BEYOND THE EAST/WEST DIVIDE:

THE REPRESENTATION OF MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICS IN AMERICAN AND EGYPTIAN CINEMAS

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Leicester

by

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September 2003

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Beyond the East/West Divide: The Representation of Middle Eastern Politics in American and Egyptian Cinemas

By Lina Khatib

Abstract

The Middle East is at the heart of political debate today. This study analyzes the representation of Middle Eastern politics in contemporary American and Egyptian films produced between 1980 and 2000. The study aims at complicating theories on the East/West divide, namely Edward Said's discourse on Orientalism, by showing not only how the Orient is constructed and dominated by the Occident, but also how the Orient itself engages in representations of the self and Others and how it is consumed by internal as well as external power struggles. The study identifies four main themes: the representations of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Islamic fundamentalism, and the use of space (both physical and mental) and gender as tools utilized in strengthening the nationalist stance each cinema takes. The study argues that the two cinemas both converge and diverge in their portrayal of those issues. While Hollywood constructs the United States as a world policeman, positioning itself above the politics portrayed, Egyptian cinema constructs Egypt as an Arab leader, yet positions Egypt as a sympathizer to other Arab nations. Hollywood also imagines the American nation as a masterful male, while Egyptian cinema imagines Egypt in terms of subdued femininity. The study shows that the two cinemas converge in their outlooks on Islamic fundamentalism, which is constructed as a common enemy. However while Hollywood's portrayal of Islamic fundamentalism is one-dimensional and based on terrorism, Egyptian cinema's is more nuanced, focusing on other dimensions of fundamentalists' lives, from every-day social matters to psychological trauma. The study concludes that the Egyptian films constitute a factor of resistance to Hollywood's global narratives; yet the study's highlighting of the non-innocence of the Egyptian films in this context complicates an East/West binary that either views the East as an essential victim or as an incarnation of goodness.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Paula Saukko for her endless academic, emotional and even technical support. My partner Matthew Godfrey, for putting up with my tantrums during some long, dark days. My parents, for their support and love and financial sacrifices without which I would not have been able to finish this thesis. My only brother for providing priceless amusement over the years. My partner's family, for being there in times of crisis and times of joy. My dear friends Catarina Figueira, Angelica Amoroso and Paolo Panzarino, for offering their homes and help in times of need. My friends and family in the UK and across the globe for never ceasing to believe in me. ORS for valuable financial aid. The BFWG Charitable Foundation, for helping me fund the video collection. Tina Jarvis, for being a wonderfully understanding and supportive boss during a difficult time. Royan Omg and James Goodger for vital technical rescue. My students, who have helped me grow as an academic. And all the colleagues who have provided support. I dedicate this work to my late friend Jeremy Foo, who would have loved to celebrate this with me.

Introducing Beyond the East/West Divide

The Middle East is at the heart of political debate today. With the events of September 11, 2001, the war on Iraq and shifting American interests in the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Middle East has been perceived globally as a place of conflict that is no longer confined to its geographical setting. So while until recently intrinsic details about political matters in the Middle East used to be largely confined to a place outside the immediate Western imagination, today the media across the globe are granting the Middle East a central position. This not only applies to news coverage, but also to fiction.

However more attention to the Middle East does not necessarily imply better understanding. Arriving in England as an MA student in 1998, I encountered several stale notions of the Middle East in general and of Beirut in specific in the minds of a few people: as an urban jungle, as an empty desert, as an exotic place with strange cultural practices, as a site of conflict and war. My discomfort with those notions motivated me to study cinematic representations of the region and its politics, as cinema is a powerful tool of cultural production. This study compares the representation of Middle Eastern politics in contemporary popular American and Egyptian cinemas. Hollywood is analyzed because it is the most powerful film industry in the world, its representation of the politics of the Middle East forming at least part of people's imagination of the region. Egyptian cinema is analyzed because it is the biggest film industry in the Middle East, which provides a good point of comparison with Hollywood. Egyptian films are distributed across the Arab world and are also watched by Arab ex-patriots globally. The study focuses on the final two decades of the last century, and how Middle Eastern politics has been represented in 15 American and 15 Egyptian popular films produced within that period. The study identifies two major political issues portrayed in the films: the Arab-Israeli conflict and Islamic fundamentalism, but it also discusses the Gulf War, the Lebanese Civil War and other political events linked with the Middle East. The thesis complicates Said's (1978) theory on Orientalism by studying not only how the West represents the East but also how the Orient represents itself. The thesis thus both affirms and disturbs the focus on Western dominance often witnessed in discourses on the East.

Orientalism and beyond

Edward Said's 1978 book *Orientalism* in particular inspires the basis of this thesis. Said shows how Orientalism implies that there exists a primordial difference between the West and the East. This constructed difference has been implanted in relations of power between the West and the East, whereby the first dominates the second, and where the East is constructed as the West's Other and the source of its identity. Thus the West uses the East, perceived in terms of lack and inferiority, to form its superior identity. Orientalist discourse uses this argument to justify the West's control over the East, portraying the East as in need of Western dominance and definition as it is incapable of defining itself.

The salience of Said's discourse is that, while written in 1978, it is still applicable today. Investigating the political relations between the United States and various Arab countries throughout the 20th and 21st centuries shows that most, if not all, Arab countries have been cast in an inferior position, whether implicitly or explicitly. For example, American attitude towards Iraq from the 1990's onwards is one about a country lacking in morals and that, unless controlled, poses a threat to American sovereignty and world peace. On the other hand, attitudes towards Saudi Arabia for example have been more careful, namely because of the latter's oil power. This has led Douglas Little (2003) to label the relations between the United States and the Middle East, politically, but also culturally, "American Orientalism". Little argues that this relationship is contradictory, resulting from "an irresistible impulse to remake the world in America's image and a profound ambivalence about the people to be remade" (2003, p. 3).

An important issue that the book *Orientalism* highlights is the matter of representation and control. Representations are a way of introducing order to the world, of making unfamiliar things familiar. *Orientalism* shows that when the unfamiliar carries a trace of familiarity, when it is "like us, and yet not like us" (Moscovici 1984, p. 25), it is looked at as not quite right, and therefore "uncultured" or "barbaric". This has meant that the Orient and the Occident are ascribed opposing characteristics that are seen in Western discourses, from travel writing to cinema.

Moscovici lists two functions of representations: First, they make objects, persons and events conventional. They "give them a definite form, locate them in a given category and gradually establish them as a model of a certain type, distinct and

shared by a group of people" (1984, p. 7). *Orientalism* argues that this has constructed the Orient as a distinct, coherent entity. This is for example reflected in the mythical creation of a unified anti-Western Arabia in Hollywood. Second, representations are "prescriptive", forcefully imposing themselves on people. This force is partially derived from every culture's tradition that states what people should think before they even think about it. Thus, "before seeing and hearing a person we have already judged him; classified him and created an image of him [sic]. So that all the enquiries we make and our efforts to obtain information only serve to confirm this image" (Moscovici 1984, p. 27). This is how myths on the Middle East have persisted in Hollywood throughout the years, transforming with history and yet conforming to an ideological stance that constructs the Middle East as "different". Said (1993) sees the position of the United States as unique in this context. As he puts it, "all cultures tend to make representations of foreign cultures... to master or in some way control them. Yet not all cultures make representations of foreign cultures *and* in fact master or control them" (1993, p. 120). American control over the Middle East has been argued to reside in the US' theory of law-making, by which American foreign policy aims at maintaining "law and order" in the world. In doing so, the United States seems to be standing not under that law, but above it. The American media's role in this is that they reflect American politics. They do not just fit into the United States' political system; they are a crucial part of that system (Tunstall 1977). According to Chomsky (1989), the media create a sense of consent among the American public, making it accept that law-enforcing role, and that "it is up to 'us' to right the wrongs of the world" (Said 1993, p. 346).

Chomsky argues for a discussion of cultural domination, which, he says, in order to be sustained

> "new forms of domination will have to be devised to ensure that privileged segments of Western industrial society maintain substantial control over global resources, human and material, and benefit disproportionately from this control... it is an absolute requirement for the Western system of ideology that a vast gulf be established between the civilized West, with its traditional commitment to human dignity, liberty, and self-determination, and the barbaric brutality of those who for some reason... fail to appreciate the depth of this historic commitment" (1982, p. 85).

Hollywood can thus be seen as an ideological tool that maintains American domination in world politics. Sardar (1999) argues that American domination is globalized:

> "In such a [globalized] world, Orientalism is transformed into an expression of globalized power and becomes both an instrument for exercising that power and containing perceived threats to that power. The iconic symbol of the 'Arab terrorist' as a general representation of Islam, for example, emerged... as a direct product of the threats that America perceived from Islam. It is a representational response to the short-lived rise in oil prices, the event of the Iranian revolution, the surrogate allies that turn into demon opponents. These events straddle the period of the evaporation of the 'Communist bloc'" (p.111).

While Orientalism is important as a framework for understanding the workings of the East/West divide, it carries several shortcomings. I shall criticize Said's discourse on Orientalism in detail in Chapter 2, but for now let me summarize: Orientalism is concerned with how the Orient is represented by the Occident; it implies that power relations between the East and West revolve around imposition by the latter on the former; Said's discourse on Orientalism also does not pay attention to power relations within the Orient itself, or how the Orient also engages in representation. Applied to cinema, those shortcomings have meant that while a significant number of *Orientalism*-based studies have been conducted on representations of the Middle East and the politics behind them (see chapter 1), the number of studies done on the way the Middle East represents itself cinematically, namely the way it represents politics, is comparatively infinitesimal.

The lack of studies of course does not mean that the Middle East has not engaged in such cinematic activities. On the contrary, there are numerous films produced across the Middle East (mainly in Egypt and Lebanon) that tackle political issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Lebanese Civil War. It is quite surprising yet depressing to see that this wealth of production has not been met with significant academic attention. Part of the problem lies in the culture of victimization that has spread across the Middle East, and which has catalyzed several projects on the stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims, but has turned a blind eye to the other side of the

formula. Paradoxically, this has meant that those studies have involuntarily sustained the legacy of Orientalism, by fixing the Middle East as defenseless and objectified. This has also meant that the gap between the "East" and the "West" has been maintained.

In light of this criticism, my study pays attention to how the "Orient" represents itself and Others, and thus goes beyond notions of Orientalism and cultural domination. The study expands existing knowledge about media representation and politics, and complicates any simple notion about the East/West divide. It goes beyond the Orient/Occident dichotomy in that it shows not only how politics affects how the East is portrayed by the West, but also how the East portrays certain elements of itself and Others. This is done through analyzing the representation of Middle Eastern politics in Egyptian cinema.

Research questions and themes

The main aim of the thesis is to complicate notions of an East/West divide. The East/West divide is constructed by Orientalist discourses both in popular myths and in academic literature that assume irreconcilable differences between the East and the West, and theories like cultural imperialism which ascribe the East a subordinate position vis-à-vis the West. The thesis is comparative, juxtaposing the representation of politics in Hollywood with that in Egyptian cinema, while looking at cinema as a tool of nationalism. The research questions posed by the thesis can be stated as follows: How do the American and Egyptian cinemas represent Middle Eastern politics? How do the representations of aspects of Middle Eastern politics differ between the two cinemas, and how do they converge? Taking into consideration the global transparency of Hollywood narratives, what challenge does Egyptian cinema produce in its representations of the same issues covered by Hollywood? How are the representations of the various political issues covered by the films informed by the political and historical context in which they occur?

Those research questions have produced four main themes that have surfaced in the quest to investigate differences and similarities among and within the films. The themes are elements of a discourse that tend to repeat in different forms across the films. The first theme is the use of space as a political tool to demarcate the Self from

the Other. The analysis has found that landscape plays a major role in the imagining of the nation and the place of Others. This is seen in Hollywood's contrasting representations of the "civilized" American landscape and of the natural/urban jungles of Other spaces, and in Egyptian cinema's casting of Others a place outside the Egyptian mental landscape. The second theme is gender, which is also utilized as a tool of nationalism demarcating the Self from Others. The relationship between and among men and women implicates different imaginings of the American and Egyptian nations in their respective cinemas, the first as a male, the second as a female, and therefore symbolizes the lack of common myths between the two sides. The third theme is the representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This issue was found to be focused on by half the American and the Egyptian films. Each side's construction of the conflict corresponds with each country's political and economic interests, with Palestine cast as Other in Hollywood and Israel cast as Other in Egyptian cinema. The fourth theme is the representation of Islamic fundamentalism, an issue focused on again by half the films on each side. Again the representation of Islamic fundamentalism is subject to nationalist and political agendas, but this time Islamic fundamentalism is represented as an Other by both sides. What links those themes is the way they strengthen the theoretical argument taken by the study. The differences and similarities between the ways the films address the themes both form an application of theory (namely Orientalism) and affirm the break from the East/West divide that the thesis advocates.

Whatever portrayal there is in cinema is also affected by factors like economics and censorship. For example, economics is one reason behind the lower technical quality of Egyptian films; and censorship covertly affects the content of films on each side. While such factors will be taken into consideration, they are not focused on. The thesis does not claim to cover the whole scope of why/how the content of the films is as it is; further research needs to be done in order to get a more comprehensive view.

Chapter outline

The thesis is composed of six chapters. Those chapters can be divided into three sections: the first forms the background of the study; the second covers broad issues found across the films analyzed; and the third analyzes specific political issues in detail. The background of the study is composed of chapters one and two. The first chapter discusses the structural framework of the thesis, introducing the films to be analyzed, the historical period chosen for the study, and reviews existing literature on relevant issues. It also introduces the two cinema industries, comparing the rise of Hollywood with the development of Egyptian cinema. This shows how Egyptian cinema came to be the biggest film industry in the Middle East and clarifies why Hollywood's stories have become global while Egyptian cinema is comparatively obscure. The chapter also analyzes the methodological framework of the thesis, focusing on deconstruction, its strengths and weaknesses, and how the thesis resolves those limitations by linking deconstruction with Foucault's discourse on power.

Chapter two sets the theoretical framework of the thesis. The chapter starts with a discussion of the theory of Orientalism and its usefulness in analyzing the films. The chapter then moves to a detailed criticism of Orientalism, showing how the research presented in this thesis complicates this theory. This is then linked with Foucault's work on power, knowledge and truth, arguing for this work's usefulness in analyzing the power struggle between and within the films, namely in the representations of the national self and Others. Islamic fundamentalism is then discussed as a specific case complicating the theories discussed so far. The issue of Islamic fundamentalism, unlike other political issues in the films, presents a challenge to East/West binaries as it is an Other to the West and the East at the same time. It is also a force that is oppositional to the nation on one hand, and nationalist on the other hand; therefore it is presented as a negotiative force within processes of globalization, rather than a localized issue. Finally, the films' discourses over Islamic fundamentalism are an example of the struggle over meaning and Truth as argued by Foucault.

The chapters that follow form the core of the thesis and present the findings of the analysis of the films within the above framework. They comprise an analysis of the themes emerging from the films. The second section comprises chapters three and four, and discusses the two main tools of nationalism spanning the films: space and

gender. Much of the political debate on the Middle East revolves around space. Space in this context not only is part of people's identity, but also a dynamic tool often utilized to define the identity of nations. Chapter three analyzes the different ways the films construct and understand space in the context of Middle Eastern politics. The chapter contrasts Hollywood's relationship with space as one about mastery, mirroring America's "from above" approach to Middle Eastern politics, with the Egyptian films' more intimate portrayal of space, where conflicts are more localized and closer to home. Thus space is explored as both a physical and a mental/imagined/lived entity. In its analysis of issues like the representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Islamic fundamentalism in the films and their spatial manifestations, the chapter demonstrates that political space is not a matter of core versus periphery, where "we" reside within a space and "they" outside it; rather, old boundaries have been erased while new ones have been (re)drawn. The chapter highlights how, nevertheless, instead of viewing boundaries as places of negotiating difference, both the American and Egyptian films lack any dialogue surrounding issues of national frontiers, resorting to authentication to imagine and legitimate their political agendas.

Chapter four discusses gender as a tool of nationalism across the films. The chapter explores gender representations of Egypt and the United States in their respective cinemas. The Egyptian films construct a mother/whore binary where the Egyptian nation is symbolized by wholesome femininity yet remains patriarchal, while sexually aloof women are used to symbolize the foreign enemy, Israel and the United States. At the same time, the Egyptian films use gender as a mark of modernity, symbolizing the oppression of Islamic fundamentalism through the representation of silent, veiled women while highlighting fundamentalism's immorality through depicting the hypocrisy of Islamic fundamentalist men in their relations with women in general. In contrast the films present images of modern, politically active women who symbolize the modern face of Egypt. Hollywood on the other hand constructs the American nation as male. The chapter shows that there has been a historical/political shift in the way this male has been imagined, moving from the image of the virile, statuesque male in the 1980's that constructs the American nation as the world policeman, to the image of the "new man" in the 1990's and beyond, where the United States is placed as a tough yet caring global force. Essential Arab enemies are also represented as male in the Hollywood films, making the

conflict between the United States and Arab countries in the films one between masculinities. The chapter thus demonstrates the lack of communication between the two imaginations of the United States and Egypt and their Others in their respective cinemas.

The third section comprises chapters five and six, and analyzes the two main political themes portrayed in the films: the Arab-Israeli conflict and Islamic fundamentalism. Those themes are analyzed not only because most of the films chosen focus on them, but also because they form the core of Middle Eastern politics throughout the historical period covered by the study. Chapter five focuses on the representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the films. The chapter explores Hollywood's construction of the conflict as an ethnic one, where Israelis and Palestinians are portrayed as clashing ethnic groups fighting over the same homeland while largely ignoring the oppression of Palestinians by Israeli settlers. The role of the United States is represented in the films as a godfather aiming at restoring peace in the region, and therefore as a superior political actor. This is compared with Egyptian cinema's focus on the plight of Palestinians on one hand, and the role of Egypt as an Arab leader within the conflict on the other hand. The resurrection of pan-Arabism in this context transforms the films into an ironic statement that ignores Egypt's peace treaty with Israel. In this sense, the chapter argues that the two sides' representation of the conflict ultimately serves nationalist agendas, emphasizing the role of the US as a world leader on one hand, and that of Egypt as a crucial Arab player on the other hand.

Arab culture has often become a synonym for Islamic fundamentalism in contemporary Western culture, from films to news to social theory. Chapter six focuses on the representation of Islamic fundamentalism in the films, and how that representation is affected by the role fundamentalism plays in the social, political, and historical Egyptian and American contexts. The chapter examines fundamentalism's role as the West's Other and the source of its identity, and the complicated social and political role it plays in Egypt as an "Islamic" democracy. Thus, Islamic fundamentalism is examined not as a "reaction" to globalization and its discontents, but as being global in itself and bearing its own "discontents". Egypt and the USA have both different and convergent points of view on these "discontents", both constructing Islamic fundamentalism as an enemy yet configuring this enemy differently. So while Hollywood seems to create/reflect the idea of

Islam/Arabism/Middle East as terrorism, Egyptian cinema presents a more complex and psychological view of Islamic fundamentalism. Islamic fundamentalism is thus presented as the prime manifestation of the complexity of power relations in the Middle East as highlighted by the films. Its Otherness status makes it not only an enemy to the West, but also a threat to national integrity in Egypt. It thus shows that the Orient's Others do not only come from the outside, but that the Orient can also exclude elements of "itself" as an Other as well, therefore taking us beyond a simplistic East/West divide.

Chapter One: Behind the East/West Divide: Structures and Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to provide a structural and methodological background to the study. This means presenting the factors used as the building blocks of the thesis: a literature review of previous work done on similar topics; a comparative background to the development of Hollywood and Egyptian cinema; a justification of the historical period covered by the thesis; an introduction to the films selected; and the methodology used in the thesis. The importance of presenting the history of both the politics in the Middle East and the cinemas lies in how the films, as texts, are produced by history. Some authors like Conrad have stressed fiction's salience in history, by presenting fiction as a closer account of "events" than formal historical accounts. As he puts it,

> "Fiction is history, or it is nothing. But it is also more than that; it stands on firmer ground, being based on the reality of forms and the observation of social phenomena, whereas history is based on documents, and the reading of print and handwriting—on second-hand impression. Thus fiction is nearer truth" (Conrad 1925, p. 17).

The position taken by the thesis however does not follow Conrad's distinction between formal history and history as fiction; it is not concerned with whether the films represent historical Truth or not. It thus diverges from ideas on the scientific determinism of history (as "oppressively exterior to human activity" (Lentricchia 1989, p. 231)) and into examining the complicated principle of causality. This principle is examined not only in the sense of how the past affects the present, but also how the present affects the past. The films' linking of the past and the present then is examined as a form of knowledge, ideology, and power relations (Williams and Chrisman 1994). As Lehtonen (2000) puts it, "*Context does not exist before... the text, neither does it exist outside of* [it]" (p. 111).

Moreover, the films do not constitute a kind of "representation" or "reflection" that is detached from a non-signifying "reality" or "historical background". This means that the films, the cinema industries, and political events all form part of a

reality characterized by power/knowledge relations (Pecora 1989). The study thus follows Said's (1993) contention in *Culture and Imperialism*, where he argues that narrative is the site in which struggle takes place, where people assert their identity and the existence of their history. The section on the development of Hollywood and its dominance vis-à-vis Egyptian cinema thus follows Said's argument that "[t]he power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming or emerging is very important to culture and imperialism" (1993, p. xiii). The section thus utilizes a historical account of the development of the two cinemas to show why Hollywood's narratives have dominated and even blocked others. The use of the word imperialism here follows Parry's (1997) argument:

> "the connotations of the word are variable, referring not only to the while or part of the West's programme of overseas conquest, occupation and rule, but also to the institution of dependencies where no military or administrative presence was or is installed, a mode perfected by the United States in its role as the predominant force of a contemporary imperialism" (p. 227-8).

Structures: Literature, history, films, industry

Studies on the portrayal of Arabs in the media

This thesis utilizes and builds on previous work on the portrayal of Arabs in the media, whether in the United States or in the Arab world. A number of studies have been done on the portrayal of Arabs in the Western media. The main bulk of those studies seems to have adopted an East/West divide notion, whether specifically (as Arab/Muslim versus American) or generally (as East versus West). Some studies cover the representation of Arabs in American media in the early eighties (Ghareeb 1983), and beyond (Kamalipour 1997) as well as the representation of Islam in the West (Said 1981, Hafez 2000). Numerous studies in the 1990's cover the representation of Arabs in news coverage of the Gulf War, such as Mowlana, Gerbner and Schiller (1992), Kellner (1992), Campbell (1993), Denton (1993), Greenberg and Gantz (1993), Bennett and Paletz (1994), Jeffords and Rabinovitz (1994), Shaw (1996) and Taylor (1998), to name but a few. Other studies discuss the coverage of

the Arab-Israeli conflict in the news media, like Liebes (1997), Wolfsfeld (1997), and El-Nawawy (2002). There is also work on the representation of the Arab world in National Geographic (Steet 2000) and on the relationship between media representations of the Arab world in the US and American interests in the Middle East (McAlister 2001). There are also studies on the use of the American media as propaganda tools in the context of Middle Eastern politics (Chomsky and Herman 1988, Chomsky 1989, Chomsky 1997).

Jack Shaheen's work (1984, 1997, 2001) spans three decades and covers Arab and Muslim stereotyping in American cinema and television. This supplements other studies on the portrayal of Arab Americans in American media in the 1990's (Jackson 1996 and Parenti 1998). Ray Hanania's website is devoted to the issue of Arab stereotyping in American media (www.hanania.com). This is in addition to a large number of articles that have been written in popular magazines about the issue. This includes articles on the vilification of Arabs (Geier 1997), Hollywood's stereotyping of Arabs (Michalek 1989, Hanania 1998) and the West's misunderstanding of the Arab world and Islam (Tash 1997).

Other studies have chosen to tackle the topic in a wider perspective (as East/West, rather than Arab/American, which is based on the idea of Orientalism). Examples on the portrayal of the Orient in Western cinema include Shohat and Stam (1994), Bernstein and Studlar (1997) and Shapiro (1999). Samuel Huntington's controversial study (1996) revolves around the idea that the situation between the West and the rest is an example of what he terms a "clash of civilizations". Needless to say, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) have become classics in works about the East/West divide.

What links those works is the idea that there is dominance by the West over the East, an idea that is informed by a cultural imperialism perspective as expressed by Schiller (1973), Tunstall (1977), Smith (1987) and Tomlinson (1991). But more recently a number of authors have adopted a "globalization" or a "postmodern" perspective to look at the East/West dichotomy, such as Abaza and Stauth (1990), Ahmed and Donnan (1994), Turner (1994), Sayyid (1997), Kiely (1998), Sardar (1999) and Tomlinson (1999). Others have tackled the situation of media in the East in relation to the West, like Armes (1987) and Amin (1999).

The latest studies on the relationship between the United States and the Middle East are by Douglas Kellner (2003), Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies (2003)

and Douglas Little (2003). Kellner focuses on the Bush legacy and discusses American support of Islamic fundamentalist groups during the Cold War, and how the George W. Bush administration had initially deprioritized issues of terrorism before September 11, 2001. The book also discusses the relations between the Bush and bin Laden families, who are linked by Middle Eastern oil politics.

Sardar and Davies discuss the position of the United States as a "hyperpower" (p. vi) whose narratives export stereotypes about Others worldwide but whose alternative cultural products are submerged in this mainstream discourse. This is illustrated with examples from American popular culture, from television series (like *The West Wing*) to Hollywood blockbusters (like *The Siege* and *Rules of Engagement*). The authors also focus on American foreign and economic policies, their global effects and their link with America's image worldwide, and on the historical context behind America's self-image. An important point in this study is the authors' emphasis on destabilizing monoliths as they argue against the construction of America, Islam or the Middle East as fixed entities.

Little starts his book with mapping the imagining of the Middle East as Other in the mind of the United States from the 18th century until today. He then moves to concentrating on politics, and America's position regarding the various tensions in the Middle East, from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Gulf War to the "War on Terrorism". He says that war, terror, mistrust and inconsistency have defined the relationship between the United States and the Middle East. Little also discusses media representations of the Middle East in the United States, from television shows to comic strips and their relationship with politics. He cites the example of "The Bel Airabs" from Saturday Night Live in 1979 as being inspired by the oil shortage in the same year. Incidents of Palestinian terrorism in the 1980's inspired other stereotypical media products; Little cites cartoons with negative depictions of Yasser Arafat, and a series of anti-Arab paperbacks like *Jihad* and the anti-Palestinian *The Haj*. Little argues that the representation of Arabs in those media products sustains Orientalist notions and imagery that have been carried well into the 1990's and beyond. Accordingly, in cinema, Little shows that there have been Arab fanatics in *Black Sunday* (1977), Libyan hit men in *Back to the Future* (1985), and plane hijackers in *Executive Decision* (1996).

In comparison with the above studies on Hollywood and Western discourses, there are few studies about cinema in Egypt. These studies complement others on

mass media in the Middle East like Kamalipour and Mowlana (1994) and Hafez (2001). Armes and Malkmus (1991) discusses cinema industries in the Arab world and Africa. Khan (1969) reviews the history of Egyptian cinema. Rassam (1995) is also historical but connects that with issues of identity emerging from the East/West divide. Shafik (1998) does the same in relation to Arab cinema in general. Sharaf ed-Din (1992), studies the relationship between cinema in Egypt and Egyptian politics from 1961-1981. Armbrust (1996, 2000, 2002) has completed several studies on Egyptian popular culture in general and its connection with Egyptian national identity. His latest publication discusses the connections between the representation of "Islamists" in two Egyptian films and social conditions and censorship in Egypt. The thesis can thus be seen as drawing on the above studies, as well as complicating them. Its main difference from the above is that it is comparative, juxtaposing Hollywood with Egyptian cinema, and thus establishing a link between discourses of the "West" and those of the "East". This breaks away from the more common frameworks of victimization or celebration of the "East" as well as from the analysis of regional cinemas in isolation.

The development of Hollywood and Egyptian cinema

Scholars like Herbert Schiller (1999) have argued that American domination of the global flow of media messages has persisted throughout the twentieth century, with media messages acting as a vehicle for the expression of state interests. However unlike "the later systems of radio and television broadcasting, the cinema has not been a tool or [sic] *direct* expression of the state" (Armes 1987, p. 35, my emphasis). But this does not deny cinema's role as a political tool. The universal appeal of Hollywood has meant that its messages have a global reach that is beyond that of any other cinema industry in the world. Egyptian cinema in comparison, though the biggest film industry in the Arab world, remains a regionally successful industry, its messages consumed mainly by Arabs. In order to understand the reasons behind Hollywood's global dominance and Egyptian cinema's regional success, we need to examine the development of both cinemas throughout history, and the economic and political factors that have resulted in the establishment of those positions.

The motion picture started in the United States and in Egypt at the same time, in 1896. Cinema at that time was dominated by Europeans (Izod 1988). With the help of Italian filmmakers, Egypt became the "only Arab country able to develop a national film industry during the colonial period" (Shafik 1998, p. 11). Egypt remained ahead of other Arab cinemas in the first half of the twentieth century, producing its first fully native film in 1923 (Khan 1969). Meanwhile the dominance of European filmmaking was overshadowed by the rise of Hollywood. The movie business in Hollywood prospered, with funding from corporate firms, a star system to attract audiences, the creation of genre films, the production of sequels to successful films, and the export of films to overseas markets. This was aided by Europe's engagement in the First and Second World Wars (Izod 1988).

Shafik (1998) states several reasons why Egypt alone succeeded in establishing a national film industry during the colonial period, a condition which contributed to securing Egypt's role as the leader of Arab cinema. First, because of Egypt's multicultural life, it remained relatively undisturbed by colonial authorities. Second, native Egyptians combined cinema with the popular musical theater, which was well-established, and so the medium found its vital producers, actors, and scriptwriters. Third, nationalist-oriented entrepreneurs, especially founder of Misr Bank, Talaat Harb, found in cinema a good investment opportunity. Fourth, Egypt gained its independence a while before most Arab countries, in 1922. That resulted in an increase in Egyptianization against foreign dominance.

The continued success of Egyptian cinema until today can be attributed to economic, educational and political factors. Economically, both state and private funding have meant that Egypt has been able to sustain the highest level of film production in the Arab world, producing around 50 films per year until the 1980s (Rassam Culhane 1995). This was aided by a steady stream of peasant migration into Cairo, which increased purchasing power. Educationally, while most Arab countries suffer from a lack of technically qualified professionals in the field of cinema, The Higher Film Institute responsible for training professionals had been established in Egypt in 1959 and remains influential until today. Politically, other Arab countries have been hampered by several conditions that prevented them from following the success of Egyptian cinema. In Algeria, for example, native Algerians were acculturated by the French, and so the first native Algerian film did not appear before independence in 1962. Morocco, independent in 1954, had the same situation. Syria,

on the other hand, suffered from a weak economy, and therefore the absence of rich entrepreneurs, in addition to social and political restrictions that remain until today. Saudi Arabia considered cinema unacceptable until the 1960's and 1970's, when King Faisal dealt with the objections of Muslim religious scholars. A similar situation occurred in Yemen, where cinemas did not exist until 1962. In addition, the success of Egyptian cinema can be attributed to its initial reliance on famous singers and stars who spread the Egyptian dialect all over the Arab world from an early time. As a result, today almost all Arab audiences have at least a passive knowledge of that dialect (Shafik 1998).

While the rise of the Cold War in the 1950's triggered the production of anti-Communist films in Hollywood, the 1952 revolution in Egypt also carried with it governmental control that continued into the seventies with the establishment of the Ministry of National Culture and Guidance, which included the Higher Council for the Protection of the Arts and Literature. These and other governmental organizations had schemes to "develop" cinema, such as: Annual awards and prizes for best direction, production, acting, etc...; participation in budgeting Egyptian-foreign co-productions and high-cost Egyptian films; decrees recognizing relations between producers, technicians, distributors and cinema owners; and sending of commissions abroad (to the U.S.S.R., China, Yugoslavia, Uruguay, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and India (note the choice of countries)) for the showing of Egyptian films (Khan 1969). According to Samir Farid, "the public sector produced all the films of any importance during the period 1963-71" (quoted in Armes 1987, p. 202).

The 1952 government instituted changes in censorship laws. In 1947, the law had blocked the depiction of poverty, peasant life, calls to revolt, and the questioning of traditional customs (Rassam Culhane 1995). New censorship laws could now ban a film not just on the basis that it is indecent, but also on that it is poor in technical, artistic and/or dramatic quality, although what was meant by that was not defined. Censorship stretched to apply to foreign films as well, especially those with pro-Zionist casts or crews (Khan 1969).

While censorship in Hollywood has almost disappeared, political censorship in Egyptian cinema continued. From 1971 to 1973, for example, Sadat prohibited all films that depicted the 1967 defeat by Israel. Even under current president Mubarak, whose regime started in 1981, political censorship remains (Shafik 1998). Shafik

gives the example of Egyptian director Atef El-Tayeb's having to change a scene in his 1986 film *al-Bari'* (The Innocent) because it showed a soldier "rebelling against the authoritarian and inhuman methods" (1998, p. 35) used in an internment camp. Yet, Egyptian censorship laws in general have become more relaxed under Mubarak. According to Amin, "[i]n comparison to the two previous Egyptian regimes...., Mubarak's regime... undoubtedly allows a great degree of freedom to the media in general" (1999, p. 322).

For at least the past 60 decades, Hollywood has remained ahead of Egyptian cinema. Besides the universal appeal of Hollywood narratives, this success is because of economic reasons, with Hollywood's high budgets enabling the production of films of better quality and that are more technically advanced, as well as enabling the exportation of those films abroad; and political reasons, with colonization having made the English language almost universal (it can be said that Hollywood itself has also contributed to this universalization of the English language) and with the decline of censorship, where since the end of the Second World War, cinema in the United States has been protected by the First Amendment (Powers et al 1996).

Hollywood's dominance remains, overcoming all competition from other cinemas and the challenge of television and the VCR by releasing movies not as single films but as "packages", including "the sale of rights for network and cable television screening, subsidiary rights to novelization, books about the making of the film, television spin-offs, soundtrack recordings and cassettes, commercially retailed videotapes, and merchandizing tie-ins such as T-shirts, toys games, [and] comics" (Armes 1987, p. 36). Such clever "redefinition of film" schemes have made it difficult for other cinema industries to compete; as Armes puts it, "[by] the time some non-Western producers had mastered the basic artisanal technology of film, Hollywood had attained levels of industrially organized production with which no other country could hope to compete" (ibid.).

As for Egyptian cinema, due to increasing film piracy on video, a decrease in the price of video rights (as Egyptian cinema relies on video to distribute its film in the Gulf), and low production funding, the number of films produced each year has decreased from 50 in the eighties to between 10 and 15 at the turn of the millennium (Armbrust 2002). Yet Egyptian cinema remains the biggest cinema industry in the Middle East.

As we can see, with all the restraints on and production problems of cinemas in the Arab world, Egyptian cinema remains the most dominant. However, due to this cinema's subject matter (which mainly only has a regional appeal), production value, and language, it has remained behind Hollywood. Despite Indian cinema being the biggest film industry in the world, it is Hollywood which is the most dominant. The American film industry has thus snowballed in its profits, productions and influence. With all the packages sold with every film produced, and with the largest available budgets, Hollywood films are the most powerful ones economically. This has meant that it is Hollywood's discourses that have been propagated worldwide.

Historical period

The films analyzed in this paper cover the period 1980-2000. The period is chosen because of various political events that occurred around that time, and which are connected with the depiction of the politics in the films. I will not offer a comprehensive historical background on politics in the Middle East, because first, it is quite difficult to write a historical account that spans a period of twenty years (in itself influenced by events going as far back as the nineteenth century at least) in only one chapter, and that is not to mention the injustice that would be caused by claims of comprehensiveness, and second, because this goes beyond the scope of the thesis. I will therefore limit myself to listing few salient events. The seventies were mostly characterized by conflict between Arabs and Israel, as well as intra-Arab divisions. The year 1970 is remembered for Black September, when clashes between Palestinian PLO and Jordan ended up with the driving away of the PLO from Jordan into Lebanon. The 1973 October war established Gulf Arab states as countries that can use their oil to attempt to control international politics. The Lebanese Civil War which started in 1975 was connected with various other events outside the strict intra-Lebanese realm, such as the Israeli invasion in 1982, and the attacks against a group of American marines in 1983.

The eighties saw further divisions among Arabs, triggered by Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's signing the Camp David Accords in 1978. He was assassinated three years later by the Islamic Group. The American embassy in Tehran was besieged by Iranian "students" in 1979, triggered by the start of the Iranian

Islamic revolution. The seventies and eighties also saw PLO engagement in various anti-American and anti-Israeli activities, including the hijacking of airplanes. Plane hijacking was also practiced by Lebanese Islamist militias (Hizbullah and Amal), such as the hijacking of the TWA flight in 1985. The Palestinian intifada started in 1987, and with it Hamas and other Islamic fundamentalist groups inside and outside Palestine started or took advantage of the situation to intensify their activities.

The eruption of the Gulf War in 1990 re-established the United States' control in the region. In 1993, Islamic fundamentalists planted a bomb in the World Trade Center, and their increasing influence in the Middle East and beyond has made them a force not to be ignored by the United States, which saw Islamic fundamentalism as a direct threat. Finally, the Arab-Israeli conflict has continued until today, with efforts towards peace being put in place and not quite realized.

