewish wars.

An additional complication within the Palestinian collective identity is that the "inside" Palestinians are simultaneously a privileged minority among the entire worldwide Palestinian population and an underprivileged minority among the entire population of the state of Israel. According to psychologists Ramzi Suleiman and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, this had led to a multidimensional rupture between the national and civic identities of the Arab Israelis. In a 1997 study, the authors canvassed seventy-seven adult Palestinians living inside the state of Israel.

The questionnaires revealed the existence of a Palestinian national identity comprised of two dimensions: an ethnocultural dimension based in language and heritage, and a sociopolitical dimension based in the desire for a two-state solution and the equalization of Arab-Jewish rights within Israel. The Palestinian civic identity was comprised of socioeconomic dimensions based in the multiple benefits of the Israeli standard of living, which included level of income, quality of housing, and education opportunities. When the respondents were asked to rank the importance of their national and civic identities, they claimed that their national-Palestinian identity was twice as important to them as their civic-Israeli identity (Suleiman and Beit-Hallahmi).

Unfortunately, the findings of this study serve to support the validity of the "siege mentality" that is both a historical and contemporary characteristic of the Jewish Israeli ethnonational identity (Bar-Tal and Antebi). If the sociopolitical dimension of the Palestinian identity is based upon the desire for equal civil rights for those living within Israel *and* a desire for a separate state for those living outside Israel -- and furthermore, if the Palestinians value the socioeconomic dimensions of their national-Palestinian identity much more highly than their civic-Israeli identity -- then Israelis are facing a double threat of being deprived of their safe haven and of being engulfed by the rapidly growing Palestinian population.

As discussed in previous chapters, the Jewish siege mentality has birthed a mirror image in the Palestinian ethos, resulting in a lose-lose competition over claims of victimization and attempts to validate one group's right to national identity, while simultaneously denying that right to the other group. To further complicate the picture, Israeli cultural critics have pointed out that the national political focus on being victimized has ironically distracted Israeli society from addressing its own acts of victimization toward the minority Jewish populations -- the lower class *Sephardi* and *Mizrahi* Jews of Hispanic, Arabic, and Oriental origins (see Loshitzky; Shohat "Sephardim"). Likewise, the Palestinian societies in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip are fostering intra-group class hierarchies by victimizing the Palestinian Gypsies who have been settled in those areas for centuries (see Lori).

Given the frequency of violent disruptions to the sociopolitical fabric within both societies, and the myriad interpersonal barriers to developing Arab-Jewish relationships, it is essential for both groups' political, cultural, and educational institutions to provide ideological support for peacebuilding activities. There exists a vastly underused potential in the entire realm of public discourse, mass media, school textbooks, literature, theater, and film to contribute to the influence of peacebuilding programs at the civic and government levels of both populations. It is this underused society-wide discursive potential that is currently being invigorated by Israeli and Palestinian NGOs such as the Search for Common Ground Middle East, Just Vision, ICCI, the Center for Dialogue Between Populations in Conflict, the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, the Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum, the School for Peace, and the Sulha Peace Project, among others.

In a recent study of grassroots peacebuilding activities, Israeli social psychologist Ifat Maoz has determined that the total number of coexistence educational programs has dramatically decreased since the failure of the Oslo peace process, and that the perceived effectiveness of the remaining projects has been substantially reduced by the hostilities of the Second *Intifada*. Nevertheless, respondents to questionnaires have uniformly agreed that peacebuilding activities are especially important during periods of prolonged violence because they represent a counteractive force to the surrounding destruction of inter-group relationships. Such activities are not viewed as solutions to the conflict -- they serve the function of keeping the flame of dialogue alive by maintaining an infrastructure for constructive relationships and by providing a support system for those of both sides who still believe in peace ("Peace Building").

Despite a downward trend in the number of peacebuilding projects, there are indications that the message of those surviving and thriving programs are indeed having an impact on public opinion. A September 2005 joint poll on "mutual respect" reveals that 66% of Israelis, 63% of Palestinians, and 63% of Israeli Arabs "are willing to accept the definition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people, concurrently with the recognition of a Palestinian identity and a Palestinian state"(HUJI Poll #13). The co-surveyors -- Israeli Communication Professor Yaacov Shamir and

Palestinian Political Science professor Khalil Shikaki -- have been conducting a series of joint public opinion polls since the year 2000. To obtain the poll results, 1369 Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem were face-to-face interviewed in the Arabic language, while 451 Israeli Arabs were interviewed by telephone. A sample of 499 Israeli Jews was interviewed by telephone in Hebrew and Russian. The pollsters called their findings "remarkable" and stated:

> Similar levels of support among Israelis and Palestinians were obtained
> in December 2004, suggesting that support for this sensitive and disputed
> issue of national identity has made inroads in both societies. [Furthermore]
> 55% of the Israelis and 53% of the Palestinians know that a majority in their
> society supports a mutual recognition of identity. *These levels of awareness*
> *indicate that this step has acquired normative legitimacy in both societies"*
> *(emphasis added).*

Considering the massive amounts of ideological conditioning that have been militating against mutual acknowledgement of the Palestinian and Israeli national identities, the results of this poll indicate that decades of peacebuilding mediations promoting mutual respect have had the effect of ameliorating the polarized rhetoric which has traditionally defined the conflict.

Israeli and Palestinian social psychologists agree, citing "deconstruction" processes in both societies that have led to a situation of "multiple conflict": each side simultaneously confronts internal and external conflict that destabilizes previously nonnegotiable identity formations (Maoz, Steinberg, Bar-On, and Fakhereldeen). Dialogue becomes more conducive in this context because it potentially supports an existing trend of allowing more voices to be heard:

> Dialogue encounters between Jews and Palestinians in Israel are
> targeted to help each group deconstruct part of its own monolithic
> self-determination while helping to reconstruct the personal and
> collective worlds of the two sides. The confrontation with the 'other'
> can cause the participants to clarify issues that are related to their identity

constructions preceding the encounter. Still, there are elements that they

become aware of only as a result of the encounter itself (933).

In effect, an ongoing "dialogue with history" (Zerubavel) has created growing diversities within the Israeli and Palestinian collective identities, and has opened up possibilities for reconciling previously antithetical narratives.

Palestinian and Israeli scholars have focused on a third psychological obstacle to historical attempts at dialogue between the two populations: conflicting styles of cultural discourse. In everyday conversations, discursive strategies are employed directly and indirectly to communicate meaning through facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, word choice, accent, and a host of other variables; even silence can carry different meanings. These strategies are indigenous to every culture and fulfill the communicative needs of each collective. However, discursive strategies that are commonly understood by *intra*-group communicators are not necessarily understood by *inter*-group communicators. Furthermore, when representatives from groups in conflict attempt to dialogue with each other, they often employ conflicting cultural communication styles that are connected to their group's collective memories and ethnonational identities. In the case of Palestinians and Israelis, their differing discursive styles are grounded in religious and/or political differences which have been operating under historical inequities in power distribution between the two populations. Differing styles of cultural discourse, the third psychological obstacle to dialogue, will be theoretically explored in the sub-section below.

3. Cultural Discourse

Yousel Griefat and Tamar Katriel, Departments of Education and Communication at Haifa University (1989): "If we are right in claiming that for members of mainstream Israeli culture, the general flavor of interactional life is colored by the meanings and values associated with the dugri *[straight talk] ethos, and that for Israeli Arabs the meanings and values associated with the ethos of* musayara *[respectful indirectness] demarcate the central parameters of social*

interaction, it would seem that the incompatibility of cultural styles between Arabs and Jews on the dimension of directness indeed contributes to misunderstandings of all sorts" (132-33).

Culturally-derived patterns of communication are a mark of collective identity that play important roles in attributing meaning to social discourse and in maintaining group harmony. When applied to inter-group encounters, the "unmatched assumptions" underlying Israeli and Palestinian codes of cultural discourse can often interfere with the participants' aspirations for dialogic communication (Griefat and Katriel). Palestinian and Israeli scholars have identified the Jewish Israeli ethos of "*dugri* speech" (straight talk) and the Arab Palestinian ethos of "*musayara* speech" (respectful indirectness) as epitomizing the incompatibility of Jewish-Arab discursive patterns.

The Palestinians participating in dialogue workshops are approaching the encounters with a strong recognition of the import of *what* they say and *how* they say it. The code of *musayara* is descended from Islamic religious teachings that have been traditionally employed to maintain hierarchical differentiations within social relationships. As a style of communication and conduct, the code has historically been an important site for individual and collective identity formations within Arab communities. Palestinians have used the following descriptions to explain its pervasiveness in their lives: "*Musayara* is in the blood of every Arab person." "You drink it with your mother's milk" "It's in the air, you breathe it in" (Katriel 219).

The high value accorded to collective interdependence, solidarity, and harmonious relations within traditional Arab communities has encouraged a formalized use of language for all types of discursive situations. The words chosen are generally rich, expressive, and elaborate in descriptiveness. They are delivered in an indirect, courteous manner that is respectfully "other-directed" and responsive to sociocultural expectations. Conversational effusiveness is artfully employed to dramatize and intensify interpersonal bonding, and may be embellished by such nonverbal gestures as affectionate touching, and deferential or attentive facial expressions (Fegahli; Zaharna "Understanding").

Within the *musayara* code, authentic dialogue is equivalent to "going along with" and accommodating the needs of the other speaker. Respectful, uninterrupted listening is a sign that the other is being heard. When speaking, the tone of voice is conversationally restrained to protect the other's right to respond. Courteous persuasion can involve the use of abstract language and exaggeration to evoke image over meaning. While ambiguous language and inconsistencies between words and actions are well tolerated, face-to-face conflict is not. In cases of disagreement, mediation by a third party is preferred to direct confrontation between the two aggrieved parties (Katriel).

Conversely, the Israelis are approaching the encounters with an informal, improvisational approach to speaking that is constructed around egalitarian notions of communal life and a limited respect for authority. The *dugri* code arose within the context of an Israeli nation-building ethos that deliberately chose to privilege actions over words, and assertiveness over submission: "[I]ts employment signals communal affiliation through the forceful assertion of a culturally shaped and valorized personal identity" (Katriel 21). This personal-communal identity was shaped, during the last half of the twentieth century, by the experiences of the Holocaust -- where millions went meekly to their deaths -- and the *kibbutzim* collectives, where the Zionist *Sabras* were born and raised to fight back.

Straight talk has been valued as a code of spontaneity, individualism, and honesty. Face-to-face confrontation can be relished; disrespectful arguments can be commonplace; voices are naturally loud, boisterous, and unrestrained. The words are self-centered in that they are chosen to reflect the sincerity and dedication of the person speaking; logical argumentation techniques are used to convince another speaker of the incorrectness of an opposing point of view. Personal and national honor are built around a "quest for authenticity" that is clearly expressed through an open and direct discourse:

> The quest for authentic dialogue has been central to the making of
> Israeli culture since the first decades of the twentieth century, when
> early Zionist groups began to settle in Palestine…The quest for

authenticity in Israeli speech culture, is, of course, part of a larger

cultural focus on the creation of an authentic new Hebrew culture

and new Jewish person, which has been central to the Israeli

nation-building ethos (Katriel 18).

However, Katriel concludes, there are mitigating trends in the pervasive use of straight talk as a discursive strategy. As Israel has grown into a more culturally diverse society, ideological shifts in the Zionist enterprise have reshaped speaking patterns and speech events. *Dugri*, apparently, has lost its privileged cultural position as the primary communication option and has now become one of a repertoire of interactional styles.

In a somewhat commensurate manner, the mandatory use of the *musayara* code is weakening among younger Palestinians, especially within the growth of nationalist discourse against Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. The changing ethnonational consciousness, with its advocacy of a two-state solution and equal rights for Arab Israelis, is critical of the elders' traditional *musayara* with Jewish officials. The new Palestinian communication strategy is politically aggressive: "'[O]ne has to stand up for one's rights forcefully, and keep close watch over the way our interests are being handled in government offices'" (Griefat and Katriel 130). Generally, this mirrored trend of openness toward new discursive strategies within both the Israeli and Palestinian cultures has contributed to a narrowing of the gap between the two traditionally divergent patterns of communication.

Within the context of dialogue encounters, several observers have verified that both groups' divergent communication styles tend to progress toward convergence, from meeting to meeting, as a function of inter-group adaptations to conversational interactions. In a 2000 study, Zupnick finds that during the course of twelve grassroots dialogue events, the divergent styles of the two groups were undergoing a change to become more communicatively compatible. Focusing on conversational interruptions, Zupnick assumes that the *dugri* style has often viewed conversational interruptions and overlapping speech as signs of egalitarian group solidarity, while the *musayara* style has often viewed them as a lack of respect or deference to the speakers.

After tracking the frequency of such interruptions, Zupnick concludes that "both groups modify their indigenous style in the inter-group interaction" (107), with the Palestinians gradually shifting from intra-group *musayara* to re-situate themselves into a more powerful position *vis a vis* the Israeli participants, while the Israelis were gradually shifting from intra-group *dugri* to re-situate themselves into a less confrontational interaction with the Palestinians.

Similarly, in a 2001 study, Maoz observes that over the course of fifteen meetings in a university setting, the style of communication that was gradually adopted by both groups tended to maximize negotiation of conflict by moving toward dialogue, which was presumably in fulfillment of the preferred goal of the encounters. Focusing on the use of challenging questions, Maoz assumes that the *dugri* style has tolerated argumentative questioning as an acceptable method of dominance and control, while the *musayara* style has branded argumentative questioning as disrespectful of authority and disruptive to social hierarchies. After tracking the frequency of such questions, Maoz concludes that the Palestinians were progressively addressing more challenging questions to the Jewish group, while the Jews were progressively becoming less argumentative with their own group members, and were displaying more cohesiveness in front of the Palestinian group ("Participation").

In light of these and other corroborating scholarly studies, it does appear that indigenous styles of cultural discourse are becoming less salient in calculating the psychological obstacles to Palestinian-Israeli dialogue, and that Israeli and Palestinian dialogue participants are gradually adopting each others' discursive strategies in their efforts to communicate on common ground. These findings are consistent with scholarly opinions that the two populations are increasingly amenable to acknowledging bi-national historical narratives and to mutually respect each other's national aspirations. It does appear that those educational programs with major procedural flaws have faltered and expired, while the robust programs have learned from past mistakes and are overcoming traditional psychological obstacles to authentic dialogue.

This warming trend in Palestinian-Israeli cross-cultural discursive practices is reflective of similar trends in formerly entrenched hotspots of ethnic conflict throughout Europe, Africa,

and Indonesia, where progress is being made in softening polarized discourse and creating a shared vocabulary for dialogue (see SFCG <u>Programmes</u>). The trend also mirrors postmodern and deconstructionist scholarly theories which have expanded the concept of cultural identity from a shared ancestral past into a diversified transglobal future (see Bhabha <u>Location</u>; Collier; Collier and Thomas; Drzewiecka and Halualani; Hall "Introduction," "Cultural."

It is important at this juncture to enumerate the specific flaws that have plagued the troubled dialogue programs so that we can better evaluate the weaknesses that will presumably hinder popular and peacebuilding film texts from being helpful in re-imagining and re-mediating the parameters of the conflict. The following six weaknesses have been gleaned from these flaws: 1) One-sided dominance in the sponsorship, administration, and/or production of the project, especially within the context of a top-down, government-controlled ideological framework. 2) Uni-dimensional portrayals and/or stereotyping of the enemy Other. 3) A usurping of one group's historical narratives and collective memories by the other. 4) Lack of mutual acknowledgment of the complex national identities, discursive strategies, and socio-cultural practices of members of both groups. 5) Lack of mutual acknowledgment of the victimization and oppression that members of both groups have experienced and/or are experiencing. 6) Failure to validate the social and political realities of the macrocosmic conflict. Taken in conjunction with the six strengths culled from the successful program designs in Chapter Four, these six weaknesses can aid in selecting the most effective popular and peacebuilding film texts for inspiring dialogic communication between the two groups.

The act of storytelling, as embedded in filmic narratives, provides an open door not only for re-imagining the past but also for envisioning a future settlement to the conflict. The implementation of dialogically inspired film texts within Track II peacebuilding mediations can provide diverse avenues for overcoming the procedural and psychological obstacles that

traditionally have impeded the occurrence of transformative dialogue about the conflict. Dialogically crafted films can counteract the monolithic "bracketing-out" of competing cultural memories and enable an inclusive recognition of both groups' common needs by "bracketing-in" shared narratives that serve to bolster peacebuilding sentiments, thereby achieving Marouf Hasian's 1998 call for a "re-imagining of the histories and identities of the region" and a re-humanizing of villainous images of the enemy Other (97).

When used in conjunction with political, education and grassroots dialogue programs, such filmic interventions can augment Track II peacebuilding efforts to re-mediate the conflict. Especially where film texts are bi-nationally sponsored and broadly disseminated, they have opportunities to influence as many "transmitting mechanisms" as possible in re-presenting the prejudicial outgroup information that has previously been institutionalized through myriad "political-social-cultural-educational channels" in both societies (Bar Tal "Formation"). Chapter Six will more fully address the potential for dialogically crafted films to reach the Israeli and Palestinian publics with the message that peaceful co-existence can be crafted at the grassroots level.

A main objective of this project is to propose a method of textual analysis which can invigorate the future choices of film texts for purposes of promoting dialogue about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Toward this objective, a method of dialogically inspired co-narration was employed to describe the history of the conflict in Chapter One. In Chapter Two, this method of co-construction was maintained in relating the relationship of the two national cinemas to the history of the conflict and the development of conflicting ethnonational identities. In Chapter Three, a homologic analysis of three Israeli and three Palestinian film texts was essayed to gauge the validity of Goldmann's hermeneutical methodology for this purpose. In Chapter Four, three secular and three religious dialogue programs in the political, educational, and community arenas were culled for six criteria to aid in identifying dialogically crafted film texts. In this chapter, the

procedural and psychological obstacles to dialogue were examined in order to glean six weaknesses that could hinder film texts from promoting dialogue.

The final stages of this process will be essayed in Chapter Six, where the six dialogic strengths and weaknesses will be used as criteria for determining whether three peacebuilding film texts are optimally crafted to promote dialogue. The texts will be homologically analyzed for their adherence to dialogic principles of production design, thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse. After the peacebuilding texts are compared to the mainstream texts previously analyzed in Chapter Three, they will be hypothetically applied within three of the successful dialogue programs from Chapter Four. Conclusions will be drawn as to "which, why, when, and how" specific film texts can be used to enhance dialogue encounters, and guidelines will be supplied for selecting, evaluating, and applying different types of film texts for use in a variety of inter-group encounters.

CHAPTER SIX

RE-MEDIATING THE CONFLICT:

PEACEBUILDING INTERVENTIONS AND FILM TEXTS

The Search for Common Ground's organizational mandate for pairing films with dialogue has provided the major inspiration for the genesis of this research project. The project design was originally conceived as a textual juxtaposition of Palestinian and Israeli films selected by SFCG as appropriate peacebuilding tools for dialogue, in comparison with representative popular/mainstream films produced or released during correspondent time periods. The major goal of this comparative textual analysis would be to create a methodology for identifying those dialogue-enhancing qualities in the peacebuilding films that were presumably lacking in the popular/mainstream films. Since the individualized appraisal of a film text will necessarily follow its selection and will precede its application, an evaluative procedure will comprise solely one aspect of a three-tiered transaction: In order for peacebuilding practitioners to most effectively use films to promote dialogue in inter-group encounters, they need guidelines for *selecting*, *evaluating*, and *applying* the most appropriate films for their particular situations.