While the films analyzed are not read against those historical events in a "reality check" manner, they are examined in the context of the politics. More often than not, the films analyzed have concerned themselves with the salient political issues of the time, and therefore cannot be discussed in isolation from this historical framework. As Foucault argues, "[a]ny discourse, whatever it be, is constituted by a set of utterances which are produced each in its place and time" (1979b, p. 19). The films' relationship with history is subjective. This means that the same historical event is given different, often contradictory, interpretations in Hollywood and Egyptian cinema. Perhaps the most salient example is the Arab-Israeli conflict, with Palestinian resistance interpreted as mere terrorism (or at best, a revolution) in Hollywood, while it is portrayed sympathetically in Egyptian cinema. A similar point can be made about Hollywood's representation of Islamic fundamentalism, where fundamentalism is conflated with terrorism on one hand and with Islam on the other hand. This is contrasted with how Egyptian cinema portrays fundamentalism from other angles (social, personal) ignored by Hollywood, and its distinction between Islam and the extremism of Islamic fundamentalism. The 1973 War is represented as a threat to American oil interests in Hollywood, but as a celebrated victory in Egyptian cinema. The Lebanese Civil War is also subjected to alternative interpretations. While Hollywood presents the war as a case of tribalism, Egyptian cinema completely glosses over intra-Lebanese divisions and instead constructs the war in the context of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

The analysis thus pays attention to the various Truths constructed in the context of history by the films. The study's highlighting of the different ways historical events are represented destabilizes fixed interpretations of those events. This denaturalizes the various binaries the films present (East versus West, barbaric versus civilized), and shows how the Truths constructed by each side about the Self and Others are produced by specific historical contexts (Saukko 2003). Therefore, the study highlights not only how history can be read differently from different angles, but also how history can be written differently from different angles. The films are thus shown to present alternative histories that are rooted in the political agendas of each side, and that aim at the construction of alternative futures for the United States and Egypt respectively (Clifford 1997b).

Film selection

The films analyzed are informed by the contexuality of the historical period in which they are produced and which they represent, and therefore encompass a period of history that is eventful in this context. The thirty films selected within the timescale 1980-2000 are chosen on the basis of dealing with politics in the Middle East in a central way. Every effort has been made to ensure that as many films fitting the criteria as possible are included. Several sources have been consulted to ensure that the collection of films analyzed is as comprehensive as possible, however it has been quite difficult to find a completely reliable source with no omissions. The process of searching for and obtaining the films took more than one year. Ray Hanania's website provided a starting point for Hollywood films dealing with the Middle East. However the website lists all films depicting the Middle East without specifying what the films actually represent. Therefore synopses of the films were checked on the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.org) to determine which ones would be relevant. Additional American film titles were included which were collected from other sources (internet search engines, Halliwell's annual Film and Video Guide, the British Film Institute library) or which had been released in the cinema between the years 1998 and 2000.

Searching for Egyptian films—all in Arabic—proved far more difficult, due to the lack of any centralized database on Egyptian cinema. Searching for films involved a trip to Egypt, where some videos were obtained, another to Lebanon, where more

were collected, and commissioning a number of video stores in Lebanon to suggest and provide titles which were then flown over to the UK. Few films were also obtained from some video stores on Edgware Road in London. Obtaining the Hollywood films was also difficult, involving buying the newer films from mainstream video stores in the UK, a trip to Lebanon to obtain some titles from the 1980's, and ordering the rest over the internet from the United States, some second-hand, and then converting them from NTSC format to PAL. Some of the films collected were judged as not suitable for the purposes of the thesis, and therefore have been omitted (such as *Back to the Future* and *Hot Shots*, where the portrayal of Middle Eastern politics was judged to be not central to the films, and *The Closed Doors*, which was omitted because it is not a popular Egyptian film (it is an art house film and therefore did not have a commercial, mainstream cinematic release). Three other films (*Iron Eagle* (US, 1986), *A Mission in Tel Aviv* (Mohimma fi Tal-Abib, Egypt, 1998), and *State Security* (Amn Dawla, Egypt, 1999)) were not included because of the inability to obtain a video copy.

The films chosen were found to deal with two main issues: Islamic fundamentalism and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some also deal with the Gulf War, the Lebanese Civil War, and the unsettled politics of the 1980's (with a focus on terrorist activities). The 1980's American films mainly focus on the Arab as a materialistic oil sheikh (*Power* (1986)), a "revolutionary" in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict (*The Ambassador* (1984), *The Little Drummer Girl* (1984)), a plane hijacker (*The Delta Force* (1986) and *Hostage* (1987)), and a terrorist in the Lebanese Civil War (*Programmed to Kill* (1987) and stretching into the early nineties in *Navy Seals* (1990)). With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the outbreak of the Gulf War, the focus on the Arab "enemy" intensified, with the Arab/Muslim now replacing the Communist threat (the "green peril" replacing the "red peril"). Saddam Hussein became an embodiment of Arab savagery and the new Hitler in the eyes of the media. Saddam's use of Islam to rally the support of the masses coupled with the World Trade Center bombing few years later added a new dimension to this imagery: Islamic fundamentalism. Thus, the films from 1990 till 2000 remain focused on the Arab threat, paying homage to hijacking in *Executive Decision* (1996), anti-American terrorism in *True Lies* (1994) and *Rules of Engagement* (2000), reflecting the Gulf War in *In the Army Now* (1994), *Courage Under Fire* (1996), *Three Kings (1999)*,

and *South Park: Bigger Longer and Uncut* (1999), and tackling the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and the Islamic fundamentalist threat in *The Siege* (1998).

Not many Egyptian films produced in the 1980's fit the criteria; the only two suitable films are *Execution of a Dead Man* (1985) and *Road to Eilat* (1986), both of which deal with the 1973 War. A number of films from the 1990's also deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict (*Naji al-Ali* (1991), *Love in Taba* (1992), *Trap of Spies* (1992), *48 Hours in Israel* (1998), *Girl from Israel* (1999)). With increasing tension between various Islamist groups and the Egyptian government, and several attacks by those groups on tourists in Luxor among other incidents, a number of films produced in the 1990's deal with Islamic fundamentalism: *Terrorism and Barbecue* (1993), *The Terrorist* (1994), *Birds of Darkness* (1995), *Destiny* (1997), *The Other* (1999). *The Other* also opposes what is seen as American ideology, and so does *Hello America* (2000). In addition, two films deal with the life and achievements of the late Egyptian president Nasser, *Nasser 56* (1996) and *Nasser: The Story of a Man, A Story of a Nation* (1998) (to be referred to as *Nasser* in the thesis). A transliteration of the Arabic titles of the films can be found in the filmography, but for ease of use, the thesis will use the English translation of the titles, which (apart from *Nasser* (1998) and *Terrorism and Barbecue* (1993), which are the English titles chosen by the film producers) are the author's own translation. The total number of films analyzed is 30, fifteen American and fifteen Egyptian. In addition to those films, which form the core of the units of analysis, the thesis sometimes alludes to other films for clarification, which are also found in the filmography.

Methodology: Deconstruction and Discourse

The thesis uses deconstruction as the main methodology of analyzing the films. Deconstruction is chosen because it is a framework that underpins much analysis of the Middle East, following the work of Spivak and Said. Deconstruction has been used by those scholars to analyze Orientalist traditions; the thesis follows that in its analysis of Hollywood but also uses deconstruction to make sense of the Egyptian films. Deconstruction is also chosen because it is a theoretical as well as a methodological tool. Its use is not as a systematic means enabling an objective analysis of data (i.e., as method); rather, it is used to provide a theoretically informed

reading that will help tease out the political nuances of the films as well as use the films to complicate and contribute to the theories framing the thesis (Orientalism, globalization and Foucault's Truth/power/knowledge, discussed in chapter 2). In this way, reading the films as texts is not implied to be objective but always already informed by the theoretical stance the researcher takes (in this case, to undo an East/West theoretical and ideological divide); different methodologies will thus produce different results because they focus on different dimensions of the object of study (Saukko 2003).

Perhaps the most important problem faced here is that of labels. By labeling a technique used "semiology" or "deconstruction" one risks essentialism. I would therefore present that my methodological stance draws on, rather than fully utilizes, deconstruction, mixing it with other tools in order to arrive at an optimal analysis technique. The analysis thus draws on deconstruction, but also complicates it by utilizing the work of Michel Foucault (1980) on discourse.

There has been considerable debate on the gulf between the terms "text" and "discourse". While one school of thought views "text" as anything open to analysis, others limit text to the written. A similar ambivalence applies to the term "discourse", seen as applying to the spoken by some, and to any order of utterance (including images) by others (Fairclough 1995). At the same time, the relationship between text and discourse is ambivalent. Some theorists use the terms interchangeably (Saukko 2003). Others, like Bakhtin and Barthes, define discourse as "a voice within a text" (Mills 1997. p. 9). Mills adds that other theorists such as Benveniste view discourse as "the representation of events in a text without particular concern to their chronology in real-time (histoire/story)" (1997, p. 9). Said (1993) has argued against "an astonishing sense of weightlessness with regard to the gravity of history" (p. 366-7) that he says is present in methodological approaches like deconstruction and discourse analysis.

This break with history has alarmed theorists like Norman Fairclough who has coined the term "critical discourse analysis" to refer to the analysis of "how texts work within sociocultural practice" (Fairclough 1995, p. 7). At the same time, Fairclough is alarmed by the reductionism of defining "textual analysis" as that of the content of texts. Fairclough argues that textual analysis is as much an analysis of text form, which he calls texture, as it is of text content. I will be combining Fairclough's recommendations in my methodological approach, in that the films analyzed are

looked at as texts open to interpretation within specific historical contexts and carrying discourses of power.

Here the work of Foucault and Derrida comes into play. Foucault has alerted us to the link between knowledge and power, whereas Derrida has demonstrated how "signifying practices *construct*, rather than simply *represent* social reality, and how ideology works to make such practices seem transparent" (Chandler 2003). I shall look at the juxtapositions between Foucault's and Derrida's works in more detail later, but now let me begin by mapping out the usefulness of deconstruction as a form of critical discourse analysis in this thesis.

Deconstruction and difference

One of the main strengths of deconstruction is its destabilization of oppositions and contradictions within texts. As Spivak argues, "all texts are at least double, containing within themselves the seeds of their own destruction" (1976, p. liii-liv). Deconstruction disrupts texts by revealing how they are systems of differences (Payne 1993). An example is given by Saukko (2003), citing Said's (1978) analysis of how "discourses on 'the Orient' as irrational, despotic and erotic... work to construct the self-identity of 'the Occident' as rational, democratic, and puritan" (2003, p. 136). This can be seen in the American films' discourses on Arab Others, ascribed the same "Oriental" characteristics listed by Said (bearing in mind all the limitations of my use of the word *same*), and used to construct the identity of the American nation as rational, democratic and puritan. Deconstruction is thus useful in how it helps analyze the Other as disturbing the Self, thereby highlighting the subversive element of meaning through difference.

Saukko also uses Said's analysis to illustrate how deconstruction works by "unravelling the way in which binaries render the other side of the equation invisible and natural" (Saukko 2003, p. 135-6). This statement refers to the way deconstruction unravels how discourses are "organised around practices of exclusion" (Mills 1997, p. 12). Newton further explains that deconstruction destabilizes presence not only by revealing practices of exclusion, but also by showing how "[t]hat which is excluded or marginalised... [has] an equally legitimate claim to occupy the centre" (1990, p. 79). In this sense, what the films do not show demands attention. For example, *Courage Under Fire* tackles the Gulf War but does not represent Arabs, neither as civilians nor

as militants. This is juxtaposed with emphasis on the courage of American soldiers in combat. Yet it is the absence of Arabs that can be regarded as an example of an exclusionary discourse that naturalizes American morals and positions the Self (visible) as superior to the Other (invisible). Presence and absence are not constructed in complete opposition to each other, but each one is defined through the other (Sampson 1989).

Fairclough (1995) adds to the discussion on presence and absence two dimensions. First, whether presence is implicit or explicit. Fairclough argues that analyzing implicit content "can provide valuable insights into what is taken as given, as common sense" (p. 6). The films often present the "normal" implicitly in order to highlight the "abnormal" (for example, the contrast between fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists).

Second, whether the explicit is relatively foregrounded or backgrounded. This can be seen in, for example, representations of the American army in the Hollywood films. My analysis shows that the American army in the films is always ascribed a position of power; however the explicitness of this power differs according to the political agenda. Thus, in films from the eighties, when American foreign policy was more centered around issues of establishing supremacy (in the context of the Cold War), the strength of the American army in films like *The Delta Force* and *Navy Seals* is at the forefront of the representations. In contrast, as American foreign policy moved to a half-supreme half-nurturing role under the Clinton administration, the strength of the American army was backgrounded in favor of its representation as a world rescuer as seen in *Three Kings*. Doubleness within a text then "subverts a text's claim to identity or integrated wholeness" (Newton 1990. p. 82).

In addition to the usefulness of deconstruction in its destabilization of oppositions within texts, doubleness can also be used between texts (Nygren 1991). Nygren uses doubleness as such in cross-cultural analysis of films. He utilizes deconstruction to juxtapose texts against each other. The juxtaposition of American and Egyptian films thus works to go beyond the polarity between the two sides and the imagination of them as necessarily oppositional, and into recognizing that both sets of texts form "a juxtaposition of different social and cultural constructs" (Nygren 1991, p. 178). Specifically, the analysis of the two sides' relationship with Islamic fundamentalism as an Other complicates their positioning as dialectically different. Thus, the analysis abandons a "closed system" of representation in favor of "a plural

process of conflict and exchange where the ideological determinants of a system themselves come into question" (Nygren 1991, p. 174).

Deconstruction is also useful in its notion of "trace", the way words (and images) "possess meanings... from their uses in earlier contexts which cannot be banished entirely" (Newton 1990, p. 72). The films employ this in their use of icons. For example, *The Insider* uses the representation of Lebanon as an icon of the Other, barbaric land that is nevertheless rendered weak as it is conquered by the Western man and that thus establishes his omnipresence. This is seen in the opening sequence where Al Pacino's character, Lowell Bergman, the presenter of a leading political program, enters the otherwise unreachable South of Lebanon in order to interview a Hizbullah leader. The fact that the film itself does not deal with Middle Eastern politics, but rather with a scandal within the American tobacco industry, illustrates how Lebanon is used merely to establish Bergman as a powerful journalist when he embarks on an investigation of the tobacco scandal. In this sense, "Lebanon" acts as a trace that carries meanings of anarchy and inaccessibility.

Discourses participate in the creation of reality. The perception of language (or image) as transparent and as a form of representation is contested by the analysis of discourse as carrying constraints that determine how things are expressed (Mills 1997). Pecheux (1982) argues that discourses are sites of struggle over meaning. The films analyzed are therefore not viewed as fixed texts, but rather as locations of power where meanings are contested. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the films' definitions of places, namely Palestine. The Egyptian films choose the word "Palestine" to refer to the same (ideological) landscape referred to as "Israel" in the American films. At the same time, the Egyptian films' use of the word "Israel" is pathological, indicating the oppression of the Palestinian people under occupation. As we can see, meaning, as Hall argues, is "a social production, a practice. The world has to be *made to mean*" (1982, p. 67). As Spivak puts it, "reading... *produce*s rather than *protects*" (1976, p. lxxv).

This argument brings us to the relationship between Truth and deconstruction. Simply put, deconstruction sees the real as constructed by discursive practices (Mills 1997). This means that one cannot arrive at an objective or comprehensive description (Newton 1990), which Spivak (176) argues is the aim of structuralism. Bennett (1982) illustrates by showing how Saussure's distinction between sign and referent meant a distinction between signification and reality. Bennett argues that the implication that

"the former is in some way subordinate to and governed by the latter" is challenged by deconstructive practices that stress "not only the independent materiality of the signifier—the 'fleshiness' of the sign—but also the activity and effectivity of signification as a process which actively constructs cognitive worlds rather than simply passively reflecting a pre-existing reality" (p. 287). As Evans puts it, what we are left with is a "non-center" (1991, p. xx). Spivak (1995) also emphasizes this construction by saying:

> "Deconstruction does not say there is no subject, there is no truth, there is no history. It simply questions the privileging of identity so that someone is believed to have the truth. It is not the exposure of error. It is constantly and persistently looking into how truths are produced" (p. 27).

Derrida (1978) uses the word "differance", which stands for both difference and deferral, to refer to the way in which meanings emerge in a system of distinctions and also to the way this emergence does not happen "on the basis of essences or substances that are fully present as such" (Sampson 1989, p. 11). Derrida warns against this presence, or what he calls logocentrism, defined as "an order and coherence that exists outside the play of signification" (Newton 1990. p. 72). However the rejection of presence has led to some post-structuralists to argue against interpretation of texts completely (such as Jonathan Culler 1983). In contrast, others argue for "freeplay", or a multiplicity of interpretation (David Lodge 1990). The first case is because of the danger of interpretation leading to the "discovery" of a single meaning (Barthes 1990). This has been seen in how critics of interpretation often advocate the superiority of audience reception over textual analysis (Fairclough 1995).

Deconstruction is useful in how it is an illustration of the second case. As Spivak argues: "No engineer can make the "means"—the sign—and the "end"—meaning—become self-identical" (1976, p. xix). Spivak differs from Barthes in her stance on interpretation. While Spivak sees interpretation as "the introduction of meaning" (1976, p. xxiii), Barthes argues that: "To interpret a text is not to give it a (more or less justified, more or less free) meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what *plural* constitutes it" (1990, p. 5). Spivak and Barthes thus have different interpretations of interpretation, specifically of "freeplay". My argument is that

interpretation, as used in this thesis, has elements of both. On one hand, one cannot ignore the role of the interpreter as a distorter of meaning, not in the sense of the interpreter being a distorter of Truth, but in the sense that "nothing is ever comprehended, but rather designated... What we think of as "perception" is always already an inscription" (Spivak 1976, pp. xxiii, xl). On the other hand, the analysis opens up the films to a variety of heterogeneous readings.

Deconstruction and contexts

Deconstruction complicates the relationship between signifiers and signifieds. Both deconstruction and semiology are concerned not with "what texts mean", but rather with "how texts mean" (Newton 1990, p. 95). Deconstruction has been argued to complicate semiology. Deconstruction posits that semiology has two main limitations. First, semiology is confined within the text. Second, semiology is limited by regarding the sign "as a homogeneous unit bridging an origin (referent) [signifier] and an end (meaning) [signified]" (Spivak 1976, p. xxxix). This is where deconstruction is presented as serving as a *supplement* (in the deconstructive sense, i.e., an extension *and* a replacement (Derrida 1976)). Derrida argues that meaning cannot be analyzed in one (temporal) context; rather, meaning alters with changing contexts. However Barthes argues that semiology need not always be looked at as devoid from attention to context; the interpretation of the meaning of a sign is implicated in the context of the analysis. Therefore, deconstruction is used in this sense to highlight how, as Spivak puts it, "Sign will always lead to sign, one substituting the other... as signifier and signified in turn" (1976, p. xix), and therefore complicating semiology.

This chain can be related to the nature of texts as always linked to other texts, a process referred to as intertextuality. Hartman (1980) argues that intertextuality points to the "difficulty in locating meaning totally within one textual source" (p. viii). Mills (1997) agrees by stating that discourses are constantly in dialogue and therefore cannot be analyzed in isolation. However dialogue here does not necessarily refer to a relation of agreement between discourses. It also refers to how discourses occur in contrast and in conflict to other discourses. *The Siege* depicts an example of the ambivalence of discourse as such in presenting Arab-Americans as an assimilated group on one hand (through the representation of Arab-American FBI agent Frank

Haddad), and an excluded group on the other hand (through the representation of terrorists embedded in the Arab community). Those two conflicting discourses are juxtaposed when Frank's son is captured by the American army in an attempt to isolate Arab terrorists in New York after a terrorist attack. Thus, the discourse on Arab-Americans in a time of peace is destabilized by that in a time of war.

The above example from *The Siege* also emphasizes the importance of studying discourse in a historical/social context. Mills (1997) argues that discourse itself is determined by and enacted within a social context. This means that discourse is not stable and shifts according to the context it is embedded in (Nygren 1991). Deconstruction however has been accused of not paying enough attention to history (Foucault 1980). Foucault (1979b) argues against

> "the reduction of discursive practices to textual traces; the elision of the events produced therein and the retention only of marks for a reading; the invention of voices behind texts to avoid having to analyse the modes of implication of the subject in discourse; the assigning of the originary as said and unsaid in the text to avoid replacing discursive practices in the field of transformations where they are carried out" (p. 27).

Foucault's accusation is an extension of his criticism of structuralist methodologies like semiology because of their inattention to history. Levi-Strauss (1967) for example has written about "societies without history". Newton (1990) therefore proposes combining deconstruction "with Foucault's preoccupation with the relation between discourse and power" (p. 99). Theorists like Said (1984), Saukko (2003) and Payne (1993) have established this link in their analysis. Said (1984) argues for an association between textuality and history, warning against losing touch "with the resistance and heterogeneity of civil society" and against transforming "everything into evidence for the efficacy of the method, carelessly ignoring the circumstances out of which all theory, system, and method ultimately derive" (p.26). Payne and Saukko go further by following Spivak (1976) in the positioning of social/historical context as *text*. In her definition of intertextuality, Saukko refers to the process by which a text "can only be understood in relation to the wider cultural and social panorama, consisting of other texts" (2003, p. 103). Saukko and Payne's positioning of social

panorama as text is important in recognizing that history itself is an activity of "writing".

Foucault (1980) argues that writing history is not a "calm" process. He posits that we should shift our focus from relations of meaning to relations of power. Fairclough (1995) stresses that historicizing discourse means "on the one hand to specify the particular historical conditions within which it was generated and what its properties and shape owe to these conditions, and on the other hand, to specify what part it plays in wider historical processes" (p. 19). My analysis of the films adopts Fairclough's definition of historicizing discourse, looking at how images and other notions have been generated by historical events, and at the same time examining how those images and notions serve history and national agendas in global power relations. Thus, the hijacking of an airplane in *The Delta Force* for example cannot be analyzed without paying homage to first, the actual hijacking of a TWA aircraft in 1985 on which the film is based, and second, to news coverage of the hijack, all of which serve as a framework for the interpretation of the images constructed in the fictional hijack in the film. At the same time, the representation of the hijack serves to establish the Arab as an essential enemy. This justifies American authority over this Other while establishing the American Self as righteous. In this sense, discourses participate in the creation of notions of identity and politics (Mills 1997).

There has been considerable debate on the link between deconstruction and ideology. On one side of the debate we have poststructuralists who are poised against ideological critique. Foucault (1980) for example has argued that ideology "presupposes that the critic has privileged access to the truth, whereas any such claim to truth or knowledge is... really just a coded 'will to power'" (Fairclough 1995, p. 16). Foucault here is criticizing Marxist notions of ideology that describe it as a negative false consciousness. This can be for example applied in notions of "media as definers of social reality" (Bennett 1982, p. 307). Foucault thus rejects ideology on the basis that the notion "false" implicates the existence of the "not false", and thereby argues against the positioning of the theorist in a "real" place outside of ideology (Mills 1997). Pecheux (1982) on the other hand also rejects ideological critique because he sees it as limiting the scope of interpretation. As Mills illustrates, "[i]f we employ a discourse of 'left-wing economic texts' to interpret a text, we will imbue that text with the meanings of the larger framing discourse" (1997, p. 14).

However on the other side of the debate, theorists have challenged the ideology-as-reality model. Breaking away from a Marxist model, Hall defines ideological power as the ability to "signify events in a particular way" (1982, p. 69), and hence argues that ideology is "a site of struggle (between competing definitions)"; in this sense, he argues, ideological outcomes "depend on the balance of forces in a particular historical conjuncture" (p. 70). Fairclough (1995) tries to resolve this tension by arguing that ideology should be linked with social relations of power, relations which are characterized by their inequality and asymmetry. In light of this debate, the position this thesis takes is that of the in-between, described by Spivak. This position does not follow Marxist positions on ideology, nor does it ignore the implication of ideology on interpretation. As Spivak puts it,

> "One cannot... "choose" to step out of ideology. The most responsible "choice" seems to be to know it as best one can, recognize it as best one can, and, through one's necessarily inadequate interpretation, to work to change it, to acknowledge the challenge of it: "*Men* make their own history, but they do not choose the script"" (1988, p. 120).

Criticizing and reconciling deconstruction

The ambivalent relationship with ideology is one of several complications within strategies of deconstruction. Marxists themselves for example have attacked deconstruction for "cutting the text off from social and political questions" (Newton 1990, p. 85). This is an extreme articulation of the idea that deconstruction can entail the priority of the text over context. But perhaps one of the most salient complications is deconstruction's employment of "erasure". Erasure refers to how the Other always haunts the Self, constituting its disruptive side that threatens to surface, and this is why this Other has to be suppressed all the time. The thesis utilizes this aspect of erasure in, for example, highlighting Hollywood's suppression of similarities between the American Self and the Arab Others, as well as Egyptian cinema's construction of Islamic fundamentalism as alien to the Egyptian Self. The complication lies in how this highlighting of difference can also produce a dichotomous mode of analysis that fuels and reproduces binaries. The thesis attempts to overcome this by juxtaposing the

two cinemas and revealing the many interchanging layers of Selves and Others present in the films.

Erasure also applies to the way a term is at the same time needed and flawed. As Spivak (1976) argues, "[s]ince the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary, it remains legible" (p. xiv). Sampson (1989) explains that using terms under erasure means "employing the familiar and commonly known in order to deconstruct the familiar and the commonly known" (p. 7). Thus, the use of the terms East and West, for example, in this thesis, aims at undoing the East/West binary, while at the same time recognizing the limitation of the use of such terms as they construct the same binary they aim to undo. Evans (1991) explains that the reason why this circle exists is because there is "no neutral language, no neutral critical tools" (p. xix). This argument on term usage (or form) can also be applied to logic and presuppositions. As Payne (1993) argues, deconstruction means that the interpreter is in the grip of what they seek to contest. By exploring how women are constructed as an Other in Egyptian cinema for example, the interpretation risks the reproduction of the position of the woman as Other in the analytical discourse (an accusation poised against Malek Alloula's (1986) reproduction of erotic postcards in *The Colonial Harem*).

Another complication with deconstruction is the power implied by interpretation. Spivak (1988) pays attention to this by saying that explanations using the phrase "can be expressed as" do not mean "is", and thus deconstruction is an attempt against essentialism (Payne 1993). However, she argues, explanations "claim their centrality in terms of an excluded margin that makes possible the "can" of the "can be expressed" and allows "is" to be quietly substituted for it" (1988, p. 106), something that Payne (1993) refers to as the desire for presence. The interpretations given in this thesis thus are not meant to be the only interpretations, blocking the way for alternative readings of the films. However, the centrality of the analysis should be read in light of this limitation.

This leads to the point on the "blindness" of deconstruction. Blindness refers to the way texts exist "only through interpretation" (Felperin 1985, p. 119), and therefore to the unawareness of the author of "what the language of his [sic] text is doing" (Newton 1990, p. 80). Hence, blindness is inescapable as it is an aspect of the "*construction of the text*, rather than of some prior or primary 'text itself'" (Felperin 1985, p. 119). The way the analysis in this thesis attempts to "describe" or interpret

the way the films construct Islamic fundamentalism for example is itself a construction of the films' messages in a particular way. As Miller (1982) puts it, the focus is "not "what is the meaning?" but "how does meaning arise from the reader's encounter with just these words on the page [discourses on the screen]?"" (p. 3). In this way, deconstructive practices themselves can be further deconstructed as they construct themselves as coherent and systematic interpretations (Newton 1990).

At the same time, deconstruction is complicated not only by the way the discourse interpreted is implicated by its historical context, but also the way the interpreter's own historical situation implicates meaning (Said 1987b). Thus, the events of September 11, 2001 which occurred in the middle of the writing of the thesis have meant a reworking of some of the perspectives employed by the interpreter's analysis, shifting, for example, certain discourses on Islamic fundamentalism from the past to the present tense.

Deconstruction is contradictory, constantly undermining what it is trying to say. However that does not necessitate abandoning deconstruction in favor of rigorous structuralist approaches. While structuralist approaches may be informed by rigid systems, they are nevertheless useful in providing a framework for analyzing form. However, deconstruction remains a valuable tool if combined with attention to power relations and struggles over meaning, not only within texts, but also between texts (both cinematic and historical) and between the object of analysis and the discourse of the interpreter. I will conclude by drawing on the writings of Newton and Spivak, who offer a resolution for the contradictions of deconstruction.

Spivak in the preface to *Of Grammatology* (1976) has asserted that "one consistent reading continually erases itself and invokes its opposite" (p. xxxvii). Newton (1990) adds that any interpretation of discourse is an imposition of a certain pattern of meaning. Newton and Spivak suggest a solution in the adoption of "freeplay" "so that there is no stable centre vulnerable to deconstructive techniques" (Newton 1990, p. 87-8). The thesis attempts this in certain instances, particularly in the employment of several theoretical perspectives in the analysis of certain film scenes. Perhaps the best example is the "Ali and his female neighbor" scene from *The Terrorist* that is analyzed from a spatial perspective in Chapter 3, a gender perspective in Chapter 4, and a political perspective in Chapter 6. However even freeplay itself carries complications detailed in the above section. If, as Spivak recommends, one has to "deliberately reverse perspectives as often as possible in the process of undoing

opposed perspectives" (1976, p. xxviii), then who is to determine what capacity of reversal employed is sufficient for such purpose? The stance adopted in this thesis therefore mainly follows Newton's and Spivak's second suggestion, which is the acceptance that "contradiction is unavoidable" (Newton 1990, p. 87). As Spivak says, you cannot declare ""I will be anti-essentialist" and make that stick, for you cannot *not* be an essentialist to some degree" (1995, p. 7). Therefore, in deconstructing the films, the thesis does not aim at clarifying meanings, but rather at "celebrating" (Newton 1990) the contradictions within the films while at the same time being self-reflexive about its own limitations. The analysis thus exposes the tensions in the definition of the Self in Hollywood for example, where the American nation is constructed as authoritative yet caring, and in Egyptian cinema, where the Egyptian nation is imagined as modern yet traditional. Contradictions are also explored in relation to representations of Others. In Egyptian cinema for example, the films' casting Islamic fundamentalists a place on the edge of society is contradicted by the depiction of Islamic fundamentalists' indirect engagement in internal Egyptian politics.

Chapter Two: Theorizing the East/West Divide

This chapter draws on theories that set the framework of the thesis as a whole, and constitute the basis of the analysis. At the same time, the analysis aims to complicate the theories. The chapter starts with a discussion of Edward Said's discourse on Orientalism. Said is one of the pioneers whose work has been influential in understandings of the relationship between the East and the West. Said's work is useful because it analyzes power relations between the Orient and the Occident. It focuses on the idea of Otherness—how the Orient is the West's Other, and the implications this view carries, in casting the Orient an inferior position vis-à-vis the West, and ascribing the Orient characteristics that are in opposition to those of the Occident. This also highlights how the Orient functions as the source of the West's identity. Said's ideas are relevant in analyzing Hollywood's representation of the Arab world, which tends to follow this East/West dichotomy. However the analysis also applies Said's work to relations within the East, mainly in the relationship between men and women on one hand, and Egyptian national discourse and Islamic fundamentalism on the other hand. The analysis thus builds on Said's work by highlighting the shortcomings of his legacy on Orientalism, such as its omission of the existence of power struggles within the Orient. In this sense, the analysis uses Said's work to challenge the model of a linear, one-way notion of power.

This idea has been propagated by Foucault, whose work on Truth, power and knowledge forms an important basis in the conceptualization of the East/West divide in this thesis. Foucault challenges the idea of power being a merely negative imposition, and instead defines power as being contingent and positive or productive. Foucault's work adds to Said's dimensions that are useful as tools undoing power relations in the films. This applies to Foucault's rejection of notions of essence and the belief in the existence of a scientifically objective Truth which forms a backdrop against which all analysis should be formed. It also applies to Foucault's complication of notions of marginality and resistance, as his work can be used to argue against the idea that the East is inherently powerless in the face of the West. Instead, Foucault's work shows that power exists on all levels; the analysis follows this by paying attention to power relations exhibited within the "East" (as seen in the Egyptian

films). Those power relations indicate a struggle over discourse, whether in the context of international (Israel and the United States) or national (Islamic fundamentalism) politics. Foucault's work thus is applied to analyze the Egyptian films as a site of resistance.

However notions of resistance itself are not one-dimensional. Resistance, as a form of power, is contradictory, moving from being oppositional to being subversive. This sparks a need to understand the position of the margin in the face of seemingly usurping forces, and therefore the chapter also draws on theories of globalization. Globalization highlights contradictions of power in its view of the nation. It presents conflicting notions on older forms of nationalism, on the one hand arguing that the nation is under threat, and on the other hand presenting that the nation has been forced to defend itself against external forces, consequently strengthening nationalist sentiment. Globalization theories are thus relevant in analyzing the films' nationalist stance, a stance taken not only towards other nations, but also towards forces within the nation like Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt. The complexity of power relations is also seen in globalization's view of communication as a multi-directional process. Theories of globalization thus challenge ideas that ascribe Hollywood a position as the sole exporter of meaning.

Finally the chapter will draw on the case of Islamic fundamentalism as an example of how the theories above can be applied and linked. Islamic fundamentalism complicates Orientalism by being an Other within the East, and therefore challenges notions of an East/West divide. Islamic fundamentalism is also discussed as a case of "new" nationalism operating within processes of globalization, and that is presented by the Egyptian films as a threat to national integrity. At the same time, the two cinemas converging yet also conflicting discourses on Islamic fundamentalism are a prime example of the complex nature of power, and thus serve as an illustration of Foucault's ideas on the contingency of power. They also highlight the usefulness of Foucault's discussion on Truth; the conflicting views on Islamic fundamentalism present in the American and Egyptian films are an illustration of the struggle over Truth.

Edward Said's legacy on Orientalism

One cannot analyze discourse on the East/West binary without paying homage to Edward Said. In his influential book, *Orientalism*, Said treats Orientalism as a:

> "discourse of difference in which the apparently neutral Occident/Orient contrast is an expression of power relationships. Orientalism is a discourse which represents the exotic, erotic, strange Orient as a comprehensible, intelligible phenomenon within a network of categories, tables and concepts by which the Orient is simultaneously defined and controlled. To know is to subordinate" (Turner, 1994, p. 21).

Said (1978) looks at Orientalism as a multifaceted discourse characterized by four major ideas which he calls "dogmas of Orientalism". First, there is an absolute and systematic difference between the Orient (irrational, undeveloped, inferior) and the West (rational, developed, superior). Thus, the West defines itself as the opposite of the Orient. In the 1999 American film, *The Mummy*, for example, Egyptian Arabs are comically portrayed as ignorant, cowardly and barbaric (for instance, being referred to as "smelly like camels"), while American characters in contrast are portrayed as "civilized" (being composed, acting logically and bravely in the face of a mummy that accidentally comes back to life).

The West is not only portrayed as the diametrical opposite of the East, but also as its protector and its carer. This can be seen in the film *Three Kings* for instance, where American soldiers rescue Iraqi civilians from their Iraqi suppressors. Moreover, the Orient is constructed in terms of lack (of power, morals). This is portrayed in several Hollywood films depicting Arab terrorism, such as *Hostage*, in which we see an Arab plane hijacker not only raping an American female flight attendant, but also killing a mother on board the plane who was trying to shield her son from the terrorist's violence. At the end of the film the Arab terrorists are eventually captured by an American hero, suggesting the terrorists' ultimate lack of power. In this way Orientalism fetishizes the Other, reducing him/her to a set of essentialist variables that are often contradictory.

Second, abstractions about the Orient are preferable to direct evidence (Said 1978). Orientalism has lumped the non-West into one large entity, disregarding the

vast differences among non-Western cultures, in terms of religion, social structure, and values, thereby creating *a* fictional monolithic Orient. Edward Said sees this phenomenon as a way of maintaining the superiority of the West over the East. Said argues that the mere fact of using the terminology "Orient versus Occident", presenting the two as being endpoints on the pole of analysis, results in widening the gap between them: "the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western" (Said 1978, p. 46). He argues that such terminology does not "correspond to... [a] stable reality that exists as a natural fact" (Said 1978, p. 331). One example of the monolithic Orient is the concept of Arabia—that all Arab countries are uniform and poised against the West. This is reflected in a number of Hollywood films depicting the Middle East, whereby Arab characters are not assigned a particular nationality or even a particular Arabic accent or dialect, as seen in *True Lies* for example.

This brings us to the third dogma presented by Said, which is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, incapable of defining itself, and therefore, a generalized Western vocabulary to describe the Orient is "scientifically objective" (Said 1978, p. 301). This is another way by which the West tries to justify its hegemony over the East. By giving something the status of scientific truth, one is actually making it unchallengeable. This denies any kind of resistance to such a notion. This is again seen in films like *The Mummy* (1999), where the cinema of mystery (mummies coming back to life) is mixed with "realism" (casting one of the leading characters (a British woman) as an expert on Egyptology; using authentic-looking scenery). This use of authenticity corresponds with Lant's argument on photographs of the East; he argues that images "taken outside Europe and exhibited within Europe [the West, generally] functioned as symbols for taking possession and could thereby assuage the 'irresistible desire for spaces to conquer'" (1997, p. 77).

Finally, the Orient is something to be feared or controlled. This is perhaps best presented in the American film *The Siege* (1998), where the Orient is both feared (through the association of Arabs with American-threatening Islamic fundamentalist terrorism) and controlled (the American army declaring martial law in New York and placing all Arabs in camps until terrorists are found). Thus, Said states that the relationship between the Orient and the Occident is that of domination and hegemony, and it "is hegemony... that gives Orientalism... durability and strength" (Said 1978, p. 7).

Orientalism is characterized by how "the... [Orientalist] *writes* about, whereas the [Oriental] is *written* about" (Said 1978, p. 308). "Writing" refers to how it is the West that creates discourse about the East, and not vice versa. The Orient is thus constructed as a silent Other, an object that is incapable of defining or representing itself, and that is therefore in need of Western subjectivity. This objectification is also seen in how the Orient is presented as "a metaphor for sexuality", namely through the portrayal of Oriental women. These women are often shown to be veiled and yet exposed, such as the scene in the 1995 movie, *Don Juan De Marco*, where all 1500 wives of the Sultan gather naked in what seems to be a Turkish bath. Ella Shohat argues that "this process of exposing the female Other... [allegorizes] the Western masculinist power of possession, that she, as a metaphor for her land, becomes available for Western penetration and knowledge" (Shohat 1997b, p. 32-3).

This brings us to the issue of representation. According to Said, Orientalism has created a representation of the Orient which serves to justify the *actions* of the Occident. Applying that to cinema, one may argue that the representation of Arabs in Hollywood films is a creation aimed at preserving the status quo of the US as a world policeman controlling, among others, Arabs and Arab countries. Said says that

> "the representation of other societies and peoples involved an act of power by which images of them were in a sense created by the Western observer who constructed them as peoples and societies to be ruled and dominated, not as objects to be understood passively, objectively or academically" (Said 1987a).

Criticisms of Orientalism

Said's discourse on Orientalism has triggered an intellectual debate highlighting its shortcomings. This debate is important because it forms a significant part of the framework behind this thesis. There are six major complications within Said's discourse that the thesis demonstrates. First, as Porter (1994) and Windschuttle (1999) argue, Said implies the uniformity of Orientalist discourse over time and hence makes "nonsense of history" (Porter 1994, p. 152). Porter argues that when social and historical differences are transformed into universal differences, when, for example, moral difference is constructed as inferiority, we fail to look at hegemony as "process". Hegemony is not fixed, it manifests itself in fluid forms which maintain its

existence. Thus we can see the Otherness of Arabs surviving through its transformation from being about the womanizer/seducer of the twenties in films like *The Sheik*, to the terrorist of today.

Second, Landow (2002) adds that Said's discourse makes generalizations about the Orient when it is focused on the Middle East. This view is shared by Kerr (1980), who argued that Said's conclusions are limited and therefore cannot be generalized as applying to the whole of what he defines as the "Orient". In this sense, Said's discourse undermines the very claim it is making. Therefore, the use of the word "Orient" in this thesis does not mean that the conclusions made about the Arab world can be applied liberally to the cases of India or China for instance; rather, the word is used in order to make the connection with Said's discourse that the thesis aims to complicate.

Third, Said's view on Orientalism implies that the West is ideologically uniform. This entails two complications. Porter (1994) argues that the hegemonic unity perceived by Said in Orientalist discourse blinds him to the heterogeneity of such discourse and the possibility that this discourse itself contains ideological contradictions. This can for example be applied to the ambivalence experienced in US foreign policy as portrayed in the American films analyzed in this thesis. On one hand, the United States has taken what seems like a tough disciplinary stance illustrated in films like *Navy Seals*, where military action is America's preferred method of maintaining world order. On the other hand, with the New World Order, the United States has had to justify its military action as being about rescue rather than conquering. Films about the Gulf War, *In the Army Now* and *Three Kings*, illustrate this by portraying American military presence in the Gulf as a rescue mission.

Fourth, Porter (1994) moves to saying that Said's discourse eliminates the possibility of the existence of resistance or counter-hegemonic practices within Western discourse. While Hollywood, as analyzed in this thesis, appears to have adopted an Othering stance towards politics in the Middle East, we should not assume, as Sardar and Davies (2003) argue, that that is the only stance projected from the United States through cinema in particular and popular culture in general. Two examples that spring to mind are Michael Moore's documentary, *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) (which has had a cinema release), and Bill Hicks' stand-up comedy shows that have often been televised and sold on video. Those products, in addition to

various others, from books to music, challenge dominant American discourse on the Middle East. Therefore, while this thesis concerns itself with Hollywood, it is important to bear the limitation of this selection in mind.

Fifth, another complication in Said's discussion of Orientalism is the idea that the West writes while the Orient is written about. First, this view implies that Western colonialism is unique, and therefore disregards how colonialism may be exercised by the East as well (like the Ottoman Empire) (Landow 2002). Second, not only does focusing solely on the West's depiction of the East enforce the notion of the East as an object, such a totalizing notion also eliminates any chance of resistance by the non-West. This builds on arguments such as Sardar's, where he states that "[w]estern culture has always been obsessed with representation" (1998, p. 28). Western culture has had a history of placing the East as the object of the gaze, but this does not deny the active role of the non-West in engaging in representation itself. However, while my analysis shows how the East is also capable of representation (whether of the Self or the Other), it does not infer that the East is "innocent". The non-West therefore has the capability of looking at the West as an Other as well (as demonstrated by the Egyptian film *Hello America*, for example, which demonizes the United States as a land of crime and immorality). As Porter (1994) argues, this point unsettles subject/object binaries by alternating who is cast on each side on the binary.

Finally, underlying Said's discourse on Orientalism is the assumption of the East's innocence, not only in relation to the West as mentioned above, but, perhaps more importantly, in the context of the Orient itself (Ahmad 1994). Said's discourse on Orientalism discusses in great detail how the West sees the East as an Other, but it does not examine—though it recognizes—the vast differences and conflicts that exist within the East itself. By this I mean that although Said did mention that the Orient is not *an* Orient (as discussed earlier), he did not take his discussion further. He did not look at how there are power struggles within the Orient itself, and how these power struggles have represented a logic that is not so different from that of Orientalism. The Orient encompasses various socio-economic, gender and political stratifications that Said's theory does not pay attention to (Landow 2002). These power struggles demonstrate how each side in a struggle views the rest as Others. Within the Arab world, for example, Arab countries have often engaged in struggles among themselves, and tensions and attempts at domination exist among several countries until today (for example, the political and military dominance of Syria over Lebanon).

To sum up, the issue of "us" versus "them" is far more complicated than any theory can summarize. For within the "them" there could several more "thems". And certainly any attempt at analyzing the East versus West issue that starts with assuming that the East (or the West, as discussed above) is "struggle free" is romanticizing and simplistic. We need to examine how both sides have engaged in representation and in constructing the Other, and how this representation is part of a broader nationalist/resistant agenda.

Michel Foucault: Truth, power, knowledge

Foucault's work is useful if one wants to complicate models of power implied by Orientalism. Power, for Foucault, is not something that imposes, but rather is productive. Foucault's work also rejects notions of essence, or Truth. The thesis follows this notion, refraining from comparing the films' representations of politics to some Truth out there, and instead focusing on how the films themselves are an example of the complexity of power relations, while also containing within them power struggles. The thesis also examines the various Truths produces by the films, for example, in the way they often present fixed perspectives on Others (like Islamic fundamentalism).

The rejection of Truth

Foucault (1980) rejects the existence of anything that "was already there", i.e., Truth. For Foucault, nothing in the world is predetermined (whether by "nature" or any other factor). He emphasizes the role played by *chance*, a factor which has the ability to turn the tables of reason. Foucault maintains that chance is actually reasonable, because it is what history is based upon. By chance Foucault does not mean haphazard occurrences, but the idea that things "have no essence" in and of themselves. Everything in the world should be understood in the context of history: how things happened as a result of other things, what took place after what, under what circumstances, what factors contributed to their happening.

Foucault analyzes Truth from a political-economic position. He concludes that this political economy of Truth is characterized by four important traits. I shall list

those traits and discuss their relevance to this thesis. First, "'Truth' is centered on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it" (Foucault 1980, p. 131). Foucault is critical of matters of essence implied by discourse that is dressed as scientific, such as Orientalist discourse. But at the same time, it should be noted that it is not just the West that presents discourses on the East as scientific; the East engages is a similar mechanism, constituting Truth about the West (Landow 2002). The films show that both sides also engage in production of scientific discourse on the Self as well.

Second, Truth "is subject to constant economic and political incitement" (Foucault 1980, p. 131). Foucault believes that the demand for Truth arises both "for economic production as for political power" (ibid.). The struggle for political power is represented in the films in the tension between the US, Egypt, and Islamic fundamentalism. In the American films, Truth says that Saddam Hussein is a madman from whom the world should be protected, therefore US action against Iraq is justified. By the same token, according to Islamic fundamentalists in the Egyptian films, Truth says that the Egyptian government does not adhere to Islamic values and thus it is "corrupt"; therefore terrorist acts against it are fair.

Third, Truth "is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media)" (Foucault 1980, p. 131-2). It is no surprise that Foucault mentions the media as a "great political and economic" apparatus. The media—in all forms—play an important role in the creation and diffusion of Truths about the world. The study of the films places them as agents of diffusion and consumption of various Truths as illustrated above. This means that films play an active role in ideological constructions in society.

Finally, Truth "is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation ('ideological' struggles)... [t]here is a battle 'for truth', or at least 'around truth'" (Foucault 1980, p. 132). This last point can be the conclusion, or the summary, of the three previous points. Truth is not one simple thing; it is composed of a whole nexus of power relations on all levels. Foucault's argument against absolute Truth thus demonstrates both the American and the Egyptian claims for it. In the words of Foucault,

> "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault 1980, p. 131).

As we can see, the struggle over Truth is an example of the manifestations of power relations, where both the West and the East engage in mechanisms of power. As Foucault puts it, "there is not, on one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it" (1978, p. 101). All discourses are discourses of power.

Power and knowledge

Foucault argues that "power is comprised of instruments for the formation and recording of knowledge" (McHoul and Grace 1997, p. 22). In *Discipline and Punish*, he writes: "We should admit... that power produces knowledge... that there is no knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (1979a, p. 27). Discourses on Orientalism such as Said's have often taken the perspective that Orientalism is a form of power that imposes its discourse on Others. However, in my criticism of Said earlier, I pointed out how power is not a singular form possessed by some and denied to others. I also pointed out how Said's analysis of Orientalism implies the denial of the existence of power relations within the Orient. As Foucault argues:

> "Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always also the elements if its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application" (1980, p. 98).

Following from this Foucault offers methodological advice on the analysis of power. One should not, he argues, analyze "the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations", but should instead focus on "power in its extremities... in its more regional and local forms and institutions" (1980, p. 96). Foucault thus criticizes notions of power as being central to the state for example. The analysis in this thesis applies this through concentrating on films as localized sites of power. According to Alan Sheridan, "[t]here are certain categories of person... whose ability to exercise power is severely limited, but few members of these groups do not find some means of exercising power, *if only on each other*" (Sheridan 1982, p. 218, my emphasis).

Foucault warns that accepting power as something that "does not flow down uniformly from the more powerful to the less powerful" but that "it circulates between bodies" (Barker 1998, p. 28) may still blind us to the workings of power. The reason power works, he says, is not by being negative and repressive, but by being productive. As he says in *Power/Knowledge*:

> "What makes... [power] accepted, is simply that fact that... it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression" (1980, p. 119).

Repressive power to Foucault is what he refers to as ideology. Foucault criticizes notions of ideology because, in his view, ideology has three main premises. First, it is obsessed with a true/false dichotomy in the sense that it judges discourse against matters of essence (Rabinow 1984). This is seen in Said's discourse on Orientalism, which presents and challenges how the Occident creates a Truth about the Orient, but which implies that the Orient has been misrepresented and therefore undermines its own criticism by hinting that a True representation is possible (Windschuttle 1999). Second, ideology is concerned with issues of division and rejection. Foucault gives the example of the opposition between reason and madness: "The discourse of the madman was not treated in the same way as the discourse of the reasonable man" (Sheridan 1982, p. 122). Orientalism posits that the discourse of the East cannot be treated in the same way as that of the West. It is different as it is perceived to be unreasonable. At the same time, just as madness is used to constitute reason, the discourse of Orientalism used the East to constitute the West. However,

the complication in such an ideological notion is how ideology can be seen as a struggle over meaning, where discourses of the East have also rejected and distanced themselves from those of the West (as seen in *Hello America* for example) Third, ideology is prohibitive. This means that it limits the scope of discourse. From an Orientalist perspective, the scope of the Orient's discourse is limited and therefore the Orient is not free to "speak" (Sheridan 1982). This is how notions of ideology deny the presence of power as a network. However, as demonstrated by the Egyptian films, while they may not be totally free to "speak" (as their views are not transmitted on a global scale the way Hollywood films are), they remain an attempt at exercising power. Moreover, locating power in the hands of one party blurs the existence of power struggles within that party as well. An ideological analysis of cinematic representations of Middle Eastern politics that locates power within American discourse forgets that the American films are also subjected to prohibition, and in turn are not free to "speak".

Foucault adds a final point to his analysis of discourse as power, by stating that "there are no relations of power without resistances" (1980, p. 142). In this sense, Foucault complicates issues of "the margin" by boldly stating that "power is 'always already there', that one is never 'outside' it, that there are no 'margins' for those who break with the system to gambol in" (1980, p. 141). Resistance can occur in three ways. First, the "oppressed" may simply turn around a dominating discourse, as seen in the opposition of *Hello America*. Second, the oppressed may "find that their discourse has been appropriated by the dominant social forces" (Simons 1995, p. 91). This is seen in *The Other*, as the film begins with Edward Said in a cameo role (playing himself) positioned as an influential Arab intellectual at American universities. Said in the film declares: "Cultural creations are for everybody. It doesn't matter who gives what to whom... We have to transcend having to belong somewhere... I hope the day comes when we stop saying us and them, and instead say we." Finally, resistance can happen through subversion. The Egyptian films often embrace elements of the West (like technology, attire, popular culture) and yet make them fit in within Egyptian traditional values.

Globalization, power and the nation

Globalization theories have highlighted the complexity of power relations between the local and the global, and consequently they have sparked a debate on nationalism and the position of the nation vis-à-vis globalization forces as well as non-traditional forms of nationalism like Islamic fundamentalism. Despite the importance of this point, the complexity of power relations is not always referred to in some definitions of globalization. Those definitions either seem to define globalization as a new form of imperialism (as stated by Friedman 1990 and Tomlinson 1999), or to overemphasize the connectedness between localities generated by globalization (as stated by Giddens 1990 and Hall 1992). Those definitions should not be discarded; they are useful in the way they highlight the interplay between the local and the global, or glocalization (Robertson 1997). However, the thesis aims to build on and complicate those theories by attending to the complexity of power in the global arena.

One myth on globalization is that it does not entail the separation of the Third World from the West, but that both the West and the Rest can "speak" at the same time (Ahmed and Donnan 1994), in the same space. But is this not a romanticized view of the world, or at least a stage which we have not reached yet? Globalization is characterized by complex relationships of power. As Kiely argues, "[i]t is not the case... that some parts of the world are effectively incorporated while others are insufficiently globalised; rather, it is that *the actual processes of globalisation that have occurred have been intrinsically uneven, unequal and unstable*" (1998, p. 11). In this sense, power relations in the global arena are no longer limited to national expressions. At the same time, today "in many instances national interests are becoming merged into global ones" (Waters 1995, p. 117). The national interests of the United States have thus become "global" interests which are being challenged by other global forces like Islamic fundamentalism. America's New World Order has now become a New World Disorder, with the Cold War being replaced by "War on Terrorism". As Waters argues, the "domination of the superpowers has disappeared to be replaced by a fluid and highly differentiated pattern of international relations that exhibits much... chaos and uncertainty" (1995, p. 118). This interplay between American and Egyptian nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism forms a power

triangle that is represented in the films analyzed. The analysis shows that the relationship between Islamic fundamentalism and nationalism is complex and negotiative within processes of globalization.

Another myth is that globalization is a usurping force that threatens the sovereignty of the nation-state. According to Waters,

> "politics is a highly territorial activity and ... the organized nation-state is the most effective means for establishing sovereignty over territory that human beings have yet devised. Globalization is a process with a spatial referent but that paradoxically threatens territorial sovereignty. The state might therefore just be the final bastion of resistance to globalizing trends and the key indicator of their effectivity. If states survive globalization then it cannot be counted the force that it currently appears to be" (1995, p. 122).

Featherstone, on the other hand, sees this as a consequence of globalization itself. It is misleading, according to Featherstone, to think that global culture leads to a "weakening of the sovereignty of nation-states which... will necessarily become absorbed into larger units and eventually a world state which produces cultural homogeneity and integration" (1990, p. 1). This also means abandoning the homogenizing processes (Americanization, for example) presented in the cultural imperialism theory. As Featherstone put it,

> "Rather we need to inquire into the grounds... involving the formation of cultural images and traditions as well as the inter-group struggles and interdependencies, which led to these conceptual oppositions [homogeneity/heterogeneity] becoming frames of reference for comprehending culture within the state-society which then become projected onto the globe" (1990, p. 2).

Applying this to Egyptian cinema, we find that the various political, economic and social changes occurring in Egypt from 1952 until now have had a great effect on Egyptian culture, and consequently Egyptian cinema. Various Egyptian governments have exercised different modes of censorship on Egyptian cinema—modes that differed under each government's rule (from King Farouq, to Nasser, to Sadat, and

now Mubarak). Censorship, combined with the various cultural and economic changes that have occurred in Egypt, have made the products of Egyptian cinema quite varied. At the same time, from Nasser's time onward, Egyptian cinema has been characterized by a zeal for nationalism (combined with pan-Arabism at the time of Nasser) (Sharaf-ed-Din 1992). A similar process can be seen in Hollywood, with economic and political changes affecting the films produced over time. Those films are also characterized by a nationalist stance, expressed across genres.

These various factors undermine the above-mentioned idea of the world becoming nation-less and homogeneous. Several Hollywood films illustrate the appeal of nationalism (*True Lies*, *Three Kings*, *Rules of Engagement*). In Egyptian cinema on the other hand the situation is slightly more complex. For example, in 1996 and 1998, two Egyptian films about Nasser (*Nasser 56* and *Nasser: The Story of a Man, A Story of a Nation* respectively) appeared. They both depicted Nasser's advocacy for Arab unity and Egyptian integrity: world homogeneity is rejected, yet at the same time, regional homogeneity (Arabism) is advocated.

The debate is thus taken beyond that of world versus nation-state into one of "selective commonality"—homogeneity based on certain common factors (geography, language, history) chosen for political/economic purposes (enhancing trade relations, combating Israel). However, what is happening in the Arab world today negates this homogeneity (Egypt and Jordan having peace treaties with Israel; inter-Arab rivalry (Iraq/Kuwait, etc.)). This gives Egyptian cinema its special status of being in the middle: homogenizing on the one hand (regionally), and heterogenizing on the other (internationally). At the same time, the nationalist zeal in Egyptian cinema articulates the threat to the nation posed by external forces (imperialism) as well as internal forces (Islamic fundamentalism), which complicates Hollywood's one-dimensional threat by Others (namely Islamic fundamentalism).

The controversy of Islamic Fundamentalism

Islamic fundamentalism, defined by Moallem (1999) as "a regime of truth based on discourses identified with, or ordained by, God (taken metaphorically or literally) and binding its observants" (p. 323), has often been looked at as an example of the clash between the local and the global. According to Giddens (1990), local

transformations are not counter-globalization developments; however, the local sometimes struggles to affirm its identity and thus maintain its power because it feels threatened by the forces of globalization. The local loses its trust in political institutions and embarks on its own struggle for existence (Cox 1996). Through the universalization of Western cultural preferences, the secularization of law as the basis of social order, and the denial of the possibility of a single, superior culture in such a pluralistic, choice-driven world, religion finds itself obliged to relativize itself to global trends. Islamic fundamentalism has been seen as one of the responses representing the clash between the secular and the religious, the West and the East.

Most of the films analyzed in this thesis represent Islamic fundamentalism from different angles. In contrast with other political issues covered in the films (like the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Gulf War), the representation of Islamic fundamentalism is a prime example of the complex nature of power. The controversy of Islamic fundamentalism lies in how it challenges the East/West divide, as this "local" in itself becomes a globalizing force. Therefore, Islamic fundamentalism complicates theories of globalization and nationalism. At the same time, Islamic fundamentalism is Othered by the West as well as the East, and therefore is a strong case for complicating Orientalism. The struggle over the representation of fundamentalism shows how it is a contingent form of power that cannot be reduced to a simple us/them dichotomy.

This section discusses Islamic fundamentalism in relation to the theories mentioned above in order to pave the way for the empirical analysis to follow, as Islamic fundamentalism is an illuminating example illustrating the theoretical points made above and the complexity of the political situation that complicates the theories. Before starting to analyze Islamic fundamentalism, it is important to note that it is a combination of several movements and groups. These various Islamic fundamentalist groups (whether political or militant) are severely divided, to the extent that "each refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the others" (Karawan 1997, p. 25). There are "different tendencies and varieties of Islam" and fundamentalism (Sayyid 1997, p. 36). Therefore it is mistaken to talk about Islamic fundamentalist movements as one entity (Said 1981). However, as put by Sayyid, "the diversity of Islamic movements does not mean that... [Islamic fundamentalism] lacks coherence" (1997, p. 157). Moghissi explains that all fundamentalist movements "see Islam as a totalizing force that inspires and regulates all aspects of public and private life" (1999, p. 70).

Islamic fundamentalism, globalization and nationalism

Debates on globalization have carried with them variable, often conflicting, views on the relationship between the global and the local. On one hand, globalization has been seen as the intensification of relations between different cultures in a time-space compression (Robertson 1997). On the other hand, it has been looked at as the expansion of cultures into the global realm (Featherstone 1995). Both those views articulate the idea that the global and the local are constantly interacting. The result of this interaction has often been seen as either a homogenization of cultures, resulting in cultural integration or unification, or a heterogenization, not only in the sense that cultures are diverse, but also that they may clash (Huntington 1996).

At the heart of all this lies a debate about the position of the nation in a globalized world. Some argue that the nation and nationalism are becoming obsolete, with connections being made between cultures and individuals across national boundaries, resulting in cosmopolitanism where the individual becomes a citizen of the world (Naussbaum 1994). Others argue that the nation is in fact strengthened in this context, with individuals holding on to their national identity to protect its existence in the face of usurping global forces (Dorris 1994). In other words, this view looks at the global as a threat to the national.

However the world today is witnessing the emergence of new forms of affiliation that transcend the nation, yet that do not necessarily mean that the nation is under threat. Those new affiliations can be seen as a new kind of nationalism, or patriotism. This "new patriotism" describes the existence of intersecting affiliations, local, global, regional, and religious. Islamic fundamentalism is a case of this "new patriotism", forming an example of global (not cosmopolitan) citizenship. Islamic fundamentalism articulates itself within, and not in opposition to, processes of globalization.

Islamic fundamentalism is an example of "the ambiguous expression [of] assimilation into the universal... and simultaneously for... adhering to the particular, the reinvention of difference" (Wallerstein 1984, 166-7). On one hand, Islamic fundamentalism recognizes its "difference" from the West, and articulates it to replace Western hegemony with its own "hegemony", or, as Robins (2000) puts it, "to create a global civilization on different basis from that which is being elaborated by the symbolic analysts of the West" (p. 200). Fundamentalism's "shifting hegemony"

provides "alternative visions of the global situation" (Friedman 1994, 201) that aim at "the formation of a single world culture" that transcends the nation (Friedman 1994, 100). As Sayyid explains, "Islamists explicitly reject nationalism, declaring that 'an Islamic state is not a nationalistic state because ultimate allegiance is owed to God (...)'" (1997, p. 91).

On the other hand, Islamic fundamentalism has not always been oppositional to the nation. Islamic fundamentalism was mobilized in the 1920's to expel the British from Egypt, and to rally against the Soviets in Afghanistan. More recently, it has been used by Hizbullah to expel the Israelis from South Lebanon. These examples illustrate how "being" (or rather, "becoming") Islamic fundamentalist is not a matter of subsuming cultural/national difference, but rather of "constituting a *discursive device* which represents difference as... identity" (Hall 1992, p. 297).

On another level, the Islamic fundamentalist identity recognizes the national nature of conflicts yet projects them beyond the nation. An example is Palestinian group Hamas, which targets its activities against Israel and yet engages in rallying support in other countries (like Britain), where it hails the suffering of Palestinians as a global issue rather than a localized one. As we can see, Islamic fundamentalism's fluid identity has taken different forms according to the historical context, moving from being nationalist to a challenge to nationalism to a mixture of both. The spread of fundamentalism as a "national" form "divorced from territorial states" (Appadurai 1996, p. 169) has prompted Appadurai to label its identity "postnational". He also uses the term to refer to fundamentalism's emergence as an alternative form "for the organization of global traffic in resources, images and ideas" (ibid.). However, while Appadurai also maintains that this implies that nation-states have become obsolete, the above discussion alerts us that we cannot make generalizations about Islamic fundamentalism as being essentially oppositional to the nation, and as seeing the concept of the nation-state as hegemonic and anti-Islam.

Islamic fundamentalism as a regional force

Islamic fundamentalism does not only have a national character, but is also regional. Islamic fundamentalism as a regional force is seen in the Islamic world, but is perhaps most visible in the Arab world (although that view is currently being challenged with the increasing exposure of groups in places like Kenya, Indonesia and

Chechnya). The Arab world has gone through stages in which its regional identity has been put forward and withdrawn. During the rule of Egypt's Nasser, for example, there was a resurgence of pan-Arabism. This can be seen as a reaction to colonial (British, French, Italian) presence in the region, as well as to the formation of the state of Israel in 1948. However Nasser failed at establishing Arab unity. This is because, first, pan-Arabism underwent tensions between the demands of the state and those of collective action (Smith 1997), and second, because the different political regimes within it are ultimately national (Fanon 1994).

Moreover, the advocacy of a national identity (whether local or regional) has been in conflict with the views of many Islamic fundamentalists in the Arab world who argue for an Islamic identity (Al-Ahsan 1992). The existence of Islamic fundamentalists in the Arab world and elsewhere can be seen as an example of the failure of the nation-state system to create a truly national identity (whether local or regional). However, what seemed to partly resolve this identity crisis in the Arab world is the problem with Israel, as Arab countries have attempted to unite against this common enemy (Al-Ahsan 1992). Yet this unity was short-lived, catalyzed by Egypt's and Jordan's signing of peace agreements with Israel. Not only did the peace treaties go against popular opinion across the Arab world, they also added to the dismay of Islamic fundamentalist groups, who regard Jihad against Zionism as one of their motives. In this sense, Islamic fundamentalism has arisen as a kind of substitute for a failing Arab identity.

This argument can be linked to that of the relationship between Islamic fundamentalism and globalization. Hall (1992) argues that globalization entails the formation of new identifications that are simultaneously global and local. He however singles out the Islamic fundamentalist identity as being the result of the "tension between Tradition and Translation" (p. 312), or between "ethnicity" and "global homogenization" (p. 313). However, while Islamic fundamentalist movements have often been looked at as being oppositional to global processes, they constitute a new patriotism, conceptualized as the formation of new "linkages between... delocalized political communications, and revitalized political commitments", and at the same time provide a means for the production of locality for communities in multiple ethnoscapes (Appadurai 1996, p. 196). Islamic fundamentalism today, namely after the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, has been invoked as a threat to globalization, a "closed", localized force that challenges our non-essentialist,

fluid identities. However I argue that Islamic fundamentalism is a relativizing force within processes of globalization, not aiming at negating global reality, but at shaping it. By that I mean that Islamic fundamentalism is "a way of asserting a particular (group) identity, which in turn is a prime method of competing for power and influence in the global system" (Beyer 1994, p. 4). In doing so, Islamic fundamentalism transcends nations, but is not necessarily oppositional to the nation.

Islamic fundamentalism then is a force that is "located within and beyond the borders of the nation-state" (Moallem 1999, p. 324). Barber (1992) has argued that Islamic fundamentalism is an example of the fragmentation of the nation into smaller groups. He argues that this is in contrast with what he terms McWorld, or "an emergent, transnational cultural uniformity" (Grosby 1997, p. 82). But the situation is more complex than homogeneity/heterogeneity. Islamic fundamentalism is an example of glocalization, bearing elements of the local and the global in its outlook and operation.

Islamic fundamentalism is not a nativist movement merely "entailing a 'localist' character" (Abaza and Stauth 1990, p. 218). Abaza and Stauth (1990) argue that "the Islamic religious ethic is directed toward world domination by means of world conquest" (p. 210). Islamic fundamentalism seems to have exclusively adopted this ethic, and therefore should not be confused with other Islamic movements, such as that of the Nation of Islam in the USA, which is a *separatist* movement, aiming at isolating the Muslim community from the "existing social order" (Kepel 1997, p. 54), even though the two movements share certain aspects like "bottom-up Islamization" which offers services to the community to attract common members of society (Kepel 1997, p. 72). Islamic fundamentalism's advocacy of jihad is also characteristic of its global nature. In the early days of Islam when jihad in the name of religion was declared, the aim was not only to protect the Islamic *umma* and to "redraw boundaries" (Barber 1992, p. 7), but to *expand* it, so that the whole world (if possible) would be Muslim.

This is somewhat similar to arguments on cosmopolitanism and patriotism as oppositional. Martha Nussbaum's (1994) pro-cosmopolitanism argument in Boston Review, which advocates being a "citizen of the world", has generated various responses from thinkers like Barber (1994) and Dorris (1994) who argue that this global citizenship is too demanding and overwhelming, and Beitz (1994) and Wallerstein (1994) who say that cosmopolitanism need not reject patriotism, but that

the two can be sustained together. However none of those arguments can be simplistically applied to Islamic fundamentalism. It may have resistant characteristics, but it is not oppositional to global forces. It is neither an example of cosmopolitanism not of patriotism, but articulates a new patriotism that is relational and negotiative within the processes of globalization.

Fundamentalism between Orientalism, Truth, and power

The West and the East have both claimed to have the Truth about Islamic fundamentalism. These Truths are not necessarily always contradictory. One way in which these Truths converge is how both the West and the East see fundamentalism as an attempt at not modernizing Islam, but Islamizing modernity (Kepel 1994, p. 2). Islamic fundamentalism is presented as seeing the modern world as corrupt and 'Satanic' because it does not adhere to Islamic ways, whether in morality, politics, government, or social state. Modernity is not only exemplified in the West, but also in secular (and non-Muslim) Eastern states. Islamic fundamentalism condemns how modernity has meant that the state has not just undermined the role of religion, but has replaced religion altogether (Abaza and Stauth 1990).

On another level, while this common Truth suggests that fundamentalism opposes the West and its manifestation in the East, a closer scrutiny challenges this Truth. Fundamentalists may have opposed the secular ideological aspect of modernity, but they have "adopted the most sophisticated techniques of modernity and tried to dissociate them from the secular culture, to show that there is no necessary connection between the two" (Kepel 1997, p. 5). An example is how Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan used their American weapons and guerrilla training to expel the Soviets from Afghanistan. The US excuses its support of these militants by saying that it could not directly confront the Soviets (Karawan 1997). This example (represented in the Egyptian film *The Other*) is one of many that complicate the idea of fundamentalism as being totally oppositional to the West.

Another example can be derived from an argument by Sayyid. Sayyid presents the West's Truth about fundamentalism by observing that one "way of describing the discourse on 'Islamic fundamentalism' is to call it 'orientalism'... This allows the 'abnormality and extremism' of fundamentalism to be contrasted with the moderation

and reasonableness of western hegemony" (1997. p. 31). Thus, fundamentalism becomes "a means of establishing and reinforcing the identity of the West" (Sayyid 1997, p. 33). It is clear from this argument that the West tends to equate the East with fundamentalism (Moallem 1999).

Needless to say, the East itself is divided into a pro-fundamentalism minority and an anti-fundamentalism majority. The latter category uses fundamentalism to define its identity too. For example, in the 1994 Egyptian film *The Terrorist*, while the "moral" woman is seen by fundamentalists as being veiled and home-bound, for non-fundamentalists she is not veiled and enjoys a far higher level of freedom. The non-fundamentalist East thus uses the same "abnormality and extremism" of fundamentalism that the West uses to define the Eastern identity as its opposite.

At the same time, what adds to the controversy of fundamentalism is that Islam is constructed by fundamentalists themselves as "a master signifier, the point to which all other discourses must refer" (Sayyid 1997, p. 47). Hence we can establish an interesting connection: Fundamentalists use Islam to affirm their identity the way the West and the East use fundamentalism to affirm their identities—only that the first is a positive affirmation, while the second is a negative one.

However, in the cases of the West and fundamentalists there is "an attempt... to hegemonize the general field of discursivity" (Sayyid 1997, p. 46). Just as, in Said's words, "the Islamic Orientalist expressed ideas about Islam in such a way as to emphasize his, as well as putatively the Muslim's, resistance to change, to mutual comprehension between East and West, to the development... out of archaic, primitive classical institutions and into modernity" (1978, p. 263), so do Islamic fundamentalists when they talk about the modern world, with their call for preservation of tradition, their denial of any comprehension between East and West (instead, some justify brutal action against the West), and their emphasis on the *return* to an ideal past (Moghissi 1999). In doing so, Islamists refer to Islam as an "incarnation of goodness" (Sayyid 1997, p. 48), while Orientalists see Islam as "a degraded, dangerous representative of the Orient" (Said 1978, p. 260). At the same time, Islamic fundamentalists see non-Muslims (whether Western or not) as Others (as represented in *The Terrorist*) (Moghissi 1999). As put by Moallem, "[f]undamentalist discourse... is dependent on "otherness" to organize an ideological "we" " (1999, p. 335). Fundamentalists then have also used the West to construct their identity.

So where does the non-fundamentalist East stand? From analyzing Egyptian films, we see that this East occupies a position somewhere in the middle. It sees Islam as good, but so does it see other religions; it does not necessarily argue for East/West harmony but it calls for the appropriation of "good" elements from the West; and it supports modernity and condemns extremism, while remaining in the realm of tradition. Here it is important not to romanticize this non-fundamentalist East. Condemning fundamentalism does not give any country the status of absolute "goodness"; such a condemnation can be a means to an end on the country's political agenda. Often, in countries like Egypt, opposing fundamentalism serves as part of a nationalist project. Nevertheless, the argument moves beyond that of an East/West dichotomy and into a tripartite situation where every side is attempting to have a claim over the Truth. According to Sayyid,

> "[t]he truth is one way of describing statements which we consider to be good or useful... Politics... is the process by which societies arrive at a new vision of the truth, a new way of describing the good or the useful. To paraphrase Michel Foucault, '[t]he political question... is truth itself'. As such, truth and politics cannot be separated" (1997, p. 12).

Chapter Three: The Politics of Space: Spatial Manifestations of Nationalist Agendas

Introduction: Why space matters?

The first theme I will focus on in this thesis is the depiction of space. Much of the political debate in the Middle East revolves around space. Space, both physical and imagined, is not only part of the identity of people, but also a dynamic tool often utilized to define the identity of nations. As Lefebvre argues, "space is produced by social relations that it also reproduces, mediates, and transforms" (Natter and Jones 1997, p. 148). Space thus is constantly in flux and carries multiple meanings. It is not a given, a neutral stage upon which history is played out. It is part of history and culture, constantly being defined and redefined. In other words, space is a cultural process through which "pasts erupt into the present" (Gregory 1997, p. 228). There has been a considerable degree of conflict over space, and indeed, (re)defining space is an act of power (this has most obviously been seen in the mapping done by Europe on other parts of the world).

In this chapter, cinematic representation of space is analyzed as an example of the exercise of power. The chapter argues that the ways the two cinemas understand space are different. While Hollywood seems to attempt to use space as the stage upon which political conflicts are fought, i.e. space as background, Egyptian cinema pays more attention to the way space is part of political conflicts, i.e. space as foreground. The term "background" here is not used to imply that space in Hollywood has no meaning; rather, the term is used to indicate that space in those films plays a secondary, or a supplementary role to that of "historical" (or action) events. This view of space as background is an example of the obsession with history as "playwright" (Carter 1995, p. 375) as pointed out by Soja and Foucault. Carter argues that this reduction of space to a stage is an illustration of what he calls imperial history, a history that ignores the lived experiences of space by the people who inhabit it.

Most of the American films analyzed in this chapter belong to the action genre, a genre characterized by a masculine, open space. Hollywood's relationship with space here is one about mastery, relying heavily on open, wide and aerial shots of action occurring outdoors. The Egyptian films on the other hand, are mainly

melodramas, and are largely confined to feminine, indoor spaces, with space looked at from the inside. It is a much more intimate portrayal of space. This use of space is parallel to the ways the two sides deal with the various political issues involved. Thus, America's approach to Middle Eastern politics as portrayed in the films is from "above", suggesting mastery over the politics and over the Other regions where the conflicts are played out. It parallels America's constantly expanding political frontiers. Egypt's approach on the contrary is one from "below", where the conflicts are more localized and physically closer to home.

Through this empirical analysis, the chapter aims at problematizing the representation of space in the two cinemas. Space often passes unnoticed in cinema, becoming naturalized and/or fixed in our imagination as a given. The chapter will thus "denaturalize" space through contrasting the two cinemas' use of space and how that is related to the films' political nature. The chapter argues that the two sides' use of space, while not necessarily oppositional, reflects different approaches to common political issues. The spatial manifestations of representing Middle Eastern politics thus underscore both countries' divergent political agendas.

Space, identity and culture

Space is a question of power (Foucault 1970). Where once the colonizers' representation of the Other landscape was an example of knowledge as power, through practices like travel writing, mapping and naming, the films' portrayal of space is a more recent, yet parallel, illustration. Films enable the criticism and the reordering of the geographical imaginations of the world (Massey and Lury 1999). In doing so, films can create space as well as deny it. The films analyzed here represent and classify space in different ways, but the inherent similarity in both the American and the Egyptian films is the importance of the role that space plays in the construction of national identities and in fighting political battles.