This culminating chapter, therefore, adheres to a three-tiered process: First, the steps involved in selecting the three peacebuilding film texts are described. Second, those texts are homologically evaluated using the "lessons learned" from Chapter Four's thriving dialogue programs and Chapter Five's flawed dialogue models; the texts' dialogic strengths and weaknesses are then contrasted with Chapter Three's popular/mainstream texts. Third, the

peacebuilding texts are hypothetically applied to three of the more successful dialogue programs identified in Chapter Four. The final section expands the horizons of film/dialogue formats by considering how a range of films, both indigenous and foreign, may be appropriate for use in a variety of peacebuilding mediations within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

<div align="center">Selection of the Three Peacebuilding Film Texts</div>

My process of selecting the three film texts for this chapter was informed by a canvassing of the roster of SFCG peacebuilding films involving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, coupled with Internet research to locate other NGOs that are involved in producing peacebuilding films about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and/or are conducting programs using film plus dialogue. A three-year period of information-gathering included attending two Common Ground Film Festivals in Washington DC in 2003 and 2004, interviewing a number of SFCG people connected to the Common Ground Film Festival and the Middle Eastern offices, and speaking to a number of filmmakers who had shown their films at the Festivals. The research on popular/mainstream Israeli and Palestinian film texts was informed by a reading of all available English books and articles on the two national cinemas, correspondences with several Israeli and Palestinian film scholars and filmmakers, the canvassing of numerous film distributor's catalogues for leads to undiscovered films with Israeli and Palestinian directors, and the viewing of all available films by Israeli and Palestinian directors and co-directors.

As I began to investigate the roster of SFCG peacebuilding films related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I discovered that the SFCG's film/dialogue mandate is broadly directed toward regions in conflict throughout the world, and that its generalized selection methods are neither as specific nor as controlled as the framework demanded by a rigorous theoretical project on film texts about one particular conflict. Furthermore, its roster of Palestinian and Israeli film

texts has been dramatically weighted in favor of Israeli and American directors, and is largely exclusive of Palestinian-directed films. The 2002 Common Ground Film Festival program, however, did include the former Link Television broadcast <u>Two States of Mind</u> (2001), a co-created documentary by Israeli Director Shira Richter and Palestinian Producer Ghassoub Alaeddin. Although <u>Two States</u> is not currently available on film, it led me to Link TV's web site, where I discovered Jamal Dajani's and David Michaelis' <u>Occupied Minds: A Palestinian-Israeli Journey Beyond Hope and Despair</u> (2005). Their documentary was originally a Link TV broadcast, and is currently available for purchase in DVD format.

The concept of a co-created, co-directed, and co-produced Palestinian-Israeli film intrigued me for a number of reasons. The example set by such a bi-national endeavor would ostensibly re-imagine a major stereotype of the conflict, with violent enemy images of the Other to be replaced by nonviolent images of cross-cultural friendships and business collaborations. Furthermore, since a co-created film text would presumably embody mutual respect by each group member of the other's socio-cultural practices, it would likely fulfill the first five "best practices" criteria gleaned from the "lessons learned" from thriving dialogue groups in Chapter Four.

To reiterate, these criteria are: 1) A quest for parity in the numbers and status of the designers, administrators, and participants of the programs. 2) The importance of both sides being given the opportunity to formulate and speak their respective narratives, coupled with mutual respect for both sides' historical memories. 3) A willingness of both sides to engage in patient listening and the re-thinking of received social prejudices. 4) Mutual respect for the complex range of socio-cultural practices and values among members of both groups.

5) Openness by both sides to engage in interactive problem solving, business collaborations, and cultural exchanges. (The sixth criterion -- A recognition that affirmative action may be needed to re-mediate ingrained power inequities and/or systemic funding disparities in the co-sponsorship of bi-national projects -- will be discussed below).

Moreover, the themes, discourse, and characterizations of a co-created, co-directed, and co-produced film text would presumably avoid most of the six weaknesses culled from the "cautionary tales" in Chapter Five. To reiterate, those "cautionary tales" criteria are:

1) One-sided dominance in the sponsorship, administration, and/or production of the project, especially within the context of a top-down, government-controlled ideological framework.

2) Uni-dimensional portrayals and/or stereotyping of the enemy Other. 3) A usurping of one group's historical narratives and collective memories by the other. 4) Lack of mutual acknowledgment of the complex national identities, discursive strategies, and socio-cultural practices of members of both groups. 5) Lack of mutual acknowledgment of the victimization and oppression that members of both groups have experienced and/or are experiencing.

6) Failure to validate the social and political realities of the macrocosmic conflict. As previously stated, these criteria are offered as guidelines for dialogue practitioners to use when interjecting films or film clips into bi-national encounters, and are neither intended to rigidly define the multi-faceted characterizations of each group's cultural morays nor to over-structuralize the procedure by which particular films are chosen.

Based on the foregoing presumptions and caveats, I selected Occupied Minds as the peacebuilding film text to be homologically analyzed during the time period 2003-2006. I then attempted to locate two additional Israeli-Palestinian co-directed films for textual analyses during the time periods 1993-1995 and 2000-2002. (These time periods are delineated as such

for the purposes of homological comparison between the three peacebuilding film texts and their popular/mainstream Israeli and Palestinian counterparts in Chapter Three). However, I was only able to locate one additional co-directed film -- Micha X. Peled's and George Khleifi's <u>You, Me, Jerusalem</u> (1995) -- from the Facets Film catalogue. Without the availability of a third co-directed film, I chose Anat Even's <u>Compromise: A Love Story of Arabs and Jews</u> (1995, 2000) as the peacebuilding text for that time period. (The film was released on video in the US in 2000 and was shown at the 2002 Common Ground Film Festival). Although <u>Compromise</u> is authored and directed solely by Israeli Anat Even, it has a bi-national production crew and subject matter: The filmic presentation tracks a co-authored and co-directed theatrical production of Shakespeare's <u>Romeo and Juliet</u>, with Israeli actors cast as the Capulets and Palestinian actors cast as the Montagues. Thus, the theatrical production itself is a dialogical, collaborative artistic effort between Palestinians and Israelis. I surmised that <u>Compromise's</u> bi-national design, subject matter, and characterizations would more closely embody the six "best practices" criteria than any other film by Israeli and/or Palestinian directors during that time period.

In the following three sections below, the peacebuilding texts that I have selected -- Peled's and Khleifi's <u>You, Me, Jerusalem</u> (1995), Even's <u>Compromise</u> (1995, 2000), and Dajani's and Michaelis' <u>Occupied Minds</u> (2005) -- will be homologically analyzed with regard to their fulfillment of dialogical crafting in four areas: production design, thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse. The criteria for these analyses will be informed by the "lessons learned" from Chapter Four's thriving dialogue groups and Chapter Five's flawed models.

Since the relevant *Historico-Political Contextualities* have previously been identified in their respective time periods in Chapter Three, each analysis will commence under the sub-

section of *Socio-Cultural Intertexuality* and will continue with the sub-section of *Ethno-National Textuality*. Additionally, a new sub-section, *Perpetuating or Transforming the Conflict*, will extend the previous methodology applied to Chapter Three's six popular film texts for purposes of performing a comparative analysis with the peacebuilding texts. Thus, You, Me, Jerusalem will be contrasted with Michel Khleifi's Tale of Three Jewels and Rami Na'aman's Flying Camel for the time period 1993-1995; Compromise will be contrasted with Joseph Cedar's Time of Favor and Elia Suleiman's Divine Intervention for the time period 2000-2002; while Occupied Minds will be contrasted with Hany Abu-Assad's Paradise Now and Eitan Gorlin's Holy Land for the time period 2003-2006. Within the new sub-section, those rhetorical strategies that the six mainstream films have employed to promote ethnonational imaginaries will be pinpointed and contrasted with those dialogue-enhancing strategies that the three peacebuilding films have employed to dampen the controversies and promote reconciliation.

<div align="center">Evaluation of the Three Peacebuilding Texts</div>

<div align="center">Micha X. Peled's and George Khleifi's You, Me, Jerusalem (1995)</div>

1. Socio-Cultural Intertextuality

Co-Directors' Statement, You, Me, Jerusalem: "We turned our cameras away from politicians and experts in this film not only because they are in the news every day, but mostly because we were much more interested in the lives of the ordinary residents of the city. No matter what agreements are signed in Oslo and who shakes hands in Washington, ultimately it's the citizens of Jerusalem who will determine the future of their city. It is the fate of Jerusalem and its people that we wanted our viewers to reflect upon" (SFJFF, Director Micha X. Peled).

      Peled and Khleifi are the first independent filmmakers who have taken the unusual step of co-financing, co-producing, and co-directing a Palestinian-Israeli film. As is the case with the

vast majority of independently produced Israeli and Palestinian films, both directors have lived extensively outside of the Middle East, primarily in Europe and the US. Prior to the collaboration with Peled, George Khleifi had co-produced two films with Michel Khleifi -- Wedding in Galilee (1987) and Tale of the Three Jewels (1994) -- and one with Mai Masri and Jean Chamoun -- Children of Fire (1990). Additionally, he had assisted Michel Khleifi in directing Canticle of the Stones (1990). As discussed in Chapter Two's section on Palestinian cinema, George Khleifi's media background has also encompassed film acting, scholarly publishing, and television programming.

Prior to his 1995 collaboration with Khleifi, Micha Peled had directed and produced two short films and two full-length documentaries, Will My Mother Go Back to Berlin? (1993) and Inside God's Bunker: The Story of the Hebron Massacre (1994). Peled has subsequently directed and produced two award-winning films: Store Wars: When Wal-mart Comes to Town (2001), which reports on the opposition of Ashland, Virginia's residents to the opening of a Wal-mart in their small community, and China Blue (2005), which traces the global effects of western consumerism in creating sweat shop labor conditions for Chinese factory workers who produce blue jeans.

During its initial release period in 1996, You, Me, Jerusalem won the Gold Apple Award at the US National Educational Film and Video Festival and the award for the Best Documentary at the Hawaii International Film Festival. It was shown at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, the Rotterdam Film Festival, the Human Rights Watch Festival, and was aired on public television in the US and Europe. Fortuitously for a comparison of sociocultural intertextualities in contemporaneous peacebuilding filmic endeavors, You, Me, Jerusalem appeared at the 1996 San Francisco Jewish Film Festival on the same program with Michel Khleifi's Forbidden

Marriages in the Holy Land (1995). The format of Forbidden Marriages is built on a series of

interviews with couples that have been living in mixed marriages (as defined in national, ethnic,

and/or religious terms) throughout Israel and Palestine. The couples' narratives recounting the

difficulties they have encountered living out their chosen paths are interspersed with clerical

discourses by a Muslim imam, a Jewish rabbi, and Christian priest on the marital teachings of

their faiths.

Khleifi's purpose in Forbidden Marriages is to dramatize the incongruities between the

intercultural realities of some 6,000–12,000 mixed couples throughout Israel/Palestine, and those

religious marital codes imposed by the societies within which they live. His message is "to show

the Middle East's urgent need for a civil code of marriage which liberates the individual from all

religious constraints and gives him/her the freedom to choose" (SFJFF, Director Michel Khleifi).

The film is a departure from Khleifi's traditional concentration on Palestinian narratives in that it

is evenly balanced with voices representing both the Israeli and the Palestinian populations.

However, as with all of his other films, his artistic purpose is to break and transcend societal

codes. While Khleifi communicates a liberating theme of religious and secular co-existence, the

film does more to highlight a non-dialogical situation than it does to provide dialogical solutions.

When analyzed under the four proposed categories, it may be determined that the film is

dialogically crafted in the areas of character portrayal and thematic content, but chooses to focus

on social and political impasses in its textual discourse, and does not equally represent Israeli

participation in its production design.

Like Forbidden Marriages, the message of You, Me, Jerusalem is that the Israeli and

Palestinian populations are not waiting for their governments to give them permission to co-exist

-- they are designing and implementing grassroots co-existence programs that are benefiting

citizens from both sides of the conflict. However, unlike Forbidden Marriages, the interviewees of You, Me document a popularly accepted solution to a political impasse -- a bi-national emergency medical team -- that goes beyond societal codes without breaking them first.

2. Ethno-National Textuality

Co-Directors' Statement: "Working together, a Palestinian and an Israeli, became a metaphor for the subject of our film. We certainly had our differences of opinion, but we also had a common goal – to finish on time a film we both liked. An impasse was not acceptable. In the same way, all the residents of Jerusalem, East and West, in spite of all their conflicts, share a common goal – to create a livable city for all and according to the national aspirations of both sides" (SFJFF, Director Micha X. Peled).

You, Me, Jerusalem consists of a series of conversations with the medical personnel and their families who staff a bi-national Intensive Care Mobil unit (ICM ambulance) that serves the greater Jerusalem area. Since the 1967 war, the city itself has been politically divided into Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem and Palestinian-controlled East Jerusalem, while the greater Jerusalem area includes militant Israeli religious settlements and hostile Arab villages. The ICM doctors and volunteers live and work within the geographical area that they service. Peled and Khleifi introduce Israeli nurse Oranit Golkin and Israeli volunteer Eliahu Brand with shorter segments; they spend more time with Israeli paramedic Dudu Ben Ezra, following him into his home and recording conversations with his wife. The most extensive footage is devoted to Palestinian chief medical doctor Salam Da'ana's family. Salam's father Omeir is interviewed at his newsstand in the Old City, where he has worked daily for twenty years, and is prompted for his recollections of growing up in British Mandate Jerusalem. Salam's son Amer is shown playing basketball at the public park and is questioned about his experiences with mixed Israeli-

Palestinian sports teams. The film does not record any actual medical emergencies (possibly for privacy reasons), but chronicles the transitions that the ICM staff make from personal activities to being on medical call to reacting in emergency response. Clearly, the major topic of the film is the city of Jerusalem, and the bi-national ICM team is a vehicle for envisioning a future of peaceful co-existence among the city's divided residents.

While the ICM workers have neither encountered the types of government strictures nor the extent of social opprobrium experienced by the <u>Forbidden Marriages</u> couples, they have, on occasion, been physically attacked when answering emergency calls in areas experiencing violence. A major difference between the intermarried couples and the bi-national work team is that the families of the intermarried couples have frequently ostracized them for their choice of intermarriage, while the families of the bi-national work team have usually (but not always) commended them for their choice of cooperative livelihood. The Da'ana family clearly exhibits an attitude of cross-cultural acceptance of Israelis, and, ostensibly, is highlighted in the film for this reason.

Omeir Da'ana, a self-educated elderly gentleman, recalls the beginning of his employment at the age of seven, when he was paid to distribute newspapers. Through his constant contact with the written word, he taught himself to read Arabic and Hebrew, and eventually became a writer of short stories. His earnings as a writer enabled him to purchase his own newsstand, which is located at the Damascus Gate outside of the Old City of Jerusalem. Da'ana, who joined the Communist party as a teenager, relates that he and a small minority of Arab Jerusalemites supported the boundaries of the 1947 United Nations partition of Israel and Palestine; however, their desires for a peaceful life were overruled by the Arab world, which denied Israel's right to establish a Jewish nation in the Middle East.

When Da'ana takes stock of his life, he is especially proud to mention that he has four sons, all of whom are doctors or dentists. He, like many other Palestinians, desires a politically democratic and economically comfortable life:

> Moslems, Christians, and Jews all live in this country, and I prefer that we're all equal in the future state…Jerusalem is the city of peace. We must defuse the bomb that is inside this city. The wisest among the Jews and Arabs should agree to divide the city to Israeli and Palestinian sides, with free crossing. If there's sincere desire, it's possible (<u>You, Me, Jerusalem</u>).

At this point, Da'ana's conciliatory attitude takes a hard turn, as he concludes: "We will never agree that it is only the Israeli capital. A few leaders may, but the Palestinian people will never agree." Da'ana's juxtaposition of "The wisest among the Jews and Arabs" and "a few leaders" implies that, in his opinion, the current leaders are not very wise, and in the absence of wise leadership the will of the people should prevail. In the current situation, the will of the "outside" Palestinians is the establishment of a separate Palestinian state, while the will of the "inside" Palestinians is to be treated as equals within the state of Israel. Unfortunately, as explained in Chapter Five, the implementation of these two Palestinian "wills" is seen as a death knell by Jewish Israelis.

When measuring the adherence of the film's production design, thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse to the six "best practices" criteria, the film receives high marks in production design, thematic content, and character portrayal with its predominance of collaborative practices and mutual respect. The co-directors' friendship and business relationship encourages them to problem-solve together and to gravitate toward producing a film text that promotes their desire for East and West Jerusalemites to live in peaceful co-existence.

In their thematic content, they document a bi-national collaborative effort that includes personal and professional cross-cultural exchanges among the team members. They draw in peripheral characters such as Zoher Nablusi, a Palestinian social worker who supervises bi-national activities in the Jerusalem park, to reinforce the salutary message of overcoming social prejudices. The co-directors' message in their choice of thematic content is one of mutual respect between the two groups and a willingness to work together to solve common problems.

The film text is somewhat weaker in its textual discourse, however, as measured along a number of dimensions. In the editing of the footage, Palestinian discourse is favored over Israeli discourse by the amount of time allotted to representatives of each side, although the script does maintain parity in the number of participants. The viewers are introduced to three Israeli members of the team (Golkin, Brand, and Ben Ezra) and one Palestinian member (Da'ana), which would justify bringing in two more Palestinian family members to balance the dialogue. In fact, the film brings one more Israeli (Ben Ezra's wife Nicole), and three more Palestinians (Da'ana's father and son, and Zoher Nablusi) to even the number of dialogue participants at four and four. However, the Palestinian participants are privileged in the amount of time allotted to their narratives in comparison to the amount of time allotted to the Israeli narratives. This editing decision, which is also shared by Anat Even in editing Compromise, tends to privilege the Palestinian narratives and historical memories over the Israeli ones. However, it may be argued that the privileged discourse adheres to the sixth "best practices" criterion: A recognition that affirmative action may be needed to re-mediate ingrained power inequities in the sponsorship of bi-national projects (see Baskin and Al-Qaq).

Additionally, the types of discourse voiced by the participants falls into the "cautionary tales" category on two occasions: First, Dudu Ben Ezra is filmed in his living room having a

heated discussion with his wife, who states that she does not trust Arabs in general, and that if his co-workers were being accused of collaborating with the enemy by Palestinian extremists, they would betray him to save their own families' lives. Although Dudu expresses hope that his children's political views will become his own, Nicole, at the moment, clearly has the upper hand as she instills fear of Arab suicide bombers into their children's hearts. Like donning a well-worn garment, Nicole Ben Ezra lapses into the second "weak" criterion -- a uni-dimensional portrayal of Arabs and the stereotyping of the enemy Other. Also, the major voice of the film is Omeir Da'ana, who emerges as a wise elder statesman, even as he is proposing dual solutions to the political administration of Israel/Palestine that would be anathema to the preservation of Israel as a Jewish state. His discourse falls prey to the fourth weakness -- a failure to acknowledge a major foundation of Israeli national identity.

Despite the film's shortcomings along the dimension of textual discourse, You, Me, Jerusalem remains an important beginning to the concept of co-directed peacebuilding films in its preponderantly strong dialogic qualities. Without sugarcoating the difficulties facing advocates of peaceful co-existence, the text does evidence an honest portrayal of the conflicted viewpoints of those who are eagerly pursuing collaborative programs in the face of ongoing violence and political inequalities. It may be rationalized that the Ben Ezra family argument and the Da'ana propositions are realistic portrayals that do not attempt to whitewash the facts on the ground, and that airing them for scrutiny by both sides is a valid dialogic framework.