The main idea to remember when analyzing space is that space is not fixed; its dynamic representation in the films is an example of how space is constantly in the process of being produced (Lefebvre 1991). This means that space is "an active component of constructing, maintaining, and challenging social order" (Liggett 1995, p. 245). Moreover, space itself is a cultural construction. The meanings of a space are

based on the social power structure of the culture representing those meanings (Rose 1992). Space becomes a question of difference, where differences between cultures/spaces are socially constructed (Soja and Hooper 1993). The concept of space as difference draws attention to the instability of space and how it is differently configured by different people in order to affirm different identities. Space is not just a tool for constructing identities; it is here that spaces become places that have personalities that are part of the people's identities (Nietschmann 1993). Space thus is contested. The same space that is a source of identity for one group (for example Palestine for the Israelis) is used as a point of differentiation from Others (Palestinians), while it is also a source of identity for those same Others. The same applies to Islamic fundamentalists in Egypt. Cairo for example is a physical and cultural center for the actions of Egypt's moderates, yet it is the same space that hosts Egypt's Others. In this way, we can no longer speak of perceived or conceived space (Lefebvre 1991) in uniform ways. It is no longer a matter of core versus periphery, where the "us" reside within the space and the "them" outside it. For we are speaking about the same space here. The issue is that this space is constructed subjectively as place. Space thus is not an *object* of discourse that is spoken for (by the films, by the people (re)claiming it) and that does not represent itself (as argued by Beauregard 1995). Space is dynamic and demands attention.

Hence we cannot speak of an "abstract" landscape or space without also paying attention to its "lived" constituents (Lefebvre 1991). This has prompted Sauer to formulate the term "cultural landscape" (in Hirsch 1995, p. 9). This is because a study of space cannot be reduced to "an empirical notion of objects-in-space" (Shields 1997, p. 186). In other words, it is important to examine space not only as material but also as a socially produced system of representation "through which that materiality both embeds and conveys social meaning" (Natter and Jones 1997, p. 151).

Moreover, if we are to argue that all places have an identity, we should pay attention to the location of this identity not only in a larger social and historical framework (Soja 1996), but also within a framework of other spaces' identities. Morley (1999) explains that we should not turn to separate, internalized histories in order to discern the identity of places (as, I argue, in the Hollywood films), but rather to see a place's uniqueness as "a point of intersection in a wider network of relations" (p. 157). This does not refer to understanding place as antagonistic to other places, but

as linked to them. The Other place here is not seen as a threat from which a place should be protected, but as forming part of the identity of the place.

This challenges existing dichotomies about inside/outside, center and periphery. Because the line between the two is hard to define. This is perhaps best illustrated in bell hooks' (1990) ideas about margins in her book *Yearning*. She argues that when the people on the margin actively engage with the center and the margin at the same time (by that I mean recognizing the political complexities of the relation between margin and center and trying to make sense of it), i.e., when the margin becomes a site of resistance, it no longer is an Other space. This is because the notion Other invokes objectification; hooks undoes the inside/outside binary by arguing that the margin can also be empowering.

Hollywood's spatial political stage

In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said introduces the term "imagined geographies" (1978, p. 55) to denote (to borrow a phrase from Driver and Rose 1992, p. 4) the "maps of meaning" that colonizers created to make sense of Other land(s) like the Middle East. In this sense, countries become subjective creations (Freeman 1999). Yet the colonizers' view was that their imagined geographies were scientific and objective (as in the writings of Mary Kingsley, see Blunt 1994a and 1994b). Hollywood's representation of Other spaces does not diverge greatly from this path. The Middle Eastern Other spaces represented in Hollywood are political and ideological, yet viewed from a distance that invokes a sense of objectivity. This is established through the use of various camera shots that in turn constitute space in this particular way: aerial shots, wide-angle shots, radar views, "targeting" views, penetration views, and panning shots. The different camera shots in turn construct the Other space in various forms: as an object, as a target, as wilderness, as an urban jungle, and a barrier/border to be crossed. In what follows, I will examine each of those forms with reference to the particular films analyzed in this chapter.

Imagining the landscape

1. Objectifying the Other space

Our first experience of San'a in *Rules in Engagement* is a feeling of floating over the city. Masses of solemn houses, yellowish in the twilight, appear suddenly on the screen and jerk us from Wake Island in the Indian Ocean to Yemen. We soon realize that the view we are seeing is that of the American marines arriving in helicopters after a Yemeni terrorist attack on the American embassy in San'a. The helicopters' descent upon the city recalls the opening of Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, where the first thing we see is aerial views from Hitler's plane as it flies over and comes down on Germany. Just like Hitler is positioned as God, the American marines' spatial representation bestows upon them an element of glory. At the same time, this representation invokes a sense of mastery over the Other landscape. The Other landscape is thus objectified by the American gaze. This scientific gaze denies a representation of the intricacies of the Other space, and hence its "lived" aspects.

Keiller comments:

> "the higher we ascend... the more we can see, but the less we know about events beneath... it seems that it is the things that we don't see that are most important to the depiction of spatial experience in the films" (1982, p. 48).

The invocation of American mastery is also established through the use of the radar view as seen in *The Siege*, a film depicting Islamic fundamentalist terrorism in the heart of the USA. The opening sequence of the film contains images of radar screens monitoring the movement of an Islamic fundamentalist Sheikh's car in the Saudi desert. The radar view shots do not depict the car in its actual form, but rather as a point in motion on the radar screen. As if to validate the radar's view, shots of the sophisticated radar screen are inter-cut with shots of the Mercedes as it glides through the sand dunes of the expansive Saudi desert. High angle shots of the car moving in the arid land from the right- to the left-hand side of our screen further establish the car and the Sheikh, who is meant to represent Osama bin Laden, as objects of American scientific scrutiny. Blunt (1994a) sees this surveillance as an act of authority. *The Siege*'s spatial depiction of this mastery is then twofold. First is the above-mentioned

surveillance; second is the enabling of a physical penetration of the desert, with American spies having gone through the desert to set up a trap to capture the Sheikh. In this sense, the unknown Other space is defined in terms of lack (of power) (Massey 1993), which legitimates control over the landscape (Rose 1992).

2. Targeting the Other space

Sometimes the Other space is represented as a target. This is particularly seen in situations where American soldiers go into Other countries/landscapes. *Navy Seals*, a film where American marine troops are summoned to Lebanon to rescue a load of American missiles from the hands of militants, is an illustration. The film emphasizes the superiority of the American Seals over the Lebanese militias in the various fight sequences. The fighting takes place in Beirut, depicted as not much more than a mass of rubble and shambles. Beirut is meant to function as a generally passive background in the film, where the Americans victoriously encounter the Lebanese militias. Seals penetrate the unknown landscape, hiding behind crumbling walls as they shoot their enemy. In their search for the missiles, they break into warehouses, slamming the doors open, and examining the space from every angle. The camera follows the soldiers as they go in, pans their angered faces, and lingers on the damage caused by their urgent search. When the soldiers shoot, the camera takes their side and portrays their targeting point of view. The Seals' bullets hit their targets, but also penetrate the urban landscape, adding to its existing symptoms of war: Bomb and bullet holes penetrating everything, the walls, the buildings, even the roads. The space may be a background in the story, but it does carry with it the horrific aspects of war. The film does not explain how or why the missiles got to Lebanon. The focus remains on the pleasure derived from action sequences and on glorifying America (with the Seals finally succeeding in their mission). The conflict could have been anywhere, and the narrative is a classic one about the fight between good and evil.

Yet the space need not always be visually present to be targeted. Sometimes targeting is invoked in the unseen. An illustration of this is found in *Courage Under Fire*, a film depicting the quest of an American colonel to find out whether a pilot killed during the Gulf War deserves the Medal of Honor for her courage. Iraq during the Gulf War in the film is never given the privilege of a mid shot or closer. Instead, we see hazy images of arid landscape where fighting is taking place between

American and faceless Iraqi soldiers. That the landscape is at the heart of the conflict seems to make little difference in the film. Again, the focus is on American heroism, relegating space to a secondary position. The targeting thus is represented indirectly, resembling military computer games where the enemy is reduced to a symbolic representation depicting a "clean war" (Ryan and Kellner 1990).

3. The ideology of wilderness

One of the most commonly used images of Arabia is that of the desert. The desert is a classic example of the opposition between nature and science (Rose 1992), between wilderness and civilization. Sometimes this distinction is depicted literally, with juxtaposing images of progressive, (sub)urban space and desolate wilderness (Short 1991). *Rules of Engagement* heavily relies on this, with sharp editing that moves between the jungles of Vietnam, leafy American suburbs and the Yemeni desert.

The desert is also used as a signpost that serves both the narrative and the American political agenda. It acts as an icon (Nietschmann 1993) that is reduced to a set of transferable "imaginative associations" (Freeman 1999, p. 58). The narrative is served because the desert is an example of a classic binary (barbarism versus civilization); the political agenda is served because the desert is invested with ideology. It is not only—being "foreign"—a "condition of excitement" (ibid), but also a condition of fear. Fear is transposed to the people who inhabit the desert. They are seen as "native" to the desert, i.e., they are naturalized as part of the landscape (Gupta and Ferguson 1992), or as a reflection of what wilderness represents (Short 1991). In *In the Army Now*, American soldiers Bones and co. find themselves on a mission in the Libyan desert, trying to evict invading Libyans from Chad. The desert is inhabited by soldiers who are as savage as the land they occupy. Speaking roughly, dressed roughly and treating the Americans roughly, they seem to display the qualities of what is seen as the opposite of civilization, even though they possess such technological advances as weapons and television (which they use to get news from CNN). Here, as Baudrillard explains, the desert can be associated with the figure of the non-human or anti-human who is outside the social order (1983; see also Short 1991). Bones and co. get lost in the desert, and see their situation as being "nowhere" (Schaffer 1994).

Arabia as desert is thus denied its privilege as place. It becomes mute (Freeman 1999), only spoken for by the (cognitive) mapping of the United States.

But perhaps the most striking example is *Three Kings*, which depicts the experiences of American soldiers at the end of the Gulf War as they embark on an accidental rescue mission of Iraqi civilians. The Iraqi people in the film, fleeing from Saddam and hiding in underground caves, seem to be enslaved by the land they inhabit (Budley and Safran 1983). The Iraqi land itself is not seen as the carrier of the Iraqi people's pain, but rather as inflicting this pain upon them. This parallels the United States' stance towards Iraq after the Gulf War, seeing Saddam, and not UN sanctions for example, as the sole cause of his people's misery.

In contrast with the depiction of the Other wilderness comes that of the American wilderness. In the American case the attitude is shifted from one about fear to one about pride. Instead of seeing wilderness as something to be defeated, it is viewed as something to be preserved and saved. This concern with environmental conscientiousness is best represented in *Power*, where there is a clear shift from focusing on the Other/Arab landscape to focusing on saving the American landscape from threat by the same Arabs traditionally associated with the menacing wilderness of Arabia. The film revolves around political consultant Pete St. John, played by Richard Gere, whose conscience prevents him from supporting the American presidential candidate he is supposed to be working for in favor of another "green" candidate. St. John's concern about the environment in the film is a reflection of his spiritual growth as an individual and also of the spiritual growth of the nation he represents. In other words, wilderness here is seen as a sacred space. *Power* is a reflection of the Reagan administration era, where battles were fought (and still are) between environmental and business and government interests, and where material gain was ultimately overshadowed by the environment as the most valued prize. Environmental politicians played on the traditional (and religious) ethic associated with the countryside to cultivate this new sense of morality in society (Short 1991).

4. The ideology of the urban

Perhaps the most interesting shift that can be seen in the American films is the displacement of the condition of wilderness from actual natural settings to urban ones. In other words, the (Other) city now is portrayed as a negative space, a modern

wilderness or a "concrete jungle" (Short 1991, p. 26). In many of the films, like *Rules of Engagement*, *Navy Seals*, and *Programmed to Kill*, a film about American scientists implanting a female android amidst Lebanese terrorists in order to eradicate them, there is a stark contrast between the depiction of scarcely inhabited American landscape and crowded Arabian landscape (Budley and Safran 1983). The American landscape is usually green (*Rules of Engagement*) yet urban (*The Siege*). Arabia, on the other hand, is a condensed hustle and bustle of seemingly overlapping houses (*Rules of Engagement*), narrow alleys (*Programmed to Kill*), and graffiti-covered walls (*The Delta Force*, *Navy Seals*). The "difference" of Arab cities is not represented positively; instead of the cities being portrayed as "buzzing", they are depicted as cramped. This suggests a sense of claustrophobia and chaos (Naficy 1996) that can be projected upon the Arab political scene.

The most significant example of the concrete jungle in the films is the depiction of Beirut. Beirut is an example of city as crisis (O'Healy 1999). Freeman (1999) speaks of the internal consistency that occurs throughout films and that utilizes the same symbolic locations; in the case of Beirut, these have created and consolidated myths about the city and the people who inhabit it or are linked to it. Beirut is a city that is "fossilized" (O'Healy 1999, p. 241), its overrepresentation fixing it as a site of ruin, terror and chaos. Beirut thus belongs to a system of fossilized icons often depicted in cinema, like Cairo and the pyramids or the Arabian desert. This recalls Baudrillard's notion of simulacrum, where "codes have superseded signs and... the difference between the real and the reproduction is erased" (quoted in Freeman 1999, p. 61-2). Beirut (like Other Arab places) in the films is a bearer of anti-American sentiment, physically displayed through graffiti. Slogans like "Death to America" are splashed all over the Arab cities (San'a in *Rules of Engagement*, Beirut in *Navy Seals* and *The Delta Force*), their foreign ambiguity (as they are written in Arabic) providing a further sense of threat to a non-Arabic speaking audience. The walls of the Beiruti space are thus reflectors of the political sentiment in the city as portrayed in the films. Beirut is also essentialized as a place where "normal" life does not seem to exist; the people living in that space are the fighters and the militias. It almost seems empty of civilians (the same can be said about San'a in *Rules of Engagement*, where the apparent civilians, including women and children, turn out to be anti-American "terrorists"). In this sense, the films deny Beirut its "lived" existence.

Beirut is an ambivalent space. It is "different" and this difference provides an element of anticipation that, when fulfilled, may or may not bring pleasure (Urry 1990). Often described as the "Switzerland of the Orient", Lebanon had been a tourist site before the Civil War. The Lebanese landscape, which combines snowy mountains and sandy beaches, had been a sign of interconnectedness—of seasons and topography and of cultures. This is evoked in *The Delta Force*, a film about American rescue of an American airplane hijacked by Lebanese Islamic militants. A male Israeli Hizbullah captive in the film is taken to an unknown place in the Southern suburb of Beirut after the flight he was on is hijacked. As he is being dragged across the city's streets, the man nostalgically (and rather ironically) reminisces about the pleasure that the pre-war Lebanese landscape had provided him. Lebanon is thus mentally represented as a place that used to welcome Israelis until it was "taken over" by Hizbullah and other Islamist groups (though we do not see that place). The result of this takeover is a radical change of the Lebanese landscape. Now, the country is essentialized as a chaotic mass of rubble. The metaphor "Switzerland of the Orient" thus becomes more than just about landscape. It carries with it an ideological meaning that renders Lebanon a Westernized oasis in the middle of a tumultuous Middle East. The Lebanese landscape thus is politically charged, with the film displacing the "blame" for the changing face of Lebanon onto Islamic fundamentalists. The conflict is internalized, surgically removing the Israeli (foreign) contribution to the effacing of Beirut in specific and Lebanon in general.

5. The Other space as a barrier/border to be crossed

The Other landscape in the films is subjected to different acts of authority by America. Mapping and surveillance are two examples, but perhaps the most important case is that the Other landscape is often physically penetrated by the Americans. We see the Americans traveling to Lebanon in *The Delta Force*, *Programmed to Kill*, and *Navy Seals*, to Iraq in *Courage Under Fire*, *Three Kings*, and (figuratively) *In the Army Now*. Keiller (1982) argues that the penetration of landscape reduces it from space to object. Being objectified traditionally means that the space can be either a site of desire (for example in the case of tourism) or fear (in the case of anti-terrorist military/intelligence action). Penetration by the masculine American nation can be seen as raping the feminized, weak landscape. But the Other landscape here is also a

barrier to political mastery. It has to be crossed, overcome, to ensure American victory; in other words, it has to be (re)territorialized. This implies three things. First, border/barrier crossing involves a physical penetration of land and its impregnation with another culture. Young (1995) explains that this is a seizure of cultural space. Second, this territorialization by Self over Other can be seen as enlightenment, as the start of civilization and the end of primitivism. Finally, as Young (1995) puts it, "[c]olonization begins and perpetuates itself through acts of violence, and calls forth an answering violence from the colonized" (p. 173). Those three implications can be clearly seen in *Three Kings*. The mastery of science over nature is also displayed in *Three Kings*. At the conclusion of the Gulf War, American soldiers in the film find themselves rescuing Iraqi civilians even though that means defying American army orders. The American scientific mastery over the Other nature is seen in the film's main character Archie and his mates' passing through the mountainous landscape of the Iraq/Iran border in order to deliver the Iraqi civilians to safety. Mountains are traditionally viewed as the most inaccessible parts of landscape (Short 1991), and so conquering them infuses the American soldiers with power over the Other landscape and consequently over the people who inhabit it. The film is full of images of American military vehicles and soldiers roaming the desert. When it ends with crossing the Iraqi border and with the Americans reincarnated as saviors of the oppressed Iraqi civilians, America's political frontiers are further expanded. Frederick Jackson Turner argued that the elimination of frontiers is "the significant fact in the American identity" (Turner 1963, quoted in Short 1991, p. 93). The American identity is thus viewed as one projected externally, an all-embracing identity that seeks to better the Other landscapes and their people. This is reflected in American foreign policy (Williams 1972), from Vietnam to the Gulf War to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The American presence in Iraq is portrayed as bringing with it a new hope that is carried forward the further the soldiers move into and appropriate the Iraqi land. They bring with them physical prowess as well as humanity, and give the Iraqi people a chance of survival away from their primitive caves. Needless to say, the American presence involves a degree of violence, but the violence here is depicted as being directed at the Iraqi oppressors rather than at the oppressed Iraqi civilians. Cultural violence is glossed over through the depiction of a member of the American squad praying with the Iraqis in one of the caves. But the film cannot hide its self-aggrandization. The camera works with the American soldiers as they cross the Iraqi

barrier, with cameras placed on army vehicles traveling through the desert, allowing us to see the landscape unfold in front of our eyes and giving us a taste of the American sense of mastery. The camera also travels on ground level with the soldiers. This is not to give a sense of empathy with the land (by not objectifying it from above, for example), but to give that empathy to the soldiers as they explore unknown landscape.

6. Penetrating the American landscape

The threat of the Other is not confined to foreign lands. Sometimes the threat happens at home. This is seen in *Executive Decision*, *Hostage* and *The Delta Force*, where home is transported onto airplanes carrying American passengers, and *The Siege* and *True Lies*, where terrorist activities are carried out in New York and Florida. The depiction of terrorism on board airplanes is obviously inspired by actual hijacking events in the 1980's (like the case of the TWA flight in 1985). But the cinematic portrayal is interesting because it invokes a sense of urgency and claustrophobia that is more clearly represented here than in any other kind of space. This can be seen in *Executive Decision*, *Hostage* and *The Delta Force*—three films depicting almost identical hijacking situations by Arab terrorists.

On board an airplane, there is no escape. This heightens the drama of hijacking/rescuing situations, and when resolved, also heightens the heroism of the saviors. The camera is more confined on airplanes, and so the variety of shots used is limited. But this also functions to portray the feeling of limitedness experienced by the hijack victims. In all three film mentioned, there is a heavy emphasis on low angle shots when portraying the hijackers, thus making them appear larger and more menacing compared with their confined environment. There are also plenty of close-ups, both on the hijackers' and the victims' faces. This serves to increase the degree of horror illustrated. Mid-shots are also used to give a more collective feel of the terror inflicted, where we see the hijacker(s) in the aisle bordered by seat rows of frightened passengers. The sense of chaos in this situation is also often depicted through hand-held camera work and quick editing that sharply moves from the hijackers to the victims and vice versa, and from one side of the airplane to another or from above to below.

Yoshimoto (1996) points out that the representation of America is not confined to an inert set of images; on the contrary, representing America constitutes a set of conflicting images that are partially responsible for the emergence of the identities of other nations. This is the case of the identity of Beirut in the films for example. At the same time we cannot analyze America's portrayal of itself as a nation as an isolated matter. As O'Healy puts it, "[i]n order to constitute itself, the subject needs to recognize, expel and disown what it is not. It needs, specifically, to demarcate its boundaries" (1999, p. 250). Boundaries are not confined to borders with other nations; they can exist within the nation as well, as seen in the case of the Arab terrorists living in the United States in *True Lies* and *The Siege*, but more specifically the case of the Arab-Americans in the latter.

Foucault contends that the apparent "natural" spatial oppositions such as inside (familiar)/outside (strange) are invested with ideology (1970; see also Lewis 1991), and hence are "still nurtured by the hidden presence of the sacred" (quoted in Dumm 1996, p. 38). In this way, the sacredness of a space implies the existence of boundaries that deny that space to Others. Hence, the Other's presence in a homeland (physically or culturally) is deemed profane. Morley (1999) explains that members of society produce imaginary geographies that locate them at the core, representing those outside as different and threatening. Sibley terms this the "geography of exclusion" (quoted in Morley 1999, p. 161), inhabited by "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983). Natter and Jones(1997) explain that any

> "(social) process of centering entails a structuring [that]... implies the assignation of a periphery. Assignment to the periphery 'provides a home'—one of terror—for the 'other', the mere existence of which was both a provocation to, and the raw material for, the center" (p. 150).

In *The Siege*, Arab-Americans living in New York are summoned by the American army in order to capture those behind a series of terrorist attacks. The army herds all Arab-American New Yorkers, old and young, male and female, to massive cages on the streets of the city. Even Frank Haddad's (an FBI agent of Lebanese origin) son is taken to the camp. Aerial views of thousands of screaming Arabs in the cages are followed by panning shots of the seemingly identical faces and attire of the Arabs. While on the one hand the film's use of cages and its criticism of military

action are part of an anti-totalitarianism message, cages also act as a vehicle of containment that constructs an internal barrier between self and disease. The political conflict between the US and the Arab terrorists in the film acts as a transforming factor on the American landscape. It moves from being a land of inclusion (America as a cultural melting pot) to becoming a land of exclusion (the "authentic" American imagined community rejecting outsiders) (Soja and Hooper 1993). Thus, the Americanness of Arab-Americans in America is "unnatural" and unsettled, subject to being revoked at any time. The usual myths of mastery over the Other apply here, with the idea of the "terrorist within" causing a great deal of distress to an American landscape that is (cinematically) traditionally "non-penetrable". The process of differentiation in the film is an attempt to reclaim this landscape. Of course, this differentiation is an attempt at denying the power embedded in the periphery, and that can "deconstruct any center of which it is part" (Natter and Jones 1997, p. 151).

Space and power

Whether inside or outside America, the action in all the above-mentioned movies occurs outdoors (with the exception of airplanes). This is related to how the American films mainly belong to the (masculine) action genre. Yet there is a distinction between the American and the Other spaces in the films. While the exterior space of America is masculine, refusing to kneel down and non-penetrable, the exterior space of the Other is feminized through mapping (*The Siege*), invasion (*In the Army Now*) and exploration (*Three Kings*). In other words, it is a passive space.

Other landscapes are reduced to imagined spaces. McQuire (1998) argues that Hollywood is notorious for its use of others countries and places as mere background locations for its story lines. Indeed, the common theme of the films seems to be the glorification of America. The director of the film *Collateral Damage* (2001) changed its terrorists from Arabs to Colombians (pre-September 11) because he thought Hollywood was saturated with Arab terrorists. The action in and the plot of the film remained the same. Only the locations and ethnicities were different. Other spaces thus operate as a stage upon which human struggle occurs and political battles are fought (Budley and Safran 1983). Gottheim (1979) argues that this is a passive relationship to landscape.

Both Soja (1996) and Lefebvre (1991) agree on the concept of "trialectics of spatiality". There is not just a center and a periphery; there is always an-Other (space) (Il y a toujours l'Autre). While First Space is the physical space that can be empirically mapped, that is perceived, Second Space is the imagined space. Lefebvre (1991) argues that Second Space is that of the production of spatial knowledge, where certain orders are imposed on space. Soja (1996) explains that order is constituted through control over knowledge, signs and codes. This space is the space of power, ideology, surveillance and control. Third Space, on the other hand, as Spivak (1988) argues, is the space of critical awareness of the space-blinkering effects of historicism. This is why, in order to understand space, we have to study it hand in hand with the historical and social processes that are inevitably linked to it.

From the above analysis of the Hollywood films, we can see a heavy emphasis on the issues of space, power and knowledge. Space is sometimes mapped and measured, often imagined. We have to understand here that even as a victim of Other terrorist attacks, the United States remains the stronger side. It is not marginalized, it marginalizes others. Thus, the imagined geographies of Other spaces are a result of the processes of control exercised by the imagined community of the United States over the Other imagined communities. First Space exists to the extent that the material form of social spatiality exists, as seen in representations of New York for example. However, what envelopes this perceived space is the conceived one, the imagined space of self and Others. The imagined space of Others is homogenized, but most importantly devoid of history, in the sense that it is a fruit of the ideological representation of the American political view. It is not idealized, but essentialized to serve the American political agenda, which is to establish the dominance of the United States in Middle Eastern (world) politics. Hence, space is reduced to a tool, a stage. The Other space does not allow the Other subaltern to speak; indeed the space itself does not speak. It is a passive space, a subaltern itself.

Thus we can see that there are "hegemonic cultural practices" (Natter and Jones 1997, p. 150) operating in the films, in the sense that the social space depicted is essentialized. The films "attempt to fix meaning of space, arranging any number of particularities, disjunctures, and juxtapositions into a seamless unity: the one place, the one identity" (ibid.) (here Arab as terrorist). But Natter and Jones (1997) emphasize that "hegemony, as the process that naturalizes both space and social relations, is like any form of power: never fixed or inevitable but always open to

exposure, confrontation, reversal, and refusal through counterhegemonic or disidentifying practices" (p. 150). This counterhegemony will be explored through the spatial representations of the other side, that of Egyptian cinema.

Egypt's spatial contradictions

Space in the Egyptian films remains a tool of demarcation between the inside and the outside, but is also a space of resistance. In this sense, it is both an essentializing and counter-essentialist national space, the first in the case of Egypt's Others (namely Islamic fundamentalists in *The Other* and *The Terrorist*), the second in the face of an invading enemy (namely Israel in *Love in Taba* and *Girl from Israel*). This parallels Liggett's (1995) idea that space is about separation. Conceived space erects walls to separate the inside from the outside and its Others. This is similar to the representation of cosmopolitan New York in *The Siege* where—with the (r)ejection of Arab-Americans—the city becomes a kind of fortress society. This calls for the confrontation of the Egyptian landscape as problem(atic) (Gottheim 1979). It is a site of contradictions and conflicting spatial practices. Our relationship with that place becomes ambivalent; Egypt is at once a fortress and a carnival (Judd 1995). In both cases, the films try to present a unified image of Egypt the Nation (and hence a coherent space) that is plagued by the difference it harbors. This difference (illustrated by the presence of Islamic fundamentalists) emphasizes the failure of spatial totalization. As Natter and Jones (1997) argue, structure cannot subsume difference.

In this context the space of Other is contrasted with the moderate Egyptian national space. The dominant national view of Egypt is as the "mother of the world". Indeed, the Egyptian space depicted in the films can be seen as feminine. This can be linked to the generic aspects of the films, as they are mostly melodramas, traditionally a feminine genre with emphasis on interior spaces, which makes the characters in the films comparatively less mobile than their American counterparts in Hollywood (Naficy 1996). This also applies to the few outdoors spaces depicted in the films. The physical space of Cairo in the films for example is largely portrayed as enclosed, womb-like, with narrow, interlocking winding roads that seem to protect the people living within the city. However, this does not deny that "the symbolic agency that controls this space is clearly masculine" (O'Healy 1999, p. 254).

We can say that the Egyptian films focus on landscape from the inside out. So while the American films present "a panoramic gaze objectifying the landscape through the imperial power and authority of an external observer" (Blunt 1994b, p. 97), the Egyptian films' representation is more subjective, with the observer located within the landscape.

The outsiders inside: Islamic fundamentalists in the Egyptian landscape

Naficy argues that "the inside and outside spaces express not only gendered subjectivity but also often national or ethnic imaginings and longings" (1996, p. 128). Islamic fundamentalists in the films are ascribed a position outside the Egyptian national imagination, so it is not surprising that they are also outside spatially. By this I do not mean only physically, but also mentally.

Islamic fundamentalists in *The Terrorist*, *Birds of Darkness*, and *The Other* are shown to live on the "edge of society". Even though they physically exist within the Egyptian landscape, they operate outside the society surrounding them. I say surrounding because they are not seen as part of that society, but as a threat to it. The physical representation of the fundamentalists' existence is always indoors. Closed space can be looked at as a way of symbolizing the Islamic fundamentalists' closed mind. Naficy's (1996) argument about films' invoking "confining but comforting claustrophobic spaces" (p. 131) can be applied to the way Islamic fundamentalists in the films are shown to regard their confined spaces as shelters from what they perceive as a hostile foreign culture. The fundamentalists live in minimalist, even barren, enclosed spaces. Ali's room in *The Terrorist*, a film about a disillusioned Islamic fundamentalist man, is perhaps the best illustration. A dark room with a grenade chest as a seat, a small bed, a rug, a faint light bulb hanging from the ceiling, and a plaque engraved with the word "Patience" on the wall, the room is a reflection of Ali's dark existence. It serves to isolate him from the outside world. Denied the shelter of the womb of the city (Cairo), Ali turns to his own shelter.

At the same time, Ali's shelter creates a cocoon for him to retreat in from the pleasures of society. This contrast is best portrayed by Ali's walk down the Cairo street leading to his rigid room. The street buzzes spontaneously (Pidduck 1998) with movement, color, and human interaction, with street vendors, people in colorful attire, and neighbors chatting all crossing Ali's path (or rather, Ali crossing their path, as he

is an intruder). The street also provides sexual pleasure, with a voluptuous woman walking straight in front of Ali and unknowingly offering an experience denied to Ali in his confined space. The walk down the street thus is a metaphor for a passage through (outer) life. Ali quickly hides from life's temptations in his room, a room linked to the outside world only by sounds coming in through the shaded window. The space between the blades of the window blinds becomes Ali's only physical access to the pleasures of the outside world. Ali uses it to peep on his female neighbor who resides in the building across the street, and who is shown as wearing a low-cut bright red dress. Ali fantasizes about the woman—a metaphor for all the pleasures he desires but is denied. Ali's experience is best summarized by Adrian Searle's words:

> "Going to the window... becomes a figuration of disconnectedness from one's surroundings, but it is also the first step, (get up and go to the window) of finding, or re-finding one's place in the world" (2000, p. 3, catalogue essay in Still, Site Gallery: Sheffield, quoted in Betterton 2001).

Thus, Ali's window experience becomes an attempt at entering the denied Egyptian space. At the same time, it emphasizes to him his exclusion from it. The window becomes a "transparent filter" (Pidduck 1998, p. 382) between Ali's life and the outside world, and marks his physical and sexual constraint. The camera in the scenes uses a lot of point-of-view shots, panning and tilting around the room, zooming in and out at the length of the street, and looking down on Ali's neighbor. Therefore, the transformations of everyday space for Ali that we see are almost entirely subjective (Keiller 1982). This subjectivity highlights the various juxtapositions of Ali's life and the outside world: his is colorless, the world's is colorful; his is silent, the world's bustling with sound; his is closed, the world's comparatively open and full of possibilities. These juxtapositions are constructed through camera work that pans the walls of Ali's room as they are closing in upon him, allowing us to see what Ali is seeing when he peeps on his neighbor.

A similar yet at the same time different space to Ali's is the room that the liberal-prince-turned-fundamentalist Abdullah is made to sit in by the enlightened friends and family of the progressive-thinking philosopher Averroes in *Destiny*, a historical epic about the battle between Averroes and opposing Islamic fundamentalists in twelfth century Andalusia. Abdullah, who is lured by

fundamentalists into abandoning "blasphemous" song and dance, is tied up by Averroes' friends to a chair in the room and made to listen to the songs performed by the dancing crowd outside. The room's window is also the opening on the outer world and its pleasures, which Abdullah tries to resist. However the space he is confined to this time serves as a site of liberation. For the people outside, the room is the only way in which they can liberate Abdullah from himself. The room becomes a site of power.

Andalusia in the film is used as a metaphorical representation of Egypt. A land of prosperity with considerable material beauty, its mountains, waterfalls and gardens reflect not only the material wealth of the place, but also its spiritual wealth (Atef 1997). Andalusia is made to carry the values of the idealized Egypt, bestowing on the country a certain degree of sacredness. At the same time, with its rejection of Islamic fundamentalists, Andalusia bears the politics of the motherland it is standing for. Both landscapes thus are open yet enclosed, drawing boundaries between self and Other. However both films offer the fundamentalists a chance to become absorbed in the Egyptian social space. While this is done through coercion in the case of Abdullah, Ali is slowly drawn back into non-extremist society through the compassion of a family that ends up hosting him and showing him an appealing, alternative way of living. In this way, enclosed spaces of the mind are opened up, at the same time emphasizing Egypt's national identity as open, and idealizing Egypt as enlightened.

Cyberspace, marginality and globalization

The Other is the only film in the sample that moves beyond physical space and into cyberspace as a site where political struggles are fought. Cyberspace is also represented as a site for the realization of fantasy, whether personal or political. In particular, the film represents a constant connection between Islamic fundamentalists and the United States, conducted through e-mail and internet chat. Cyberspace thus allows an otherwise undetected convergence between the terrorism of the first and the imperialism of the second, with disastrous results.

The film revolves around a young Egyptian journalist, Hanan, who falls in love with a half-Egyptian half-American man, Adam. Adam's mother, Margaret, is an American businesswoman who detests Egypt yet is engaged in fraudulent business plans that would allow her economic control over the country. She is also obsessed

with her son whom she turns to to provide her with the love and attention she lacks in her marriage. She opposes his marriage to Hanan, and forms an unholy alliance with Hanan's brother, the Islamic fundamentalist Fat'hallah, who also opposes the relationship and promises Margaret to force the couple to divorce. Fat'hallah also aims at controlling Egypt through the establishment of an Islamic fundamentalist regime. Fat'hallah and Margaret are revealed to be partners, using the internet to communicate and conduct their personal deals, as well as illegal arms and immigration deals. Cyberspace is thus represented as a site for the realization of fantasy, not only politically but also personally.

For both, cyberspace is a space where they can exercise power. It gives Margaret the chance to control her son's life by keeping a computer file on his life (that includes a database of all his ex-girlfriends). Adam in the film is an Egyptian nationalist, hence cyberspace becomes a tool that allows symbolic control by American imperialism over Egypt. For Fat'hallah, power is exercised through his use of cyberspace as a space of sexual fantasy. In an online conversation with Margaret, Fat'hallah chooses Paris as the virtual location of their "meeting". Images of Montmartre prostitutes as well as the Eiffel Tower are here reproduced as national symbols of France and specifically of Paris. Paris acts as a metaphor for Fat'hallah's repressed sexual fantasies, invoked through the city's mythical association with sexuality and permissiveness (Phillips 1999). It also acts as a metaphor for Fat'hallah's view of the West as promiscuous. As Baltazar argues, cyberspace allows the subject to manipulate space to fit their needs, rather than "fragmenting the identity" (2001, p. 28) to fit the space. Cyberspace is an ideal, imagined space that allows Fat'hallah to transgress the constraints he has imposed on himself as an Islamic fundamentalist and thus guarantees him a virtual victory in his struggle with himself. In this sense, cyberspace can be seen as an example of what Soja (1989) terms mental space or Second Space: a space that is generated by and conceived in the minds of those who consequently "inhabit" it.

The internet is an agent of anonymity, where anyone can be whoever they want to be, an enabling medium that allows the individual to go beyond their social self (Turkle 1996; Hjarvard 2002). It also confuses or blurs the boundaries between the spaces in which those in "dialogue" exist (Freeman 1999). Cyberspace has created communities that are not necessarily physically or nationally bound, but which transcend the sacred boundaries of home and nation (like the subgroup of

fundamentalists and Americans), forming their own private spaces (Morley 1999). Yet we have to remember here that even though cyberspace communities are not national, they are not detached from the nation (Bhabha 1999). Indeed, the political arguments conducted between Margaret and Fat'hallah are inherently about Egypt as a nation (as they both ultimately aim at controlling it, economically for Margaret, and politically for Fat'hallah), and at the same time a reaction to the "nature" of this exclusive nation that denies the fundamentalists political representation (as Islamic fundamentalist groups are denied parliamentary participation in Egypt). Cyberspace thus is a way for both sides to (re)claim the nation.

However, closer inspection reveals the artificiality of the "dialogue" between Margaret and Fat'hallah. Although the two sides are communicating, they are both setting traps for and deceiving each other. Margaret informs the police about the physical location of Fat'hallah, while he lies to her about helping divorce his sister from her son. The internet here acts a theater for the operation of those global actors, allowing them to escape the bounds of the nation-state and form a subculture (Sassen 1999), however, in this particular context, the outcome of this is that the internet is not operating as a site of freedom and resistance. On the contrary, it is a site of oppression where two villains meet.

The internet can also be looked at as allowing individuals in different physical spaces to interact "privately" in exclusive chat rooms. The discussion between Fat'hallah and Margaret is a "private" one, making their politics an exclusive spatial activity denied to any outsiders. The internet in the film is not seen as being open to the non-villains, the Egyptians; it is vilified. So Adam, Hanan and their friends are depicted as not using the internet, although they have the means to. Technology is thus "theirs", and not "ours", giving it a sinister meaning, with the internet becoming a criminal/imperialist web. Yoshimoto (1996) explains that with no more physical space to conquer, virtual space is colonized. The film depicts cyberspace as a new frontier that the United States is attempting to colonize.