3. Perpetuating or Transforming the Conflict (1993-1995)

In revisiting the six mainstream Israeli and Palestinian film texts analyzed in Chapter Three, it is now appropriate to consider whether these popular films could be used to promote dialogic communication between the two groups in conflict. The first pair of films analyzed in

Chapter Three is Rami Na'aman's <u>The Flying Camel</u> and Michel Khleifi's <u>Tale of the Three Jewels</u>. In comparing these two films with <u>You, Me, Jerusalem</u>, the most obvious point of correlation is that George Khleifi had previously worked with Michel on at least three of his films, as a co-director, co-producer, and actor. During the Oslo peace process, both Khleifis chose to focus on topics of bi-national coexistence (<u>Forbidden Marriages</u> and <u>You, Me</u>). However, Michel's major message had been and would remain the irreconcilable tensions in Palestinian society -- tensions that were initiated by the Palestinians themselves and fueled to a fever pitch by the Israeli occupation. It would not be until 2003 that Michel Khleifi would co-direct a film with Israeli Eyal Sivan (<u>Route 181</u>), while George Khleifi "took the bull by the horns" in this 1995 collaboration with Micha Peled.

As discussed previously, a film does not require co-direction in order to be dialogically crafted in its production design (e.g. Anat Even's <u>Compromise</u>). However, when a film is uni-nationally produced, it is axiomatic that the remaining three dimensions -- thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse -- should clearly exhibit dialogic principles in their construction and editing in order to fulfill the "best practices" criteria for films best suited for peacebuilding mediations. While <u>Tale of Three Jewels</u> provides a rich tapestry of *intra*-group characteristics and discourse, it categorically fails to engage the *inter*-group dimensions of the conflict in meaningful dialogue, and fuels Palestinian ethnonationalist narratives by villainizing the faceless Israeli soldiers who shoot an innocent boy. It falls prey to at least four of the "weak" criteria: one-sided dominance in the sponsorship, administration, and/or production of the project, stereotyping the enemy Other, failure to acknowledge the complex issues surrounding Israeli national identity, and lack of any portrayals of cross-cultural collaborations or friendships between members of the two groups.

Na'aman's film, on the other hand, does engage dialogic principles in the construction of its characters, themes, and discourse, if not its production design. Out of the six mainstream films analyzed in Chapter Three, Na'aman's text fulfills the greatest number of "best practices" criteria and is the only text that portrays a Palestinian-Israeli personal relationship. As noted in Chapter Three, the comedic venue of caricature even-handedly reveals the foibles of all of the characters, including the Israeli protagonist and his Palestinian helper. However, as Shohat has generally observed regarding Israeli national cinema, the plot is focalized from the Israeli point of view, and the action is mainly propelled by goals of the Israeli protagonist, with secondary input from the Palestinian character's desires. Thus the text falls victim to the third and fourth "weak" criteria by failing to give the Palestinians the opportunity to speak their own narratives and by evidencing a lack of respect for the problematic national identity issues of the Arab Israelis and the Palestinian refugees. Also, Na'aman falls into the ethnonationalist trap of ignoring the existence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (the sixth weakness), thereby furthering a "life is normal" falsehood among the complacent Israeli populace.

Of the three films canvassed from this time period, You, Me, Jerusalem has the greatest number of dialogic characteristics, fulfills the major criteria of a peacebuilding film, and has the greatest potential to promote Israeli-Palestinian dialogue -- most specifically concerning the resolution of the status of Jerusalem under a two-state solution. Refreshingly, the major political viewpoints of the films are en-textualized by a moderate Palestinian gentleman, who forthrightly sets out the desired parameters of an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement that include the sociopolitical needs of the "inside" and "outside" Palestinians. The message of the film is to encourage moderate citizens to work together to shape the future of co-existence in Jerusalem.

The peacebuilding film analyzed in the following section, Anat Even's <u>Compromise</u>, expands the cooperative tenets of coexistence expressed in <u>You, Me, Jerusalem</u> by doubling their impact through a theatrical-realistic convergence. The Palestinian and Israeli participants in the bi-national production of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> are simultaneously challenged in their own real world and in Shakespeare's constructed world by their smoldering fears and resentments of each other, as they struggle to rehearse amidst internal personal animosities and external disruptive events.

<div align="center">Anat Even's <u>Compromise: A Love Story of Arabs and Jews</u> (1995, 2000)</div>

1. Socio-Cultural Intertextuality

Eran Baniel, Israeli co- director of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u>: "We had to find a gentile, a poet, a stranger who would be familiar with our reality, and who would enable us to meet on common grounds, and work things out without endless arguments about territory, hostages, prisoners, terrorism, stones…All these issues would have been unsolvable if we had tried to solve them on a regular, daily basis"(<u>Compromise</u>).

Fuad Awad, Palestinian co-director of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u>: "It was hard for me to tell the audience, we'd like to make peace, when the occupation is still taking place, [but] I have a feeling that the peace process is on its way, so perhaps it's worth it to be as close to this peace as we can"(<u>Compromise</u>).

<u>Compromise</u> documents the first Israeli-Palestinian joint theatrical venture, a co-production of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> by the Khan Theater in West Jerusalem and the El Casaba Theater in East Jerusalem. The film focuses on the political and artistic issues that surface during the bi-national rehearsals, which take place during the Oslo peace process in the early 1990s. Although the film was financed by the Israeli Film Service and the Jerusalem Foundation, it

received more attention in Europe than it did in Israel/Palestine. After being released on videotape in the United States, the documentary was selected for the 2002 Search for Common Ground Film Festival. That SFCG Festival program also included a Link TV production directed by Israeli Shira Richter: <u>Two States of Mind</u> (2001). <u>Two States of Mind</u> documents an Israeli-Palestinian female race team who compete in Rally Aicha de Gazell, a twelve-day, women-only jeep race that takes place in the Moroccan Sahara Desert. Unfortunately, Richter's production is currently unavailable on videotape or DVD.

In canvassing the sociocultural intertextualties from this time period, an important peacebuilding film to consider is Yulie Cohen-Gerstel's <u>My Terrorist</u> (2002). In addition to being shown at the 2003 Common Ground Film Festival, the film was chosen for the ICCI pilot film project and will air on Link TV in February 2007. <u>My Terrorist</u> is authored, directed, and produced by Gerstel-Cohen, who relates the story of her involvement in a 1978 terrorist attack carried out by Fahad Mihyi, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The attack occurred on a bus that was transporting Gerstel-Cohen and other El Al airline crewmembers to a London hotel. She was among those wounded, and two other stewardesses were killed. Over twenty years later, Gerstel-Cohen has politically evolved from a militant nationalist to a peace advocate, and she begins to wonder about the fate of her attacker. Discovering through research that Mihyi is serving four concurrent life sentences in a British prison, she begins corresponding with him, and eventually travels to the United Kingdom to meet him face-to-face. That meeting, coupled with the apologetic letters she has received, convince her that Mihyi has repented and is no longer a violent threat to society. After learning that Mihyi is coming up for parole, she agrees to write a letter to the parole board, supporting his release from prison.

Stating that the film is a "'cinematic journey to convince those around me and myself that it is time to forgive'"(Musetto), Gerstel-Cohen documents numerous public appearances, television debates, conversations with the hostile mother of a murdered stewardess, and a visit to her psychiatrist -- difficult experiences which have led to her final decision. She declares: "It is a vicious circle: revenge-revenge-revenge-revenge. It's my idea to break this cycle. Now I know that the only hope is to overcome fear, and face each other" (My Terrorist). The filmmaker relates that she has been severely criticized by some Israelis, and that her daughters have suffered negative consequences as a result of her decision. She recounts that she agonized anew after the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center, and remains "very pessimistic" about the chances for an end to the conflict.

When evaluating My Terrorist for "best practices" along the four dimensions proposed, the text is not co-produced, its character portrayal and textual discourse are exclusively Israeli, and its thematic content tracks the filmmaker's path to a tortured decision -- rejected at the outset by the mother of a dead co-worker and later somewhat regretted by Gerstel-Cohen herself -- to make a controversial plea for forgiveness of her attacker and other misguided souls like him (Mihyi calls himself a "manipulated" nobody in one of his letters to her). Gerstel-Cohen has explained that Miyhi's voice is not heard because he has asked not to be filmed and wants to remain as anonymous as possible. However, this decision aggravates the text's one-sided predominance in its design and production by eliminating any Palestinian voice whatsoever from the film. The filmmaker's focus is intra-personal and intra-Israeli; the textual discourse is centered in debates rather than dialogues.

While My Terrorist is undoubtedly of interest to international audiences, and may be useful as a uni-national text for Israeli workshop participants, its discourse falls prey to several of

the "weak" criteria. The preponderance of Israeli voices in film vehemently criticize Gerstel-Cohen's desire to forgive her attacker while espousing uni-dimensional portrayals of Palestinians as terrorist enemies. There is no evidence of the existence of cross-cultural collaborations or friendships between members of the two groups; apparently, Gerstel-Cohen never considers speaking to a Palestinian about her decision -- she exclusively looks for validation within her private circle of friends and the wider Israeli collective. These dialogic weaknesses detract from the film's efficacy for promoting dialogue in a bi-national setting.

Anat Even's Compromise, on the other hand, is fairly consistently in its fulfillment of the "best practices" criteria in its production design, thematic content, character portrayals, and textual discourse. The documentary is Even's third endeavor, after Duda (1994) -- chronicling the experiences of Israelis at a drug rehabilitation center in Spain -- and Positivos (1995) -- describing the personal relationships of a number of AIDs carriers in France and Spain. Recently, Even teamed with Israeli director Ada Ushpiz to produce Detained (2001), the story of three Palestinian widows who live in a war zone at the Palestinian-Israeli border of Hebron. Although Even has never worked with a Palestinian co-director, she is sympathetic to the Palestinian nationalist cause and voices public opposition to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. As will be seen in the following section, the ethno-national textuality of her film is of paramount importance: her solution to the conflict flows from the title of her text, pairing love with compromise.

2. Ethno-National Textuality

Fuad Awad, Palestinian co-director of Romeo and Juliet: "We do not fear the integration between the two cultures. Our fear is that our culture will disappear" (Compromise).

Eran Baniel, Israeli co- director of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u>*: "Our main purpose was to create an opening in both communities, and to present the play before a wide range of audiences, thus creating the incentive for further meetings and debates, and open the minds as well as the hearts of people on both sides. It didn't happen"(*<u>Compromise</u>*).*

The film begins with a close-up of the famous face of Israeli Arab actor Mohammed Bakri. He growls, "When you dream, you also lie." After a segue into statements by the co-directors on the rationale of the displacement of their conflict onto Shakespeare's foreign soil, the theme is reengaged by an Israeli Jewish actor, Arie Tzerner: "It's wrong to expect the truth. Lying is the essence of theater." Bakri responds: "There's a thin line between love and hate." Throughout the documentary, which intersperses clips from the rehearsals, scenes from the costumed production, interviews with Jewish and Arab actors, and television commercials for the European traveling presentations, the dominant theme is the hatred between the Capulets (Israelis) and the Montagues (Palestinians). Neither the love of Romeo and Juliet nor the prose of Shakespeare can disperse the pain and fear that each side feels towards the other. On at least one occasion during rehearsals, loud arguments become fistfights.

In one segment, Even's camera follows Palestinian actress Hitaam into her home, where her husband reveals that he once planted a bomb that failed to detonate on an Israeli bus. His vengeful act was in retaliation for the seizure of his family's home and land during the 1948 war. He refuses to express remorse, but begrudgingly admits that he is relieved now that the bomb did not explode. While he does not prevent his wife from participating in the bi-national theater production, neither will he support her choice nor view the production. Hitaam expresses her anguish over the incarceration of her brother in an Israeli prison; he has been sentenced for resisting the military occupation. Not surprisingly, Hitaam is emotionally conflicted throughout

the rehearsals, cries openly on opening night, and is one of the first actors to resign from the traveling troupe.

Evaluating the production design, thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse in terms of dialogical crafting, the film is unevenly distributed in some areas. As previously discussed, the filmic production is basically one-sided: It is an Israeli film by an Israeli director. However, that design is counter-balanced by the dialogic theme of the bi-national production, and virtually obviated by the parity in the co-sponsorship and co-direction of the theater production itself. The character portrayal is honest and well balanced, as is most of the textual discourse. However, it seems likely that Even is experiencing some "perpetrator guilt," as her editing clearly favors the Palestinian participants over the Israelis in place prominence and time allotment: Two Palestinian voices (Bakri and Hitaam) are given the first and last words of the film. In terms of time allotment, Hitaam and Bakri also emerge as the most riveting participants in the production.

Despite the dialogic content of the documentary's theme, most participants have experienced failed expectations and express disappointment. The momentum of the artistic project has tracked the cycles of the political conflict: The cast and crew trudge throughout the years of the First *Intifada*, are invigorated by the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993, are rewarded with a successful opening of the production in June 1994, and are subsequently traumatized by Rabin's assassination in September 1995. The Palestinian co-director Fuad Awad expresses remorse over the continuing Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories, while the Israeli co-director Eran Baniel expresses remorse over the lack of continuing support from the Israeli public for their joint theater production. Both Palestinian and Israeli actors express remorse that their years of effort have led to little more than a few nights of

entertainment for the Israeli and European publics. Despite all of these expressions of disappointment, the documentary leaves the viewer with the message that peaceful co-existence begins at the grassroots level, is nurtured by cross-cultural friendships and collaborations, and can only spread through active pursuit and perseverance. As Shakespeare teaches through his dramatic denouement, peacebuilding between enemies is painful and difficult, but its rewards are far superior to the bitter fruits of violence and revenge.

3. Perpetuating or Transforming the Conflict (2000-2002)

In comparing Even's <u>Compromise</u> to the second pair of films from Chapter Three, Elia Suleiman's <u>Divine Intervention</u> and Joseph Cedar's <u>Time of Favor</u>, the peacebuilding documentary invokes the theatricality of Suleiman's film and the dramatic impact of Cedar's film in a bold re-envisioning of the conflict as a Shakespearean tragedy. Unlike <u>Divine Intervention's</u> obsessive preoccupation with the omnipresence of Israeli soldiers in the Palestinian territories, and unlike <u>Time of Favor's</u> dishonest representation of the absence of Palestinians within the state of Israel, <u>Compromise</u> seeks to equally represent the presence of both sides and their dual responsibility in perpetuating a cycle of vengeful violence. The narrative of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u>, which depicts the doubly tragic denouement of a hateful feud between the Capulets and Montagues, correlates to the doubly shared grief experienced by the extended families of Israelis and Palestinians who have been physically and psychologically maimed by the conflict. The positioning of Shakespeare's voice as a cross-cultural stranger with his own tragic tale establishes his nonpartisan credentials; the narrative's hard-won lesson speaks to the futility of shared hatreds, while offering life-giving alternatives for shared friendships and love.

Compromise does not attempt to ignore or belittle the oppressive effects of the conflict, nor does it fantasize that cross-cultural collaborations are easily established and fulfilled. Yet, like You, Me, Jerusalem, it endeavors to present a model of encouragement for grassroots community involvement in designing and accomplishing bi-national projects. While the Peled-Khleifi film is more overtly politicized with its goal of settling the future status of Jerusalem through inter-community discourse, the Even film is more explicitly engaged in the realm of possibilities for re-mediating the conflict in the minds and hearts of willing segments of both populations. Importantly, Compromise approaches the re-envisioning of the conflict through the sociocultural realm of shared involvement; it tends to go around barriers against political collaborations by first seeking to establish community relationships among people who slowly learn to know and trust each other over extended periods of interpersonal contact.

The final peacebuilding film text to be analyzed, Occupied Minds, maintains continuity with Compromise and You, Me, Jerusalem in its realistic portrayal of the difficulties facing potential peacebuilders from both groups. The film, a collaborative effort between two friends and co-workers, chooses its subject matter as the co-production itself, rather than a documentation of someone else's bi-national project. Through their documentary, Jamal Dajani and David Michaelis are describing the realities of their cross-cultural friendship as much as they are attempting to re-envision the conflict through each other's eyes.

<div align="center">

Jamal Dajani's and David Michaelis' Occupied Minds:

A Palestinian-Israeli Journey Beyond Hope and Despair (2005)

</div>

1. Socio-Cultural Intertextuality

Jamal Dajani, Palestinian co-director: "Occupied Minds captures both the physical and mental

occupation that Palestinians and Israelis on the front line experience daily through their fears,

apprehension and suspicion. It is not the discourse or narrative of foreign journalists and pundits with no connection to the land or the people. Rather, it IS the story of the land and its people" (LinkTV, Documentary Press Release).

David Michaelis, Israeli co-director: "We hope our film will decode for American viewers the true narratives of the people—narratives hiding behind the simplistic slogans of Israeli and Palestinian politicians that are circulated widely in the media" (LinkTV, Documentary Press Release).

Jamal Dajani's and David Michaelis' documentary Occupied Minds is a television production that crosses over into the film market in DVD format. It is conceived and executed with a bi-national design that includes co-writing, co-directing and co-editing by an Israeli Jerusalemite and a Palestinian Jerusalemite who are friends and co-workers at Link TV in San Francisco. Although both Dajani and Michaelis grew up in Jerusalem during the same time period, they did not meet until five years ago at the US offices of Link TV. Dajani, who is the satellite channel's Director of Middle Eastern Programming, has lived in the US since 1975; Michaelis, who is the Director of Current Affairs, arrived in the US specifically to work on the Link TV start-up and continues to maintain a residence in West Jerusalem. Since the channel's inception, the two have been collaborating on Mosaic: World News from the Middle East, a compendium of English-translated news reports from a pool of thirty Middle Eastern broadcasters. Prior to joining forces, they both have had extensive backgrounds in television programming for over two decades.

Michaelis and Dajani filmed Occupied Minds during a fourteen-month series of visits to Israel/Palestine in 2003 and 2004. Their purpose was to visit each other's neighborhoods and speak to residents and government officials in order to gain a sense of "the harsh realities of our

shared land," both physical and mental (<u>Occupied Minds</u>). Michaelis has stated that their

objective is not so much to present a balanced dialogue as to "'achieve a different kind of insight,

a human and political insight'" (Wall). The purveyors of these insights include their families and

friends, Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants, peace activists and victims of violence; their

locales include the West Bank and Gaza, East and West Jerusalem, and the military checkpoints

that separate the two populations. Dajani explains:

> The movie is, in essence, a travelogue; we are the eyes and lenses that bring
>
> you our experience…We are using ourselves as a medium to tell the story,
>
> and the story is about the people we encounter. We didn't say we've got to get
>
> two people on the Jewish side and two on the Arab side. What we wanted was
>
> to show the realities we encountered, at that moment (Wall).

Although the film's textual design is more argumentative than dialogic, the confluence of

Dajani's and Michaelis' professional backgrounds and close friendship have served to produce a

co-directed text that encourages the growth of artistic and cultural collaborations between

Palestinians and Israelis. However, Dajani's and Michaelis' film is not specifically designed as a

peacebuilding tool -- the co-directors adopt a primarily journalistic viewpoint in their

documentary production. It is helpful at this juncture to compare the production design and

goals of the <u>Occupied Minds</u> documentary with a contemporaneous television broadcast that is

also available in DVD format -- John Marks' <u>Shape of the Future</u> (2005).