So even though cyberspace has constructed what Morley labels virtual geographies, where, in the words of Wark, "we no longer have roots, we have aerials" and "we no longer have origins, we have terminals" (quoted in Morley 1999, p. 158), it has not erased the affiliation to the nation. Shohat (1999) says that cyberspace provides an imaginary home; she does not say whether cyberspace provides an imaginary homeland. This can be applied to the case of the Islamic fundamentalists in

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The Other. Despite limiting their interaction with the outside world to the internet, they do not use cyberspace as a substitute homeland. Yes, it is an imagined home, conceived in the absence of a physical one (as the film portrays the fundamentalists as living outside society), but it is mainly used as a tool to reclaim the homeland that they are exiled from (Egypt). Cyberspace then is not detached from physical space (the Egyptian landscape). This is in line with Shohat's (1999) argument that cyberspace is another zone in which conflicts are carried out, and that is connected with the corporality of its users. She also stresses that by being another space, and not a substitute space, existing local and global power relations are merely extended to this new space, rather than being displaced from the physical one. Therefore, rather than being an interactive global space that connects people, the film views cyberspace as a global network of villains, and globalization as a threat and as corruption.

Treading on the Egyptian landscape: the case of Israel

Egyptian landscape is transformable and contradictory in relation to Israel (Hirsch 1995). This is best seen in the representations of contested places like Taba. A part of the Egyptian Sinai, and directly on the Red Sea, Taba had been seized by Israel in 1967 and returned to Egypt in 1989 after the success of Egyptian-Israeli peace talks. Taba since has become a metaphor of Egypt. It is a site bearing the history of the fighting between Egyptians and Israelis, and thus a site of pain. It is also a site of pre-war nostalgia, perceived with a sense of lost authenticity that idealizes its past, thereby implying an "original purity" (O'Healy 1999, p. 243) that is now disfigured. In this sense Taba is a memorial, a representational space that acts as a cultural indicator (Liggett 1995). It is also a site of the uncertainty of Middle Eastern peace treaties; a popular place with Israeli tourists, Taba has caused a degree of confusion among many Egyptians, who within it have had to encounter those they used to consider the enemy now enjoying their country's resources. At the same time, Taba itself, with its spectacular views, is gazed at romantically by the Egyptians. It is a spectacle to be viewed, consumed and admired (Urry 1990; Phillips 1999) by both sides, with much ambivalence.

Girl from Israel represents this ambivalent relationship with Taba. A family holiday in Taba brings national pride as the Egyptian family admire the beauty of the place. At the same time, being in Taba brings back flashbacks to the mother of her

soldier son being killed by the Israelis in that location. Also, Taba offers a rather intimate encounter with Israeli tourists, some posing as Americans, who try to befriend the family. An Israeli girl succeeds in seducing the family's younger son, and convinces him to cross the sea with her to Israel. The sea carries many meanings. It "offers a horizon of freedom and possibility" (Pidduck 1998, p. 395) to the son. The sea can also be seen as a symbol of the tranquility and purity of the Egyptian nation. At the same time, it offers a natural and symbolic frontier between Egypt and Israel (Haffner 1997). Beyond this horizon lies Israel; in this sense, the line of water becomes an "indifferent horizon of disease" (Haffner 1997, p. 35). The film plays strongly on the symbolic evil of what crossing the sea represents vis-à-vis the myth of the ideal Egyptian landscape. It is here that landscape is transformed from being a stage to political conflicts to being a crucial player. Yes, it is imagined, but it is also a "lived" space that carries with it the experiences of the people within it. Combining elements of the physical and the imagined, Taba becomes something that also goes beyond the two; it is a space with a political subtext (O'Healy 1999).

Beyond the Egyptian landscape: the contested space of Palestine

The most intricate illustration of the complex role that space plays in represented political conflicts is the case of Palestine as imagined in the films. The Palestine problem itself is one largely about space, where the same landscape is fought over by conflicting parties. However, the importance of space here is not just because of the physical space of Palestine; more important are the ideological connections that that space carries. Specifically, Palestine is a bearer of history, religion and myth (for example Arabism). Yet its most important face is as a homeland. The Egyptian films closely focus on imagining Palestine as a lost homeland. In doing so they play on nostalgia, but also on resistance. All this is played out against broader issues such as diaspora and exile, and also the myth of Arab unity. The Arab world emerges as a solid unit in the face of the Israeli aggressor (as seen in *Nasser*, *Nasser 56*, *Naji al-Ali* and *Road to Eilat*).

The importance of Palestine as a place lies in its position as one of the major carriers of meaning for the Palestinians and Arabs in general. Nietschmann (1993) explains that it is this position that emphasizes the importance of place for invaders. Place is infused with the identity of people and their inherent power. Therefore,

"[p]eople, institutions, and resources may be captured, but if place can't be erased, then the occupation will never be victorious" (Nietschmann 1993, p. 8). An example of this is the renaming of Palestine as Israel. Nash (1994) sees naming (like mapping, Blunt 1994a; McEwan 1994) as an act of authority that reflects the fluid, unstable and open nature of space, rendering it open to the strategic/manipulative use by marginal/dominant groups. It is precisely this idea that we see in the Egyptian films in their stance towards Israel, and hence their attempts at reclaiming Palestine. However the Egyptian films, with the exception of the opening sequence of Naji al-Ali, do not physically represent Palestine. Instead, the films invoke Palestine ideologically and discursively, and hence the following analysis of the Palestinian landscape is not about Palestine as First Space, but rather about the Egyptian films' (literal) imagining of Palestine as Third Space.

1. Homeland as nostalgia

At first glance the case of Palestine seems like an excellent representation of the characteristics of place as dynamic and contested, challenging any notion of "national naturalisms" that "present associations of people and place as solid, commonsensical, and agreed-upon" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, p. 12). However, it is those authentic claims to the Palestinian landscape (and beyond) that lie at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with Israelis viewing the Palestinian landscape as their promised land. At the same time, the Palestinian people look at Palestine as their only homeland. As Gupta and Ferguson say, "places are always imagined in the context of political-economic determinations" (1992, p. 11). It should be noted here that the Egyptian films invoke Palestine from the Palestinian/Arab point of view, thus portraying the Palestinian people and their lost land as the victims and at the same time the resisters. In doing so the films rely heavily on alluding to history through methods like usage of actual footage (fighting sequences in *Nasser 56*) and historical biographies (*Nasser*). The importance of this attention to history is emphasized by Soja and Hooper (1993), who argue that a proper analysis of space pays attention to the spatial aspects of the historical processes of those "uneven developments" (p. 185) that result in spaces' becoming sites of struggle. Processes of differentiation and division operate in which both the hegemonic and resistant cultures/nations attempt to reclaim space.

Egypt's role here is as a helper, mainly fighting the Israelis in the 60's under Nasser (*Nasser*, *Nasser 56*, *Road to Eilat*). Egypt as a representation does not feature bluntly in *Naji al-Ali*, except through the character of a disillusioned Egyptian drunken man on the streets of Lebanon who is still waiting for the "Arab forces" to come and rescue Palestine and Lebanon from Israeli aggression. However, the film itself—an Egyptian production with a largely Egyptian cast and an Egyptian director about the life of the late Palestinian caricaturist Naji al-Ali—serves to strengthen the position of Egypt as a sympathizer and supporter of the Palestinian cause (despite Egypt's own peace treaty with Israel).

In the films, Palestinians are not people who have no place to call home; they are people who are attempting to reclaim a place they call home that is idealized in the Palestinian and Egyptian imagination. Idealized is a strong word here, as Palestine is imagined as an authentic, "good" landscape/motherland. In this way, the nostalgia experienced by the Palestinian diaspora is seen by Naficy (1991) as a fixation whereby home is fetishized, with the exiles focusing on certain (imaginary) aspects of the lost homeland while ignoring others. Here Naficy conflicts with Anderson's notion of homeland; where the latter sees it as imagined, Naficy sees it as imaginary, to emphasize this idealization. Naficy argues that by trying to exercise power over the recalled past and lost homeland (by representing them ideally), exiles are actually attempting to control their present space and time.

However, it is not only the Palestinians who are represented as experiencing exile. The whole Arab world experienced a sense of exile after the 1967 war, including Egypt. Exile was not only because of the lost land after that war, but also because of the loss of the sense of a collective Arab identity that president Nasser was trying to revive. The films thus can be seen as using Palestine as a tool to reawaken this lost identity.

The complexity of the situation of Arabs as exiles, especially in their relationship with what is called home, is expressed by Naficy:

> "Today, it is possible to be exiled in place, that is, to be at home and to long for other places and other times... It is possible to be in internal exile and yet be at home. It is possible to be forced into external exile and be unable to, or wish not to, return home. It is possible to return and to find that one's house is not the home that one had hoped for that it is not the structure that memory

built. It is possible to go into exile voluntarily and then return, yet still not fully arrive." (1999, p. 3).

This means that home is not a "real" place (Morse 1999). Rather, home is linked to personal and culture-specific imaginary. Home is thus defined as a protected, stable place that "cannot be understood except in relation to its outside(s)" (Morley 1999, p. 153), which draws attention to public and private constructions of "home" (Blunt 1994a). At the same time, the Arab situation highlights that exile can be internal, and not just external (Naficy 1999).

In the case of Palestinians, what adds to this exile is the absence of mobility, whereby the exiled are confined to a place that is not "home" (Durham Peters 1999). An example is the refugee camps in Lebanon represented in *Naji al-Ali*, which the film depicts as tents in 1948, then as haphazardly built concrete slums in the 1960's and beyond. Questions of power emerge here, with a distinction being established between who moves and who does not, who can move and who cannot; the tent-to-concrete transformation acts as a metaphor for the Palestinian diaspora's fixity in space (Morley 1999). Naficy (1991) describes the exile's relation with the lost motherland in Freudian terms, as a traumatic experience of separation. What adds to this trauma is the occurrence of war in the motherland, whereby the distance of the exile from home causes a sense of national loss. This may generate a feeling of guilt among some exiles (living in relative safety away from the war). This may be seen as an incentive for the exile's long-distance national struggle and attempts to reclaim the motherland through various activities (Naficy 1991).

But not all activities are "authentic". The struggle over the motherland is not only one between the exile (Palestinians) and the occupier (Israel). It is also an "internal" struggle among Palestinians themselves. *Naji al-Ali* seems to validate the populist nostalgic perspective as opposed to the elitist one. The division between the Palestinian "lay people" and the Palestinian elites is conceptualized as a struggle over authenticity. Spatially, the lay Palestinian people are represented as existing on the margin of society in refugee camps resembling slums (in the suburbs of Beirut, in the South of Lebanon). They remember Palestine through their nostalgic stories and Naji's political satirical cartoons. The elites, in contrast, inhabit high-rise buildings at the core (center of Beirut). While the lay people are represented as sacrificing their lives and actively fighting for Palestine, the elites are depicted as too settled in their

new comfortable lifestyle to care. Their affiliation to Palestine has become no more than lip service. Their claim to authenticity is graphically represented as invalid. The elites' affiliation to the "real" Palestine is replaced with one to a fake one. Naji's anticipation to see Abu'l'fawares' Palestinian shrine is devastated as Abu'l'fawares unravels what he calls his own Palestine, a roof garden full of fruit trees on top of his Beirut apartment. That the elite have chosen such artificial affiliations is criticized as what has added to the devastation of Palestine itself. It is the ordinary people who bear the cross of resistance, and who suffer the consequences of those spatial/(un)national affiliations. The authenticity of the lay people's claim to the land here is unquestioned. And the film itself is represented as an authentic discourse on Palestine. As for Abu'l'fawares, he is ostracized for severing his ties with his original/authentic homeland (Welsch 1999).

2. Homeland as resistance

Thus, the relationship between the exile and the homeland is transformed. Nostalgia is often criticized as being unreal for its invocation of authentic, good landscapes; as Keith and Pile ask, "how can the authentic be authenticated—or more properly, who is to authenticate the vernacular?" (1993, p. 9). But the relationship between the exile and Palestine is seen by Seed (1999) as the opposite of nostalgia. Seed describes nostalgia as "resigning oneself to... [an] irretrievable loss" (1999, p. 91). She sees the act of keeping the keys to the doors of the houses the exiles left (as seen in *Naji al-Ali*) as a reminder "to remember and to narrate the history of their losses" (p. 91), mainly the loss of not just home, but homeland. In other words, the exile's relationship to the lost motherland here is seen as an active one. By keeping the "history" of Palestine alive, *Naji al-Ali* can be seen as an attempt to reclaim the lost land.

The film uses a mixture of point-of-view and wide-angle shots in this context. Point-of-view shots are used to represent the Palestinian people's individual view of their history (the Der Yassin massacre and their existence in refugee camps). The film establishes that the current marginalization of Palestinians in refugee camps in Lebanon is due to their ejection from Palestine in 1948. To emphasize this, the film goes back and forth in time, representing the point of view of the young Naji both in the refugee camp in the South of Lebanon as he tries to make sense of his barren

surroundings, and in his flight from Palestine, as he observes the suffering of people around him. This serves to generate audience empathy with Naji and the Palestinian people, and makes their suffering more intimate. Wide-angle shots are used in the depiction of Palestinian resistance through the film's fighting sequences. The camera moves back and upwards as we see men shooting at Israeli tanks that are invading the camp, and women throwing hot water from balconies on the Israeli soldiers' heads. Keiller (1982) argues that such high angle, distant shots do not infer the lack of sympathy for the people experiencing what is being depicted (as seen in Eisenstein's *October*). We do not see the characters' point of view here, but this camera use enables us to understand their experiences of space.

Before moving on it is crucial to critically examine the notion of history as used by Seed (1999, above). I was at the Arab Book Exhibition in Beirut in November 2001, where, at the section dedicated to the Center for Palestinian Studies, I asked for books about the history of Palestine. I was presented with volumes about the Crusades. When I stated that I meant books about the origins and transformations of the Israeli occupancy, I was told "that is not history". I realized that one has to be very careful in the use of such terminology. For the Palestinians and most Arabs, the Palestinian issue is an issue of the present. The term history thus invokes notions of the past, and the past is seen as something that is over and irretrievable. The refusal of "history" here is an attempt at refusing the freezing of Palestine in time.

The concept of homeland as a remembered place constructs it as an imagined, idealized space; but homeland is also used by displaced people as a unifying, "symbolic anchor" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, p. 11). In other words, it is empowering (Bisharat 1997). The place of displacement, or the margin (in the case of Palestinians, the refugee camp for example) thus becomes a site of resistance. Bhabha (1990) and hooks (1990) agree that when space becomes a space of resistance, it no longer is merely imagined, but becomes a Third Space. This means that, according to hooks, being at the margin becomes a matter of choice because it is empowering; people are not marginalized, they *choose* the margin as a space of resistance. This space is the lived space of the people, and carries their present and their history. So unlike Palestine as an imagined utopia, the refugee camp is what Foucault terms heterotopia, a space invested with the complexities of power and knowledge, but also with the lived experiences and histories of the people connected with it. Soja explains that in this context spatial knowledge is transformed into (spatial) action in a field of

unevenly developed (spatial) power (margin/center). This is how we may look at this space as Third Space. It is not just a medium through which the marginalized attempt to exercise power, it is also the outcome of their actions. (Third) Space is both an instrument and an outcome of resistance. It reflects the struggle over the right to a space, and also the right to be different, to be on the margin. That is why Lefebvre (1991) has stressed the importance of what he calls the "trialectics of spatiality", that spatiality, historicality and sociality are overlapping and interactive. So when people choose marginality, both margin and center are deconstructed and disordered. Third Space is thus essential for the survival of the oppressed; the concept allows us to comprehend how they look at the center and the margin at the same time and understand both (hooks 1990). The notion Third Space is thus useful here because it undoes the binaries of inside/outside, center/margin, real/imagined.

The refugee camp as a Third Space is also an illustration of how space in this context is a foreground. In contrast with Selwyn's (1995) argument that the Palestinian landscape is a space where the increasing Arab population is perceived as a threat by Israelis, Palestine in the films is no longer a stage upon which political conflicts are fought; it itself is part of conflicts, through the lived experiences of its people. This recalls Shohat's (1989b) observation of an image of a Palestinian fighter in a film who seems to be emerging from the land. In this sense, the land and the people merge into one entity where you cannot separate one from the other.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of the various roles space plays in the films, one can draw some important distinctions between the American and the Egyptian films' relationship with space. One of the most distinctive comparisons is the gender/generic aspect. While Hollywood's films take place in a masculine, open space, the Egyptian ones limit themselves to feminine, closed spaces. This is because the former are generally action films, while the latter are melodramas. Yet in Hollywood action usually occurs within the space of the Other, namely Arab countries. Those countries are characterized by their wilderness, whether natural or urban. This establishes two things. First, the Other space is objectified/feminized through penetration by the Americans. The role of American soldiers and intelligence officers in the films is

depicted as to discover and conquer the Other landscape. Second, the Other space is feminized as nature versus the American culture or science. The Other space is objectified by the American gaze through practices like mapping and surveillance. This is established through heavy usage of wide and aerial shots that imply mastery over the landscape. The Egyptian films in contrast use a lot of mid shots, close ups and point-of-view shots of landscape, which is a more individual, intimate view of space. Using Keiller's (1982) argument, the contrast between external views of space (wide shots) and individual perspectives of space (characters' point of view) means that while the Hollywood films depict space, the Egyptian films depict the experience of space. This can be transplaced onto people, denied their individuality in the Hollywood case, and depicted as people with individual experiences in the Egyptian one. This is also seen through the focus on history, personal and national, in the Egyptian films, depicting spatiality as a producer, not just a product, of history, in contrast with the absence of history in the Hollywood ones.

As we have seen, cinema is a "national institution which is merely symptomatic of broader political and economic relations" (McQuire, 1998, p. 203). In exploring questions of the relationship between space and the imagination (Dumm 1996), cinema utilizes space as "the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity/difference" (Lury and Massey 1999, p. 231). In other words, space as difference is an enforced concept, a part of a global system of domination that plays on problems of contact and isolation between cultures.

With boundaries still existing between cultures, we can see that territorialization has not disappeared; it has been redefined, space has been reterritorialized (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). This means that identities are also re-(rather than de-)territorialized (for example Naficy 1991). The existence of displaced people (the Palestinian diaspora for instance) is a case here. Diaspora in general has challenged the idea of fixed homeland. Questions of belonging have been complicated, the line between colonizer and colonized has been blurred, and concepts of local politics are seemingly no longer valid. This creates a sense of anomie, portrayed in the films through the Islamic fundamentalists who are "here" but also "there", the Arab-Americans who are ascribed a marginal loyalty to the American whole, and the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who are not accepted as part of the Lebanese nation despite the many years they have spent there (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Diaspora thus "is an invocation of communal space which is simultaneously

both inside and outside the West" (Keith and Pile 1993, p. 18) (I add the national space). Hence, boundaries are not disappearing with diaspora. Freeman (1999) argues that such group formations strive to homogenize and maintain social order within their own socially constructed and practiced boundaries.

Thus, the state of displacement does not just apply to those who are physically or culturally displaced (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Displacement also applies to those who remain in the same physical or cultural place, who find that their illusion of home has been shattered, thus breaking their perception of a natural link between place and culture (the nationalist imagining of the United States and Egypt).

Anderson's concept of imagined communities can be applied here, whereby

> "imagined communities... come to be attached to imagined places, as displaced peoples cluster around remembered or imagined homelands, places, or communities in a world that seems increasingly to deny such firm territorialized anchors in their actuality" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, p. 10-1).

So, instead of viewing boundaries as places of communicated difference, of negotiating difference, as places of dialogue, both the American and Egyptian films lack any dialogue surrounding issues of national frontiers, resorting to authentication to imagine and legitimate their political agendas.

Chapter Four: The Orient and its Others: Gender and the Nation

Gender has been an essential part of the Orientalist discourse. Orientalist notions of the Arab world are invested with ideas of sensual and submissive females (the harem) and violent, yet succumbing males (the colonized). These notions have sedimented themselves onto the Western imaginary sense of the Middle East. At the same time, gender interlaces political agendas of the East itself.

Gender in the films is a national symbol or myth; it is part of narratives through which the United States and Egypt imagine their collectivist identities. While females have been traditionally seen as a *symbol* of the nation (like Marianne in France and Boadicea in England) and as "signifiers of national difference" (Kandiyoti 1994, p. 377), the male has been looked at as an active embodiment of it. However a closer look reveals a more complex view. There is a major axis dividing how the American and the Egyptian nations are represented and gendered in their respective cinemas. The Egyptian nation is represented as a virtuous, virginal female who does not pose a threat to patriarchy. On the other hand, the Other nations in the Egyptian films, Israel and the United States, are symbolized by sexually permissive females, thereby constructing a virgin/whore dichotomy (Enloe 1990). However this dichotomy is paralleled by that of the contrast between the representation of repressed Islamic fundamentalist women and that of modern, politically active women signifying the modern face of Egypt.

This tension in Egyptian cinema is an illustration of the ambivalence of cinema as a cultural artifact caught between modernity (seen as manifested in a progressive present), and tradition (seen as looking at the past for guidance). The films thus form part of a nationalist movement that is opposed to the West yet at the same time admires it and accepts its supremacy (Elsaddah 2002). As Barthes (1993) argues, myths are discourses that serve to "suppress" history in order to build national identity. This suppression and transformation of history in order to affirm the nation is also seen in Hollywood. Here the imagination of the American nation has moved from the representation of the virile, conquering male that constructs the American nation as the world policeman, to that of the "new man" who symbolizes America's position as a world savior. The Other in this context is also represented as male, making the

conflict between the United States and Arab countries in the films one between masculinities. The analysis that follows thus destabilizes the binaries between and within the men and the women represented in the films, showing how gender is a myth transforming "history" into "nation" (Barthes 1993).

The changing face of the American male/nation

It is no coincidence that nearly all American films depicting Middle Eastern politics are action dramas. Action dramas, as a genre, are protypically male fantasies of mastery, often with military-political undertones. The classic action films, such as *Rocky IV* and *Die Hard*, portray the odysseys of a rugged American male hero against some primordial national enemy, such as the Soviets, the Japanese, and the Arabs. The films establish a mythical association between the strength of the rugged American hero and the nation's strength. The American nation as represented in action films is then clearly a masculine nation. Jeffords (1993) points out that the golden era for such a representation of infallible action heroes was the Reagan era. She argues that that era was characterized by cinematic representations of two oppositional masculinities: The "soft" bodies, signifying immorality and disease, and the "hard" bodies, signifying strength, loyalty and courage. While the soft bodies belonged to Others, including Arabs, the hard bodies constructed "white masculinity as a kind of default position, ostensibly lacking specificity but defining the universal in the form of the white male" (Davies and Smith 1997, p. 17). Moreover, the characteristics of the hard bodies mirrored America's "hard" foreign policy and stance in the Cold War era.

With the Gulf War came another kind of foreign policy, maintaining the status of the US as a world policeman but adding another dimension. The United States also constructed itself as a rescuer and liberator of oppressed peoples. Such an allegory was reflected in cinema in the representation of "new men". Jeffords argues that this is a "new" way for masculinity:

> "not, as in the 1980's outward into increasingly extravagant spectacles of violence and power..., but inward, into increasingly emotive displays of masculine sensitivities, traumas, and burdens. Rather than be impressed at the

size of these men's muscles and the ingenuity of the violences, audiences are to admire their emotional commitments and the ingenuity of their sacrifices" (Jeffords 1993, p. 259).

The new men then offered a mélange of masculinity that combined being sensitive with maintaining "manhood", which in essential terms refers to "society's dominant conception of masculinity—man as warrior and conqueror" (Kimmel and Kaufman 1994, p. 270). While the face of the American nation may have changed, its representation remains one about mastery over the Other. Whether an action hard body or a new man, the American male remains a universal savior/hero, while the Arab male is essentialized as a threat to the peace and integrity of the United States and the world at large. The weakness of the Arab male is ultimately established with the physical victory of the American male, and the emphasis on the sexual vulnerability of the Arab.

Tough American men/nation

The representation of the prowess of the United States as exemplified by action heroes is based on portraying the male protagonist as a "spectacular body". The hero's body is the focus of the camera's vision, and is often exaggerated by close-ups, larger-than-life framing, and lingering camera shots (Holmlund 1993). The body's strength can mean that it is "offered as a form of protection... within this discourse, the body itself functions as a sort of armour against the world" (Tasker 1993, p. 123). The hero here is a savior who rescues the innocent from terrorism (*True Lies*, *Hostage*, *Programmed to Kill*, *Executive Decision*, *The Delta Force,*), or conquers threatening foreign land (*Navy Seals*, *Rules of Engagement*). But the hero's strength does not only lie in his physical prowess, it is also situated in his high mental capability and expertise.

Perhaps the best example of the representation of the physically powerful American male is Harry in *True Lies*. Harry, the heroic American male (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) is an FBI agent directly attacked by causeless Arab terrorists, and has to fight back in order to protect his family and his country. The battle between masculinities in *True Lies* is one of the most explicit between "hard" and "soft" bodies, where on one hand we have a symbol of the idealized America, and

on the other hand we have the contrasting image of the Other. Harry represents an exaggerated, larger-than-life masculinity that stands out from almost everyone around him (Sobchack 1988). In the sequences where Harry engages in an air battle with the main villain, Harry's body is displayed through his wearing a sleeveless, unbuttoned vest that emphasizes his statuesque, muscular physique.

Camera work also plays a role in this emphasis. One of the longest action sequences in the film starts with a shoot-out between Harry and two Arab terrorists in a male toilet at a department store. Harry manages to kill one of the terrorists, but the other one escapes, crashing out unto the street through a glass display window. The camera lingers as Harry follows, dashing through the glass frame caused by the terrorist's crash. As Harry chases the villain across the street, the latter snatches a motorbike. Harry follows, running and leaping over colliding cars, until he eventually manages to "borrow" a policeman's horse which he rides, chasing the villain along a street leading into the Marriott Hotel lobby. The use of the horse exaggerates Harry's presence even further, and the camera juxtaposes his image with that of the slight Arab figure on a considerably smaller motorbike. The chase continues on horse and motorbike inside the hotel, and larger-than-life Harry has to lower his head several times in order not to hit the ceiling as he pursues the villain. Harry guides his horse in a spectacular jump over a reception desk, his long coat flapping behind him, mirroring classic images of Zorro in his quest for justice. Harry finds himself in the street again, this time having to go through a large fountain in order to get to the terrorist on the other side. The camera portrays Harry's heroic, Western-like splash through the water on his horse repeatedly, in slow motion, and from four different angles. Harry ends up guiding the horse through the hotel's glass elevator, and as the two enter the compartment, they dwarf an elderly couple on their way to their upstairs room. Not only is Harry (and his horse) made to appear even larger in such a confined space, the camera also utilizes high-angle and low-angle shots showing Harry looking down at the couple, and them looking up to him, respectively. Harry ends up on the hotel's roof, still on horse back. After the villain, who had also reached the roof, still on his motorbike, falls down into the hotel's outdoors swimming pool on ground level, the scene ends with Harry standing on top of the high-rise hotel, seemingly even bigger than the city surrounding him. This heavy physical presence lends its weight to the subsequent heavy presence of the American nation.

In addition to Harry's extreme physique, his "voice" adds another dimension to his muscular masculine performance (Tasker 1993). Harry is not only muscular, but also witty, throwing one-liners at everyone from the horse he snatches to chase the terrorist to the terrorist himself. And he is also a charming talker when in the company of women. Dressed in a tuxedo, Harry goes undercover to a cocktail party where he meets an attractive female gang leader. As the camera traces Harry's entrance, we see her admiring looks. It only takes Harry a few moments to get her to give him her business card, dance with him, and give him the information he needs about her terrorist network without her noticing. This consequently leads Harry to unravel her and her gang's hiding place and uncover their terrorist plans, and the film ends with the triumph of Americans over threatening Others.

This model of extreme masculinity has acquired a different interpretation in the 1990's and beyond, where the focus has shifted from physical to mental prowess. An illustration is Samuel L. Jackson's character Childers in *Rules of Engagement*. The film's controversial portrayal of Arabs led to its ban in most Arab countries, as the film justifies the mass killing of the Arabs by showing armed Arab women and children who attack the US embassy in Yemen. The American soldier Childers responds by shooting at the Arab crowd, and is consequently charged with breaking the rules of engagement, to which he responds by persistently fighting his case in court until proven right. In this way, Childers' position as protector of the nation is redeemed. A striking scene in the film is one where Childers steps out of court after one of his hearings to see a troop of American soldiers saluting the American flag in the leafy forest nearby. Childers' image joining the salute zooms on that of the raised American flag; the shot is then cut to that of Childers' saving the American flag while it is being shot at by terrorists in Yemen, risking his life in the process. Childers' rescue of the American flag is later used in the trial as proof of his patriotism. The film ends with the redemption of America's glory and the justification of its "mistakes", while celebrating the masculinity of the black man who risks his life to rescue the American ambassador, the American flag, and American soldiers.

Thus, the symbolic battle between nations as presented by the films remains one about strengthening the American national identity as invincible. The films eliminate any doubt about the validity of the United States' political/military actions, maintaining its position as a righteous world policeman.

New men, same nation?

Besides its role as a world policeman, the films also construct the United States as a world carer. While "new masculinity" was still overshadowed by the traditional representation of tough men in the 1980's with films like *Rambo*, *Terminator* and *Black Rain*, it presented an important turning point that has continued until today. The representation of heroes' internal feelings has replaced the display of "highlighted masculinity... as a violent spectacle that insist[s] on the external sufficiency of the male body/territory" (Jeffords 1993, p. 346). The films examined in this section (*Power*, *Courage Under Fire*, *Three Kings*) relate to the changing nature of the Arab Gulf from the eighties till the nineties, and represent the political conflict in the area through the contrast between the new American man/nation and the backward Oriental man.

Power is a film in which the threatening Arab male makes a short but meaningful appearance, attempting to use his oil power to tilt American congress elections to his advantage. The film was released thirteen years after the 1973 October (Yom Kippur) war, in which Arabs fought Israelis in an attempt to recover land overtaken by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day war. The Six-Day war had ended with Sinai, the West bank and Gaza seized by Israel from the Arabs. Egyptian president Nasser had failed to recover the land, and his successor Sadat was determined to win it back, partly to validate his own position as the new Egyptian president. After two weeks of near loss on the side of the Israelis, the United States offered Israel military support. OPEC Arab countries consequently used their perhaps most important resource, petrol, to exert some pressure. By cutting off Europe's and the United States' supply of oil, oil-rich Arab countries were able to pressurize Israel into giving up some of the land. The war, a defeat for the Arabs militarily, but a win economically and politically, put Gulf Arab countries back on the agenda as powers not to be ignored.

Power can be seen to parody the Arabs' victory, as if saying that despite being able to use their oil as a political tool once, the Arabs cannot succeed in doing that again. While the main spin doctor in the film Pete St. John is working for his mainstream candidate, the film presents a rival candidate who is an environmentalist. St. John is shown to be dutiful to his candidate but to prefer the environmentalist one to win because of his conscientiousness. Thus, despite his job, which he performs

professionally, he still chooses the benefit of not just his country, but also the environment. He thus mirrors a nation that sees itself as a world savior and a supporter of green ethics.

The film is one of the few non-action dramas in the sample. A political drama, it does not contain any action sequences; yet revolving around the realm of politics means that the film is largely confined to a traditionally male arena. St. John is the savvy American who knows his way both within and outside of his job. Professional to the smallest detail, such as his tailored suits, he is a symbol of the US at the beginning of the eighties. He is calm, preferring to let off steam by playing percussions instead of fighting and is concerned with image-management. This masculinity is different from the one we are presented with in action dramas, whereby a high proportion of attention is given to the hero's physical attributes and prowess. St. John is concerned with physical attributes, but they are not ones about muscles; they are about being fit, an obsession that had taken 1980's America by storm. The film can be seen as representing 1980's driven America as the ethical businessman.

The Gulf in the 1990's became a site of conflict again after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and subsequent American intervention. *Courage Under Fire* is a thriller depicting the perseverance of Gulf War veteran Lt. Colonel Sirling (Denzel Washington). Sirling assigns himself the mission to find out whether a female colonel who died during the Gulf War deserves the Medal of Honor or not. No one else shows interest in his investigation, and he is left to pursue the truth on his own, outside the system. His sense of duty drives him to confront a soldier who tried to prevent the award of the Medal of Honor. Sirling questions the man persistently as they drive down a long country road. The soldier becomes enraged and instantly commits suicide, but Sirling remains calm throughout, keeping control of the car. But he encounters difficulty in keeping control of his life, as his mission puts strain on his relationship with his family. But Sirling does not forget his children. Despite his absence from them, he waits in his car outside his house to watch them from a distance. He eventually proves that the female colonel deserves the medal, and goes back to his normal family life, after his wife finally comes to terms with the importance of duty. Sirling is therefore redeemed as a new man who is a good husband and a good father who is driven by his morals, and thus can be seen as representing the American nation's conscience (Jeffords 1993).

Three Kings, set at the end of the Gulf War, reflects America's changing stance in the region. The film concentrates on a multi-ethnic American army unit containing a range of character types that is established as a "democratic microcosm" of the United States (Sobchanck 1988, p. 15). The combination of the individualist leader (Archie), the reasonable black man (Chief Elgin), the family man (Troy) and the naive yet aspiring young man (Conrad) identifies the characters with the "average man" and thus highlights their role as representatives of national identity. The men cruise the desert in army vehicles displaying America flags, and are guided by a nationalism that induces them to pray to God "to protect us as we protect our country".

Archie, played by George Clooney, is the heroic figure in this army squad, emerging "as one who is typically outside, if not actually opposed to, the mainstream" (Tasker 1993, p. 104). This is portrayed in his sexual behavior as well as his military behavior. Our introduction to the "cool" Archie in the film sees him having sex with a female journalist covering the end of Gulf War. Archie's imperfection is soon highlighted in his temptation by the chance to steal a large amount of gold held by Iraqis. However he is later presented as an independent thinker and leader who defies the system—eventually becoming a local hero—by saving the lives of innocent Iraqi civilians. He and his mates Troy, Chief Elgin and Conrad risk their lives, their status and their future to smuggle the Iraqis into Iran where they can escape Saddam Hussein's dictatorship.

Throughout the trip to the Iranian border Troy suffers from a serious injury, highlighted with anatomical shots of what is happening inside his wound juxtaposed with shots of the Iraqi people. The people's wounds thus become linked with Troy's own, with the message connecting the men's sympathy towards Troy with that of the United States towards Iraqis. At the same time, Troy constantly thinks of his wife and daughter and how he plans to devote himself to them after he leaves the army. Troy's wife and daughter are presented as the catalyst that keeps him going and enables him to tolerate and eventually overcome his wounds. As Jeffords puts it, he becomes an "emotionally and physically whole man", whose family provides "both the motivation for and the resolution of changing masculine heroisms" (1994, p. 143). Troy's injury also serves to show that "the national body can be... capable of recovering from a past wound" (Jeffords 1994, p. 51). The American men's masculinity in the film is thus revisionist, portraying them as a helping hand instead of terminators. However

the film does not present the men as totally refraining from violence. The men engage in battle when needed, shooting at and killing a significant number of Iraqi soldiers. This combination means that these "wild yet sensitive (deeply caring yet killing) guys" (Pfeil 1995, p. 5) are "simultaneously feminized and re-empowered" (Pfeil 1995, p. 54). The men thus serve to legitimize the US' violent intervention in the Gulf War, symbolizing the US as a much needed rescuer. As Bigham argues, this representation of new men serves as "an apparent strategy for holding on to power during shifting times" (1994, p. 4); "with the codes of masculinity reduced to a series of roles, sensitivity is just another in the repertoire" (1994, p. 5).

Though masculinities may differ, the underlying attributes are the same. The American nation is manifested in the superior/victorious male who is set against Other nations. The masculinities seem to differ according to historical sensitivities, changing with the highlights of the times. Thus, eighties environmentalism is highlighted along with the Reagan era's tough approach, nineties feminism follows with new men and the focus on male sensitivity as opposed to physical strength, and multiculturalism continues at the turn of the millennium, with black actors taking on more major roles as representatives of the changing face of the same nation.

Essential Arabs

In contrast with the greatness of the American male comes the mediocrity of his Arab counterpart. Whether the Arab's political agenda is known or not, the films seem to use Arabs as token enemies, essential for the strengthening of the central hero, and consequently the American nation. In fact, one could easily replace the Arab "bad guys" in those films with anyone from any other background, as their threat and operations are not culture specific. What is fixed about these Arab men though is their essential Orientalist representation as backward, savage and materialist Others. This masculinity manifests itself in the representation of the Arab terrorist who is on a mission to attack the United States. This terrorist can be a plane hijacker terrorizing the elderly and religious figures (*The Delta Force*), women (*Executive Decision*), or children (*Hostage*); a maniac kidnapping an American family (*True Lies*); or a street militant set on attacking American troops (*Navy Seals*).

The terrorists in the films are characterized by extremism, ignorance and lack of sympathy. An illustrative case here is that of Abdo Rifa'i in *The Delta Force*. A

rugged, dark figure with a heavy accent, Abdo launches an attack on the passengers and crew of a "TAW" flight (paying homage to the 1985 TWA hijacking). Abdo's reasons for the hijacking are stated by him as being to fight Zionism and American imperialism. However, Abdo's ignorance is highlighted when he forces the German hostess to read out the names of those he believes are Jewish passengers, assuming that all Jews are Israelis. With mad hair and gun in hand, Abdo orders his captives to gather near the cockpit, and mistakenly forces a Christian man of Russian origin to comply as well because he thought the man's name was Jewish. When an elderly priest tries to calm Abdo down, the priest also ends up joining the on board "concentration camp". Abdo's political case is therefore stripped of any credibility, and instead we are faced with a representation of a ruthless man who poses a threat to the unity and integrity of an all-encompassing American nation, where people from different backgrounds live in solidarity. This is exemplified in the Russian man's statement that the United Sates has treated him well.