     The <u>Shape of the Future</u> was written and produced by SFCG founder John Marks under

the aegis of Common Ground Productions, the international television and radio division of the

NGO. Marks and his wife, Susan Collins Marks, lived in East Jerusalem during 2002-2004,

working on projects sponsored by the SFCG Middle East offices as well as the production of the

television documentary. The two-part documentary, filmed in Hebrew and Arabic, was televised

simultaneously over Israeli, Palestinian, and Arab networks in the fall of 2005 and was screened

on two consecutive evenings at the 2006 Common Ground Film Festival. The interviewee's

comments in Part I of the presentation are centered on issues of security, goals of normalcy, and

the fate of Jerusalem in the context of a future peace settlement. The opinions in Part II address

the resolution of problems surrounding the Palestinian refugees, the Israeli settlements and

occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the separation fence now in the process of being

built by Israel.

The documentary's shift of focus from a troubled past to a hopeful future is designed to

draw attention away from ingrained rhetorical constructs and toward possibilities for re-

imagining the conflict. John Marks explains his project design:

> Most television programs are about the past. They go back and give historical
>
> footage or they analyze the past, what happened and what went wrong…
>
> "The Shape of the Future" is prospective, not retrospective and that is very
>
> different from most television. In fact this has never been done. No one has
>
> made a documentary that starts with the present and looks forward to investigate
>
> the possibilities and opportunities that exist in the future (SFCG The Shape of
>
> the Future: John Marks Interview).

The SFCG documentary implements a model of co-operation for envisioning a future of peaceful

coexistence. While avoiding the most controversial aspects of competing historical narratives

embedded in the present conflict, it deliberately delves into the most hotly disputed elements of a

future peace settlement. Furthermore, the equal weight given to the Hebrew and Arabic

languages in filming and editing and the emphasis placed on simultaneous regional broadcasts are intended to circumvent the power asymmetries inherent in the roots of the conflict.

In its conception and execution, the documentary places a groundbreaking emphasis on the value of dialogue in reconciling the seemingly intractable aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the participants never meet face-to-face at the same physical location -- they "dialogue" through the editing and splicing of the video footage:

> We wanted there to be equal voices and credible voices. We usually looked
> as far to the right or to the center as we could in choosing people to interview.
> We didn't want to have people who were known just for being in favor of
> peace agreements. We tried to get people who were not well known but
> had a great deal of credibility in their society… We also wanted to have a
> good gender balance because in the Middle East women don't usually
> speak on these questions… [T]he Israeli and the Palestinian version do not
> have a narrator. The series continues from sound byte to sound byte allowing
> the individuals to speak directly back and forth (SFCG The Shape of the Future:
> John Marks Interview).

Not surprisingly, the facilitating of a balanced representation of Palestinian and Israeli voices of equal credibility is a dialogic format of reportage that is being duplicated by the mass media productions of other peacebuilding NGOs (see LinkTV Mosaic: World News from the Middle East; UNESCO Joint Israeli-Palestinian-German Television Co-Production).

In recognition of the ethnocentric distortions and negative stereotypes that have permeated textbooks in the Israeli and Palestinian school systems, SFCG Middle East has plans for a broad-

based distribution of the documentary that will entail an educational component:

> [W]e are making teachers' curriculum guides in Israel and in the Palestinian
>
> territories. We are going to be training teachers on how to deliver the series
>
> and putting together teachers' packages that will include the curriculum
>
> guide and the tapes, so that the series can be shown in schools to junior high
>
> and high school students. We are also going to have showings in universities.
>
>
>
> We want to make the videotapes as widely available as possible (SFCG
>
> The Shape of the Future: John Marks Interview).

However, Marks explains that the major purpose of the documentary is not for use as an

educational tool: its target audience is the mass public and its primary goal is to have an impact

on public opinion that will translate into large-scale support for a political peace agreement.

Marks plans to use his film to reach the Israeli and Palestinian publics with the message that

peaceful co-existence can be crafted at the grassroots level. Due to the film's adherence to all of

the "best practices" criteria and its avoidance of five of the "cautionary tales" criteria (the

exception being its one-sided dominance in the sponsorship, administration, and/or production of

the project), the film has a strong potential for being used to promote dialogue in the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict.

   Although Shape of the Future would have a more valid claim to promoting balanced

dialogue if it had recruited indigenous representatives from both sides of the conflict to

collaborate in its production design, it adheres more closely to the "best practices" criteria than

does Occupied Minds. Occupied Minds' full title -- A Palestinian-Israeli Journey Beyond Hope

and Despair -- would be more fully realized if its parameters for collecting insights had been grouped around a series of topics for future peaceful co-existence. While <u>Occupied Minds</u> does acknowledge competing solutions for peaceful political governance of the city of Jerusalem and the future state of Palestine, its textual discourse does not embody a balanced representation of moderate voices from both sides. Rather, inflammatory discourse is portrayed alongside of hope-filled declarations, with confrontational voices dominating the dialectical exchanges. As described in the sub-section below, it is along the dimensions of thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse that <u>Occupied Minds</u> adheres to a number of criteria that weaken its potential for promoting dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis.

2. Ethno-National Textuality

David Michaelis, Israeli co-director: "We need a third-party intervention -- the United States plus Europe intervening in the conflict; also, the populations need to be separated for an interim period. After this period of two to four years, we need to find a Palestinian-Israeli federation-style solution for a Palestinian and an Israeli entity to exist. Both sides have to recognize the narrative of the other side, and the Israelis need to understand that this is not a symmetrical conflict. They need to stop arguing for control over how Palestinians need to or want to live" (Bennion).

Jamal Dajani, Palestinian co-director: "Clearly, I am the optimist of the two of us. I believe that rather than creating two separate states -- one Israeli and one Palestinian -- we should have a one-state solution where everyone shares the same land and has equal rights. No other solutions will last. The current situation resembles a scrambled egg. You can't unscramble an egg. Arabs and Jews are intermingled in historic Palestine" (Bennion).

Even though Dajani and Michaelis are close friends, they have agreed to disagree on their

timelines for peaceful co-existence. Both agree that they will probably not experience peace

during their lifetimes -- Dajani is hopeful that the next generation will experience peace and

Michaelis believes it may take centuries to heal the wounds of the conflict. Dajani advocates a

one-state solution, while Michaelis supports a gradual, globally monitored progression from two

federations to separate national entities for the two ethnic groups. The friends' divergent

viewpoints are reinforced, rather than reconciled, within the text of their film.

The most pessimistic portion of <u>Occupied Minds</u> documents two interviews with a retired

Israeli politician, Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem. The first conversation,

which takes place in Benvenisti's home, is painfully short:

Benvenisti: 'We are in a bi-national condition.'

Dajani: 'But the bi-national condition you're talking about is the

condition of the haves and the have-nots.'

Benvenisti: 'Exactly.'

Dajani: 'Everything is intermingled, but you have one side that

controls everything and the other side -- it's almost a master and

slave relationship.'

Benvenisti: 'You provoked the worst in me already. This interview

is ruined…I dictate the rules of the game, not you…You came to

interview me in my house, so at least be polite, okay?' (<u>Occupied Minds</u>).

After Dajani apologizes to Benvenisti and asks to continue the interview, the three men meet

again in a public park in Jerusalem. Although the conversation is more cordial, the crux of

Benvenisti's explanation for the present impasse is that Israelis believe they are peace-loving and

peace-desiring, and that the Palestinians desire to destroy the Jewish population:

> And if we are faced with annihilation, we can invoke all of the memories of
>
> Jews being persecuted for the last 2,000 years. Then the Palestinians become
>
> a different kind of Gentile. Now you can blame the Israelis, but you can also
>
> blame the Palestinians for allowing enough justifications for that myth…[Y]ou
>
> have enough building blocks to create the myth of Israel fighting for its soul
>
> (<u>Occupied Minds</u>).

To enhance the pessimistic portion of the documentary, the next interview is with a leader of the *Al Aqsa* Brigade, a militant fundamentalist group. The man relates that following the Oslo Peace Accords, he was very hopeful for a two-state solution, and became heavily involved in Israeli-Palestinian peace advocacy programs for the arts and youth. During the Second *Intifada*, the Israeli military raided his home in Jenin, and his mother, brother, and friends were killed. During his time of mourning and distress, not one of his Israeli co-workers contacted him: "We'd eaten together from one plate, shared food, slept together…And no one cared what happened when the camp was destroyed…A person is burned from the inside and his life closes in on him…All he wants is to explode. And because of this, no one can stop him" (<u>Occupied Minds</u>).

The voices of these irate males are counterbalanced by the voices of two female peace activists expressing optimism and determination. The Israeli woman focuses on deeds, not concepts: "I don't think we need reconciliation. I think we work and do things as if there was already peace." The Palestinian woman focuses on the collective power of positive mindsets: "I'm very optimistic. Things could change. And I always believe the power is in the people's soul and mind -- they can make the change" (<u>Occupied Minds</u>). While the female peace advocates are given the last lines of the film and are thus privileged with the "take-away"

message, the vast majority of the text is devoted to documenting abuses to Palestinian human rights occasioned by the Israeli military occupation, Israeli checkpoints, and Israeli politics.

In homologically analyzing the thematic content, character portrayals, and textual discourse of <u>Occupied Minds</u>, it is apparent that the inherent promise of a co-created, co-directed, and co-produced film is not fully realized along any of the other three dimensions. The thematic content is largely focused on past injustices. Especially in the interviews with the Israeli politician and the Palestinian militant, the rhetoric is symmetrically ethnonationalist and dredges up many of the stereotypical images of the enemy Other that have been fueling the conflict. In its character portrayals, the text attempts to include voices in favor of peaceful co-existence, but the voices are substantially fewer in number and are allotted less time to express their more optimistic viewpoints. Furthermore, the only peace advocates in the film are two women; the juxtaposition of their non-confrontational minority viewpoints with the adversarial majority viewpoints has the overall effect of projecting a nonviolent, weak imaginary to the female sex and a violent, strong imaginary to the male sex. Finally, the only bi-national friendship connected to the film is that of the two directors. None of the character portrayals includes examples of cross-cultural collaborations or friendships between Palestinians and Israelis.

3. Perpetuating or Transforming the Conflict (2003-2007)

In comparing <u>Occupied Minds</u> with the third pair of films from Chapter Three, Abu-Assad's <u>Paradise Now</u> and Gorlin's <u>Holy Land</u>, the greatest difference is that the co-directed film's bi-national production design validates the existence of Israeli-Palestinian personal and business relationships, while the mainstream films ignore or vilify such cross-cultural collaborations. In the Nablus hierarchy of <u>Paradise Now</u>, Palestinian citizens are subject to

vigilante execution for suspected collaborations of any kind with Israelis, and the families of those who consort with the enemy are accorded the lowest social status. In the urban bar scene of <u>The Holy Land</u>, the cross-cultural friendship between Razi and Mike is depicted as a criminally based relationship; furthermore, Razi is portrayed as a treacherous and emotionless handler of young male suicide bombers. The cross-cultural world of <u>Occupied Minds</u>, on the other hand, is one where politically moderate Israelis and Palestinians support each other and

work together to enrich each other's lives -- at least in the production of television documentaries.

As previously recognized in relation to <u>Occupied Mind's</u> character portrayals, if more of the interviewees had expressed a willingness to engage in interactive problem solving -- which would have fulfilled the fifth "best practices" criteria -- rather than dwelling on justifications for continuing the violence, the full title of the film, <u>A Palestinian-Israeli Journey Beyond Hope and Despair</u>, would be more fully actualized. However, despite its shortcomings, <u>Occupied Minds</u> does give both sides the opportunity to formulate and speak their respective narratives and does chronicle the voices of Palestinians and Israelis from all walks of life, thereby fulfilling the second and fourth "best practices" criteria. <u>Paradise Now</u> not only silences the voices of Israelis, it portrays the criminalization of the act of speaking to an Israeli. <u>Holy Land</u>, likewise, envisions Arab-Jewish collaborations as being criminal and dangerous. Sadly, within the traditionally mediated parameters of the conflict, the simple act of filming Israelis and Palestinians talking to each other and trying to overcome their political differences is a laudable move toward re-mediation.

In summary, the contrastive analyses of the six popular/mainstream film texts showed how each of the six directors chose to en-textualize worldviews that work to exacerbate the militant ideologies inherent in the perpetuation of the conflict. In a fairly consistent manner, albeit from different perspectives, all three Israeli film texts -- Na'aman's <u>Flying Camel</u>, Cedar's <u>Time of Favor</u>, and Gorlin's <u>Holy Land</u> -- present a "business as usual" worldview of Israel that elides the military occupation of the Palestinian territories and the plight of the Palestinian refugees; only <u>Holy Land</u> tangentially refers to the conflict at all. By ignoring the conflict and the suffering of the Palestinians, Israelis are able to avoid the national soul-searching that would normally precede a popular movement toward a peace settlement. Additionally, if Israeli military violence is ignored, any justifications for Palestinian terrorism are obviated.

Conversely, all three Palestinian texts -- Khleifi's <u>Three Jewels</u>, Suleiman's <u>Divine Intervention</u>, and Abu-Assad's <u>Paradise Now</u> -- focus almost exclusively on the Israeli military occupation, the plight of the Palestinian refugees, and the daily humiliations experienced by Palestinian civilians at the military checkpoints. Uni-dimensional portrayals of callous and inept Israeli soldiers are alternated with fantasies of the occupier's annihilation. By stereotyping, ridiculing, and de-humanizing the enemy Other, Palestinians are able to ignore the impact of their own leaders' corruption and ineptitude in repeated failed attempts at society-building, to deny the real consequences of the Palestinians' political defeats in a series of pan-Arab wars, and to justify resorting to militancy and terrorism as acceptable forms of revolutionary resistance.

Although all six of these mainstream texts employ strategies that tend to promote controversy and anger rather than dialogue and reconciliation, this does not preclude the use of *all* Israeli and Palestinian popular films for promoting dialogue within inter-group encounters.

At the present time, a strict policy of adherence to peacebuilding film texts would seriously restrict the quantity and diversity of available choices: The number of peacebuilding texts about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is extremely small, and those few that exist are overwhelmingly confined to the documentary format. Furthermore, due to the attractiveness of popular films to mass audiences, a text that indirectly or metaphorically supports peacebuilding efforts could present better options for capitalizing on the current movement of popular opinion toward a political peace settlement. However, a number of additional guidelines for these types of applications are needed. Following the next section, "Application of the Three Peacebuilding Texts," those particular caveats for selecting, evaluating, and applying a variety of other texts to promote dialogue will be discussed in the final section, "Using Popular and Foreign Films for Promoting Dialogue About the Conflict."

<div align="center">Application of the Three Peacebuilding Texts</div>

In order to establish guidelines for applying peacebuilding films within dialogue programs, it is salient to build on those few dialogue models where films are already being incorporated into the workshop designs, and also to adopt a method for accurately discerning at which intervention points the texts can have the greatest chance of invigorating dialogic processes. Two of the most successful bi-national non-profit organizations that are currently experimenting with a film/dialogue format are the Interreligious Co-ordinating Council in Israel (ICCI) and the Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum. The ICCI is located in Jerusalem, which makes it appropriate to hypothetically apply You, Me, Jerusalem to the ICCI's film/dialogue project. All members of the Parents' Circle members have lost loved ones in the conflict, which suggests applying Compromise to their dialogue program. Since the Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam School for Peace has conducted the greatest amount of scholarly

research into stages of development during dialogue encounters, <u>Occupied Minds</u> will be hypothetically applied within the School for Peace model at specific points of intervention.

1. *You, Me, Jerusalem* and the ICCI

The ICCI is in the forefront of efforts to invigorate the use of film plus dialogue in Israel/Palestine. Established in Jerusalem in 1991, it is the sponsor of an extensive interfaith dialogue network and has been influential in conducting and supporting dialogue encounters at the political, educational, and community levels (see Chapter Four). The ICCI has already begun establishing a film library for the benefit of its seventy-member network of peacebuilding organizations. In the trilingual booklet, <u>Understanding One Another: The Use of Film for Coexistence Education</u> (2004), the ICCI lists the films it has vetted and categorizes the use of different types of film texts as being time-specific, age-specific, gender-specific, and nationality-specific. Since no co-directed films were selected and evaluated by the ICCI for its pilot project, Peled's and Khleifi's <u>You, Me, Jerusalem</u> would make an ideal addition to its roster of peacebuilding films.

The fact that <u>You, Me, Jerusalem</u> tracks three generations of a socio-politically moderate East Jerusalem Arab family could have an impact on Israelis who have been inculcated with convictions similar to those expressed by Nicole Ben Ezra -- Arabs are generally untrustworthy and every Palestinian is a potential terrorist. Also, the fact that the film follows ICM team member Eliahu Brand, an orthodox Jew, on his daily studies of the *Torah* at his *yeshiva* could have an impact on Palestinians who are convinced that every orthodox Jew is politically aligned with militant West Bank settlers. Likewise, Duda Ben Ezra's disagreement with his wife's anti-Arab attitudes, and Omeir Da'ana's support of the 1947 partition plan recognizing the state of Israel, could impress both sides with the fact that most Israelis do not monolithically support the

Israeli military occupation and most Palestinians do not monolithically support the Palestinian terrorists. Due to the quality and diversity of its textual discourse, the film provides many avenues for promoting dialogue within bi-national encounters: due to its range of character portrayals, it is suitable for all ages and genders from younger teens to older adults; due to its length (fifty-four minutes), it might be preferable to devote two sessions to the film plus dialogue.

You, Me, Jerusalem sets a challenge for future ICCI dialogue interventions to become more politically meaningful. One method of accomplishing this goal would be to adapt the Kelman-Rouhana problem-solving workshops for a new model of citizen involvement in structuring workable policies for all Jerusalem residents. With the use of such a film as a starting point for identifying issues that need to be resolved, an Israeli-Palestinian committee for "Our Jerusalem" could launch a program -- possibly progressing from a uni-national to a bi-national level of interaction -- that educates and encourages both publics to join in determining where they agree, instead of focusing continuously on where they disagree. The goal would be to foster a movement from confrontation to cooperation, with the film setting the parameters for the dialogue.

2. Compromise and the Parents' Circle

The Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum, like the ICCI, operates in the grassroots, educational, and political arenas. While the ICCI's original goals were centered in cross-cultural religious education and subsequently expanded into community and political activities, the Parents' Circle was founded at the secular grassroots level and has since branched out into lobbying efforts and school presentations. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the Parents' Circle screens a short video about their organization when speaking to school students. An Israeli and

Palestinian team leads the presentations, with the two members briefly sharing their stories and discussing the lose-lose consequences of violence.

If the Parents' Circle would like to become more involved in reaching the hearts and minds of their youths with a message of nonviolence, they could screen clips from <u>Compromise</u> during their presentations, and then ask the students to connect the Capulets and Montagues to Israeli and Palestinian families they know who have lost loved ones. The subject matter of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> is particularly appropriate for metaphorically dramatizing the devastating effects that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has had on families from both sides. The documentary format of <u>Compromise</u> lends itself freely to being shown in short clips (Additionally, there are some scenes depicting sexual passion and physical violence between adult actors that would not be the most appropriate choices for youthful viewers). A further outreach could be for the Parents' Circle organization to partner with Israeli and Palestinian schools in promoting bi-national theater productions of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u>. Since the adult theater production filmed in <u>Compromise</u> altered the play's language and costumes, adding musical chants for "ownership" by the Israeli-Palestinian actors, it would seem natural for the schools to promote a shorter, simpler version of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> for their younger participants.