The representation of the Arab men in general serves to justify the position of the US in world/Middle Eastern politics. However, this justification does not always follow actual political events. An illustration of this can be seen in *Navy Seals*. *Navy Seals* deals with the intricacies of the Lebanese civil war, pointing out the large number of participants in this war: the "Shuhada" (a fictional Shiite terrorist group mentioned in the film), Hizbullah, Amal (a Shiite militia), the Druze (a religious group), Israel. Thus, the film pays homage to the idea of Lebanonization—how Lebanon has been essentialized as an icon of tribalism rather than nationalism. The film portrays one Shiite militia leader saying they "kill in response to American hostilities". However, the film gives no explanation for the complexity of the situation, nor does it provide much historical grounding, leaving the conflict in Lebanon as a given: something emanating from the intrinsic nature of Lebanon. The argument then is a classic Orientalist one about the issue of nature versus culture (West 1995).

The American intervention in the film is accounted for as through Navy Seals, anti-terrorism marine troops appointed by president Kennedy in 1962, which the film shows are sent to Lebanon in the eighties to claim American missiles. The film fails to tell how the American missiles got to the hands of Shiite terrorists in Lebanon, and does not portray American intervention from any other angle. The American presence in Lebanon in the eyes of *Navy Seals*, then, is one linked with a single military

activity, and does not necessarily replicate the US' participation in Middle Eastern conflicts in general. Yet the film's portrayal of Lebanese militias is not central. None of them is a main character. They just symbolize another threat to the United States, although what they might be capable of is unexplained in the film. This way, the Other masculinity is ambiguous. It operates as an abstract threat to the American nation.

The same applies to *In the Army Now* and *Three Kings* where we are presented with irrational and barbaric Arab soldiers. But in addition to the barbarity of the Arab men in the two films, *Three Kings* presents another dimension to this Other masculinity. The Arab men in the film belong to one of two groups. They are either outsiders who explicitly long for American aid, and thus represent a passive, surrendered masculinity, or are soldiers who blindly follow Saddam's orders and are therefore set to destroy and jeopardize the status of the United States. Yet the Iraqi soldiers are brutal not only to the Americans, but also to their own people, killing them and preventing them from accessing food. An unforgettable scene in the film is one where a container truck filled with milk that is meant to be for the starving Iraqi civilians is shot by Saddam's soldiers, bursting it open. As the milk spills all over the ground and is slowly soaked into the dry earth, women and children gather around the white pool, drinking the mixture of milk and mud in desperation while the Iraqi soldiers watch like stone figures. The film thus is an illustration of Orientalist discourse, whereby the Orient is presented as needing the Occident to rescue it from itself.

The Iraqi soldiers in *Three Kings* are also obsessed with material gain, and harbor vast quantities of stolen, mainly electrical equipment and gold, stored in basements resembling showrooms. The most striking scene here has to be the one where Archie and co. "strike gold". They open, one by one, a long row of suitcases, only to find them filled with stacks of pure gold plates. Materialism is also found in the Gulf Arab man in *Power*. Riding in the back of a Mercedes, in full headdress and gallabiyya, he complains about the environmentalist candidate who is advocating alternative energy sources to petrol. The Arab man's concern is that if the USA manages to conserve energy, then there would be little or no need for Gulf oil. The Arab Gulf man is not interested in the United States. The film symbolizes this through showing him struggle to pronounce the word "Ohio". All he clearly expresses interest about is his profit and the need for his oil. The film ends with the victory of the

environmentalist candidate, with the Arab's defeat symbolized by his absence. The Arab male, therefore, is a symbol of the vulgar, degenerate, materialist, cruel Arabia that is threatening to swallow up the United States. The Arab's defeat in the end revalidates the American national identity as victorious, and Others the Arab further. The absence of the Arab character here is symbolic of the total elimination of "disease" from American society. This is further stressed through the victory of the environmental candidate. The message, then, is the battle for a "clean" America, both literally and symbolically.

A slightly more unusual representation of Arab masculinity is found in *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut*. The film is a cinematic version of the television cartoon, and revolves around the portrayal of Saddam and Satan in a battle over controlling Earth, which they descend to from hell after a dispute between the United States and Canada. Representing an "Operation Human Shield", whereby black soldiers are summoned to fight at the front lines to spare the lives of white soldiers, the film is heavily critical of the alleged allocation of black soldiers to battlefronts during the Gulf War. The film is also self-reflexive in its portrayal of Saddam Hussein, represented as a cartoon with a newspaper cutout for a head, and who thus is as much a creation of the media as an actual threat to American integrity. The film's casting of Saddam as a homosexual having an affair with (and then "dumping") Satan gives a new dimension to the representation of Other/Arab masculinity in American films. This non-mainstream masculinity is satirical, yet it serves to symbolically demonize Saddam further. At the same time, it undermines him as a threat because, in the film, he is too much of a pathetic "loser" who wants to dominate the world but fails.

Yet perhaps the most extreme representation of essential Arab Others is their absence. Despite dealing with the Gulf War, *Courage Under Fire* does not portray any Arab characters, male or female. All the Arabs we see are vague black silhouettes of Iraqi soldiers in the background getting shot by the Americans. As Lt. Colonel Sirling sits in a circle of ex-Gulf war soldiers to query them about the details surrounding the death of a female pilot, one soldier gets so carried away in his descriptions that he uses the word "fuckers" to refer to the Iraqi soldiers. Staring at Sirling, the soldier apologizes for his language. Here Sirling smiles warmly at him, approving of the soldier's description, and affirming the United States' superiority by saying that compared with the Iraqis "we're a hell of a lot smarter". American policy

in the Gulf War is not criticized, and the symbolic absence of the Arabs denotes their relative unimportance in a war tale taken for granted as "right". It also serves to dehumanize them.

Sexuality and the Arab male/nation

The Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the longest on-going struggles in the Middle East, and which has extended beyond the Arab world with increasing US intervention. The position of the United States has shifted from relative direct support for Israel (such as American aid in the 1967 and 1973 wars), to acting as a go between, attempting to arrive at an agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians which would (in theory) satisfy the interests of all three parties. This US role most prominently started in the early eighties, and thus can be seen as triggering the production of two films, *The Ambassador* and *The Little Drummer Girl* in 1984, that deal with this issue. *The Siege* was released in 1998, and provides a more contemporary look at the manifestation of the Arab-Israeli conflict at the end of the nineties.

The United States in the films is represented as the rational negotiator who is set to combat terrorism and arrive at peace. This can be seen through the representation of the American ambassador in *The Ambassador*, and the FBI agents in the other two films. Against this moderate masculinity is that of the mad Arab male terrorists, who train in military camps in *The Little Drummer Girl*, terrorize moderates in *The Ambassador*, and blow up the Americans in *The Siege*. Indeed, not all Palestinians want peace with Israel, and various Palestinian extremist groups such as Hamas have engaged in military and suicidal activities against Israel and the United States. The films sometimes make a distinction between those people and the majority of Palestinians and Arabs. However, there is still a major divide between the Arab men in the films and their American counterparts. This division is a derivative of a long Orientalist perspective objectifying and vilifying the Orient as essentially "uncivilized" and uncontrollable.

Perhaps the most interesting point about this contrast of masculinities is about the Arab men's sexuality. In the three films dealt with here, we are presented with the stereotype of the "Arab stallion". The origin of this stereotype as seen in American films dates back to the days when Rudolph Valentino in *The Sheik* lured Western

women into his bed. This stereotype evokes images of harems and Arab men who are maybe good at attracting women but who bear a lack in everything else and end up defeated by the Western men. This stereotype can be compared with that of black male sexuality, which in classical Hollywood films is often represented as virile yet savage. In both cases, the sexuality of the Other is primitive, whether overtly (black) or covertly (Arab). This savagery is an explicit symbol of the "essence" of the Other nation/nature, sharply contrasted with that of the West, symbolized not through sexuality but through the use of the Western male's mind.

Both *The Siege* and *The Ambassador* represent American women (CIA agent Alice and the American ambassador's wife, respectively) sleeping with Palestinian men. Alice is asked by an FBI agent "do you know what they do to women there [in the Middle East]?" to which she answers with a satisfied "oh yes". Computer-detected scenes of her having sex with the Palestinian Samir are then beamed to the FBI agents who express their admiration at the "stallion's" skills. In *The Ambassador*—a film about the attempts of the American ambassador to Israel, Hacker, to achieve peace between Israelis and Palestinians—Hacker's wife submits totally to her lover, for whom she dresses in revealing Oriental clothing and belly dances. The camera traces her face while they are making love and shows her reveling in ecstasy. The film goes further in adopting the "Arab stallion" stereotype by using that same phrase to describe the man. When the unfaithful wife is asked by her husband whether she enjoyed the supposed horse show she was attending (her alibi for seeing her lover), she replies, I enjoyed it very much, "I got an Arab stallion".

A point linked to the above is the film's display of these Arab men's bodies. In all the films where these bodies are shown, naked or half-naked, the American men remain fully clothed. The display of the men's bodies in *The Siege* and *The Ambassador* is purely sexual, whereas in *The Little Drummer Girl*—a film about an American actress, Charlie, who gets recruited by the Mossad to help eradicate Palestinian "terrorism"—it is partly sexual (scenes of Charlie and her "Palestinian" lover Michel (who is later revealed to be Israeli agent Joseph), and partly humiliating (the torture of the always naked body of the revolutionary Samir). Samir's naked body—despite his failed attempts to hide his modesty—is displayed to the gaze of the audience, Charlie and his captors. The power of the gaze here "traps subject and object in... [a] claustrophobic space of ritual and obsession" (Riggs 1993, p. 54).

Samir's Israeli captives, especially, are the ones obsessed by his nudity, which they gradually construct. In a series of inter-cut shots, Samir in the beginning is clothed, then is wearing a rag, then is lying down in a fetal position which hides his front, then is made to stand up while covering his genitals with his hands, and finally is forces to appear totally naked. The focus of these shots is on Samir's penis, whether it will be displayed or not. In this sense, the penis is "marked as being of extraordinary significance. The discourse of the melodramatic penis still seeks to block a penis from merely being a penis" (Lehman 2001, p. 39). Whether in a sexual context or a humiliation context, the Other body is objectified as a spectacle to be consumed or dominated. As Parpart argues, "individual moments of male nudity [of the colonized male body] may register... as... affirmative of difference and marginality" (2001, p. 179). But Samir's case is, moreover, one about the progressive conquering and subsequent total submission of the Other. Samir's subsequent murder by the Israelis does not add to their conquering; his naked surrender is a sufficient indicator. Samir is the only one among the above-mentioned Arab men who has his penis displayed. The rest are eventually killed.

The female nations of Egyptian cinema

The woman-as-nation metaphor has meant that in Egyptian cinema "women... become the battleground of [national] group struggles" (Spike Peterson 1999, p. 48). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) argue that citizenship constructs men and women differently. They state five ways in which women participate in national processes, and which form the framework behind the analysis of the representation of the female Egyptian nation. First, women are constructed as biological reproducers of members of an ethnic group. Second, they are constructed as reproducers of boundaries of ethnic or national groups. This has necessitated the establishment of codes determining women's acceptable sexual behavior, limiting this behavior within the group. Third, they are ideological reproducers of collectivity and transmitters of culture. Fourth, they signify national difference, and therefore act as symbols in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction, and transformation of the nation. And finally, women are constructed as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis further argue that "[d]ifferent historical contexts will construct these roles not only in different ways but also the centrality of these roles will differ" (1989, p. 7). The analysis of the Egyptian films shows that notions of gender and patriarchy cannot be applied universally, and therefore highlights the importance of examining the representation of the different roles of women in the films in a historical context. In doing so the analysis challenges the notion of "'Third World Woman' as a singular monolithic subject" (Mohanty 1994, p. 196), where women form "a unified 'powerless' group prior to the historical and political analysis in question" (Mohanty 1994, p. 202).

In what follow four major points will be discussed. First, the representation of woman-as-idealized-nation. The Middle East has generally invested the female with the task of being the moral gauge in society. The female's role thus goes beyond symbolizing the morals of the family and into being the bearer of the nation's values. In films about late president Nasser, the Egyptian nation is represented as a virtuous female who does not pose a threat to patriarchy. With Egypt imagining itself in terms of honorable, subdued femininity, it is no coincidence that Egyptians call their nation the "mother of the world". Second, Kandiyoti (1994) argues that women's appropriate sexual conduct "often constitutes the crucial distinction between the nation and its 'others'" (p. 377). Thus, in contrast to this image of idealized femininity, films representing Israel and the United States as Other nations communicate the representation of Other-woman-as-whore. Other nations are symbolized by sexually permissive females who are presented as summarizing the moral depravity of the enemy. Third, the symbolic use of women as an oppositional tool vis-à-vis Islamic fundamentalism. Here we have two representations. The first is the use of woman as a tool highlighting the moral depravity of Islamic fundamentalist men. The second is the representation of the silent, veiled woman who symbolizes the oppression of Islamic fundamentalism. This is contrasted with the fourth point, the representation of the modern woman/Egypt, seen in women who are politically active. However, the chapter argues that this representation of "active" women does not imply that they are central protagonists. The films in the end construct the Egyptian nation as being patriarchal. The shift from the representation of idealized women to that of modern women indicates a historical move from private patriarchy, where women are subordinated through their relegation to the home, to public patriarchy, where

"women are no longer excluded from the public arena, but subordinated within it" (Kandiyoti 1994, p. 377).

Idealized femininity

"Women bear the burden of being 'mothers of the nation'" (Kandiyoti 1994, p. 376). The Egyptian films analyzed are mainly melodramas focusing on the feminine, private sphere, where family honor and nation honor are signified by idealized, wholesome women. Thus the females symbolizing the nation tend to be devoted mothers who sacrifice for their husbands and their families. One way of analyzing this devotion is stated by Kaplan, who argues that the mother's passion for her children can be a "'safe' location of female desire" (1992, p. 79). Kaplan also maintains that the mother who sacrifices for her husband can be "blameless and heroic... she has ceased to be a threat in the male unconscious" (1992, p. 124). Yet, such a paradigm "uncritically embodies the patriarchal unconscious and represents woman's positioning as lack, absence, signifier of passivity" (ibid).

Such characteristics are seen in the character Tahiyya, Nasser's wife, in the film *Nasser*. The film is a biographical account of the life of the late Egyptian president, and presents Tahiyya as a selfless mother/devoted wife who not only takes care of her children and husband, but also sacrifices her own personal life with Nasser for the sake of the nation. The film ends with Nasser's death, depicting a mourning Tahiyya alone by his death bed, saying "it is only now that I have you for myself". Tahiyya's sacrifice means that she is ascribed a heroic status. This status is maintained in her portrayal as being an obedient wife, yielding to Nasser's wish to work long hours despite her concern over his deteriorating health. At the same time, she excels at her role as housewife and hostess. A scene depicting a meeting between Nasser and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Abdel Hakim Amer starts with a panning shot revealing a long dinner table laid with food prepared by Tahiyya. As the three eat their dinner, the men praise Tahiyya's culinary skills, after which she leads them to the living room where she serves them tea. Yet as soon as Amer and Nasser start discussing politics, Tahiyya makes a swift exit, excusing herself as having to look after the children, and taking the sugar pot from the tea tray with her while joking that she cannot trust her husband with the sugar.

The film's depiction is closely based on the doctrines of the real Nasser. According to Hatem, Nasser was passively ambivalent "regarding the impact of the roles assigned to women in modern society" (1993, p. 39). Officially, Nasser was committed to "the integration of women in the public sphere" (ibid.): Despite the shortcomings of the unchanged personal status laws, among others, Nasser's government gave women the right to vote and distributed education and health benefits equally, which women gained from. Yet, Nasser quelled the public Egyptian feminist movement during most of his ruling period, accusing it to be too leftist. This was in line with his suppression of all other independent political groups (Badran 1993).

Nasser's revolutionary struggle relied upon "using Islam to rally the masses for the liberation of their occupied land" (Majid 1998, p. 327). Majid explains that such a "form of Islam was obviously infused with a patriarchal spirit" (ibid.). As Khan puts it, "these politicized, frequently anticolonial, anti-West movements exert increasing social and sexual control on the symbolic and chaste women centered at the core of an identity politics" (1998, p. 468). Moghadam calls such a type of revolution a "Woman-in-the-Family" model (quoted in Wilford 1998, p. 6).

The women's role in this context is more complex than that of men, in that while men and women may sacrifice themselves for the nation, it is the woman who is a symbol of the nation itself (and the nation's honor) (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Joseph 1999; Wilford 1998). As a woman's morality extends to the nation, Tahiyya becomes a symbol of the pure, nurturing, virtuous Egypt. Her political uninvolvement validates Delaney's point, "*women may symbolize the nation, but men represent it*" (1995, p. 190, italics in original).

Permissive femininity

The Arab-Israeli conflict in the Egyptian context has taken many shapes. The situation has shifted from blatant opposition to Israel pre-1978 to acceptance after Sadat's signing of the Camp David accords in 1978. Sadat started a long process of peace talks with Israel, ending in 1989, with Israel returning Sinai and other Egyptian territory it had occupied 15 years earlier. Yet, while the Egyptian state's stance towards Israel since then may have been accepting, the general mood in Egypt has not always been the case. Even with peace with Israel being established, this popular anti-

Israeli sentiment is expressed in cinema. All the films portraying various aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict analyzed in this chapter represent Israel as an essential enemy. This representation can also be traced to Egyptian cinema's being the biggest film industry in the Middle East, and hence the need to cater to a wider anti-Israeli sentiment, "using Arab-Israeli politics as a commercial drawing card" (Armbrust 2002, p. 927). Gender is at the heart of this representation.

The films representing the Arab-Israeli conflict are guided by essentialist assumptions about Others and about the Egyptian/Arab self (Sharoni 1995). The films present a sharp opposition between Israeli women and Egyptian women acting as Israeli spies on the one hand, and nationalist Egyptian women on the other hand. The films can be divided into two sets. The first set portrays Egyptian women betraying the nation by working as Israeli spies, while the second portrays Israeli women on Egyptian soil.

The first set includes *Execution of a Dead Man* and *Trap of Spies*, films that are similar in their treatment of the subject of Egyptian spies working for Israel in the seventies. They both introduce young Egyptians allured by the money and status that being a spy gives. The Egyptians in both films hide what they are doing from their families, who in turn condemn the spies when they discover what they do. The spies in the films are also similar in their "immorality". Both films rely on females to represent this immorality. In *Trap of Spies*, the female Egyptian spy who betrays her country even after being caught by the Egyptian secret service is a blatant representative of Israel's reliance on duplicity to achieve its aims. She is a symbol of the immoral Israeli state that is attacking "us" from within and that "we" should guard ourselves against. In *Execution of a Dead Man*, the spy Sahar also gets caught by the Egyptians yet continues working for the enemy. However, her immorality is amplified in that she gets pregnant after having an affair with another Egyptian spy. Here we see the classic use of premarital sex as a sign of moral degeneration.

The second set includes *Love in Taba* and *Girl from Israel*, films that show how Israel's decadence has infested the Egyptians' every day lives. Both films tackle the issue of normalization between Egypt and Israel after peace was established. Set in the newly freed land of Taba in Sinai (previously Israeli-occupied), the films construct gendered self/Other dichotomies (Ranchod-Nilsson and Tetreault 2000) that establish women as a battleground in the Arab-Israeli conflict (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989). Women are used to establish "the boundaries of the group [Egyptian]

identity, marking its difference from alien 'others'" (Spike Peterson 1999, p. 49). Jan Jindy Pettman argues,

> "Women's use in symbolically marking the boundary of the group makes them particularly susceptible to control in strategies to maintain and defend the boundaries. Here women's movements and bodies are policed, in terms of their sexuality, fertility, and relations with 'others', especially with other men. This suggests why (some) men attach such political significance to women's 'outward attire and sexual purity', seeing women as their possessions, as those responsible for the transmission of culture and through it political identity; and also as those most vulnerable to abuse, violation or seduction by 'other' men" (1992, p. 5-6).

The films illustrate the above through constructing various binaries. First is the contrast in attire and lifestyle. The Israeli women are represented as heavily made up and bikini-clad, drinking alcohol and taking drugs as they party through the night. The Egyptian women, in contrast, dress modestly and refrain from any such activities, spending their time in Taba playing volley ball and painting.

Second is the sincerity/deception binary. While the Egyptian women are presented as not having anything to hide, the Israeli women are presented as being deceitful. In *Love in Taba*, Israeli women hide their HIV status from the Egyptian men they sleep with. The message is that Israel as symbolized by those women may be attractive yet is diseased, luring "our" men and then destroying them. In *Girl from Israel*, an Israeli woman pretends to be an American in order to get through to a young Egyptian man she eventually seduces, promising him money and status if he leaves his family behind and goes to Israel. In this way, there is a focus on the contrast between the artifice of Other women and the naturalness of the moral Egyptian women. It can be said that the Other women's artifice is a symbol of the artificiality of the state of Israel itself as portrayed by the films. Established in 1948, the state of Israel is seen by the majority of Arab countries (though not Egypt) as an artificial state that they do not recognize—an impostor attempting to replace the "real" Palestine.

Third is the emphasis on women's sexuality. The nation's honor is seen as an extension of the family's honor, which women are also used to signify. The greatest

weight in this context lies in premarital virginity, which seems to dominate any other form of expression of morality (Tucker 1993; Tseelon 1995). The Egyptian women in *Girl from Israel* do not have sex before marriage; the Israeli women, on the other hand, attract the Egyptian men through presenting the opportunity of premarital sex. Towards the end of the film, *Girl from Israel* depicts a rape of one of the Egyptian virgins (dressed in a floating white dress) by an Israeli man (dressed in black). As Spike Peterson argues, "the rape of the body/nation not only violates frontiers but... [also] becomes a metaphor of national or state humiliation (1999, p. 48).

This self/Other essentialism has also been extended to the representation of the United States as an imperialist force threatening the sovereignty of the Egyptian nation. *The Other* represents the imperialist United States as a devouring mother. A wealthy American business woman indulging in a world of fraud, Margaret serves as a classical villain: Her unholy alliance with Islamic fundamentalist terrorists, her selfishness, immorality and total immersion in a constructed cyber world detach us from any identification with her character, and highlight her contrast with Egyptian purity and simplicity as seen in the character Hanan, Margaret's Egyptian daughter-in-law. Margaret sees the Egyptian people as an Other: She is outraged when Adam, her son, donates blood to Egyptian victims of an explosion: "why give blood to 'them'?"

Margaret follows the idiosyncratic character of the devouring mother who swallows her children while the father is factually or symbolically absent (for example, *Psycho* 1960). In *The Other*, Margaret is obsessed with her son and tries her best to be number one in his life, casting on him the "duty" of compensating her for the romance she never had with her husband. Unlike Hanan's devoted mother, Margaret does not suffice by sublimating her desire though her son; she projects her unfulfilled desire on him (Kaplan 1992; Mulvey 1999). That preludes Margaret's latent rejection of Adam's marriage to Hanan, and her consequent endeavors to undo the multiethnic coupling (Adam being a Christian Egyptian-American and Hanan being an Egyptian Muslim). The inevitable and classical outcome of this drama is that Margaret ends up destroying her child. Throughout the film, Adam and Hanan's anti-essentialism is caught up between the poles of imperialism and fundamentalism. This entrapment is epitomized in the film's tragic ending. In front of Margaret's eyes and amidst a shoot-out between the fundamentalists and government military troops, the loving couple die holding hands.

In the final third of the film, we find out that Margaret is an alcoholic. She is also portrayed as having a derogatory view on other women, whose purpose, in her eyes, is merely for (sexual) pleasure. Margaret's role is ultimately as a symbol of the United States in all its degeneracy. This symbolism is stressed towards the end of the film in a conversation between Margaret and her Egyptian husband. We hear Margaret reminding him that he would be nothing without her, and at the same time, she declares, "he who leans on me, I bust him", while throwing her whisky bottle at a TV set. Using the only distinguished avant-garde technique in the film, the scene is then cut to that of missiles being launched—obviously a sign of destruction.

Oppressed femininity (and masculinity)

As if appearing out of nowhere, a sultry woman in a revealing red dress, with big hair, lots of jewellery and lots of makeup appears on the screen. She taps her feet gleefully in a short dance routine, then, to the background of non-diegetic cabaret music, sashays slowly down a flight of stairs, smiling at the people in front of her and swaying the frills of her dress, like a diva who knows is making a big entrance. Jaws drop at the sight of her, with her colorful aura contrasting with the grayish-yellow background of the place and the dull outfits of the crowd. She explains that she was being interrogated by the police for a prostitution accusation.

This scene featuring the Egyptian actress Yousra in *Terrorism and Barbecue* is one of many in which her nameless call girl character is used to juxtapose that of the Islamic fundamentalist man Rashad (whose jaw drops in the above scene as well). That call girl is a classic example of cinema's seductive, "immoral" whore who epitomizes men's suppressed desires, and is an object of the men's gaze, both in the film and in the audience. She literally walks into an armed protest against the government led by the ordinary man Ahmad inside the 13-storey ministries complex. She joins the protesters, and when Ahmad asks her why she did that, she answers that she is too shy to say, to which he reacts, "do you feel shy like we do?"

Ahmad's spontaneous response epitomizes the call girl's "essential otherness" (Mulvey and MacCabe1989, p. 57), and the expectation that she—being an "immoral" call girl—is inherently evil and emotionless. The film thus demarcates the simple, innocent, moral Egyptian people who, in a comedy of errors, find themselves being labeled as terrorists, and the call girl who is presented as different, both in the way she

looks and in her immorality. The call girl plays a key role in the film, in that she is used to point out the Islamic fundamentalist Rashad's moral dissolution. Gazing hard, eyes almost popping out, at the call girl's breasts, Rashad—a civil servant caught up in the protest—"advises" her to "go back to the right path", saying "all you need is a long dress and a veil and you will be virtuous." The veil thus becomes the passport that will legitimate the fundamentalist's action on his desire. This desire remains forbidden otherwise, and all the man can do is stare, causing the call girl to wonder, "is this look on your face that of an adviser? And how come you are not advising the rest of the people?"

The scenes containing the call girl in *Terrorism and Barbecue* provide what Mulvey refers to as "scopophilia", defined as "pleasure in looking" (1999, p. 60). The way the camera traces her footsteps as she walks down the stairs, the way it caresses her face while she looks empathetically at a desperate suicidal man who falls for her, the soft non-diegetic music that we hear every time she moves, her husky voice, the slow pace of her speech, her bright red dress and the way she uses her bosom to store her makeup and accessories, all work to emphasize her sex appeal and therefore intensify the gaze of both the male audience and the male characters in the film, especially Rashad (Mulvey 1999; Tseelon 1995). Ahmad, though, is presented as being uncomfortable with her overt sexuality, stammering and diverting his gaze away from the girl. The call girl is therefore used to strengthen Egypt's morality in opposition to the corruption of Islamic fundamentalism.

A similar example is the lawyer Fat'hi's sexy neighbor in *Birds of Darkness*, a film depicting Islamic fundamentalism spin doctoring during Egyptian parliamentary elections. All we know about her is the way, squeezed into a tight dress that emphasizes her ample breasts, she enters his house submitting her chest to Fat'hi to pat in front of his Islamic fundamentalist friend Ali as a form of greeting, goes straight to Fat'hi's bedroom and starts undressing on his bed, all the way laughing and calling Fat'hi to join her, disregarding the presence of a stranger. Thus the anonymous woman is shown to know her place, which she accepts and submits to robotically and without protest. After Ali asks Fat'hi about her, we find that Fat'hi used to be her lawyer and saved her from prosecution for murdering her husband. The woman has apparently made a deal with Fat'hi: He proves her innocence, and in return, she gives him sexual favors. This immoral woman is later used in the film to juxtapose Ali's

suppressed desires with Fat'hi's gratified ones. Ali enters Fat'hi's bedroom only to find the woman's red bra left on the bed.

A comparable ambivalence is found in *The Other*, where a cyber meeting virtually set in Paris finds the fundamentalist Fat'hallah, who chose the location, in the presence of Parisian prostitutes in the Eiffel Tower. Being virtual, we know that the presence of the prostitutes is the product of Fat'hallah's fantasy. However, his overt reaction is saying how wishes to eliminate the presence of these women, whom, in such a realistic fantasy, he can only gaze at. This representation of women as objects to be desired and controlled (Tseelon 1995) ascribes Islamic fundamentalism an Orientalist status where women are constructed as Other (Kofman 1996).

But this fundamentalist desire oscillates between being forbidden and being permissible. The fundamentalist Ali in *The Terrorist* is a man with sexual desires like everybody else. Ali is convinced by his leader that the "possession" of the women of "infidels" is permissible. After he gets run over by a woman whose non-fundamentalist Muslim family welcomes him into their home while he recovers, Ali does not hesitate to follow his leader's suggestion and makes a sexual move on the woman's sister, which she blatantly rejects. Ali is also torn between his religious commitment and his voyeurism. In one scene Ali walks down the street behind a woman wearing a tight dress. The camera displays Ali's gazing at her bottom, which the camera then zooms on giving us Ali's perspective. At home, Ali peeps from his window at the woman, now wearing a low-cut red dress, and is on a lower floor in the building opposite him. Ali fantasizes about having sex with the woman—something that disturbs him and drives him to seek refuge in vigorous exercise and prayer.

Tseelon analyzes such gendered acts of looking/being looked at by saying that in such a distinction "there is an assumption that one position, that of the onlooker, is inherently more powerful than the other" (1995, p. 68). In the case of the woman he harasses, the woman as the object of Ali's gaze is visible. Tseelon argues that being visible does not mean possessing power: "visible as objectified is powerless, but visible as prominent and dominant [here, Ali] is powerful" (1995, p. 68-69.). In the case of Ali's neighbor, both the woman and Ali are invisible to each other. In the same way, Tseelon argues, "[i]nvisible as ignored and trivialised is powerless, but invisible as the source of gaze... is powerful" (1995, p. 68). Hence, invisible or not, the fundamentalist man constructs the woman as an object of his gaze and she is therefore always powerless.

In this way, the films dealing with fundamentalism in this chapter show that according to fundamentalism, the woman is commodified. In *The Terrorist*, fundamentalist leader Ahmad promises Ali a wife if he performs a terrorist activity. In *The Other*, the fundamentalist Fat'hallah promises to let his friend marry Fat'hallah's sister (Hanan) if the friend helps him gets her divorced from her husband. Thus, we see that the woman has no say, and that she is used merely as a product in exchange for services. To summarize, women are used in the films as indicators of the corruption of Islamic fundamentalist men. This serves to de-validate their political agenda while at the same time strengthening the Egyptian nationalist agenda that sees Islamic fundamentalism as an Other. This discourse of difference is an illustration of how the nation "utters different narratives for its different inhabitants" (Eisenstein 2000, p. 38).

Moreover, the films portray the oppression of Islamic fundamentalism through the image of the silent, veiled woman (Afshar 1996). It is important to note that the notion of veiling a la fundamentalism in these films tends to always be that of the long, loose black chador, perhaps because of its dramatic look (as opposed to a mere colorful head scarf, for example, typically associated with traditional baladi women in Egyptian cinema). This image of the chador-wearing woman brings to mind the images of colonized women reproduced in Malek Alloula's book *The Colonial Harem*. As Khan puts it, "both poles [Islamism and Orientalism] essentialize the ideal Muslim Woman and reduce her to the same symbols and icons" (1998, p. 469). Almost always, with the exception of religious historical films, any such veiled woman in Egyptian cinema is connected with Islamic fundamentalism. The epitome of fundamentalist oppression can be seen in *The Terrorist*, where such women are shown to be blindly obedient to men. There is a scene in which Ali, the fundamentalist terrorist, knocks on the door of his fundamentalist leader, Ahmad. The first shot is that of Ahmad eating with his four chador-wearing wives. We hear knocking on the door, and Ahmad quickly dismisses his wives with a wave of his hand. Words are not necessary for the women to understand where their place in the hierarchy is. In *Birds of Darkness*, however, the oppressed, veiled woman steps out of the house. But that does not take her beyond any "expected" female roles: she is either the fundamentalist lawyer Ali's secretary, or a messenger who gives Ali a letter from his opponents. These women are contrasted with other women in the film, who are seen as successful business women—even if they had either literally or

metaphorically "inherited" their businesses from their fathers/(male) partners (like the character Raga'). The film tries to put across the message that despite their "involvement", fundamentalist women are still oppressed.

There are multiple assessments of the meanings behind the "uses" of the veil, especially the one about the veil being a sign of resistance (El Guindi 1999). However, the Egyptian films seem to concentrate on only one: the veil as a sign of backwardness and oppression. In all these films, if we hear the veiled women speak, their relative passivity sends the message that in essence, they are silent. In contrast, the films' depiction of the businesswomen shows that it is unveiling and "liberation" that gives the woman a say in society—hence, being "advanced". This view is resonated in Nawal El Saadawi's argument that "Islamic fundamentalist groups are trying to push women *back* to the veil, *back* home, *back* under the domination of their husbands" (1997, p. 95, my emphasis). The veil becomes a sign of the sexual and psychological repression of the fundamentalist identity—an identity deemed foreign to the Egyptian national one. The veil then is a nationalist tool "through which social difference is both invented and performed" (McClintock 1997, p. 89). The demarcation between Islamic fundamentalism and the construction of the Egyptian national identity as modern and oppositional emphasizes how

> "definitions of the 'modern' take place in a political field where certain identities are privileged and become dominant, while others are submerged or subordinated... secular notions of modern nationhood subordinate and sometimes seek to destroy alternative bases for solidarity and identity" (Kandiyoti 1994, p. 382).

Resistant femininity?

Women participating in national struggles form another category that constructs the Egyptian modern national identity. When the woman, expected to be weak and powerless, becomes a fighter, she becomes a symbol of the ability of the powerless to fight (Waylen 1996). However as Kandiyoti argues, activities of women participating in nationalist movements

> "could most easily be legitimised as natural extensions of their womanly nature and as a duty rather than a right. Modernity was invested with different meanings for men, who were relatively free for adopt new styles of conduct, and women, who, in Najmabadi's terms, had to be 'modern-yet-modest'" (1994, p. 379).

Franco argues that even "when a woman managed to become a militant, she was often forced into a traditional gender role and classified as either butch or seductress" (1994, p. 366). Kandiyoti's and Franco's arguments are illustrated in the films depicting politically active women: *Road to Eilat*, a film about an Arab coalition under the command of the Egyptian marines on a secret mission to Israel, *48 Hours in Israel*, also about a mission to Israel before the 1973 War, this time using Egyptian spies, and *Naji al-Ali*, a biographic film on the life of the late Palestinian political cartoonist of the same name.

Both *Road to Eilat* and *48 Hours in Israel* present female fighters going undercover to Israel in order to accomplish missions that would aid in the preparation for the 1973 October war against Israel. Both women use seduction to achieve their aim of entering Israel and gathering intelligence information, the first by alluring Israeli men (*Road to Eilat*), the second by working as a showgirl (*48 Hours in Israel*). Both films use elaborate shots of the women's bodies in action, with a whole dance sequence in *48 Hours in Israel*, and a scene of Maryam's body being caressed by an Israeli man in *Road to Eilat*.

Mulvey and MacCabe (1989) argue that women's sexuality is the condition that makes them visible in a male-dominated world. It is this sexuality that makes those women visible in a male-dominated resistance movement. The display of the women's bodies means that they no longer become sex objects for foreign men only (Enloe 1990); in this "nationalist movement", "the native continues to retain the same essential characteristics depicted in Orientalism, but nevertheless imagines himself [sic] as autonomous, active and sovereign" (Yegenoglu 1998, p. 123). As Yegenoglu (1998) argues, this nationalist movement sustains the legacy of Orientalism and its view of Oriental women as objects of men's gaze.

But Maryam's role is not confined to seduction. The film explains her participation in the struggle by reciting her story. The time line of the film is 1969, during which Palestinians were seeking refuge in Jordan as a result of the harsh

conditions of being under occupation. These conditions resulted in several traumas ranging form illiteracy to lack of hygiene, and consequently "heightened political consciousness among [Palestinian] women" (Dajani 1993, p. 114). Some of these women "have broken through traditional prejudices to become fighters" (Holt 1996, p. 190). *Road to Eilat* follows Sayigh's explanation that at the end of the sixties there was a "'revolutionary tide' generated by the defeat of the Arab armies in 1967" (1993, p. 176). Sayigh points out how Palestinian women underwent military training as members of the Resistance Movement, something which Maryam exemplifies. She is shown carrying a gun, wearing military uniform just like her male counterparts, and actively participating in missions for the Egyptian Marines (hers is to go undercover to Eilat as an Israeli).

Sayigh (1993) explains that a number of women had joined the Resistance Movement due to the encouragement of male kin, but Maryam in the film, rather romantically, explains that she joined after her brother died for the Resistance. This invocation of equality resonates Majid's point that "it was the national struggle... that brought women out of their confined, privatized social spaces into the public sphere" (1998, p. 351). Palestinian resistance has generated the slogan *al-ard qabl al-ird*, meaning "land (or national freedom) before honour" (Abdo 1994, p. 162).

However, as Wilford argues, "fighting alongside men to achieve independence does not provide a guarantee of women's inclusion as equal citizens" (1998, p. 3). The film's presentation of the brother's death as the incident that caused Maryam to become a fighter serves as a justification of her actions, and as a reassertion of her femininity as well (Tasker 1993). Moreover, the film ensures that Maryam does not stray "too far from socially acceptable roles for women" (Inness 1999, p. 46). Maryam's role in the Egyptian marine's operation, for most of the film, tends to be complementary to that of her male colleagues. She spends most of the time encouraging her male colleagues and taking care of them in a sisterly way (for example, she pulls out a photograph of her deceased brother and shows it to one of the men, emphasizing the resemblance between him and her brother, and they strike up a quasi-sibling relationship). Moreover, when Maryam is in a military uniform, she does not fight, and when she is carrying a gun, she does not shoot. Thus the film follows Anthias' and Yuval-Davis' explanation that "in national liberation struggles... generally [women] are seen to be in a supportive and nurturing relation to men even where they take most risks" (1989, p. 10). Moreover, Maryam's display of

emotions serves to tone down her toughness and to "reassure the audience that... [she] is a "normal" woman" (Inness 1999, p. 98). Looking at how Maryam's character is portrayed, we find that she generally acts in reaction to men's schemes: we do not see her planning, but executing her male leaders' strategies (Tasker 1993; 1998). Thus she can be said to be a sidekick, and not a central character, despite the length of time she spends on screen.

The journalist Suad in *Naji al-Ali* is another woman "fighter". Suad is perhaps the closest we can get to what Doane calls "woman's film" (1999, p. 71), whereby the woman is a central protagonist, instead of an object to be looked at. Resisting the proposals of her ex-fiancé, who offers to "protect" her from the perils of her job as a journalist during the Lebanese War, and dedicating herself to the cause of anti-Israeli Palestinian/Lebanese/Syrian resistance, running fearlessly along battlefields, and engaging actively in political debate, she epitomizes female power and confidence. Stacey explains that such a character serves to "[offer] women fantasies of resistance" (1999, p. 201). However, after an assassination attempt on Naji's life, we see her helpless in the hospital staring at Naji who is lying in a coma. Tasker argues that the woman's role in this representation is merely to provide "an audience for the hero's suffering, his powerlessness emphasised by her gaze" (1993, p. 26).

Both Maryam and Suad are single women, which might be seen as a rejection of "the responsibilities of adult womanhood" (Tasker 1993, p. 14), or as strengthening their tough image (Inness 1999). This is emphasized in the character Suad, who is not only single, but has left her fiancé for her political involvement. She is also a "tomboy" sometimes in the way she acts (and sometimes dresses) (Inness 1999). Maryam also fluctuates between being "feminine" in her swimming suit and "masculine" in her military uniform. Such cross dressing can be seen as a way of negotiating the portrayal of women's fighting bodies, as atypical, even deviant, with women's traditional non-fighting role (Tasker 1998). It can also be seen as emphasizing their toughness yet reaffirming their femininity. Suad and Maryam are both the only women in all-male environments. While this can be seen as highlighting their strength, their contrast with the other women in the films, who assume more traditional roles, emphasizes their portrayal as being exceptional women, and hence "their toughness is understood not to be a common trait of women" (Inness 1999, p. 97).

Thus, despite Suad and Maryam being strong characters at face value, they are a "revised stereotype" (Tasker 1993, p. 19) of women in cinema, strong but with their toughness undermined (Inness 1999). Perhaps because *Naji al-Ali* does not want to transgress patriarchy totally, in a scene where a party is held to celebrate Naji's' safety, it is Suad, the only woman present, who makes the cake. This not only reaffirms Suad's femininity, but also undermines her toughness. The same can be said about Nadia El-Guindi's character in *48 Hours in Israel*, where she disguises as a dancer. Inness explains this use of disguise by saying that the woman's "toughness can be seen as only another example of her play with disguises; we need not fear her if we can believe that underneath the tough exterior a "true" woman resides" (1999, p. 35).

As Enloe (1990) argues, this depiction of women in nationalist movements descends from nationalism being masculine and patriarchal to start with. Schulze (1998) explains that nationalist movements do not erase the view of women as inferior to men: "when they are needed they may carry arms and fight, but ultimately they are still seen as 'other'" (p. 159).

Conclusion

"Nations are contested systems of cultural representation" (McClintock 1997, p. 89). Gender is one of the most powerful tools by which nations define themselves and others. In cinema, the way masculinity or femininity is represented can dictate political statements. In Hollywood, as we have seen in the context of Middle Eastern politics, gender has been used to exclude Arab Others from the American national identity and to vilify them. Whatever the political situation, from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the association between Gulf Arab states and oil as power, gender has been used to legitimize the actions of the United States while demonizing the Arabs. In this context, the male stands in for the nation, whether American or Other.

Women on other hand are used in the cultural construction of the Egyptian nation, and as instruments of demarcation between the self and the Other. As demonstrated by the representation of Tahiyya and the Egyptian virgins in *Girl from Israel*, "idealized images and real bodies of women serve as national boundaries" (Ranchod-Nilsson and Tetreault 2000, p. 5). This is contrasted with the image of the

whore who epitomizes the Otherness of the enemy, namely Israel and the United States. Lying between the virgin and the whore is the silent, veiled woman who signifies the oppression of Islamic fundamentalism, and the politically active female who embodies the modern face of Egypt.

Orientalism exists strongly in both sets of films. Most of the American films belong to the action genre. This genre is built upon issues of mastery, whether over objects or over others. The films do not deviate from this current, and they all conclude with the American hero's control over the situation and over Others. The films' political purpose is to illuminate a fantasy odyssey fought against primordial enemies. They operate within this general Orientalist perspective, depicting the Arab men as ultimate, essential Others.

The Egyptian films also employ sexist slants when portraying women. We have seen how, despite their casting of some women in "fighting" roles, the films rely on the display of the women's bodies. The women are thus objects of the gaze of the men in the film and of the audience. They are simultaneously used as the tool by which the "immorality" of Others is measured (in case of the fundamentalists and the Israelis) and as validators of the patriarchal nation. This is epitomized in the representation of Tahiyya, who confines herself to her private sphere while leaving all the political work to her husband.

Thus it is important to pay attention to the way the nation is configured in both cinemas. The female nation of Egyptian cinema and the male nation of Hollywood represent clashing political and cultural stances. The American focus on individuality and consequently individual freedom is absent from the Egyptian agenda. The latter's agenda is more consumed with issues of familial/national morality that are manifested in the feminine subservience to this larger-than-one's-life cause. The American nationalist agenda focuses on the other extreme, the masculine crusade for freedom. Hollywood thus has both created and appropriated what can be seen as global narrative transparency, setting its individualism stories as a striking, more resonant contrast to Egyptian cinema's apparent totalitarianism.

In all those representations, we find that men and women are embedded in good-versus-evil struggles around the authenticity of the American and Egyptian national identities (Moghadem 1994). The face of this struggle has changed throughout history. In the case of Hollywood, it has moved from representing the United States as an infallible hero to a new (caring but killing) man. But this has not

completely eliminated essentialist notions of the self. Hollywood films of the 1990's have presented a shift from the focus on the white hero to representing black heroes as well, as seen in Childers (Samuel L. Jackson) in *Rules of Engagement*, Sirling (Denzel Washington) in *Courage Under Fire* and Chief Elgin (Ice Cube) in *Three Kings*. The black body is used a sign for US democracy (Willis 1997). But at the same time, despite the initial "subversion" of the system practiced by the three men, the character of the black man does not transgress the rules irreversibly. As bell hooks argues,

> "part of makes his character "acceptable" is that he not threatening to change the system; he is working hard to uphold the values of the existing social structure. There is an underlying insistence throughout the film that no other system could be as good... The underlying assumption is that he commits to this because he worships, admires, and loves white patriarchal power" (1992, p. 101).

In the case of Egyptian cinema, the struggle over authenticity has moved from representing Egypt as a virtuous mother to a modern woman. However, the Egyptian films send conflicting messages about modern, tough women. On one hand, their toughness is acceptable. On the other hand, this toughness is presented as such only in the sense that it is circumstantial. This emphasizes how, as McClintock argues, women "are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation but are denied any direct relation to national agency (1997, p. 90). However, through showing how women play different, often conflicting roles, the films challenge the Orientalist treatment of women in the "Third World" as a homogeneous entity. At the same time, they challenge resistant discourses that "elevate the racially female voice into a metaphor for 'the good'" (Suleri 1995, p. 273).

In this sense, the two cinemas converge. Despite their generic differences, they both utilize gender in the same way, strengthening their own national identities and constructing enemies as outsiders to those identities. The generic slant of each cinema has predisposed the construction of the nation as male in the American action films, and as female in the Egyptian melodramas. However women in both cinemas remain outsiders who are at best sidekicks. And while the representations of the enemies in the two cinemas may differ, with the American films portraying primordial yet submissive Others and the Egyptian films portraying essential materialist and sexually

permissive ones, the two films rely on gender to convey those messages in a similar manner. Thus, the list of Others in the films grows. Not only is the "Orient" an Other according to Hollywood; the Orient itself has its own Others, signified by either indulgent women (the West) or repressed ones (Islamic fundamentalists).

Chapter Five: Constructions of Ethnicity and Resistance: Representing the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict is perhaps the most controversial issue of the politics of the Middle East. Much has been written about this conflict, as it is one of the longest and most complicated ongoing problems in this area. In their representations of the conflict, both the American and the Egyptian films engage in a similar discourse of difference, and both advocate subjective nationalisms that form part of an ongoing cultural battle over the same "homeland" and that complicate the mythical form of the nation. The subjective nationalisms in the films construct the Israeli and Palestinian nations as permanent. This complicates arguments such as Brennan's (1995), who points out that the nation is a mythical form referring to a transient political structure. Hugh Seton-Watson argues that "there is no "scientific" means of establishing what all nations have in common" (Seton-Watson 1977, p. 5). Brennan (1995) adds that this accounts for the ambiguity of the myth of the nation. He points out that "nation" comprises not only an imaginary "discursive formation" (Foucault 1972), but also political structure and "the institutional uses of fiction in nationalist movements" (Brennan 1995, p. 170).

The relationship between the cinemas and nationalism belong to a tradition of overlapping between nationalism and art. On one hand, art is influenced by nationalist movements. This can be seen for example in the Egyptian films about Nasser (like *Nasser 56*). The point can also be applied to Hollywood, with, for example, the several films glorifying the American nation and its allies produced during the Cold War). On the other hand, the Egyptian films about the Arab-Israeli conflict show how art can be seen as directing nationalism. This has led to the declaration that "[t]he nation... is an abstraction, an allegory, a myth that does not correspond to a reality that can be scientifically defined" (Mariategui 1971, 187-8, quoted in Brennan 1995, p. 172). In this sense, we can look at nations as being invented (Brennan 1995) or imagined (Anderson 1983); the role of the films is to take part in this invention or imagination. However, we still have to remember, as Brennan points out, that not all art work about nations is nationalistic. Moreover, not all nationalist cultural practices are essentially progressive or regressive. Aijaz Ahmad argues:

> "Whether or not a nationalism will produce a progressive cultural practice depends, to put it in Gramscian terms, upon the political character of the power bloc which takes hold of it and utilizes it, as a material force, in the process of constituting its own hegemony" (1995, p. 79).

On another level, looking at the representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict reveals the difficulty of applying traditional cultural theories to the conflict. The conflict is problematic in that, although it has often been referred to as "ethnic conflict", it comprises various other factors that complicate notions of ethnicity. The conflict is mainly nationalist, but not in the sense that one nation is fighting another. It is in the sense that diasporic peoples are aiming at reclaiming the nation. This is not the case however in the Hollywood films, which construct the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis as an ethnic conflict. The films therefore do not go "so far as to question the basic assumptions of the dominant "official" interpretations of the conflict" (Safty 1992, p. 145). This "official" discourse encompasses, first, the presentation of the conflict as one between ethnic groups, which distorts the position of the Palestinians. Second, the conflict is represented with sympathy to Zionism and the assumption of the legitimacy of the state of Israel. The American films invoke historical and religious notions to strengthen Israel's claim to Palestinian land. Third, this carries with it the representation of Arab acts of violence as terrorism, while showing those by Israel as "reprisals... directed at "guerrilla bases" " (Safty 1992, p. 149) as seen in *The Little Drummer Girl.* And finally, the association of Palestinians with terrorism in general, which undermines their claims (Safty 1992).

The United States' position within this conflict is far from neutral; it has often been perceived as a supporter of Israel, which has alienated the Arab masses (Saikal 2000). It has been argued therefore that, in representing this conflict, the American media in general have been informed by a dominant Zionist discourse. The American films dealing with the conflict take a more sympathetic side towards Israel; yet the United States is represented in the films as a godfather, superior than both the Israelis and the Palestinians, and mediating for peace between the two warring sides. This representation forms part of the American national and global agenda, exhibiting sympathy to American Jews while at the same time confirming the position of the US as a world policeman.

The Egyptian films, on the other hand, engage in a similar process of glorifying the self and vilifying the Other. Yet vilifying Israel is complicated by Egypt's political stance towards Israel from the time of Sadat onwards, where, although normalization between Egypt and Israel has not been established, the two countries have signed a peace treaty. The Egyptian films choose to vilify Israel as an essential evil enemy that allows no space for negotiation or co-existence, and, more recently, the United States for ignoring conflicts in the Middle East. The Egyptian films then ignore Egypt's official discourse in order to satisfy both Egyptian populist discourse and wider Arab anti-Israel sentiment. Egypt is thus imagined in the films as a crucial Arab player, and therefore the films both resurrect and lament a golden age of pan-Arab nationalism that had reached its climax under Nasser.

The Arab-Israeli conflict in the Egyptian films also complicates notions of post-colonialism. This is demonstrated through the focus on the oppression of Palestinian diaspora, compared to the transferring of Jews from the position of the subordinate to a dominant one with the building of the state of Israel. As Clifford (1997a) argues, "such 'homecomings' are, by definition, the negation of diaspora" (p. 287). By narrating the experiences of the Palestinian diaspora, the films construct themselves as a means of resistance. The films again take a populist stance by praising the loyalty of ordinary people (or the masses) to the Palestinian cause while criticizing the Arab elites' indifference. The Egyptian films thus contradict notions of homogeneity of the Arab world implied by Hollywood by highlighting the elites as an internal Other, blamed for the decline of pan-Arabism.

The unity of Arabs in the Egyptian films is not presented as being the same as that of Jews in the American ones. This is because while Hollywood unifies Jews not only by using a myth of common culture, language and religion, but also by using a myth of common ancestry, transforming the Jews from a religious to an ethnic group and therefore downplaying Israel as a political project, Egyptian cinema makes no claim for common ancestry. Pan-Arabism can thus be seen as portrayed as a form of nationalism rather than ethnicity, i.e., it is a political project that utilizes common cultural aspects, language and religion while recognizing and maintaining the ethnic diversity of the Arab world.

Hollywood: The United States as godfather in an ethnic conflict

Hollywood's representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict revolves around three major themes. The construction of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians as an ethnic conflict; the establishment of physical and ideological borders between Israelis and Palestinians, which entails the construction of both sides as a predominantly homogeneous group; and the representation of the United States as a godfather whose role infantilizes both Israel and Palestine.

An ethnic conflict?

Brown defines ethnic conflict as "a dispute about important political, economic, social, cultural or territorial issues between two or more ethnic communities" (1997, p. 82). Anthony Smith defines ethnic community as "a named human population with a common ancestry, shared memories, and cultural elements; a link with a historic territory or homeland; and a measure of solidarity" (quoted in Brown 1997, p. 81). On one hand, Israelis and Palestinians share most characteristics of an ethnic community. They each have shared memories and cultures and a defined name, each is linked with (the same) homeland, and they both share a measure of solidarity. For both, their community structure is more authoritative than their economic and political structures (Rex 1997b). However, the complication comes when considering common ancestry. While Palestinians do not usually allude to notions of common ancestry, Israelis invoke that through religious tales and claims to one place of descent. Anthony Smith (1999) argues that common ancestry is one factor that constitutes ethnic myths. There are four other factors. First, having a myth of spatial origins. Israelis and Palestinians both believe in belonging to the land of Palestine. Second, implicating a myth of a heroic, golden age. For the Palestinians, this is the pre-Zionist immigration phase, when they still lived in the whole of Palestine. For the Israelis, it is before the Jewish diaspora. Third, including a myth of decline, and finally, a myth of regeneration, aiming at restoring the golden age. Both sides allude to such myths (for the Israelis, starting with the diaspora and then the Holocaust, establishing regeneration through the establishment of the state of Israel; for the Palestinians, decline starts with the establishment of Israel and the Palestinian diaspora, and regeneration in several nation-building activities, culminating in the

intifada in 1987), Thus, both aim at restoring what they see as their golden age through their current struggle.

We can therefore see that neither Israelis nor Palestinians satisfy the full requirements of ethnic myths. The crucial factor here is the myth of descent. Smith (1999) explains that in the quest for recognition and independence, ethnic spokesmen have "drawn on, or in some cases invented, a 'myth of origins and descent' " (p. 60). Smith (2000) argues that Israelis have "invented traditions serving the immediate needs of Zionist pioneering elites in 1920s and 1930s as they sought to portray an activist, heroic "new Jew" in Palestine—in contrast to the burdened and victimized "old Jew" of the diasporic exile" (p. 56). This partly explains how Jews—racially, ethnically, linguistically and nationally diverse—have mobilized themselves to establish Israel. In doing so, they have also drawn on a common ideology (Zionism) and a common history. The ethnic myth here is used as a nationalist tool (Jenkins 1997), as a means of "destroying local, and regional ties in the interests of the centre and the whole community" (Smith 1999, p. 61). The ethnic myth, in other words, has moved beyond culture and into politics. It no longer aims at just preserving an existing community, but also at creating a new one. In this sense, the present is placed in the context of the past, and Judaism is used as both a source and a vehicle of Israel's shared memories.

In light of this background, Hollywood constructs the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians as an ethnic conflict relying on the use of ethnic myth in the representation of Israel. Not only do Israelis in the films share a common ethnic myth, Jews worldwide are portrayed as sharing this common sentiment and history and even origin, with no distinction between Zionist and non-Zionist Jews. *The Delta Force* for example represents an American Jewish couple who are devoted to Israel. This ethnic conflict then is constructed as one between two groups over the same territory who both claim it as their homeland. This struggle over landscape can be seen in an argument between Israeli students and a PLO figure in *The Ambassador*. The PLO figure, Mustafa, says he has "fought and killed for my homeland", to which Israelis reply they will "never give it back". Mustafa compares Palestinian refugee camps to concentration camps, saying Palestinians can never go back to them. He talks about "Palestinians thrown out of their homeland" while the Israeli students argue: "We'll give back the land when America gives back occupied territories, like Texas to Mexico! Are you asking us to return land that we have conquered?" This resonates

Shohat's (1997a) argument that the metaphor of the virgin land is shared by Zionism and American pioneer discourses. As she puts it, "Assumed to lack owners, [the land]... becomes the property of its 'discoverers' and cultivators who transform the wilderness into a garden, those who 'make the desert bloom'" (p. 100).

Another way in which the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is "ethnified" is through presenting Palestinian resistance as a "revolution", as seen in *The Little Drummer Girl*. The film does not refer to the PLO by its name, but simply calls it "the revolution". The conflict is thus changed from being about Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation to being about Palestinians revolting against an already-established order. The emphasis on an already-established order is one way in which Israeli claims to Palestinian land is naturalized in the films, and where Israel is constructed as driven by an ethnic nationalism. Smith (1999) and Kellas (1998) define ethnic nationalism as one where the nation is conceived of as a community where common ancestry is the prime condition of belonging to the nation. They argue that this nationalism is different from, though not necessarily mutually exclusive to, what they call territorial (Smith) or social/civil (Kellas) nationalism, where a nation is conceived of around a definite homeland, but where the individual can choose which nation to belong to. Kellas argues that this nationalism is individualist, in that anyone can join. Ethnic nationalism, by comparison, is problematic because it means that this nationalism is by definition exclusive and collectivist. Israel, as represented in the films and in reality, includes characteristics from the territorial model; however, the problem is that it emphasizes the ethnic one, making it an exclusive nation. This is due to Israeli claims to an "original", "natural" identity. Clifford (1997a) explains that "claims of a primary link with 'the homeland' usually must override conflicting rights and the history of others in the land" (p. 288). But how far back does one have to go in order to prove this primary link? Moreover, such a claim denies the heterogeneity of societies in history, in "ancient homelands". Clifford warns that such a claim risks ahistoricism by drawing a border between the "originals" and the "new comers". In this sense, how far back in history should one go to have a claim to belonging? As Clifford (1997a) puts it, "How long does it take to become 'indigenous'?" (p. 288).

Homogenizing Israelis and Palestinians

The films construct ideological and physical borders between Israelis and Palestinians that place each group in essential opposition to the other. The borders constructed by Hollywood are not abstractions; they are metaphorical and arbitrary constructions that form part of "the discursive materiality of power relations" (Brah 1996, p. 198). The way Palestinians and Israelis in the films are not separated only geographically, but also ideologically, necessitates the importance of looking at "psychic territories demarcated" (Brah 1996, p. 198). This exclusionary discourse constructs Palestinians as a threat to Israel from the outside. In *The Little Drummer Girl*, for example, no Palestinians are shown as living in Israel. In *The Ambassador*, Israeli students declare "There is no Palestine". This invokes notions of "a land without people for the people without a land" as stated by Golda Meir. As Safty explains, this slogan

> "strips a people of its land, denies and annihilates its existence, rejects the assimilation of the Jews in their respective European societies, establishes the concept of the Jewish people as a distinct entity despite opposition from assimilated European Jewry, and creates in the collective consciousness of European audiences the image of Palestine as an empty heaven ready to perceive a homeless people" (1992, p. 139).

The ideological borders constructed by the films also serve to homogenize each side in the conflict. We can trace three major steps in the process of homogenization of Jews and Israelis employed by the films. First, we witness a redefinition of the Jewish communities around the world as a unified group with a single political culture. This explains outside support for Israel by Zionist and non-Zionist Jews, like in the case of the Jewish lobby in the United States which has influenced the American government into maintaining its massive aid to Israel (Kellas 1998). Kellas (1998) cites various reasons for the strength of the Jewish lobby in the United States. First, the wealth of the Jewish community which backs their political influence. Second, the general sympathy towards Israel because of the Holocaust. Third, the psychological similarities between the United States and Israel as immigrant nations. Jewish unity is represented in *The Delta Force* where the

American Jewish couple on board the hijacked place reminisce about their honeymoon in Jerusalem.

Second, there is a re-education of the potential members about the nation's "true culture". The Israeli true culture according to Zionists can only be about establishing Israel in the land of Palestine. This "territorialization of memory" (Smith 1999, p. 152) results from regarding the land as sacred. *The Ambassador* opens with the American ambassador to Israel Hacker driving into Jerusalem, along the way pointing out "Moses' tomb" to his companion. Thus, while the nation is often argued to be a cultural system with religious characteristics providing meaning and continuity to people (Anderson 1983), this does not mean that nationalism has replaced religion. Rather, Israel and its representation in the films demonstrate how the two go together (Kellas 1998). But sacredness is not only applicable in the religious sense, it is also seen in how the Israeli/Palestinian land is imagined as a land free from oppression. In *The Little Drummer Girl*, Israel is portrayed as a safe haven, with a glistening sun and idyllic beaches, where Charlie retreats after her ordeals of being a spy.

Third, we witness a regeneration of that true culture, seen for example in the revival of Hebrew as the official language of Israel. The American Jewish woman in *The Delta Force* wears a wedding ring engraved in Hebrew. Israeli discourse thus has often invoked the past as a bedrock from which the present has emerged. The films show how religious, historical and political experiences are used as accounting for the present. The Israeli nation thus is represented as a "deposit of the ages, ... the outcome... of all its members' past experiences and expressions" (Smith 1999, p. 171). In other words, this is a determinist view of the Israeli nation, where the nation is determined by ethnic heritage. Ethnic heritage also plays a role in invoking the injustices of the past which justify the present. The Jewish plight from Egypt at the time of the Old Testament and the marginalization of Jews in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century and before for example are evoked in *The Little Drummer Girl*; when Charlie questions Israeli head of operations Marty on why the presence of the state of Israel is so crucial, he answers by saying "Maybe you would prefer us to take a piece of Central Africa or Uruguay? Not Egypt thank you. We tried it once and it wasn't a success. Or back to the ghettos?"

Perhaps the most salient factor in how this ethnic heritage invokes injustices of the past to make sense of the present is the Holocaust. The films use the Holocaust not only to strengthen the Jewish/Israeli identity, but also to mirror contemporary

Palestinian "terrorist" activities. Shohat (1997a) argues that this "idea of the unique, common victimization of all Jews at all times provides a crucial underpinning of official Israeli discourse" (p. 94); this discourse uses the Holocaust "as a stage for demonstrating (Euro)Israeli nationalism as the only possible logical answer to horrific events in the history of Jews" (p. 93). The Holocaust thus is part of Israel's social memory (Collard 1989) that endows it with a definite identity (Smith 1986) and that outlines its conflict with the Arab outsiders.

In *The Ambassador*, Hacker is taken by an Israeli man to visit a Holocaust exhibition, where still images of Holocaust victims are projected as slides. Later in the film, Hacker brings together Israeli and Palestinian students to meet at a Roman ruins site in Jerusalem in order to discuss ways of reaching peace. As the students squat on the ground, the Israelis on one side, the Palestinians on the other, with Hacker in the middle, they light candles, then get up chanting "peace". However a Saika (a Palestinian-Syrian group portrayed as rejecting peace with Israel) man in a kaffiyya emerges from the ruins and shoots at the students. Close ups of faces exploding with blood and heads being blown up are followed by shots of bodies lying on the ground, as Hacker is crushed in the middle. The images of the students' dead bodies mirror the images of Holocaust victims seen in the slide exhibition earlier, establishing Palestinian terrorism as a new Holocaust. This is also invoked in *The Delta Force*. Abdo Rifa'i, the hijacker of a flight on a Greece-Rome-New York route, summons the German hostess to pick passenger passports that have Jewish names. When she refuses, saying being German invokes the Nazis, and advising Abdo that he wouldn't want to be associated with "Nazis who killed 6 million Jews", he replies by saying, "not enough". A female Jewish passenger reacts by saying "no, this can't be happening, not again", to which her husband replies, "we survived once; we can do it again".

The films often regiment Palestinians and Arabs vis-à-vis Israelis and Jews, but at the same time present Palestinians in conflict. The films thus homogenize Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular in ascribing them a tribal status that invokes Orientalist discourses, where the Orient is uncivilized and unable to rule itself, thereby necessitating control by the Occident. This is portrayed through numerous terrorist activities conducted by Arabs against Israelis and Americans. Examples can be seen in *The Ambassador*, where Hacker survives an assassination attempt by the Saika group (described in the film as an extreme Syria-based terrorist PLO faction

that threatens the establishment of peace in the Middle East). In reality Saika, created in 1968, was part of Syrian president Assad's regime, and engaged in attacks against Palestinians in Lebanon in 1967 despite belonging to the PLO, and became anti-PLO after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 because of a clash of interests over Lebanon (Nasr 1997). Therefore, on one hand, the films merge conflicting parties under a barbaric Arab/Palestinian umbrella. This also mythologizes the Arab Other as an abstract threat, as seen in *Executive Decision*, where an unidentified suicide bomber in London declares his support for Palestinians and Bosnians before blowing himself up. The film presents this at its beginning, as a context for a plane hijacking by Arab terrorists later. However the bomber's Arabic, un-subtitled declaration makes it difficult for non-Arabic speakers to establish this context, leaving the hijacking and the American rescue it entails as a mere classic battle between good and evil.

On the other hand, the films present conflict among Palestinians, ascribing the Palestinians a primitive status that is contrasted with that of modern Israelis and Americans (Wilmer 1997). This is an illustration of how "group identities must always be defined in relation to what they are not" (Eriksen 1997, p. 37). *The Ambassador* presents a PLO member, Mustafa, who tells Israelis and Americans "you must recognize that Palestine is a nation, and not a tribe". Yet his statement is undermined when he declares that the PLO wants peace while it is extremists who want revenge, which the film follows by an attack by Saika on Mustafa and the group he is addressing. Thus, Mustafa remains a mere token in a sea of Arab protagonists, his discourse drowning in theirs. As Spivak argues, tokenism does not allow the subaltern to speak, "when you are perceived as a token, you are also silenced" (1990, p. 61).

Both the homogenization of Israelis and Jews on the one hand and Palestinians and Arabs on the other hand and the presentation of the Arab-Israeli conflict as an ethnic one are problematic. Homogenization is problematic because it essentializes Israelis and Arabs. Much has been written on the essentialism of Arabs in Hollywood (for example, Jack Shaheen's (2001) book *Reel Bad Arabs*). A similar statement can be made on the essentialism of Israelis, namely through the work of Ella Shohat and Robert Paine. Paine (1989) points out the complexity of the allocation of identity (as Zionist, Jewish or Israeli) to a land of immigrants with different cultural and social backgrounds. He also points out that the unifying discourse disregards how Zionism has changed over time. Shohat (1997a) argues that Zionism presents a "'proof' of a

single Jewish experience" (p. 95) that does not allow overlappings with other religious or ethnic communities. She then challenges the presentation of Israelis as a homogeneous group by invoking the differences and inequalities between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews (which are ignored in the films). Paine and Shohat differ in their interpretation of Israel. While Paine sees Israel as a master identity encompassing "*intra*-ethnic components" (1989, p. 129), Shohat (1997a) argues that Israel is a case of a state creating a nation. This is seen in how "Israel is a European strategy, conceived, organized, and blessed by Europeans (whether Jewish or Gentile), adopted and secured by the United States, which has been actualized by Western/Northern implants depending upon a mass of Easter/Southern labor and military draftees" (Downing 1991, p. 263). Shohat thus highlights the ambivalence towards the East and the West experienced by Israel, which is again ignored in the films. This is seen in how Israel's claim to the land is part of a myth of origins located in the East, while the Holocaust invokes West as a "place of oppression to be liberated from" (Shohat 1997a, p. 98), yet at the same time, Israel's claim to be "a secular, western democracy and Jewish" (Paine 1989, p. 128) means that it looks at the West as an "object of desire to form a 'normal' part of it" (Shohat 1997a, p. 98), while looking at the East as backward and underdeveloped.

Presenting the Arab-Israeli conflict as an ethnic one is problematic because of the many complexities such a presentation entails. First, Israel assumes an ethnic character, where the nation is constructed on the basis of ethnic heritage. The main criticism of this view is that, though useful for its account of the importance of history, it ignores how the present also "shapes and filters out the ethnic past" (Smith 1999, p. 171). This entails looking at the nation as a cultural artifact. As such, a nation is the product of the accumulation and interaction of the collective myths and symbolic representations existing within it. The Israeli nation becomes an imagined, invented community. It is a nation still in the making, with continuous immigration by ethnically and socially diverse groups. Add to that the fact that the inhabitants of Israel are also heterogeneous in the same way. This emphasizes the importance of symbolic representation of the nation of Israel as a binding factor. The Holocaust is one of the major symbolic elements of the Israeli nation's psyche; today it is often invoked to strengthen Israeli unity. The conflict with Palestinians, especially with the various acts of Palestinian resistance (whether political, cultural or military), has now been presented as a new holocaust, creating the myth of the Arab who wants to drive

Israelis into the sea (as stated by the characters Marty and Joseph in *The Little Drummer Girl*). Smith (1999) calls this process national archeology, whereby the past is not excavated as historical remains, but reconstructed to be related to the present.

Another complication in referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as ethnic is the fact that Israelis are largely a settler community. Kellas (1998) describes Israeli nationalism as a hybrid of what he calls "colonial" and "integral" nationalisms. Colonial nationalism is an example of Hechter's theory of internal colonialism. Hechter argues that inequalities between regions in a country inhabited by different ethnic groups eventuate in consigning those on the periphery to an inferior position, while the core remains dominant, resulting in hostility between periphery and core. This is intensified by what Hechter calls the cultural division of labor, whereby the core group occupies the best positions and the periphery is left with inferior roles. Palestinians in Israel are second-class citizens, and for example are not allowed to serve in the army (Kellas 1998). In this sense, the Israelis become "colonizers" and Palestinians become "colonized". Kellas adds to Hechter's theory by marking how Zionist Jews in Israel are settlers; he compares the condition of Palestinians in Israel to that of blacks in South Africa under apartheid. He however points out that the difference between Israel as a settler nation and other settler nations is that "the Jewish settlers... claim that they have 'come home'" (Kellas 1998, p. 171). Integral nationalism applies to Kellas' description of an exclusive nationalism that is based on an absolutist ideology whereby the "own" nationalism is deemed superior to any other nationalism. In this sense, Palestinian nationalism is seen by Kellas as anti-colonialist nationalism, which complicates discourses that place the condition of Palestine within a postcolonial framework.

The United States as godfather

The position the United States has taken within the Arab-Israeli conflict historically has fluctuated between predominantly regarding Israel as a diplomatic liability under Eisenhower and Carter to a strategic asset under Truman, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Reagan, to a combination of both under Bush, Clinton and George W. Bush. Yet throughout the 20th century and beyond, Israel has maintained a special relationship with the United States, nourished not only by influential pro-Israeli Jewish lobbying in Washington, but also by the American view of Israel, with

its geographical location and military prowess, as a strategic ally in the Middle East (Little 2003). This was perhaps most clearly seen during the Cold War, when the Middle East was a battlefield for the superpowers and their interests. Moreover, it has been argued that the United States' support for Israel emanates from American discomfort with Arab unity, which would undermine its influence in the Middle East (Mansour 1991; Idris 1991). This special relationship has continued until today, and is reflected in the films, some of which have been produced by pro-Israeli Jewish companies (like *The Delta Force*, in which it is declared "Israel is America's best friend in the Middle East" after which the hijacked American plane is flown to Israel from Beirut by American rescuers).

This special relationship has cast the US the role of godfather to and protector of Israel, whose relationship with its Arab neighbors is a David and Goliath situation. The exaggeration of the Arab side is seen in three films: *The Little Drummer Girl*, where a journalist states that the Palestinian "revolution" is "the richest in history"; *The Delta Force*, where Chuck Norris' character enters Beirut and declares that there are two million people in Beirut, "Beirut is a goddamn big city" (in reality, the population of Beirut is one million, even less so in the eighties when the film is set); and *The Ambassador*, which opens with the (erroneous) statement that the Israeli population is 4 million and that Israel is surrounded by 8 Arab countries with a total population of 80 million.

Israel's special relationship with the US has also undermined the Palestinian claims to resistance by portraying it as terrorism, while representing Israel in a more favorable light. *The Little Drummer Girl* presents a masked Palestinian man giving a speech in Dorset, England, claiming: "They call us terrorists. Why? Because we deliver our bombs with our hands. We have no American places to drop them from, no tanks to shell their towns. This Israeli tank commander who fires his cannon into our camps so that our women and children have their flesh burned from their bones, this Israeli is called a hero. But when we strike back, the only way we can, with our hands, we are called terrorists. If Israelis give us their airplanes, we'll give them our suitcases... What we ask is the return of what was taken from us, by force and by terror. We ask for justice". However the film later depicts the same man as being a terrorist, planting a bomb at an Israeli diplomat's house in Germany that kills an innocent child and his mother. In contrast, the film presents Israel as more reasonable and willing to stop the bloodshed. Israeli secret agent Joseph in the film declares to

Charlie: "Both sides [Israelis and Palestinians] have their madmen, their extremists. They have some who would drive us into the sea. We have some who would wipe them out and have the weapons to do it. But some, some on both sides want to come together Charlie, want the Palestinians to have their homeland beside us". Not only does this statement establish Israel as peace-seeking, its blaming of "extremists" for causing Palestinian dispossession absolves Israel from any responsibility for anti-Palestinian violence (Safty 1992).

Throughout history, however, the United States, as a superpower, has maintained a superior position to both Israel and Arab countries. While the films present anti-American terrorist attacks by Arabs within the context of the conflict with Israel which the US is shown to successfully overcome (like in *The Delta Force*, *Programmed to Kill*, the *Ambassador* and *The Siege*), the main role the United States plays in the films is not that of fighting back. The United States in the films is ascribed a position seemingly higher than that of the conflicting parties, thereby constructing the United States as a godfather mediating between Israelis and Palestinians in order to arrive at peace in the not only in the Middle East but also worldwide.

The films reflect this through presenting the US as orchestrating peace talks in the Middle East. The American superior position has simultaneously cast Israel and Palestinians an inferior position, almost as immature children fighting in a playground. This is most clearly seen in *The Ambassador*, where Israelis and Palestinians engage in mutual ideological attacks (though military attacks are confined to Palestinians) that are only resolved by the intervention of American ambassador Hacker. On one hand, the film depicts Israelis who regard Palestinians as untrustworthy, wondering why Hacker would doubt "why we're so suspicious of our enemies who have sworn to destroy us so many times". On the other hand, the film depicts Palestinians who shout "we don't talk with Jews; we kill them!" Hacker's efforts at achieving peace are hampered by an attempt on his life by Palestinian "extremists", and the Israeli Mossad who try to prevent him from arranging a meeting between Israelis and Palestinians. As a result, Hacker almost gives up on his peace mission, and decides to go back to the United States. The film uses this pretext to cast an Orientalist light on Israel, as Hacker is begged to stay by Israelis who state that they need him there.

Despite its advocacy of dialogue, the film does not make it clear exactly what the United States wants to establish in the area. Is it partition? Or is it a multicultural society? At best, the film portrays the area as a plural society, where each group exists almost totally independently, and where each group's private and communal worlds are separate from the working world. In other words, Palestine/Israel is represented with both groups operating separately in their private (moral education, primary socialization, religion) and public spheres (economics, law, politics) (Rex 1997a), but with Palestinians perceived more as residents than citizens (Safty 1992). The film also emphasizes the United States' role in the region as crucial, while at the same time maintaining the US' superiority. Hacker is careful to tell the Israelis that "the superpowers will not let you win a decisive victory".