As expressed in <u>Compromise</u>'s interviews with the crew and cast of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u>, the theater production was disappointingly underutilized in Israel/Palestine at the time of its limited engagement. The documentary, however, has memorialized the bi-national endeavor, giving it a chance for life beyond normal theatrical parameters. <u>Compromise</u> is well suited to provide an open door for future grassroots dialogue encounters, most specifically as a springboard to a myriad of possibilities for cross-cultural collaborations between the Israeli and Palestinian citizen populations. Its honest portrayal of the interpersonal difficulties experienced

by those who participated in the bi-national project does not attempt to sugarcoat the process, yet does provide a complex example of how such collaborations may be accomplished, and envisions the ameliorative impact of cross-cultural endeavors in re-mediating the conflict, both at the individual and collective societal levels.

3. *Occupied Minds* and the School for Peace

For almost twenty years, the School for Peace has been continuously conducting dialogue encounters between Jewish and Arab Israelis (Palestinians living inside the state of Israel). The most frequently sponsored events are three-day, small-group workshops for high school students structured around future relations of Arab and Jewish Israeli citizens. The topics for discussion include such issues as the definition of Israel as a Jewish state, the existence of a Law of Return, the observance of Israeli ceremonies and holidays, the promotion of official bilingualism, and the provision of equal access to political processes for Arabs and Jews (see Chapter Four).

The School's dialogue programs emphasize the asymmetrical power dynamics operating between the stateless Palestinians and the stated Israelis by assuming that the small group is a microcosm of reality, and that all elements of the whole society are manifested in varying ways within the individual members of that society. The educators and social psychologists that have led and studied the encounters have identified five stages of interaction. During Stage One, the participants meet as individuals. In Stage Two, the Arabs unite into a national collective, attack the Jewish definition of Israel, and demand equal rights. At Stage Three, the Jews counterattack the Arabs collectively for their inability to provide for their own people and for their ingratitude over the benefits they receive from the Jewish state; both groups are angry and frustrated. During Stage Four, the leaders of the program first encourage the Jews to acknowledge the Palestinian's tragedy of displacement and their oppression under military occupation, and then

encourage the Palestinians to acknowledge the Jew's tragedy of displacement and their oppression during and after the Holocaust. At Stage Five, the participants connect through their mutual victimhood and engage in genuine dialogue with each other.

As discussed previously, Occupied Minds has the greatest number of dialogical weaknesses of the bi-national peacebuilding film texts. In order to exploit those weaknesses, there are three feasible points of interjection: 1) During Stage Two, anti- Israeli discourse could be screened to coalesce and accelerate the Arab's grievances against the Jews. 2) During Stage Three, anti-Palestinian discourse could be screened to coalesce and accelerate the Jews' justifications and counterattacks against the Arabs. 3) During Stage Five, the film could be shown in its entirety: After identifying the contentious issues debated in the film, the students could engage in bi-national problem-solving by authoring acceptable solutions to one or more of those issues. Obviously, many Israeli and Palestinian films could perform this role of raising controversial topics in a contentious manner. However, Occupied Minds fulfills the "best practices" criterion of exemplifying a dialogically strong production design; Dajani's and Michaelis' narrations throughout the film emphasize their commitment to collaboratively confront the hardships being visited upon their families, neighbors, and friends by the macrocosmic political realities.

Another possibility for applying the film text during Stage Five would be to screen clips from Shape of the Future in juxtaposition with clips from Occupied Minds. The workshop's participants could be asked to contrast the textual discourse in both films and/or to co-create their own dialogues around the films' topics. This would be a similar exercise to one undertaken by Dan Bar-On and Fatma Kassem in their "Life Stories" bi-national encounters. A facet of that new dialogue model includes a presentation by social psychologist Shoshanna Steinberg which

details a research-derived system of discourse classifications for Israeli-Palestinian inter-group

conversations. The participants are encouraged to employ the discourse classifications to aid

them in understanding the language choices they and others have made during group discussions.

Early feedback has confirmed the value of this technique for avoiding unintended conflagrations

due to differing styles of cultural discourse (see Chapter Five). As a variation on the theme of

collaboratively confronting contentious issues, the School could promote Occupied Mind's

model of joint decision-making within a bi-national friendship by providing workshop

participants the equipment to make co-created videos of their own. (This idea has been recently

essayed by the Jerusalem Cinematheque, which sponsored the production of three five-minute

videos by Israeli and Palestinian children. Their compendium film I Am You Are was screened

at the 2004 Jerusalem Common Ground Film Festival).

These hypothetical applications of three peacebuilding films to three existing dialogue

programs demonstrate a few of the possible avenues for using films to facilitate dialogue. It is

defensible at this juncture to conclude that the easiest and "safest" choice for applying a film

within a Palestinian-Israeli inter-group encounter would be to select a co-directed or bi-

nationally themed peacebuilding text that is thematically congruent and age-appropriate for each

particular mediation. However, this is an overly simplified and problematic conclusion that

dictates a further investigation of possibilities for film/dialogue projects. As previously

mentioned, the roster of indigenously crafted peacebuilding film texts is painfully small. To

confine the possible texts to such a small universe would be unnecessarily restrictive.

Furthermore, as evidenced by the evaluations of all six peacebuilding texts mentioned in this

chapter -- Khleifi's Forbidden Marriages, Gerstel-Cohen's My Terrorist, Marks' Shape of the

Future, Peled's and Khleifi's You, Me, Jerusalem, Even's Compromise, and Dajani's and

Michaelis' <u>Occupied Minds</u> -- *none* of the texts scores perfectly in all of the "best practices" criteria, while *all* of the texts exhibit at least one weakness among the "cautionary tales" criteria. Therefore, prior to extrapolating general guidelines for the selection, evaluation, and application of films within Palestinian-Israeli dialogue events, it is expedient and practical to investigate the possibilities for using a range of film types within a variety of dialogue encounters.

In the final section of this chapter, a number of important questions will be asked: Can certain popular/mainstream Israeli and Palestinian films fulfill the role of engendering dialogue? Can indirect, metaphorical foreign films also be effective in promoting dialogue? Are peacebuilding documentaries from other countries and/or about other ethnonational and sociopolitical conflicts appropriate to use within Palestinian-Israeli inter-group encounters? A canvassing of films selected by the Search for Common Ground's 2004 Jerusalem Film Festival program and the ICCI's 2004 film/dialogue pilot project will inform the answers to these questions.

Using Popular and Foreign Films for Promoting Dialogue About the Conflict

1. Can certain popular/mainstream Israeli and Palestinian films fulfill the role of engendering dialogue?

As evidenced by the six mainstream films analyzed in Chapter Three and those popular films chosen by the ICCI for its film/dialogue project, the texts of contemporary Palestinian and Israeli directors are often concerned with issues that are normally being addressed in dialogue interventions. Social, cultural, and political themes addressed in Palestinian and Israeli film texts and dialogue encounters are thematically congruent in their attention to society-wide issues such as the military occupation, suicide bombings, and religious extremism, as well as to personal issues such as grief, anger, unforgiveness, and the reconciliation of individual and national

identities. This being the case, it would follow that popular films could fulfill the role of promoting dialogue *if* they do not embody a preponderance of the negative attributes found in the flawed dialogue program designs and procedures. Without a careful attention to avoiding the six "cautionary tales" referenced above, the indiscriminate use of popular films could open the door to such unintended consequences as inadvertently strengthening interethnic prejudices or fostering new negative attitudes between group members. These negative outcomes have reportedly resulted when Israeli-Palestinian inter-group encounters have been flawed by a preponderance of the six weaknesses outlined in the "cautionary tales" criteria (see Amir in Chapter Four).

In addition to eliminating popular films that adhere preponderantly to the dialogical weaknesses, the process of applying texts to each particular dialogue intervention must be determined on a case-by-case basis by pairing the goals and time constraints of each intervention with age-specific and thematically congruent film texts. The ICCI categorizes the use of popular Israeli and Palestinian film texts as being time-specific, age-specific, gender-specific, and nationality-specific. For example, Lena and Slava Chaplin's feature-length drama <u>A Trumpet in the Wadi</u> (2001), a story of two Christian Arab sisters in tragic love affairs with a Muslim Arab man and a Jewish Israeli man, is recommended for mature bi-national women's groups; however, due to the length of the film, the ICCI suggests structuring two consecutive film-dialogue sessions or, alternatively, screening certain clips from the film during a single session (<u>Understanding</u>).

As another example, the ICCI recommends that Mohammed Bakri's documentary <u>1948</u> (1998) be shown separately to mature Arab and Jewish uni-national groups in order to avoid inflammatory arguments fueled by the two groups' competing collective memories and divergent

national narratives of the 1948 war -- a war which resulted in the formation of the state of Israel and the dispossession of Palestinian homes and lands. The concept of viewing certain texts in uni-national settings resonates with a lesson learned at the Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam School for Peace (described in Chapter Four): During prolonged dialogue encounters, it is important to alternate uni-national meetings with bi-national ones. This technique allows both groups "time-outs" during intense, prolonged encounters and gives them a chance to air their differences without publicly appearing to be disloyal to their respective groups. In the case of inflammatory film texts, the dialogic ideal would be for the most humiliating and embarrassing revelations to be absorbed during uni-national film-discussion meetings, which then would ostensibly free the participants to more freely and honestly approach each other during the bi-national film/dialogue meetings.

Although hard-hitting films may be skillfully employed to engender psychological awareness of collective responsibility, it may then be a circuitous road to arrive at a dialogic stance after being "punched in the stomach" with one's ancestral sins. However, in certain cases, moral responsibility for past actions must precede a willingness to work toward a peaceful future. Thus, in certain carefully controlled instances, it may be more effective to precede the bi-national viewing of a peacebuilding film by first showing a controversial film in uni-national settings. Another way of raising emotionally sensitive issues without "punching the audience in the stomach" is to enlist the aid of indirect, metaphorical film texts from other countries to engender dialogic communication. This was the route chosen by SFCG in its screening of Dupeyron's Monsieur Ibrahim at the Jerusalem Film Festival. The pros and cons of SFCG's selection of this foreign popular text are outlined in the sub-section below.

2. Can indirect, metaphorical foreign films also be effective in promoting dialogue?

In 2004, the first Jerusalem Common Ground Film Festival was held at the Jerusalem International YMCA. Reportedly, a crowd of over 600 Israelis and Palestinians attended the opening night feature, Francois Dupeyron's <u>Monsieur Ibrahim and the Flowers of the Koran</u> (2003). The film's screenplay, adapted from a French novel, scripts a Turkish Muslim shopkeeper in Paris (Omar Sharif) who befriends and mentors a teenage Jewish boy (Pierre Boulanger) abandoned by his parents in an apartment across the street from the shop. Both Sharif and Boulanger won acting awards at International Film Festivals, and the film received a US Golden Globe nomination as Best Foreign Language Film in 2004.

Dupeyron's film text is removed from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by its geographical setting in Paris. It presents a fictional account of a cross-cultural Muslim-Jewish relationship; however the Muslim man is Turkish, not Palestinian, and the Jewish boy is French, not Israeli. The narrative transposes sociocultural stereotypes by scripting the relationship of a powerless Jewish youth (as opposed to the stereotype of a powerful Jewish soldier) and a kindly Arab mentor (as opposed to the stereotype of a violent Arab terrorist). The film text additionally transposes sociocultural stereotypes by infusing a Western film with a bias in favor of Islamic values as (represented by the kindly shopkeeper) and against Judeo-Christian values (as represented by the unfit parents). SFCG's assumed rationale for selecting this feature film is the possibility that scripted reversals of cherished Muslim-Jewish stereotypes would tend to destabilize the Us versus Them binary attitudes that have historically informed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The <u>Monsieur Ibrahim</u> narrative may be inflammatory, however, for some Jewish Israeli viewers due to three reasons: its portrayal of the boy as a thief who has sex with prostitutes; the

portrayal of the boy's parents as failing to fulfill their moral and legal responsibilities in raising their son to adulthood; and the boy's eventual merging into Ibrahim's Muslim shopkeeper persona -- including his reverence for the Koran. Again, it can be efficacious to employ indirect, metaphorical texts to fulfill the role of promoting dialogue *if* they do not embody a preponderance of the negative attributes found in the flawed dialogue program designs and procedures. Depending upon the composition of the Israeli-Palestinian audience and the goals of their inter-group encounter, an indirect film such as <u>Monsieur Ibrahim</u> could induce outrage on one occasion and promote dialogue on another occasion.

As a general guideline, the indirectness of a foreign feature film would seem to be a non-confrontational ingress into the complex dynamics of Arab-Jewish personal relationships; this supposition presumably informed SFCG's sponsorship of <u>Monseiur Ibrahim</u> as the opening night presentation of its film festival. However, in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one of the foundational problems has been a justified perception by Palestinians that Israel is linked to Western colonialist powers who support and finance its military dominance in the region (see Khalidi in Chapter One.) Likewise, there is a justified perception by the Israelis that the Palestinians are linked to the pan-Arab Islamic countries that surround and outnumber Israel while denying its right to exist as a Jewish state (see Bar-Tal "Societal" in Chapter One). Therefore, it would seem that a Palestinian-Israeli film/dialogue program which heavily relies on American, European, and/or pan-Arab films -- especially where the film texts predominantly favor the cultural values of either Judeo-Christian traditions or Islamic traditions -- would invoke criticism from one side or the other, and would not exhibit the most efficacious selection methods for promoting dialogue between the two groups. This caveat addresses the need for a balanced sponsorship of all bi-national viewing events in Israeli/Palestine and an attentiveness to

a holistic representation of indigenous and/or foreign film texts within any larger bi-national film festival programs.

Keeping these caveats in mind, it is clearly appropriate under some circumstances, for some audiences, and with some restrictions, to employ popular/mainstream and metaphorical film texts that have been authored by Israelis, Palestinians, or foreign filmmakers for promoting dialogue about Arab-Jewish personal relationships and Israeli-Palestinian political aspirations. Holistically, the six "best practices" and the six "cautionary tales" criteria will necessarily guide the decision-making processes involved in the selection, evaluation, and application of the range of film types in future inter-group encounters.

In the final sub-section below, the pros and cons of using peacebuilding documentaries from other countries will be discussed. The ostensible goal of using such films would be to analogize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with other ethnonational conflicts around the world that have reached some level of reconciliation, thereby assisting the two groups in re-imagining nonviolent solutions to their own current problems.

3. Are peacebuilding documentaries from other countries and/or about other ethnonational and sociopolitical conflicts appropriate to use within Palestinian-Israeli inter-group encounters?

Filmmaker Anne Aghion (<u>Gacaca</u>, <u>In Rwanda</u>) has participated in two Common Ground Film Festivals in Washington and has traveled to Israel with her film <u>In Rwanda we say…The family that does not speak dies</u> for its screening at the Jerusalem Film Festival. <u>In Rwanda</u> has additionally been shown in over twenty countries worldwide, from Lebanon to Haiti. The Franco-American Jewish filmmaker divides her time between Paris and New York; she has also lived in Cairo, Egypt for two years and holds a degree in Arab Language and Literature. She is currently producing her third documentary on the Rwandan reconciliation process and has just

concluded a year of filming her new documentary about scientists living in Antarctica. When

interviewed after a year spent in Africa filming for In Rwanda, she observed:

> [E]ventually, people who couldn't bear to look at each other, confessed killers
>
> and people who'd lost their whole families went into the same room, shared a
>
> drink from the same bottle, and started a real conversation about how to live
>
> together…There is no worse situation in the world today than what happened
>
> in Rwanda [when the Tutsis massacred their Hutu neighbors in the 1994
>
> genocide]. There is something profound and illuminating to be learned here,
>
> which surely can apply to people anywhere – whether in Iraq, the Balkans,
>
> Cambodia, or Israel and Palestine " (Kahn).

Aghion has indicated that she plans to travel to Rwandan villages with a generator and film

projector, intending to use her documentaries for promoting further dialogues between the Hutu

and the Tutsi villagers.

From the vast reach of In Rwanda's worldwide screenings, it would seem that the film

has international appeal; its story of forgiveness and reconciliation in the face of violent brutality

has universal applications. It embodies four of the "best practices" criteria in its textual content,

in that the narrative gives both the Hutu and the Tutsis the opportunity to speak and shows

mutual respect for both sides' historical memories. The text follows both sides as they begin to

evidence willingness to engage in patient listening and the re-thinking of received prejudices.

Both sides gradually begin to engage in interactive problem solving, business collaborations, and

cultural exchanges. Throughout, an emphasis is placed on respect for both groups' social

practices and cultural values.

The three major drawbacks to the film in assessing its appropriateness for promoting dialogue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be its failure to be balanced in its design, its lack of timeliness, and the one-sided nature of the Rwandan genocide. The creation, direction, and production of the text evidence the first weakness within the "cautionary tales" caveats: a one-sided dominance in the sponsorship, administration, and/or production of the project by an outsider to the conflict. Furthermore, the Hutu-Tutsi genocide was first instigated and later alleviated by the Rwandan government -- the current period of reconciliation between the two groups is occurring after the government has effectively mandated a peace settlement. For these reasons, it would appear that <u>In Rwanda</u> could be more effective in promoting dialogue during a post-settlement era in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Since the Rwandan genocide was solely directed against the Hutu villagers, it is dissimilar to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with its thousands of deaths from each group (although Palestinian deaths have vastly outnumbered Israeli deaths). However, some similarities do exist between the German slaughter of Jews in World War II and the speed and unexpectedness with which the Tutsis slaughtered the Hutu. Aghion, as the child of Holocaust survivors, has a personal interest in desiring a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the filmmaker obviously possesses a "global citizen" mentality that encourages her to see patterns among groups in conflict. It would seem to follow that a judicious application of her films in post-settlement dialogue encounters could be very useful tools in promoting reconciliation between Israeli and Palestinian adults at the grassroots level. However, a homologic analysis of the texts (similar to the method essayed with the three peacebuilding films above) would be necessary to more accurately determine which types of dialogue interventions

would best be served by each of the three Rwandan documentaries, or possibly by a montage of all of the texts.

Using the example of Anne Aghion's <u>In Rwanda we say…The family that does not speak dies</u>, it may be concluded that under certain circumstances and subject to controlled conditions, it can be efficacious to use peacebuidling film texts from other countries and/or about other ethnonational and sociopolitical conflicts to promote Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. Viewing and discussing peacebuilding films about ethnic conflicts in other parts of the world -- especially ones that have reached some level of resolution -- may be a less emotionally taxing avenue for prompting dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians about their own conflict. Similarly, under certain circumstances, for some audiences, and with some restrictions, it may be appropriate to employ popular/mainstream and metaphorical film texts that have been authored by Israelis, Palestinians, or foreign filmmakers for facilitating dialogue about Arab-Jewish personal relationships and Israeli-Palestinian political aspirations.

At this juncture, we have assembled an array of theoretical research and practical criteria for determining the potential of film texts to "re-mediate" and "re-imagine" the violent parameters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We have seen that the more fully a film's production design, thematic content, character portrayals, and textual discourse adhere to "best practices" criteria and avoid "cautionary tales" criteria, the greater a film's potential for facilitating dialogue within Track II peacebuilding mediations. While the existence of symmetrical access and participation in a film's production design and/or thematic content is probably the most important of the "best practices" criteria for promoting dialogue, it is not the *only* criterion and its absence does not automatically eliminate a film from being efficacious in inter-group encounters. We have also seen that even though the vast majority of peacebuilding

film texts are realistic documentaries, it may be advantageous in some Track II mediations to screen indirect, metaphorical, foreign, or popular/mainstream films instead. These observations will be summarized in the Conclusion, where general guidelines will be provided for the selection, evaluation, and application of different types of films texts within a variety of dialogue interventions.

As hybrid children of media and literature, films have the ability to promulgate exclusionary ethnonational imaginaries and inflame suspicions, or to emphasize inclusionary cross-cultural practices and promote tolerance. By emphasizing cultural commonalities, engendering empathic insights into "enemy" lives, advocating nonviolent means of responding to injustices, and fostering reconciliatory attitudes, films can provide rhetorical wedges for destabilizing the dominant constructs that have traditionally impeded movements toward peaceful resolutions. Incipient bi-national efforts to produce joint peacebuilding films and to collaborate on popular/mainstream films speak to the networking potential of artistic texts to augment the positive effects of current peacebuilding efforts. The range of contributions to Israeli-Palestinian inter-group encounters that can be realized by interjecting indigenous and foreign peacebuilding documentaries and/or indigenous and foreign feature films lends credence to the hope that a synergistic relationship of films and dialogue will have a salutary effect in supporting peacebuilding mediations between the Israeli and Palestinian populations, and will increase the groundswell of public opinion for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

CONCLUSION

FILM TEXTS PLUS DIALOGUE AS TOOLS FOR RE-IMAGINING THE CONFLICT

On October 16, 2001 -- thirty-five days after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center -- Yossi Beilin, Israeli politician and co-author of the Geneva Initiative, spoke at Georgia State University. His topic was "Achieving Peace in the Middle East." In a soft-spoken and eloquent manner, he delivered an impressive address which asserted that all of the major issues preventing a peace settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians were very close to being resolved, and that the situation basically required two courageous leaders to sit down, make mutual compromises, and sign the agreement. Following his address, Beilin allowed questions from the audience. Rather than engaging in a normal question-answer format, Beilin indicated that he would hear all of the audiences' questions prior to his answers being given. He then listened respectfully to each question/ accusation/argument, took a few notes, and gave an addendum to his speech in which he commented holistically on all of the issues. Beilin artfully listened to, without immediately answering, each audience member, thereby avoiding a potentially confrontational situation.

Beilin's use of dialogic communication to provide "breathing room" between the audience's questions and his answers is somewhat equivalent to the "cooling-off" period that transpires between the transmission of filmic communication and any oral or written discussion by its audience. As discussed in the Introduction, viewers' responses to the production and transmission of filmic communication are generally displaced in time and space. When people

are not expected to elicit immediate responses to a communication, they generally tend to be more receptive than when they feel compelled to quickly formulate a commentary or refutation. In effect, Beilin used a technique similar to "counting to ten" before he answered the audience's questions. Then, by crafting his answers in a holistic manner, he was able to weave a more compelling narrative than if he had answered each question separately. Like Beilin's cooling-off period, the conversational gap between the viewing of a film text and any commentary by the viewers can effectively dissipate mounting tensions while providing an alternative venue for keeping communicative channels open at less stressful levels of engagement.

While film narratives may play a very small role in the eventuality of Palestinians and Israelis arriving at creative methods of collaboration and commerce, there exists a largely untapped potential for films to build bridges to transformative dialogue, and for transformative dialogue to establish cross-cultural friendships, and for cross-cultural friendships to lead to inter-communal solidarity, and for inter-communal solidarity to lead to the democratic election of officials who are prepared to compromise in shaping a future of peaceful co-existence. In the face of historical enmities that are supported and furthered by social customs, cultural narratives, and political rivalries, it is of paramount importance for peacebuilding media to provide mass venues for voices of reason and compassion to be heard and heeded by war-weary populaces.

Beyond the pervasive commonalities shared by all human beings who inhabit the planet Earth, Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs share specific secular and religious similarities that are contained within Semitic tribal characteristics, Middle Eastern cultural customs, Western-influenced political values, and monotheistic religious teachings. More importantly, Israelis and Palestinians share histories of group oppression, family ruptures, threats to collective identities, and experiences of losing lands, possessions, and loved ones during traumatic political

upheavals. It is highly significant that scholarly researchers and inter-group encounter leaders have consistently reported that the mutual recognition of shared trauma and symmetrical grief has opened doors for Palestinians and Israelis to engage in dialogic communication. Film texts are particularly well suited to emphasize commonalities and to viscerally create "joint spaces" for audiences to receive these messages of mutual victimhood. Furthermore, the application of film texts within dialogue workshops can aid the participants in overcoming feelings of helpless frustration by visually portraying cross-cultural friendships, collaborative cultural exchanges, joint business ventures, and political solidarity activities that exemplify a range of nonviolent methods for counteracting cycles of revenge.

A recent Middle East edition of the Common Ground News Service contained an article by Bassam Aramin, whose ten-year old daughter had been shot in the back of the head by an Israeli soldier. In A Plea for Peace from a Bereaved Palestinian Father (February 15, 2007), Aramin declares that instead of killing "three or four Israeli soldiers in my daughter's name," he will work with the three hundred members of his bi-national group, Combatants for Peace, to lobby the Israeli government to put the soldier on trial for his daughter's death. Aramin explains that while he was serving seven years in an Israeli jail for helping to plan an armed attack against Israeli soldiers, he spoke to prison guards and learned about the Holocaust:

> And eventually I came to understand: On both sides, we have been made
>
> instruments of war. On both sides, there is pain, and grieving, and endless
>
> loss. And the only way to make it stop is to stop it ourselves…I will not
>
> seek vengeance. No, I will continue the work I have undertaken with my
>
> Israeli brothers. I will fight with all I have within me to see that Abir's
>
> name, Abir's blood, becomes the bridge that finally closes the gap between

us, the bridge that allows Israelis and Palestinians to finally, *inshallah,* live

in peace (Aramin).

In contradistinction to the story of betrayal narrated by the *Al Aqsa* Brigade militant in <u>Occupied</u>

<u>Minds</u> -- chronicling the abandonment of his family by Israeli peace advocates after the Jenin

military invasion --Aramin reports that many Israeli members of his Combatants for Peace group

came to visit his family while his daughter lay dying.

Aramin's declarations corroborate those findings by researchers of dialogue programs

that emphasize the importance of both sides respectfully listening to each other's historical

memories in order to recognize the common traumas that have been visited upon both

collectives. The former combatant credits his learning about the Holocaust as the catalyst for his

decision to adopt nonviolent means for ending the conflict. In order to transmit stories like

Aramin's to mass audiences, the SFCG Middle East has been working since 1991 on numerous

media projects in Israel/Palestine that have targeted radio, television, theater, music, and news

services. As a partner to the *Ma'an* network of independent Palestinian television stations, it has

been sponsoring television programs that feature themes of nonviolence (SFCG <u>Capacity-</u>

<u>Building</u>). Due to these established connections, John Marks was able to simultaneously

broadcast <u>The Shape of the Future</u> to Israeli audiences in Hebrew and to Palestinian audiences in

Arabic. Additionally, Marks is planning future applications of the documentary within his

organization's sponsored network of dialogue workshops, conflict resolution training, policy

forums, community peace centers, and educational programs.

As exemplified in SFCG's plans for a broad-based dissemination of <u>The Shape of the</u>

<u>Future</u> throughout a multitude of academic and community venues in Israel/Palestine, the NGO

considers "films plus dialogue" to be essential tools for re-imagining retaliatory violence as

nonviolent political activism. This re-mediating can be seen as a small but indispensable part of a movement toward "pragmatic partnership" (Kelman), and eventually, to new attitudes of forgiveness and peaceful co-existence. In the section below, a summary of the six chapters will outline the steps that this project has taken to examine, applaud, and expand upon the use of films to facilitate dialogue within Palestinian-Israeli inter-group encounters.

Chapter Summaries and General Guidelines

A critical progression through surveys of political histories, national cinemas, dialogue models, and peacebuilding films has been designed to arrive at a decision-making process for the selection, evaluation, and application of various types of film texts for invigorating a range of dialogue interventions. Chapter One modeled the application of dialogic patterns of communication in revealing how Israeli and Palestinian ethnonational identities historically have been produced, and then showing how competing narratives can be heard and recognized without preempting each other. In a practical application of this model, the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME) has recently codified a similar dialogic method in the publication of a bi-national history textbook. The project is co-chaired by Palestinian professor Sami Adwan and Israeli professor Dan Bar-On. Their collaborative effort is the first attempt to introduce both youth populations to the collective memories and historical narratives of the two groups in conflict. For many students, reading and discussing the text will be the first time that they have learned of the existence of alternative narratives to the traditional uni-national chronicles with which they have been inculcated.

Chapter Two identified the Palestinian and Israeli cinemas as important cultural texts for the framing of political issues, the construction of national narratives, and the reinforcement of collective memories. Recognizing that a country's cinema is imbued with characteristics of mass

media and popular discourse, it follows that the correspondences flow both ways and reinforce each other -- on the one hand, cinema often engages current political controversies and reinforces cherished collective memories; on the other hand, the construction of national narratives may be influenced and aggrandized by widely acclaimed film texts. The chapter examined the relationship of popular film narratives to the promotion of ethnonational imaginaries that have historically mediated the violent parameters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and showed how the filmic "imaginings" comprising the two cinemas have kept pace with, or have contributed to, the evolution of their respective societies' political aspirations.

Chapter Two also referenced an encouraging dialogic development within the academic circle of Palestinian and Israeli film scholars -- the collaboration of Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi in researching and writing the article "Palestinian 'Roadblock Movies,'" published in Geopolitics in 2005. The co-authors theorized that the Roadblock films illustrate the practical ruptures and daily humiliations imposed by the military checkpoints on the Palestinian populace, in part, to visually communicate the practical and psychological impediments blocking the construction of a cohesive Palestinian national identity. Joining with Palestinians in publicizing the multi-layered effects of these oppressive blockades, a number of Israeli filmmakers have expressed their solidarity by contributing to the Roadblock genre of film texts (see Zanger).

After detailing the correspondences between the development of the two cinemas and the co-evolution of competing historical narratives, Chapter Two described and proposed Lucien Goldmann's theory of homologic textual analysis as an appropriate method for revealing the sociopolitical ideologies inherent in cinematic texts authored by Israel and Palestinian filmmakers over the course of the hostilities. Goldmann's method has previously enjoyed bi-national scholarly acceptance, having been cited in Sabry Hafez's study of Arabic narrative

discourse and Ella Shohat's and Nitzan Ben-Shaul's studies of Israeli cinema. In Chapter Three, a tailored version of Lucien Goldmann's philosophical-anthropological-sociological method was employed to analyze three Palestinian and three Israeli popular film texts along the dimensions of *Historico-Political Contextuality, Socio-Cultural Intertextuality,* and *Ethno-National Textuality.* Rationale was provided for the decision-making process involved to the selection of the particular filmmakers and their texts. Those are: Michel Khleifi's Tale of Three Jewels and Rami Na'aman's Flying Camel for the time period 1993-1995; Joseph Cedar's Time of Favor and Elia Suleiman's Divine Intervention for the time period 2000-2002; and Hany Abu-Assad's Paradise Now and Eitan Gorlin's Holy Land for the time period 2003-2006.

At the conclusion of Chapter Three, the discursive universes constructed in all six films were canvassed for their primary and secondary allegiances to worldviews that have perpetuated the conflict. By viewing the methods and themes chosen by the filmmakers for promoting ethnonational imaginaries within their respective texts, and then by chronologically pairing them in dialectic relationship with each other, observations were extrapolated for evaluating how these texts are similar to, or different from, those film texts from the same historical period that are aiming to promote peacebuilding worldviews. Despite these filmmakers' en-textualized allegiances to confrontational worldviews, however, two of the three Palestinians have engaged in collaborative filmmaking projects: Michel Khleifi has co-directed Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel (2003) with Eyal Sivan, and Elia Suleiman has co-directed War and Peace in Vesoul (1997) with Amos Gitai. The practice of collaborative filmmaking provides an opening for bi-nationally-produced feature-length peacebuilding films to be essayed in the future, as will be discussed in the concluding section below.

Chapter Four presented a sampling of the stronger, more successful, ongoing dialogue models within the political, educational, and grassroots/community arenas. Drawing upon the most prominent Israeli and Palestinian research findings, the theoretical justifications for the experiential frameworks of each program were culled for common characteristics which have contributed to their sustainability. While each of the secular and religious programs differed as to its longevity, mandate, and target audience, they all exhibited a quest for parity in the numbers and status of the designers, administrators, and participants of the programs. Also, they all exhibited a willingness to buttress dialogue formats with experimental forms of visual communication, social interaction, and cultural collaboration. Two of the sponsoring organizations -- the Interreligious Co-ordinating Council in Israel (ICCI) and the Parents' Circle-Bereaved Families Forum -- have already begun exploring possibilities for using films to promote dialogue.

At the conclusion of Chapter Four, the common characteristics of the thriving dialogue programs were extrapolated to provide six "best practices" criteria for determining which types of film texts can best serve to promote dialogic communication. The "best practices" are: 1) A quest for parity in the numbers and status of the designers, administrators, and participants of the programs. 2) The importance of both sides being given the opportunity to formulate and speak their respective narratives, coupled with mutual respect for both sides' historical memories. 3) A willingness of both sides to engage in patient listening and the re-thinking of received social prejudices. 4) Mutual respect for the complex range of socio-cultural practices and values among members of both groups. 5) Openness by both sides to engage in interactive problem solving, business collaborations, and cultural exchanges. 6) A recognition that affirmative action may be needed to re-mediate ingrained power inequities and/or systemic

funding disparities in the co-sponsorship of bi-national projects. These criteria, culled from the procedural designs and the operative frameworks of both secular and religious inter-group encounters, were later employed to inform the homologic analysis of three peacebuilding film texts in Chapter Six.

Chapter Five examined the reasons that a number of less successful dialogue programs had faltered and expired. Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilding practitioners found that the major procedural obstacle to dialogic communication within the inter-group encounters had been the failure of the designers and administrators to contextualize existing Israeli-Palestinian power asymmetries within the macrocosmic political conflict. Scholars specializing in a cross-section of social science fields determined that psychological obstacles to dialogic communication had resulted from a combination of factors that included competing collective memories, exclusionary ethnonational identities, and incompatible styles of cultural discourse. By learning from past mistakes, recent co-existence education programs have altered their designs and practices in order to overcome these obstacles.

One of the newer education programs described in Chapter Five was the "Life Stories in the Service of Coexistence" workshop, a university-level program led by Dan Bar-On and Fatma Kassem. The participants were encouraged to "work through" the intergenerational aftereffects of a collectively-shared traumatic historical event (such as the Holocaust or the 1948 Arab-Jewish war) so that they were able to transform the pain and rage that they had "inherited" from their parents' generation into a more realistic and constructive attitude toward their own present circumstances within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Once the participants "let go" of their exclusive claims to victimhood and oppression, they were able to acknowledge the two groups' common histories of displacement, loss of national identity, and traumatic family upheavals.

This process of working through entailed a psychological de-linking or detaching of the past from the present, in order to collaboratively envision a future of peaceful co-existence.

At the conclusion of Chapter Five, these scholarly research findings were gleaned for six "cautionary tales" criteria. The "cautionary tales" are: 1) One-sided dominance in the sponsorship, administration, and/or production of the project, especially within the context of a top-down, government-controlled ideological framework. 2) Uni-dimensional portrayals and/or stereotyping of the enemy Other. 3) A usurping of one group's historical narratives and collective memories by the other. 4) Lack of mutual acknowledgment of the complex national identities, discursive strategies, and socio-cultural practices of members of both groups. 5) Lack of mutual acknowledgment of the victimization and oppression that members of both groups have experienced and/or are experiencing. 6) Failure to validate the social and political realities of the macrocosmic conflict. In order to avoid those specific flaws that had plagued the troubled dialogue programs, the "cautionary tales" criteria were parlayed into assessing the dialogical weaknesses in the peacebuilding film texts selected for Chapter Six's homologic analyses.

Chapter Six modeled a three-tier process of selection, evaluation, and application of three peacebuilding film texts. After the rationale for the selection of the three particular films was provided, the texts were homologically analyzed and hypothetically applied to three of Chapter Four's thriving dialogue programs. The peacebuilding documentaries that were selected are: Micha X. Peled's and George Khleifi's You, Me, Jerusalem (1995); Anat Even's Compromise: A Love Story of Arabs and Jews (1995, 2000); and Jamal Dajani's and David Michaelis' Occupied Minds: A Palestinian-Israeli Journey Beyond Hope and Despair (2005). Those three film texts were evaluated with regard to their fulfillment of the principles of dialogical crafting

along four dimensions -- production design, thematic content, character portrayals, and textual

discourse -- according to the six "best practices" and the six "cautionary tales" criteria.

Each evaluation was structured along the contextual, inter-textual, and textual dimensions

that were previously essayed in from Chapter Three's homologic analyses. Additionally, a new

sub-section, *Perpetuating or Transforming the Conflict* was added in order to contrast the

dialogic strengths and weaknesses of the peacebuilding texts with the six popular/mainstream

texts. Thus, You, Me, Jerusalem was contrasted with Tale of Three Jewels and Flying Camel for

the time period 1993-1995; Compromise was contrasted with Time of Favor and Divine

Intervention for the time period 2000-2002; while Occupied Minds was contrasted with Paradise

Now and Holy Land for the time period 2003-2006.

Following their homologic evaluations, the peacebuilding films were hypothetically

applied within three of Chapter Four's thriving dialogue programs. In order to build upon those

few dialogue models where films are already being incorporated into workshop designs, Peled's

and Khleifi's You, Me, Jerusalem was applied to the ICCI film/dialogue project, and Even's

Compromise was applied to the Parents' Circle educational outreach program. To aid in

constructing a method of discerning at which intervention points film texts can have the greatest

chance of invigorating dialogic processes, Dajani's and Michaelis' Occupied Minds was applied

at three different stages of development during the School for Peace's high school workshops.

Each of the three peacebuilding documentaries was shown to have a number of possible

applications at the educational and community levels of the secular and interfaith dialogue

programs. However, after recognizing the limited availability of Israeli and Palestinian

peacebuilding films, and further noting the existence of dialogic weaknesses along at least one

dimension of each evaluated text, it was proposed that other types of films should be appraised for their potential to invigorate dialogue encounters.

Chapter Six's final section referenced and notated a sampling of feature films and documentaries, both indigenous and foreign, that had either been selected by the SFCG for its Jerusalem Film Festival or by the ICCI for its film/dialogue project. It was determined that under some circumstances, for some audiences, and with some restrictions, it can be efficacious to employ Palestinian and Israeli popular films, foreign feature films, and foreign peacebuilding documentaries about other conflicts for facilitating dialogue within Track II mediations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Throughout the progression of the six chapters, a main objective of this project has been to research, collate, and weave together the political narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the artistic worldviews of the two cinemas, the dialogic influences of Track II peacebuilding interventions, and the homologic analysis of film texts to implement a method for determining "which, why, when, and how" filmic communication is best paired with dialogic communication to buttress the effects of Palestinian-Israeli Track II peacebuilding mediations. The observations and findings from this endeavor can now be summarized into six general guidelines that are designed to assist peacebuilding practitioners in selecting, evaluating, and applying films within a range of inter-group encounters. The guidelines reflect an effort to concisely summarize a step-by-step process for using "films plus dialogue" as tools for re-mediating and re-imagining the historical parameters of the conflict. They are:

1. Film texts may be tentatively selected by pairing the goals and time constraints of dialogue encounters with thematically congruent texts. Special considerations may include the ages, genders, and national backgrounds of the dialogue participants.

2. After film texts have been tentatively selected, they may be homologically evaluated for "best practices" and "cautionary tales" criteria along the four dimensions of production design, thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse.

3. Those texts that exhibit a predominance of dialogical strengths may be applied within various dialogue events according to particular needs and goals. Those texts that exhibit a predominance of dialogical weaknesses may be discarded, edited, or possibly juxtaposed with dialogically strong texts.

4. An indigenously produced, co-directed or bi-nationally themed peacebuilding film text will most often contain a predominance of dialogical strengths in its production design, thematic content, character portrayal, and textual discourse.

5. Subject to homologic evaluation, indirect feature films may be more appropriate than realistic documentaries for some audiences. Alternatively, some inflammatory films may be screened in uni-national settings prior to engaging in inter-group dialogues.

6. Subject to homologic evaluation, feature films and documentaries about other ethnonational conflicts that have attained levels of resolution or reconciliation may aid Palestinians and Israelis in envisioning cross-cultural relationships, collaborative business ventures, and bi-national solidarity movements.

These generalized findings are designed to guide peacebuilding practitioners in selecting, evaluating, and applying film texts within a variety of dialogue interventions. Ideally, we can expand upon those few dialogue programs where films are already being incorporated into inter-group encounters, and we can exploit cinema's potential as a re-mediating influence by importing dialogic qualities into the creation, production, characterization, and discourse of future films. The hope is that dialogue/film workshops will proliferate in the near future, and

will provide Palestinian and Israeli social scientists with opportunities to conduct qualitative evaluations of the efficacy of the proffered guidelines for facilitating dialogic communication. It is also expected that with an increase in the use of films to promote dialogue, filmmakers will be encouraged to create new texts that are targeted specifically for peacebuilding mediations in the conflict. In the concluding section, two recent films that exhibit dialogical strengths will be described.

A Call for Dialogically Inspired Peacebuilding Films

In this final section, two recent texts that evidence great diversity in their production design, thematic content, character portrayals, and textual discourse are presented as examples of how dialogically inspired film texts can take many different shapes and forms. The films' lengths vary from twenty to eighty-five minutes; the genres include a comedy and a documentary; the countries of origin are Israel/Palestine and the US. Both films reference the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, either metaphorically or directly, and both are accessible to uni-national, bi-national, and foreign audiences. They are currently being viewed in film festival venues worldwide and are continuing to be honored with numerous awards.

1. Ari Sandel's <u>West Bank Story</u> (2005)

After garnering four international awards during its initial release in 2005, Ari Sandel's <u>West Bank Story</u> recently won the 2006 Oscar for Best Short Live Action Film. Sandel, who produced the twenty minute film for his University of Southern California master's degree, was raised in Los Angeles by his Israeli father and American mother. As a film student and peace activist who had traveled extensively in the Middle East, Sandel objected to the one-sided negativity (either anti-Palestinian or anti-Israeli) that prevails in the vast majority of films about

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In a telephone interview with a *Ha'aretz* journalist, Sandel emphasized his dialogic intent:

> 'I wanted to create a film that would do three things: draw attention, make
>
> people laugh and present a positive and balanced position in support of
>
> peace…It was important to me to be very careful to maintain balance and
>
> equality between the sides, because most films show only one side of the
>
> conflict and then viewers from the other side feel the movie is biased.'
>
> (Anderman).

Aiming to create Israeli characters that Palestinians would enjoy, and Palestinian characters that Israelis would enjoy, Sandel scripted a costumed and choreographed musical comedy that even-handedly ridicules both sides. Sandel reports that he conscientiously maintained parity in the number of jokes and in the number of actors from each nationality. His adherence to "best practices" criteria has resulted in an unprecedented level of popular support from both Israeli *and* pan-Arab audiences. Although the film has been screened at over a hundred film festivals worldwide, Sandel has said that the most gratifying event was the Dubai Film Festival, where the film received loud acclaim despite the fact that the Dubai government does not officially recognize the existence of the state of Israel. Additionally, numerous Palestinians attending the Festival approached the filmmaker to purchase copies for their relatives in the territories.

2. Ronit Avni's and Julia Bacha's <u>Encounter Point</u> *(2006).*

A recent collaborative documentary which has adhered to both dialogic production design and visionary thematic concepts is Ronit Avni's and Julia Bacha's <u>Encounter Point</u> (2006). The film premiered at the 2006 Common Ground Film Festival and is currently touring, prior to being released on DVD. Avni has previously co-produced short videos in collaboration

with NGO partners in Senegal, Burkina Faso, the US, Brazil, and Afghanistan. In 2005 she co-edited a collection of essays in <u>Video for Change: A Guide for Advocacy and Activism</u> (Gregory, Caldwell, Avni, and Harding). Bacha has previously collaborated with Jehane Noujaim in co-writing <u>Control Room</u> (2004), a documentary on Al Jazeera's coverage of the US-Iraq War.

<u>Encounter Point</u> is produced by Just Vision, the filmmakers' nonprofit organization that is actively involved in video advocacy -- the use of video and communications technology to advance human rights. Just Vision is an Israeli-Palestinian collaborative organization with a program that "increases awareness for Palestinian and Israeli non-violent, civilian-led efforts to build a base for peace in the Middle East" (JustVision <u>About</u>). With a similar mandate to the Search for Common Ground organization, it creates educational resources for grassroots peacebuilding efforts in Israel/Palestine, conducts educational outreaches to North American audiences, and provides nonpartisan networking opportunities for Middle Eastern peace advocates.

The production design of <u>Encounter Point</u> is both intercultural and international --the production team includes Israelis, Palestinians, a North American, and a South American. The film's interviewees are civic leaders and activists who are campaigning for community-based solutions to end the conflict. Filmed over a period of sixteen months in 2004 and 2005, the documentary amasses the powerful voices of former Israeli settlers, reformed Palestinian militants, bereaved parents, social and youth workers, secular and religious teachers, and international volunteers. The textual representations are affirmed and strengthened by statements from 180 peace advocates who comprise Just Vision's Online Network for Peace (JustVision <u>Portraits</u>).

Dialogically produced documentaries like <u>Encounter Point</u> and dialogically designed comedies like <u>West Bank Story</u> make important contributions to the realm of film texts that can be used to promote dialogue. However, they do not obviate the need for the creation of indigenous bi-national fictional peacebuilding film texts by mainstream Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers. With the exception of a few children's programs and animated shorts, the two co-directed films mentioned in Chapter Six, and a number of bi-national short montages within the ICCI's roster of films, there has been a lack of collaborative fictional projects undertaken by the most prominent filmmakers in both societies. The indigenous and collaborative production of dialogically inspired popular texts, if successfully disseminated to mass audiences, would be of inestimable value in promoting grassroots co-existence efforts.

Logically, films that are designed to encourage nonviolent solutions and collaborative responses to political impasses should evidence substantial differences from films that are designed to provoke controversy, to reveal painful truths, or to provide critical commentary on those impasses. By revealing past shared traumas, emphasizing present mutual desires for family safety, and envisioning future collaborative lifestyles, dialogically crafted films can promote sociocultural goals of peaceful coexistence between the Israeli and Palestinian populations. By advocating nonviolent means of responding to injustices and by chronicling examples of Palestinian-Israeli collaboration that break the cycle of revenge, dialogically crafted films can promote sociopolitical goals of bringing micro-level insights into the realm of macro-level change.

Filmic communication, indigenously created and consumed by both societies, has been one of the important methods of "mediating" the Israeli-Palestinian conflict throughout its sixty-year history. Although dialogic communication did not begin "re-imagining" the parameters of

the conflict until Herbert Kelman instituted problem-solving workshops in the 1970s, it has, over the decades, consistently presented alternative methods of negotiating and ameliorating the most contentious points of disagreement between the two groups. In the past fifteen years, peacebuilding film texts with dialogic qualities have entered the rhetorical arena with strategies for "re-mediating" fear-filled enemy stereotypes by envisioning hope-filled collaborative efforts. Over the same time period, the Israeli and Palestinian popular cinemas have become more sophisticated in their artistic qualities and more nuanced in their textual discourses. Additionally, Palestinian and Israeli directors have begun collaborating on bi-national film texts. The simultaneous development of both national cinemas, coupled with the advent of peacebuilding films, and the willingness of Israeli and Palestinian directors to co-direct, has positioned filmic communication to have greater potential for re-mediating the conflict than ever before.

This research project lends support to those incipient film-dialogue programs being essayed by NGOs involved in media-related peace advocacy, and urges the production of many more indigenous and collaborative peacebuilding films. It is hoped that synergized approaches to combining film texts with dialogue will work to counteract the ethnonational rhetoric that has been contributing to a perpetuation of hostilities, and will supply instead a repertoire of reconciliatory re-imaginings of the violent parameters of the conflict. Building on the unprecedented level of popular support for a political settlement that recognizes both groups' national aspirations, the moment is ripe for film/dialogue programs to contribute to the envisioning of a future time when Palestinians and Israelis will live in peaceful co-existence.

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APPENDIX

Biographies: Chapter 1

Mahmoud Abbas (a.k.a. Abu Mazen or Yasser Abed Rabbo) was born in Safed, Palestine under the British Mandate. He studied law in Egypt and received his Ph.D in Russia. A friend and colleague of Yaser Arafat's, he helped form the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the late 1950s and was exiled in Tunisia during the 1980s and 90s. After the Palestinian National Authority was established under the Oslo Accords, he held the posts of Deputy Minister and Prime Minister. Following Arafat's death in 2005, he became the first democratically-elected President of the Palestinian Authority, representing the Fatah Party. He has been instrumental in outlining the parameters of Israeli-Palestinian agreements which have resulted in the Oslo Peace Accords, the Geneva Initiative, and the current U.S. "roadmap to peace".

Ehud Barak was born in Israel and received his MA in Economics-Engineering from Stanford University in California. The most decorated soldier in Israeli history, he served as Director of Military Intelligence and Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in the 1980s. In the 1990s, he served as Israeli Minister of Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs under Yitzhak Rabin. In 1999, he was elected Prime Minister of Israel. Now retired from politics, he enjoyed greater success in the military than he did in politics.

Mustafa Barghouthi is a Palestinian born in Israel. He is the secretary and co-founder of the Palestinian National Initiative (Mubadara), a political party that opposes Hamas as being too

violent, and Fatah as being too corrupt. A physician, he is the president of the Union of

Palestinian Medical Relief and founder of the Health, Development, Information, and Policy

Institute in Ramallah, West Bank. During the second Uprising, he helped organize the

Grassroots International Protection for the Palestinian People program, which brings activists to

the West Bank and Gaza to observe and deter IDF and Jewish settler violence directed at

Palestinian civilians.

Daniel Bar-Tal is currently a professor of psychology at the School of Education of Tel Aviv

University in Israel. Born and educated in Israel, he received his MA and PhD in social

psychology at the University of Pittsburg in Pennsylvania. He has a long history of

peacebuilding activities and dialoguing with Palestinians. He is co-editor of the Palestine-Israel

Journal and director of the Institute for Jewish-Arab Co-existence Through Education at Tel

Aviv University.

Yossi Beilin was born and educated in Israel, receiving his PhD from Tel Aviv University in

political science. He was formerly Spokesman for the Labour Party, the Israeli Deputy Minister

of Finance under Shimon Peres, and the Israeli Minister of Justice under Ehud Barak. He is

currently a Knesset member, and the leader of the Yahad (Social Democratic) Party. Along with

Al-Husseini and Abbas, he is a co-architect of the Oslo Peace Accords, the Geneva Accords, and

the U.S. 'roadmap' to peace.

Calvin Goldscheider has dual Israeli and American citizenship. After receiving his PhD at

Brown University in Rhode Island, he lived and taught in Jerusalem for fifteen years as a

professor of demography and sociology at Hebrew University. He currently is a professor of sociology and Judaic studies at Brown University.

Amal Jamal is a Palestinian born and educated in Israel. He received a PhD in political science from Tel Aviv University in Israel, where he is a professor in the Department of Political Science. He is currently affiliated with the Walter Lebach Institute for Jewish-Arab Co-existence Through Education, along with Daniel Bar-Tal and Nadim Rouhana.

Rashid Khalidi, editor of Journal of Palestine Studies, is an American citizen of Middle Eastern ancestry. Educated at Yale and Oxford Universities, he is currently the Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies, and Director of the Middle East Institute at Columbia University in New York. He was formerly an advisor to the Palestinian delegation at the Madrid and Washington Arab-Israeli peace negotiations from October 1991-June 1993.

Baruch Kimmerling is a professor of sociology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Although he calls himself a third-generation Israeli sociologist, he is most often associated with the second-generation historians. Considered a foremost political analyst in Israel today, his major contribution has been the reconfiguring of the Zionist enterprise and Israeli national identity to encompass the effects of political, psychological, and social interactions with the Palestinians who live in the occupied territories and within the state of Israel.

Benny Morris was born and educated in Israel. He is currently a professor of history at Ben-Gurion University in Israel. As the most famous of the new historians, he has been associated

with radical post-Zionist scholars. However, even though he went to jail for refusing to do

military service in the West Bank, he still considers himself a Zionist and a political moderate.

Shimon Peres, along with Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, received the Nobel Peace Prize in

1994 for his efforts in creating Middle East Peace. His family immigrated to Israel in 1923 from

Poland, and he served as head of naval services during the War for Independence in 1948. He

has been a member of the Knesset since 1959 and has served as Israel's Deputy Minister of

Defense, Minister of Immigrant Absorption, Minister of Transport and Communications,

Minister of Information, Minister of Defense, and Prime Minister.

Nadim Rouhana is currently a professor of psychology, sociology, and anthropology at Tel Aviv

University in Israel. A Palestinian born and educated in Israel, he received his PhD from Wayne

State University in Indiana. He is a founding member of the Program on International Conflict

and the Center for International affairs at Harvard University, where he co-conducted Israeli-

Palestinian political workshops with Herbert Kelman in the 1990s. He is the founding director of

the Haifa-based Arab Center for Applied Social Research on social and political conditions of

Palestinian citizens in Israel. A faculty at the Institute for Jewish-Arab Co-existence at Tel Aviv

University, he co-teaches courses with Daniel Bar-Tal.

Edward Said (1935-2003) was born in Jerusalem, Palestine under the British Mandate. His

family moved to Cairo in 1947 and was unable to return to Jerusalem after the war of 1948. He

came to the U.S. to attend Princeton University, and became an American citizen. He received

his M.A. and Ph.D from Harvard University in Massachusetts. In 1963, he began teaching at

Columbia University in New York as a Professor of English and Comparative Literature, where he remained until his death. After the publication of his book, <u>Orientalism</u>, he became the most well-known Palestinian intellectual in the world.

Yezid Sayigh is a Palestinian born in Israel and was educated in Lebanon and at Columbia University in New York. He is currently the Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, West Bank and has been a professor and dean at the al-Najah National University in Nablus, West Bank. He is also the Consulting Senior Fellow on the Middle East at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in the United Kingdom, and Assistant Director of the Centre for International Studies at the University of Cambridge. He was formerly a negotiator of the PLO-Israel Accord of May 1994. He headed the Palestinian delegation to the Multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security from 1992-94.

Helena Lindholm Schulz is an associate professor at the Department of Peace and Development Research at Goteborg University in Sweden, with research ties to the Sociology Department of Birzeit University in Palestine. The author of two books and numerous qualitative studies on the formation of Palestinian nationalism, she has been accepted and recognized as an international spokesperson for Palestinian refugees residing in the Middle East and Europe.

Sammy Smooha is currently a professor of sociology at University of Haifa in Israel. He was born and educated in Israel, and received his MA and PhD in Sociology at UCLA in California. He has published widely on comparative ethnic relations and internal divisions in Israeli society.

He is the author of the 'ethnic democracy' model of Israeli society, which reveals, yet justifies, the national institutionalization of the majority-minority status of Jews and Arabs, based on ethnicity.

Biographies: Chapter 2

Kamal Abdel-Malek was born and raised in Egypt. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, where he was an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, Religion, and Film/Media Studies. He was also previously a professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Alberta, Canada and an assistant professor of comparative literature at Brown University in Rhode Island, where he co-taught a course with David Jacobson on "Arabs and Jews: Their Encounters in Contemporary Israeli and Arabic Literature." He is currently an associate professor of Arabic Literature at the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

Ilan Avisar was born in Israel and educated in Israel and the US. He received a PhD from Indiana University and taught at Ohio State University for five years. He has also been a visiting professor at numerous US schools. He is currently an associate professor in the Film and Television Department at Tel Aviv University.

Nitzan Ben-Shaul was educated in Israel and the U.S. He received his MA and PhD in cinema studies at New York University. He is currently a senior lecturer in the Film and Television Department at Tel Aviv University and former head of the department.

Nurith Gertz was born and educated in Israel. She is currently a professor of cinema and literature in the Open University and at Tel Aviv University in Israel. She is currently co-authoring a book on Palestinian cinema with George Khleifi.

Sabry Hafez was born and educated in Egypt, receiving a BA in sociology and an MA in literature from Cairo University. After receiving a PhD in Modern Arabic Literature from the University of London, he taught the Arabic language and literature at several European universities. He is currently a Professor of Modern Arabic Literature and Drama at the Center for Asian and African Literatures at the University of London.

George Khleifi was born and raised in Nazareth. He emigrated to Belgium as a young adult and studied at the INSAS School of Film in Brussels. After producing several television series and documentaries in Europe and Israel for a period of twenty years, he co-founded the Jerusalem Film Institute with journalist Daoud Kuttab. He is currently the head of training and production and the deputy director at the Institute of Modern Media, Al Quds University near Ramallah.

Yosefa Loshitzky is a Professor of Communication at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As an Israeli child of Holocaust survivors, she is personally concerned with the interaction between the narratives of the Holocaust and Zionism as related to the formation of the Israeli national identity.

Hamid Naficy, an Iranian-American, received an MFA in film and television production and a PhD in critical studies in film and television, both from UCLA in California. He has produced

many educational films and experimental videos and has published extensively about theories of exile and displacement, exilic and diasporic cinema and media, and Iranian and Third World cinemas. He is currently the Nina J. Cullinan Professor of Art & Art History/Film and Media Studies, and the chair of the Art History Department at Rice University in Texas.

Viola Shafik is a filmmaker and researcher who currently teaches cinema at the American University in Cairo. She is dedicated to giving Arab cinema a larger audience, and uses film to encourage cross-cultural communication between Middle Eastern and Western audiences.

Ella Habiba Shohat is an Iraqi-Israeli-American who is currently a Professor in two departments at New York University: Middle Eastern Studies and Art/Public Policy. After undergraduate studies in Israel, she received her MA and PhD in cinema studies at NYU. Having lived in Israel as an Arab Jew, or *Mizrahi*, she has published critical works on the social hierarchy among the Israeli immigrants.

Biographies: Chapter 3

Hany Abu-Assad was born and raised in Nazareth. When he was a teenager, he emigrated to the Netherlands and studied airplane engineering. After working as an engineer for several years, he began producing television programs and documentary films. He began writing, producing, and directing feature films in the 1990s, and founded Augustus Film company with Bero Beyer in 2000.

Dahna Abourahme's family was originally from Acre and Bethlehem. She grew up in Abu Dhabi and Amman, and received her MA in media studies at the New School for Social Research in

New York. Currently living in New York, she teaches video to youth and has been involved in several community art projects in New York and Palestine. <u>Until When</u> is her first feature film, after previously working in sound editing.

Mohammad Bakri is a Palestinian Israeli who was born in the northern Galilee. After studying theater at Tel Aviv University, he became the most famous Palestinian actor in Israeli cinema, starring in numerous films for over thirty years. In 2001 he was nominated for Best Actor by the Israeli Film Academy for his role in Benny Torati's <u>Desperado Square</u> (2000). He recently turned to the role of director, and has made two documentaries.

Joseph Cedar was born in New York City and emigrated to Israel with his orthodox Jewish parents at the age of six. He studied philosophy and theater history at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and graduated from New York University. Returning to Israel, he became an IDF paratrooper stationed in the West Bank and lived in an Israeli settlement for three years.

Eitan Gorlin was born and raised in Washington, DC, and attended an ultra-orthodox yeshiva. He came to Israel to study at a West Bank Zionist yeshiva, then went back to the US to attend the University of Pennsylvania, graduating with a BA in intellectual history. Returning to Israel to become a citizen, he worked as a bartender and served as a gunner in an Israeli tank unit. Returning to the US to study film theory and production at the New School in New York, he began writing, directing, and producing films.

Michel Khleifi was born and raised in Nazareth. He emigrated to Belgium when he was twenty, and studied theater, television, and cinema at the INSAS School of Film in Brussels. After graduating, he returned to Israel for a number of years to film documentaries on the Conflict for Belgian television. Although he has made several films in Israel/Palestine, he continues to be a Belgian resident.

Mai Masri is the daughter of a Palestinian father from Nablus and an American mother from Texas. She was raised in Beiruit, where she has lived most of her life. After graduating from San Francisco State University in CA, she returned to Beirut and began making films. She married Lebanese filmmaker Jean Chamoun and they have continued to make films separately and together for over 20 years. They divide their time between living in Lebanon and Europe.

Elia Suleiman was born and raised in Nazareth. He emigrated to New York when he was a teenager and studied filmmaking at NYU University. In 1994, he returned to Jerusalem to establish the department of Film and Media Studies at Bir Zeit University near Ramallah. He is currently a part-time resident of Paris.

Asher de Bentolila Tlalim is a Morrocan-Israeli who has written, directed, and produced numerous documentaries in Israel and Europe.

Keren Yedaya was trained at a cinema and photography school in Tel-Aviv (Camera Obscura). A member of numerous women's rights associations, she is active in protest groups against the occupation of Palestinian territories. Her films are a direct extension of her political

commitment. They are portraits of women fighting for their dignity in a society that is male dominated, militarist and strongly divided into classes.

Biographies: Chapter 4

Zakaria Al-Qaq served as the Palestinian co-director of the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) from 1990-2004, along with Gershon Baskin. He holds an MA in Communication from Cairo University in Egypt and a BA in English Literature from the University of Kuwait. He has previously worked as a journalist covering the Iran-Iraq war and has also served as editor of the <u>Kuwait Times</u>.

Tal Al-Sidr, a Muslim Sheik, was a founding member of the Hebron chapter of the Hamas party and an advocate of the violent overthrow of the Israeli occupation. After being deported to Lebanon in 1991, he renounced violence and became a Minister of State for the Palestinian Authority under Yasir Arafat. In 2002 he signed the Alexandria Declaration, and has continued to engage in international interreligious peacebuilding conferences. He is currently lives in Hebron and is a tireless advocate of a joint *hudna* (religiously sanctioned truce) between the two peoples.

Gershon Baskin was born in the United States and emigrated to Israel in the 1970s. He has been the co-director of IPCRI, a jointly administered public policy think tank, since its inception in 1988. He founded IPCRI following ten years of working in the field of Arab-Jewish relations within the Israeli Ministry of Education, when he established the Institute for Education for Jewish-Arab Coexistence. At the present time, he is continuing to contribute to Track II peace building programs and to Track I peace making negotiations.

Riyad Faraj is a Palestinian from the Deheishe Refugee Camp, which is located west of Bethlehem. About 11,000 Palestinian refugees and their descendants, who fled or were expelled from their homes during the War of 1948, live in the Camp. Faraj joined the Bereaved Families Forum in January 2004. His father was killed by the Israeli army in the spring of 2003. His brother died of leukemia, which he developed while serving time in Israeli prison. Faraj himself spent nearly seven years in Israeli prisons in the 1980s.

Marc Gopin received his rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University in New York and a PhD in Religious Ethics from Brandeis University in Massachusetts. He is senior researcher at the Fletcher School for Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University in Massachusetts, and is a Professor of World Religions at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution in Virginia. He is also currently the director of the Center on Religion, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution there. Over the past 20 years, he has been active in back channel diplomatic negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, and has trained over 1,000 students from 25 countries in peacemaking strategies for ethnic conflicts involving religion and culture.

Rabah Halabi is a Palestinian born and educated in Israel, and is a long-time resident of Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam, an Arab-Jewish intentional community located near the Latrun monastery. He received a Ph.D. from the Department of Education at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he teaches, and is also affiliated with Tel Aviv University, through course offerings of the Institute for Jewish-Arab Co-existence Through Education. He is the director of the Peace Research Center at the School for Peace, and has co-facilitated Israeli-Palestinian dialogue workshops at the School for Peace for over 20 years.

Yahya Hendi is a Palestinian born in Israel. He received his BA in *Shariah* (Islamic Law and Theology) at the University of Jordan in Amman, and his MA in Comparative Religion at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. He is currently the Muslim Chaplain at both Georgetown University in Washington, DC and the National Naval Medical Center in Maryland. He is also the director of the Public Education and Assistance Conference (PEACE) office of the Muslim American Society.

Muhammed Hourani is a Palestinian born in Israel. He received an undergraduate degree from Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a PhD in Education from Sussex University in Brighton, England. He is a fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, where he directs the Desk for Dialogue and Teaching for Peace, and also directs the coexistence program at the David Yellin Teacher Training College, both in Jerusalem. Along with Rabbi Ron Kronish, he co-facilitates a Jewish-Muslim dialogue group sponsored by the ICCI, and frequently represents the Muslim faith in trialogue presentations in Israel and worldwide.

Elias Jabbour is a Christian Israeli Arab who was born in British Mandate Palestine. He and his wife, Heyam, have been active for more than thirty years in community-based peacebuilding efforts in Israel and worldwide. In 1978, they founded the first Arab-initiated center for peace in the Middle East, the House of Hope, which is located in the Galilean town of Shefa-Amer. After graduating from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Jabbour has worked as a high school teacher, writer, editor, and interpreter. Like his father, he served as Deputy Mayor of his town, and is

considered a spokesperson for the Galilean region. He and his wife were recipients of the Mount Zion Award for promoting interfaith dialogue in 1996.

Herbert Kelman was born in Austria and immigrated to the United States during World War II. He received a PhD in social psychology from Yale University in Connecticut. He is currently a research professor of social ethics at Harvard University in Massachusetts, and is director of the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. He approaches third party intervention from a background in political psychology, and has applied his method of interactive problem-solving to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for over 30 years, primarily targeting politicians and community leaders as workshop participants.

Ron Kronish received a BA from Brandeis University in Massachusetts, his rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union College in New York, and a PhD in Education from Harvard University in Massachusetts. He emigrated to Israel 20 years ago, and founded the ICCI in Jerusalem in 1991. As the ICCI director, Kronish coordinates the peacebuilding activities of over 65 peacebuilding institutions in Israel and worldwide, facilitates ongoing community dialogue groups and education programs, and appears at conferences to conduct trialogues, along with Palestinian Muslim and Christian co-facilitators.

Yehezkel Landau is a dual US and Israeli citizen. After receiving an MTS from Harvard Divinity School in Massachusetts, he emigrated to Israel, where he served as program coordinator for the Israel Interfaith Association, executive director of the Oz Ve'Shalom-Netivot

Shalom religious peace movement, and co-director of the Open House Center for Jewish-Arab
Coexistence in Ramle. He is currently a faculty associate in Interfaith Relations at Hartford
Seminary in Connecticut.

Abdulsalaam Manasra, a Muslim Sheik, was born in British Mandate Palestine in the village of
Ein Dor. He and his family became internal refugees when they fled to Nazareth during the 1948
war. He was a member of the Israeli Communist Party for 20 years, until he converted to Sufi
Islam about 25 years ago. He is currently the head of a Sufi order in Jerusalem which operates
four mosques and is planning to open an Islamic school. He participates in many interfaith
peacebuilding activities in Israel and worldwide, and recently founded an NGO for establishing a
Sufi center in Nazareth.

David Rosen, formerly the Chief Rabbi of Ireland, is the director of the Anti-Defamation
League's Jerusalem office and its co-liason to the Vatican. He serves as president of the World
Conference on Religion and Peace, president of the International Council of Christians and Jews,
director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, and co-vice chairperson of
the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel.

Nadim Rouhana is currently a professor of psychology, sociology, and anthropology at Tel Aviv
University in Israel. A Palestinian born and educated in Israel, he received his PhD from Wayne
State University in Indiana. He is a founding member of the Program on International Conflict
and the Center for International affairs at Harvard University, where he co-conducted Israeli-
Palestinian political workshops with Herbert Kelman in the 1990s. He is the founding director of

the Haifa-based Arab Center for Applied Social Research on social and political conditions of Palestinian citizens in Israel. A faculty at the Institute for Jewish-Arab Co-existence at Tel Aviv University, he co-teaches courses with Daniel Bar-Tal.

Bernard Sabella is currently an associate professor of sociology at Bethlehem University in Israel/ Palestine. He received a PhD in sociology from the University of Virginia in the US. He is the Executive Secretary of the Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees in the Middle East Council of Churches, and is on the Board of Trustees of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs in Jerusalem.

Ayelet Shahak was born in Jerusalem, where her parents immigrated before the War of 1948. Shahak's daughter was killed in a bombing outside a Tel Aviv mall in 1996, on her fifteenth birthday. During the mourning period, the Shahaks discovered that their daughter's diaries were full of writings and poems about peace. They became founding members of the Parents Circle-Bereaved Families Forum, a group of over 500 Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost loved ones to the conflict, and who advocate reconciliation over retribution. Shahak, along with her Palestinian partners, lectures in schools throughout Israel and in the West Bank.

Nava Sonnenschein was born and educated in Israel. She is one of the founders of the School for Peace at Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam, and filled a revolving position as the School's director from 2003-05. She has trained hundreds of people to facilitate groups in conflict, and has lectured extensively all over the world. She is currently working on her PhD at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Munib Younan is a Palestinian born and raised in the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. He is currently the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Amman, Jordan and Jerusalem, Israel. For the past 15 years, he has participated in interreligious trialogues with Muslims and Jews. Along with Rabbi Ron Kronish, he is the co-leader of the Jonah Group, a Jewish-Christian dialogue group sponsored by the ICCI, based in Jerusalem.

Biographies: Chapter 5

Farid Abdel-Nour received a BS in pharmacy and a PhD in political science from Rutgers University in New Jersey. He is currently a professor in the Political Science Department at San Diego State University and the Faculty Coordinator for SDSU's Center for Islamic and Arabic Studies. He is an active participant in Arab-Jewish dialogue groups in the San Diego area and gives frequent public lectures on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. His research and teaching interests are in political theory and Middle East politics.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer is a Palestinian born and educated in Israel. After receiving an MA in education from Hebrew University, he became certified as a facilitator at the Neve Shalom/ Wahat al Salam School for Peace, and began co-facilitating Israeli-Palestinian dialogue workshops. He received a PhD in conflict resolution from George Mason University in Virginia and has conducted training workshops and dialogue events in countries worldwide. After many years of secular involvement, he turned to researching Islamic traditions of peacebuilding, and began conducting interfaith dialogue events. He is currently an associate professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at the School of International Service and the

director of the Peacebuilding and Development Institute, both at American University in Washington, D.C.

Sami Adwan received a BA in elementary education from Jordan University in Amman, and an MA and PhD in educational administration from San Francisco State University in California. After having chaired the Department of Education at Hebron University, he is currently a Professor of Education at Bethlehem University in Israel/Palestine. Along with Dan Bar-On, he is co-director of the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME).

Dan Bar-On was born and educated in Israel, receiving his PhD from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is a professor of psychology and chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences at Ben-Gurion University in Beer Sheva. He is also the director of the Center for Dialogue Between Populations in Conflict. Along with Sami Adwan, he is co-director of the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME).

Daniel Bar-Tal is currently a professor of psychology at the School of Education of Tel Aviv University in Israel. Born and educated in Israel, he received his MA and PhD in social psychology at the University of Pittsburg in Pennsylvania. He has a long history of peacebuilding activities and dialoguing with Palestinians. He is co-editor of the Palestine-Israel Journal and director of the Institute for Jewish-Arab Co-existence Through Education at Tel Aviv University.

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi received a PhD in clinical psychology from Michigan State University and is currently a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Haifa in Israel. Previously, he has taught and conducted clinical research at numerous universities in the US, Europe, and Israel. He specializes in social identity, psychology of religion, and personality development.

Ellen Feghali [Kussman], a Lebanese American, received a BA in Communication from University of Missouri. Previously the director of Research and Development for the TimeZero company and a communication consultant for The Write Choice, both in Lebanon, she has also taught at the American University of Beirut Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Yousuf Griefat is a Palestinian born and educated in Israel. He received an MA in education from Haifa University in Israel, and conducted a case study of Arab Bedouin communication patterns for his thesis.

Ilan Gur-Ze-ev was born and educated in Israel. He is currently a senior lecturer on the philosophy of education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Haifa in Israel.

Marouf Hassian, Jr. received a PhD from the University of Georgia and is currently an associate professor of communication at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Fatma Kassem is a Palestinian born and educated in Israel. Currently, she is a graduate student in the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel,

where she has been working with Dan Bar-On in designing and facilitating storytelling workshops.

Tamar Katriel was born and educated in Israel. She received a PhD in speech communication at University of Washington in Seattle, where she was formerly an associate professor in the Department of Communication. She is currently a professor of communication and education at Haifa University in Israel.

Herbert Kelman was born in Austria and immigrated to the United States during World War II. He received a PhD in social psychology from Yale University in Connecticut. He is currently a research professor of social ethics at Harvard University in Massachusetts, and is director of the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. He approaches third party intervention from a background in political psychology, and has applied his method of interactive problem-solving to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for over 30 years, primarily targeting politicians and community leaders as workshop participants.

Jonathan Kuttab is a Palestinian human rights attorney from Ramallah. He is the founder and co-director of Law in the Service of Man (*al-Haq*) -- the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists. He is also the co-founder of the Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners.

Ifat Maoz was born and educated in Israel, receiving an MA in psychology from Hebrew University and a PhD in social psychology from Haifa University. She has been a visiting

scholar at several US universities, where she has both taught and conducted research. She is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where she specializes in the psychological aspects of intergroup relations and conflict. For over ten years, she has been involved in research studies evaluating cognitive-perceptual mechanisms and patterns of communication in contact interventions between Israelis and Palestinians.

Ilan Pappe was born and educated in Israel. He is currently a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Haifa in Israel.

Dan Rabinowitz was born and educated in Israel. He received a PhD in social anthropology from Cambridge University in Britain, based on ethnographic research he conducted among Palestinian citizens of Israel. He is currently a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University in Israel. He is a founding member of PALISAD – a group of Israeli and Palestinian academics involved in an ongoing intellectual debate since 1998.

Nadim Rouhana is currently a professor of psychology, sociology, and anthropology at Tel Aviv University in Israel. A Palestinian born and educated in Israel, he received his PhD from Wayne State University in Indiana. He is a founding member of the Program on International Conflict and the Center for International affairs at Harvard University, where he co-conducted Israeli-Palestinian political workshops with Herbert Kelman in the 1990s. He is the founding director of the Haifa-based Arab Center for Applied Social Research on social and political conditions of

Palestinian citizens in Israel. A faculty at the Institute for Jewish-Arab Co-existence at Tel Aviv University, he co-teaches courses with Daniel Bar-Tal.

Shoshana Steinberg was born and educated in Israel. She is currently a lecturer in social psychology at Kaye Academic College of Education in Beer Sheva, where she is also involved in a project promoting cooperation between Jewish and Palestinian Israeli citizens. Affiliated with the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME), she works with Sami Adwan and Dan Bar-On as an observer and evaluator of their historical narratives program.

Ramzi Suleiman is Palestinian born and educated in Israel. He is currently the chair of the Department of Psychology at Haifa University in Israel, and is the co-editor of the Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation. He is on the board of directors of the Jewish-Arab Center at Haifa University, and is a research fellow at the Hebrew University Institute for the Advancement of Peace, and the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. His research interests include the study of inter- and intra- group processes, social identity, bargaining, and social dilemmas.

Dina Wardi was born in Italy on the eve of World War II. Her family immigrated to British Mandate Palestine to escape the Holocaust. She currently lives in Jerusalem, where she has a psychotherapy practice. For over 20 years, she has specialized in individual and group therapy for children of Holocaust survivors.

R.S. Zaharna, a Palestinian American, received a MEd and EdD from Columbia University in New York. She is currently an associate professor of Public Communication at American

University in Washington, DC. Previously, Zaharna has served as a public communication, education and editorial consultant to the World Bank, the United Nations Arab Missions; USAID, and the Palestinian delegation to Middle East peace talks.

Yael Zeruvabel was born and educated in Israel and the US, receiving a BA at Tel-Aviv University, and an MA and a PhD at University of Pennsylvania. She has taught in several US and Israeli universities. Currently, she is a professor of Jewish studies and history in the Jewish Studies Department of Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Yael-Janette Zupnick was born in Israel and has been educated in Israel and the US. She has taught at Tel-Aviv University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her areas of interest include discourse analysis, pragmatics, and cross-cultural communication.

Biographies: Chapter 6

Jamal Dajani was born and raised in East Jerusalem, where his family had lived for centuries. He received a BA in Political Science from Columbia University in New York. He has been a US resident since 1975, and is the Director of Middle Eastern Programming at Link TV in San Francisco.

Anat Even was born and raised in Israel. She received degrees in Film, French, and Art from UCLA in California and The American University in Paris.

Yulie Gerstel-Cohen was born in Tel Aviv. Her family has lived in Israel/Palestine for six generations. She received a BA in sociology and anthropology at Tel Aviv University, and an

MA in Communication Art from NYIT. She became an independent filmmaker in 1993, and is currently the head of the Forum of Israeli Documentary Filmmmakers.

George Khleifi was born and raised in Nazareth. He emigrated to Belgium as a young adult and studied at the INSAS School of Film in Brussels. After producing several television series and documentaries in Europe and Israel for a period of twenty years, he co-founded the Jerusalem Film Institute with journalist Daoud Kuttab. He is currently the head of training and production and the deputy director at the Institute of Modern Media, Al Quds University near Ramallah.

Michel Khleifi was born and raised in Nazareth. He emigrated to Belgium when he was twenty, and studied theater, television, and cinema at the INSAS School of Film in Brussels. After graduating, he returned to Israel for a number of years to film documentaries on the Conflict for Belgian television. Although he has made several films in Israel/Palestine, he continues to be a Belgian resident.

John Marks was born and educated in the US. He is president and CEO of Search for Common Ground, based in Washington, DC, which he founded in 1982. He and his wife Susan Collins Marks recently spent two years living in Israel and working with the SFCG Middle East office in Jerusalem.

David Michaelis was born and raised in West Jerusalem, and continues to be a resident of Israel. His mother emigrated from Germany to British Mandate Palestine during the 1920s. He came to

San Francisco in 2000 to help with the launch of Link TV, and co-produces the Middle East news program "Mosaic" with Jamal Dajani.

Micha X. Peled was born and raised in Israel and educated in the US. Before becoming a filmmaker, he had been a tutor, a prison guard, a freelance journalist, a political campaign manager, and an adventure trip guide.