Egyptian cinema: Nostalgia and resistance

The relationship between Egypt and Israel is not typical of the Arab world as a whole. In contrast to most Arab countries, Egypt has signed a peace treaty with Israel. This act initially alienated Egypt from most of its Arab neighbors. However, cultural ties between Egypt and the rest of the Arab world remain strong, especially popular culture. Egyptian popular music is the most widely listened to Arabic music across the Middle East; however, Egyptian cinema remains Egypt's most successful cultural export. The Arab-Israeli conflict has proven to be a delicate issue for Egyptian cinema. In detaching itself from the rest of the Arab world through the Camp David Accords, Egypt has sought to establish a separate national identity that is emphasized more than its Arab identity. Yet at the same time, Egypt relies on the Arab market for its cinematic products. Add to this the fact that popular sentiment in Egypt remains anti-Israel. Those three conflicting factors have meant that Egyptian cinema has largely refrained from representing the Arab-Israeli conflict for most of the duration of Egypt's peace process with Israel. Yet after peace with Israel was established, Egyptian cinema turned its attention once again to this conflict, constructing Israel as an essential enemy, thereby largely ignoring Egypt's political position in reality in favor of wider Arab/populist appeal. Egyptian cinema also uses the Arab-Israeli conflict to resurrect yet at the same lament a lost pan-Arab identity. Thus, the Egyptian films representing the Arab-Israeli conflict can be seen as nostalgic towards

pan-Arabism, but at the same time, they are sympathetic to the plight of Palestinians, and therefore celebrating Arab resistance to Israel. The films' stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict can be seen as an attempt at redeeming Egypt from its peace treaty with Israel.

Israel as essential villain

The Egyptian films construct Israeli nationalism as imperialist, in which Israelis are a homogeneous group poised again the wellbeing of the Arab world. In the face of this, the films construct Palestinian nationalism as anti-imperialist, attempting at reclaiming the nation and replacing the existing Israeli power (Lazarus 1997). It is therefore interesting to see that most Egyptian films about Israel do not give much screen time to Israeli characters. *Road to Eilat*, for example, represents only one Israeli man whose time on screen is limited to less than three minutes, and *Trap of Spies* also gives little screen time to its only Israeli Mossad character. The films also do not depict Israeli landscape, leaving it to the imagination of the audience. One reason behind this virtual absence is economic, in that the films do not have enough funding to always shoot on location (not only in Israel, but also in Egypt, as most of the films are limited in their outdoors scenes). Another reason is that the focus of the films is not on Israel itself, but on Egypt's and the Arabs' stance towards Israel. In accordance with populist Arab stance, the films portray Israel as an essential villain, ascribing a similar set of characteristics to that bestowed on Arab terrorists in Hollywood.

Israel is thus associated with drugs, rape, deceit, murder and disease in *Love in Taba* and *Girl from Israel*. The latter employs a set of visual signifiers to highlight Israel's pathology, like dressing the main Israeli character (played by Egyptian actor Farouk al-Fishawi, whose blonde hair and fair complexion often land him roles as a "foreigner" in Egyptian cinema), in a black suit. This is contrasted with the white suit worn by the nationalist Egyptian father in the film (played by the black-haired and dark-skinned actor Mahmoud Yassin). Egypt and Israel are thus juxtaposed as good versus evil.

Love in Taba and *Girl from Israel* are the only films dealing directly with Egypt's post-treaty relationship with Israel, and both send an anti-normalization message that is resonant with public opinion in the Arab world. The films show that

normalization would only serve Israel, and would be a mark of disrespect for all of Israel's victims during the 1967 War and other atrocities. The young Egyptian man Wael's seduction by the permissive lifestyle of drugs, alcohol and sex offered by Israel is condemned by his nationalist peers in *Girl from Israel*. The film emphasizes the artifice of Israel's embrace of Wael by showing how one of Wael's Israeli friends rapes an Egyptian girl holidaying with Wael and his friends and family. Wael hears the girl's screams coming out of a cave by the sea, and rushes to rescue her, only to be killed by his Israeli "friend". The film thus presents the complication carried in how Israel as "colonizer" tries to convince some of the "colonized" that they are in fact different from the rest of the colonized, hence being "one of us". This resonates Fanon's notion of black skin, white masks, whereby "the White man's artifice [is] inscribed on the Black man's body" (Bhabha 1994, p. 117). Bhabha argues that this process depersonalizes the colonized and dislocates them from their own culture. The film uses Wael's death as a wake up call to those who are misguided by Israel's intentions in advocating normalization with Egypt. In this sense, the films seem to take an apologetic stance towards Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, which is mostly condemned by the rest of the Arab world.

Pan-Arab nostalgia

In all the Egyptian films analyzed in this thesis, only in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict do the films advocate a kind of nostalgic pan-Arab nationalism. This exclusivity can be seen as marking pan-Arabism as a political, rather than a cultural or ethnic project, although it does carry elements of culture and ethnicity. However there are many problems with pan-Arabism. The concept itself is idealist. It is hard to define what being Arab is actually about. Is it about the language? A common culture? A common descent? A common religion? Arab countries have elements of all of those factors, and at the same lack others. Pan-Arabism tries to bring together countries as diverse as Egypt and Lebanon under one umbrella. The creation of the state of Israel is one factor that had strengthened the idealism of this concept. Pan-Arabism was strong from 1948 until the Six Day War in 1967 as Arab countries stood together in the face of Israel. Said (1992) argues that during that time, Palestinians embraced pan-Arabism because of the lack of alternative ideologies and also because Arabism was an inclusionary ideology, in contrast to Zionism. Arab

leaders during that time regarded the liberation of Palestine as part of a bigger project aimed at reforming and transforming the Arab world's political and social landscape. However, this Arab solidarity was soon to fall apart as a result of political clashes between various Arab countries, as well as within them. Moreover, the failure of the United Arab Republic in 1961 catalyzed Palestinian skepticism towards pan-Arabism; this was intensified by the Arab defeat in 1967 (Mohamad 1999). Since then, pan-Arabism has been in decline, especially with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict, slowly being overshadowed by growing Palestinian nationalist movements focusing on local Palestinian, rather than regional Arab, priorities (Moten 1980).

The political stance in Egypt has also abandoned pan-Arabism after Nasser's failure at establishing Arab unity—a unity reduced today to no more than an "emotional attachment" (Al-Ahsan 1992, p. 52). Al-Ahsan (1992) sees Arab nationalism's heavy reliance on Islam as one of its major problems. Indeed, the Egyptian character Wael in *Girl from Israel*, who is portrayed as the one who was attracted to Israel more than any other, despite the Egyptian characters' invoking of events such as Israel's occupation of the South of Lebanon and the 1967 War, is revealed as Christian at the end of the film. Thus, any depiction of an integrated Muslim-Christian Egypt seen in the portrayal of Muslims and a Christian going on holiday together is undermined. The Christian character, with his ignoring of events seen as binding the larger Arab community, is separated from the pan-Arab project. This tendency confuses Islamic history with Arab history, and minimizes the role non-Muslim Arabs play. This consequently contributes to the creation of the idea of the existence of a unified Arabia, seen as a place with one geographical nature and ethnic, cultural, political, and religious uniformity. Indeed, such an idea echoes Nasser's utopian view of Arab unity that was based on language, Islam, and geographical unity.

While the above factors can be seen as underlying the films' celebration of pan-Arabism, they disregard how regionalism can undergo tensions between demands of the state and those of collective action (Smith 1997) as demonstrated by Egypt's and Jordan's peace treaties with Israel. Thus, pan-Arabism has proven to be both an integrative and a disintegrative force in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Though the Egyptian films try to present a unified Arab view, they minimize the heterogeneity of the Arab world, and of Egypt itself. This can be traced back to the fact that many Arab countries are post-colonial (or at least post-mandate) countries, whose borders have

been created by European powers, and not by their indigenous populations. Thus, they are fragile constructions where ethnic groups, languages and religions merge among different states. Smith (1999) argues that it is this crossing over that demands the creation of national histories, symbols, and myths among inhabitants of a certain nation. President Nasser of Egypt has been the iconic figure in this process, creating a "political religion" in order to bind the peoples of Egypt together; yet this complicated by his advocacy of Arab unity. Moreover, the films mentioned above completely ignore how Egypt's peace treaty with Israel has been one of the reasons behind the dismay of Egypt's Islamic fundamentalist groups. In reality, Jihad against Zionism is one of the motives for the various fundamentalist groups both in and out of Egypt (mainly Hizbullah in Lebanon).

The films' resurrection of pan-Arabism focuses on two major political themes: The Arab victory in the 1973 October War, and the achievements of the late Nasser. Although both of those myths are linked to Western political activities in the region, they remain confined to the Arab world and therefore are not shared by Western discourse at large. The October War, which brought together Egyptian and Syrian troops as well as OPEC Arab members against Israel, is recreated in the films as a golden, heroic age. The films thus sublimate a fading yet still present Arab hope in eradicating Israeli threat through reviving shared memories of the myth of Arab unity. In doing so the films represent Egypt as a strong, unified front, ignoring how its political behavior is in fact divided between acceptance of Israel and sympathy for Palestinians (Kellas 1998). The films revolving around the October War, *48 Hours in Israel*, *Trap of Spies*, *Execution of a Dead Man*, and *Road to Eilat*, all mainly depict Egypt as a glorified leader whose acts have been essential for the Arab victory. It is as if the films seek redemption from Egypt's peace treaty with Israel through emphasizing Egypt's pan-Arab character.

All the films on the October War represent fictional intelligence operations that are shown to be crucial for the 1973 victory. *48 Hours in Israel* depicts an Egyptian spy who goes to Israel and obtains information on Israeli settlement plans in the Sinai desert in the summer of 1973, which the film shows triggers the Arab attack in October that year. *Execution of a Dead Man*, set in 1972, depicts an Egyptian pro-Israel spy, Mansour, who is captured by the Egyptian secret service, sentenced to death, and replaced with a look-alike whose mission is to find out whether Israel is

manufacturing an atomic bomb so that Egypt can make the necessary preparations to reclaim back its territories that were occupied in the 1967 War.

Road to Eilat is set in 1969, and depicts a marines operation by a Jordanian, Palestinian and Egyptian coalition whose aim is to gather information pertinent to the subsequent 1973 attack. The film's careful choice of nationalities is paradoxical when analyzed in a historical context. September 22, 1970 marks the start of Black September, an operation where Jordan's King Hussein, with American and Israeli backing, drove out thousands of Palestinian militants and their families from Jordan (Little 2003). The film then can be seen as glossing over inter-Arab divisions, and an attempt at rewriting history.

The marines in *Road to Eilat* are shown to be given the blessings of president Nasser (who communicates with them through an emotionally-moving speech delivered by phone, and whose picture hangs on the wall of the marine's head office). This covert support of Nasser is also seen in *Trap of Spies*. Set in 1971, the film depicts an Egyptian woman who betrays her country by acting as a spy for Israel. The film explains how the spy's father had been close to the exiled King Farouq (who had been pro- the colonial British), and how she resents Nasser's Revolution which stripped her family everything. She is lured by the prospects of being a spy for Israel, and keeps that role even after her arrest by the Egyptians, who ask her to become a double agent. The secret service eventually resorts to making her believe that she caused her brother's death, reminding her of all the others who died because of her actions. The secret service spies on the spy's life, and follows her to Athens where she regularly meets with Israelis. The film ends with a statement that president Sadat executed all spies in 1972, sending a message of morality, patriotism and solidarity of vision that contradicts Sadat's stance towards Israel, as he initiated peace talks with Israel and eventually signed the Camp David Accords in 1978.

Cinematic support of Nasser's pan-Arabism is not confined to covert cases as mentioned above. Two films, *Nasser 56* and *Nasser* focus entirely on Nasser and his good pan-Arab deeds. *Nasser 56* tells, in great detail, how Nasser succeeded in nationalizing the Suez Canal. The film constructs Nasser not just as an Egyptian, but also as an Arab leader and mythical figure whose aim is to unify the Arab world, and whose nationalization of the Suez Canal is the first step towards relieving the Arabs from foreign intervention and authority (namely American, French and British intervention, as Nasser was inclined to the Soviet Union). One step towards this in the

film is how Nasser saw the American decision to withdraw its plans to finance the Aswan Dam as a declaration of war against Egypt. This did not come as a surprise to Nasser in the film, who had always viewed the West, mainly the United States, as a force hindering the progress of Egypt and the rest of the Arab world (in his speech for the Revolution's 5th anniversary, Nasser is shown as referring to the United States as a liar). Despite being told his decision to nationalize the canal is risky, Nasser does extensive research on the matter and decides to go ahead, viewing the operation as a matter of honor, and also an act of triumph not just for Egypt, but also for the Arab world as a whole. The film emphasizes the West's antagonism toward Nasser and his (pan-)nationalist plans. After Nasser announces the nationalization of the Canal, the film shows that he was referred to in a British newspaper as the "Hitler of the Nile". The film also glorifies Nasser by showing how he refuses to flee from Cairo during the consequent Israeli/British/French attack on Egypt.

Nasser also focuses on the late Egyptian president, but this time on his life as a whole. Among Nasser's many deeds, the film focuses on his opinions and actions within the Arab-Israeli conflict. The film shows Nasser's skepticism in 1939 when everyone around him thought that if Nazi Germany won the Second World War and defeated Britain (who had a mandate over Egypt), it would give Egypt its independence. At the same time, he is shown to believe that Britain will establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Nasser, as an army officer, is portrayed to be fully participating in the 1948 War fought between Arabs and Israelis, where he is shown to meet an Israeli General. Nasser's stance towards Israel is made clear in the film's portrayal of his disagreement with the General's statement that an Israeli state will bring prosperity to Palestine. The film does not suffice by glamorizing Arab support for Nasser, but shows that even his enemies have a high regard for him. After the 1952 Revolution, admiring Israelis in the film are shown as saying "Nasser doesn't hate the Jews; he just hates Zionism". Nasser in the film is also an advocate of pan-Arabism, establishing Syrian/Egyptian unity in 1958, and mediating between Jordan and Abu Ammar (Yasser Arafat) after Black September in 1971. The film conveniently omits Nasser's proposal (with Jordan's King Hussein) to recognize Israel in November 1967 on a land-for-peace basis, and his acceptance of the Rogers' plan in 1969, put forward by the United States, which called for Israeli withdrawal and a negotiated settlement of the conflict (both proposals were rejected by Israel) (Safty 1992).

Thus, the films disregard historical accuracy in favor of resurrecting pan-Arabism, representing the conflict with Israel as one that goes beyond Palestine, where Egypt has taken an active, positive role, and where Arab countries generally stand united in the face of the Israeli enemy. The films thus celebrate Arab nationalism, which is an example of regionalism as characterized by Stubbs and Underhill, and thereby comprising three factors:

"First, there is a common historical experience and sense of shared problems among a geographically distinct group of countries or societies" (Smith 1997, p. 70-1). This can be seen in how, historically, Arabs countries have often shared collective fates, from Ottoman rule, to European mandates, to conflict with Israel, to the Gulf War. This is highlighted in the films, where the Arab-Israeli conflict is flagged as a common problem shared by the whole of the Arab world.

"Second, there are close linkages of a distinct kind between those countries and societies, in other words, there is a 'boundary' to the region within which interactions are more intense than those with the outside world" (ibid.). Linkages among Arab countries span geography, culture, religion and language. However, with the exception of language, those factors are shared with neighboring non-Arab countries as well (like Iran), making the boundary of the Arab world based on political projects and the mapping of Europe. The films emphasize the political boundaries between the Arab world and the outside, constructing Israel as an external threat jeopardizing harmony between and within Arab countries.

"Finally, there is the emergence of organization, giving shape to the region in a legal and institutional sense" (ibid.). This can be seen for example, in Nasser's attempt at establishing a gross Arab state (starting with Egypt, Syria and Jordan), but more successfully, in organizations such as the Arab League, which all Arab countries belong to. Nasser's failed United Arab Republic project is glossed over in the films, focusing instead on his successes. The resurrection of pan-Arabism can be seen as a an act of remembering, or as Bhabha (1986) puts it, "a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present" (p. xxiii). Yet the complication is that, as Niranjana (1992) points out, the fragments that are now put together "were fragments to begin with" (p. 173).

The complexity of Palestinian resistance

While the above-mentioned films address the Arab-Israeli conflict from a pan-Arab perspective, where Arab leaders (mainly Nasser) are in charge of fuelling this Arab-wide nationalism, two films, *Naji al-Ali* and *Hello America*, abandon this nostalgia in favor of lament. While Nasser's failure at establishing Arab unity is not condemned, popular sentiment in the Arab world has blamed leaders since Nasser for tearing the Arab world apart. This sentiment has generated skepticism towards elitist nationalism, and support for populist nationalism, advocated by lay people. *Naji al-Ali* and *Hello America* abandon grand narratives of pan-Arabism in favor of mini-narratives of ordinary people, namely Naji in the first and Bikhit in the second. The stance those two films take towards pan-Arabism is as a promising yet unsuccessful project.

Mini-narratives of resistance can be seen in *Naji al-Ali* in the representation of the Palestinian diaspora. The Palestinian diaspora in the film is exemplified by the character Naji, who is represented as bravely expressing his uncompromising attitude towards regaining the whole of Palestine and as not being afraid to express his dismay at Arab internal differences and conflicts triggered by leaders. The real Naji in turn had used a caricature character, Hanzalah (meaning bitter), as a representation of Palestine and of himself. Hanzalah is a small boy who stands barefoot, with his back to the viewer, arms crossed behind him, wearing rags, and with hair like a porcupine's. Naji had said that he intended for Hanzalah to be a child, because childhood is a symbol of truth, innocence and reality. He also said that Hanzalah's appearance recreates Naji's own childhood in the refugee camp in Lebanon. As for his hair, Naji said that it is because porcupines use their thorns as a weapon; at the same time, they are creatures who look unbearable on the outside, but are good on the inside. Hanzalah, moreover, is a prisoner and captive. Hanzalah's arms were not always crossed behind his back; Naji explains that he decided to cross his arms after the October 1973 War, because Naji, who does not believe in compromise, felt that the Middle East then was to become subject to an American solution that will be unjustly compromising. Hanzalah's crossed arms represent his refusal to participate in such a solution (Kallam 2001). The film's stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict is based on Naji's characterization of Hanzalah. Naji in the film is shown to create Hanzallah in 1969, two years after the Arab defeat in the Six Day War of 1967. The

war triggered president Nasser to announce his resignation. The film shows that Naji was deeply disheartened by this announcement, this sentiment latently continuing within him until he creates Hanzalah and proclaims his date of birth to be June 5, 1967. Naji declares Hanzalah's nationality as just Arab, and explains that "Hanzalah seems to turn his back on the people, because he is looking at Palestine, and people have turned their backs on Palestine".

The elites' abandoning of Palestine is symbolized in the film in the stance taken by a rich Palestinian businessman, Abu'l'fawares, who, in contrast to the lay Palestinian people in diaspora living in refugee camps, lives at the top of a ten-storey building in Beirut. Naji goes to a party held in Abu'l'fawares' roof garden. At the party, Abu'l'fawares reveals the garden, full of fruit trees, to his guests and declares that he calls his garden Palestine. As the guests drunkenly chant about sacrificing themselves for Palestine while sipping champagne, Naji turns his back to them and urinates on a tree, saying, "he who takes trees from their land can never return people to their land". The next day, Naji creates a new caricature character of Abu'l'fawares, who epitomizes the economic elites who care more about money than about Palestine. Kellas (1998) argues that the economic elites are usually the least nationalist in a nation, mainly because of their links with markets beyond the nation. The film's criticism of the economic elites is coupled with criticism of the political elites. The film laments the demise of pan-Arabism through the representation of a nameless, drunken, homeless Egyptian man who Naji encounters on the streets of Saida during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. As the man roams the empty streets, he asks Naji "when will the Arab armies come?" to which Naji answers "they're busy". The Egyptian man is later shot by the invading Israeli army, his death signifying that of fading pan-Arab sentiment. Towards the end of the film, the PLO is shown to be forced to leave Lebanon after the Israeli invasion. The film shows that lay people in Lebanon lament the exodus of the PLO and throw rice over the departing Palestinian tanks as a sign of blessing. Naji realizes Palestinian resistance might be ending, and punches a glass window while tracing the Palestinian resistance' exile route: "From Palestine to Jordan, from Jordan to Lebanon, from Lebanon to where, Hanzalah?" The film's criticism of the political and the economic elites vis-à-vis the loyalty of the masses shows how each side's relationship with nationalism is different, and therefore their presence accounts for divisions within the nation (Cabral 1994).

Criticism of Arab leaders can also be found in *Hello America. Hello America* represents the experience of a naïve Egyptian man who is lured out of Egypt by the chance to work in the United States. However his experiences in the US are so negative that he decides to go back home for good. The film criticizes the indifference of Arab leaders towards Palestine and the dominance of the United States in world politics, as well as criticizing the indifference of the United States itself towards Palestine. The film also blames the Arab leaders' indifference for the success of Islamic fundamentalists who attract and exploit the dismayed masses with statements such as "America is the great Satan, it lies to its people".

As the main character, Bikhit, embarks on his trip to America, he is reminded by his neighbors to "beware of imperialism" and to "tell the American president to keep his eye on the 'question' ". When he asks which question, they reply "the Palestine question! The Third World! Globalization." Bikhit gets involved in a hit-and-run car accident, where he pretends to fall victim to the driver, the daughter of the American president who is about to run for elections again. Not wanting to cause a scandal that would jeopardize her father's position, she tries to seduce Bikhit into dropping charges against her: "I want my dad to stay president, he can increase Egyptian aid". Bikhit replies "let him also free Jerusalem. And tell him to unify the Arabs, for when we are unified, we can destroy the hell out of you, God willing". Bikhit refuses her offer, and holds a press conference expressing that "we don't need American aid". The Egyptian government's swift response is "Bikhit's comments do not represent the Egyptian government; there is no Egyptian-American crisis". Bikhit succeeds in meeting the American president, but the encounter ends up being a mere photo opportunity for the president. As soon as the cameras go, he does too, leaving Bikhit with no chance to discuss anything. The film thus not only criticizes the United States, but also Arab leaders who are not doing anything about Palestine, who bow in front of the United States because of their great debt and political weakness, and who cannot even organize themselves, instead giving the United States full reign in the region. In doing so, they also ignore the interests of their own citizens.

Naji al-Ali is the only film representing the Palestinian diaspora. However the film's representation of this diaspora is romantic, essentializing Palestinians as resistance fighters (literally and figuratively), and ignoring the tensions among Palestinian factions as well as with Lebanese ones. The Palestinian diaspora's collective identity in the film is represented as defined by its relationship to the

homeland (Clifford 1997a). The film contextualizes the presence of Palestinians in the Ain al-Helweh refugee camp in the South of Lebanon by opening with the depiction of the eviction of Palestinians from their homes in 1948 at the onset of the declaration of the State of Israel.

Narratives of diaspora are "differently imagined under different historical circumstances" (Brah 1996, p. 183), and therefore diasporas are heterogeneous, contested spaces. Thus, there are many questions to consider in discussing diaspora: "Who is empowered and who is disempowered in a specific construction of the 'we'? How are social divisions negotiated in the construction of the 'we'? What is the relationship of this 'we' to its 'others'? Who are these others?" (Brah 1996, p. 184). The film addresses the first two questions through showing how although the Palestinian diaspora "has a mass character, it is not uniform" (Cabral 1994, p. 56); it encompasses various configurations of power. The film thus contrasts the artificial nationalism of the political and economic elites with the representation of Naji, drawn from the creative arts world, as a "cultural nationalist" (Kellas 1998, p. 98). The film portrays how Israelis attempt to arrest Naji in order to silence his powerful cultural nationalism.

Naji's uncompromising position on the necessity of returning to Palestine is contrasted with that of Abu'l'fawares, who has settled in Beirut and implicitly declared it his home. This way, the film problematizes the definition of diaspora. Abu'l'fawares' is an example of the argument that not all diasporas entail "an ideology of return" (Brah 1996, p. 197), while Naji's is an example of the argument that a diaspora exists when an ethnic group or a nation "suffers some kind of traumatic event which leads to the dispersal of its members, who, nonetheless, continue to aspire to return to the homeland" (Rex 1997b, p. 274), and thus that "home" is a singular place.

As for the third and fourth questions, Brah points out that it is usually assumed that one dominant Other exists against which the "we" is constructed. Constructing binaries as such denies the historical, cultural and political complexities of a diaspora. In attacking both Israel and corrupt Arab leaders, *Naji al-Ali* complicates the us/them binary. The film depicts Naji's caricatures of Arab leaders being refused by censors in Beirut. Depressed, Naji leaves to Kuwait in 1983, working for the al-Qabas newspaper. There he gets an anonymous threat asking him not to criticize internal conflict. He refuses. He goes to London in 1985 to work for the international branch

of the newspaper, where he is assassinated by the PLO in 1987. The film ends with Naji's voice saying "I've never had a complaint about my drawings from the lay people. We'll continue". The last scene of the film celebrating the resistance of the masses by showing images of the Palestinian intifada.

Conclusion

The representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the films is based on a discourse of difference. Difference in this context is conceptualized in four ways. First, difference as experience. The films present two different constructions of the various events marking the Palestinian and the Israeli national selves. They show how, culturally and historically, "Israel" and "Palestine" are constructed differently in the eyes of their nationals and the eyes of films themselves. Second, difference as social relation. This concept refers to both every day experiences in localized arenas such as the household, and national or global economies, politics, and cultural institutions. As Brah (1996) defines it, difference as social relation refers to "the interweaving of shared collective narratives within feelings of community" (p. 118). The films articulate those narratives, emphasizing the oppression of Jews in Hollywood, and reciting the narratives of the Palestinian diaspora in the Egyptian films. Third, difference as subjectivity. Needless to say, the two cinemas follow contrasting political paths, portraying incidents as seen in the eyes of groups or individuals who embody the experience of the whole community. Thus, the hijacked passengers in *The Delta Force* represent a renewed threat to Jews as a whole, while *Naji al-Ali* is an epitome of the suffering of Palestine. Each party's experience is seen from its own angle only. Finally, difference as a constituent in the construction of identity. While the Hollywood films homogenize the identity of Israelis and Jews on one hand, and Arabs and Palestinians on the other hand, the Egyptian films homogenizes the Israeli identity but present a struggle over the expression of Palestinian nationalism, showing how this struggle over meaning is a struggle over the Palestinian identity. The films' contrast between the identity of the political and economic elites and that of the lay Palestinian people in diaspora illustrates how the Palestinian identity is not fixed and not singular, and therefore complicates a simple us/them binary. However the contradiction is that the films revolve around a discourse

of authenticity that constructs the artifice of the elites' affiliation to Palestine with the genuineness of the loyalty of the Palestinians in refugee camps.

The Egyptian films thus distinguish between two kinds of nationalism stated by Fanon (1994): bourgeois nationalism and anti-imperialism nationalism. The first refers to a kind of nationalism appropriated from colonialist discourse, a nationalism constructed by the elites. Films like *Naji al-Ali* criticize this nationalism as being fake. The second on the other hand refers to populist nationalism that aims at the "reconquest of identity" through anti-colonialism (Abdel-Malek 1981, p. 13, quoted in Lazarus 1994, p. 266). Lazarus (1994) complicates Fanon's argument by pointing out Fanon's (and the Egyptian films') implied progressive nature of such anti-colonial resistance. History has shown that anti-colonial struggle does not necessarily lead to postcolonial progress, in that while a peoples may succeed in evading colonial powers, they may still fail to do so vis-à-vis internal oppression (Lazarus 1994). Lazarus argues that this is a result of the non-elites' formation of their identity as one that aims to recreate the past, and therefore such an identity would fail when faced by a changing present.

Through Hollywood's representation of Israeli unity, and the Egyptian cinema's resurrection of pan-Arabism, the films represent how individual identities are mobilized to become part of a larger, collective experience, and whereby the internal heterogeneity of the group has to be overcome. The films are an example of Brah's argument that "power is performatively constituted in and through... cultural practices" (1996, p. 125). In a Foucauldian sense, "if *practice* is productive of power then *practice* is also the means of challenging the oppressive *practices* of power" (Brah 1996, p. 125, emphasis in original). Both cinemas attempt to rewrite history with their subjective representations of political events. Despite American sympathy towards Israel, the Hollywood films' focus on the role of the United States as peace mediator serves to establish the US as a world policeman. The Egyptian films' portrayal of Egypt as a loyal Palestinian affiliate also serves to establish it as a salient Arab nationalist leader. Thus both cinemas not only follow political agendas that are nationalist, serving the US and Egypt respectively, but also present global (US) and regional (Egypt) political agendas that are crucial for the maintenance of each side's role within a wider political context.

All the films remain about strengthening contrasting nationalisms, celebrating golden ages and sympathizing with political allies. Despite *Naji al-Ali*'s and *Hello*

America's criticism of internal differences, their criticism is directed at those in power, and not the "lay people". The films thus still cling onto a notion of homogeneity of the self. In Hollywood, Jews are denied their "multiple experiences of rediasporisation, which do not necessarily *succeed* each other in historical memory but echo back and forth" (Jonathan Boyarin, quoted in Clifford 1997a, p. 284-5, emphasis in original). Clifford (1997a) argues that Jews have been a "multiply centered diaspora network" (p. 285). Indeed, some Zionist Jews had considered establishing a "homeland" away from the land of Palestine (after Britain offered the Jews Uganda in the early twentieth century), though the majority believe in one true Zion. The films silence the minority's voices and erase the multiplicity of ethnic pasts (Smith 2000) in the strife to affirm the existence of Israel. Moreover, the films ignore political differences among Jews; although a significant proportion of the Jewish diaspora is not necessarily separatist (with many Jews preferring to continue living in their "host" societies where they have "selectively accommodated" with the hosts' political, social, cultural, and economic and everyday life aspects (Clifford 1997a)), the films portray Jews as eventually yearning towards the Holy Land. In the Egyptian films, Arabs stand united in the face of Israeli threat. This representation glosses over the many populist clashes between Palestinian refugees and citizens of their host nations, mainly in Lebanon. Lebanon in *Naji al-Ali* for example is presented as a selfless, sympathetic host. In doing so, the films try to resurrect a dead pan-Arabism. The films can thus be seen as an example of Smith's (1986) argument that "it is not society or ethnicity that determines war, but conflict itself which determines the sense and shape of ethnicity. War may not create the original cultural differences, but it sharpens and politicizes them" (p. 39). The issues the films raise then change the question from how does the past shape the present into how did the present create the past? As Chapman, McDonald and Tonkin (1989) argue, "social, moral and political considerations can render people selective in their treatment of the past, and surprisingly indifferent or hostile to alternative accounts" (p. 5).

But most interestingly, the films exemplify the difficulty of applying postcolonial discourse to the practices and representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As Shohat argues,

> "[t]he paradox of Israel... is that it ended a Diaspora, characterized by Jewish ritualistic nostalgia for the East, only to found a state whose ideological and

geopolitical orientation has been almost exclusively toward the West. Although Jews have historically been the victims of "Orientalism", Israel as a state has become the perpetrator of Orientalist attitudes and action. The Israel/Palestine national conflict, as a result, does not fit neatly into any standard categorization" (Shohat 1989a).

McClintock (1994) argues that the limitation of the term "postcolonial" lies in its implied linearity. This means that it invokes looking at history in terms of a series of stages marked by the colonial experience: pre-colonialism, colonialism, and post-colonialism. This also carries the danger of implying that the history of the subaltern here marks progress and development, reached with post-colonialism. The emphasis on the colonial experience thus suggests that the subaltern culture is defined only in relation with colonialism, which endows them with a fixed subordinate position. The Egyptian films challenge this linearity by demonstrating the Palestinian's continuing anti-colonial struggle against Israel, and using the Palestinian victimized position as a means of resistance.

Also, there is a danger in the implication of uniformity that the term brings. This is a complication of discourse on Orientalism, as it implies that Western discourse is continuous, unified and uniform, and therefore fails to look at hegemony as process (Porter 1994). This refers to the practice of talking about *the* post-colonial experience, thereby denying various cultures their historical specificity. This is intensified when talking about *the* post-colonial Other, implying that the subaltern is the same unchanging Other to the same colonizing forces, and thus carries a danger of essentialism and overlooking power imbalances, both within the West and the non-West. Looking at the Other as such neglects the various differences between and within cultures who have undergone (or still undergoing) colonialism in all its forms. They are all thus defined in relation to the "West". The Egyptian films challenge this in their demarcation of the lay people and the elites. Moreover, post-colonialism may deny that colonialism may be imposed by the non-West as well, as seen in the relationship of Israel with the Arab world in the Egyptian films.

McClintock (1994) also points out that the term post-colonial is "prematurely celebratory" (p. 294), in that it implies the absence of any experience of colonialism at present. She presents the case of Palestinians under Israeli occupation as an example. In general, McClintock's reservation regarding the term post-colonial revolves around

the term's temporal, rather than power-focused, orientation. It also criticizes the term's glossing over of colonialism's continual influence, and its negligence of including more subtle "imperialism-without-colonies" (1994, p. 295) as seen in the United States and Israel.

In this sense, the Hollywood films themselves become part of colonialism. Fanon (1994) argues that colonialism not only imposes itself on the present and future of oppressed people, it also distorts and destroys their past. In doing so, colonialism negates a people's national reality. It also strives to make the people appropriate notions of their own inferiority and even the unreality of their own nation, as seen in the representation of Palestinians in *The Ambassador* and *The Little Drummer Girl*. In response to this oppression, the oppressed resort to various forms of combat, one of which is what Fanon calls the literature of combat. Fanon describes this as shaping national consciousness and fighting for the people's existence as a nation. Culture, in other words, becomes a resistance tool (Cabral 1994). In *Naji al-Ali*, Naji's attempted arrest by Israelis demonstrates Israel's attempt at paralyzing Palestine's cultural weapon. It is thus that Naji becomes a heroic figure who defies this oppression through drawing using the most limited of resources. Naji's art becomes another step in a long process of national liberation that attempts to affirm the identity of the Palestinians in the face of Israeli oppression. The Egyptian representation of Arab/Palestinian struggle thus makes the films a site of resistance vis-à-vis Hollywood's and America's dominant discourses. However, being the dominated group allows them to utilize what Spivak (1990) calls "strategic essentialism", in that appealing to common, unique historical/cultural experiences serves the purpose of creating new, resistant political identities (Brah 1996; Blythe 226).

The Egyptian films thus complicate the application of nationalism theories, namely notions about the coercive nature of nations, through their celebration of the Palestinian national liberation movement (including the intifada) (Ahmad 1994). Moreover, the Egyptian films converge in their approaches to the nature of the nation. The films' representation of Israel and Palestine is largely modernist, where nations are politically, economically and socially determined. The films reveal each of the Israeli and Palestinian nations "as 'narrative' to be recited, a 'discourse' to be interpreted and a 'text' to be deconstructed" (Smith 1999, p. 167). Like Israel in Hollywood, Palestine in Egyptian cinema becomes a matter of symbolic

representation, constructed through "the images it casts, the symbols it uses and the fictions it evokes" (ibid.).

Despite their resorting to fixed boundaries, the Egyptian films are an illustration of the changing cultural identity of Arabs and Palestinian. This identity is shaped by discourses of history, memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. As Stuart Hall argues,

> "Cultural identity... is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (1994, p. 394; see also Hall 1989).

Chapter Six: From the Other Outside to the Other Within: Representing Islamic Fundamentalism

Arab culture has often become a synonym for Islamic fundamentalism in contemporary culture, from movies to news to social theory. In American and Egyptian films, Islamic fundamentalism is used in many ways to validate both the American and the Egyptian nationalist identities and agendas. This chapter uses Said's (1978) work on Orientalism in analyzing the Occident's view of the Orient as seen in Hollywood; but the chapter aims to go beyond that in also analyzing how the "Orient" represents itself as seen in Egyptian cinema. The chapter aims at complicating Said's views on Orientalism in that when the Orient itself takes part in the process of Othering (here, of Islamic fundamentalists), the Orient no longer becomes merely "a European invention" (Said 1978). It is also important not to forget that Islamic fundamentalism complicates the East/West dichotomy, in that it is by nature a global movement occurring both in the "East" and the "West". This chapter focuses on the two cinemas' representations of Islamic fundamentalism. While these representations generally differ, they still converge at times, representing Islamic fundamentalism as an Other.

The aim of this chapter starts from Bhabha's point: "In order to understand the productivity of colonial power it is crucial to construct its regime of 'truth', not to subject its representations to a normalising judgement" (1983, p. 19). Hence, the chapter does not aim to measure whether Hollywood or Egyptian cinema's representations of Islamic fundamentalism are good or bad. It aims to analyze the different "truths" created by each side in their representations of Islamic fundamentalism. Bhabha (1995) argues that the postcolonial perspective aims at undoing the view of the First and Third Worlds as a binary opposition. Following this point, the chapter aims at highlighting the intricate political and cultural boundaries existing not only between but also within the two sides.

The representation of Islamic fundamentalism in these cinemas is affected by the role fundamentalism plays in the social, political, and historical Egyptian and American contexts. In what follows, I will first examine Islamic fundamentalism in the American and Egyptian social and historical contexts, after which I will analyze the representations of fundamentalism in Hollywood and in Egyptian cinema, and

conclude with a comparison between the two cinemas. While Hollywood's representation of fundamentalism is focused on fundamentalists as terrorists, Egyptian cinema represents fundamentalism from various other aspects. Yet the two sides use fundamentalism to validate their national identities, identities that assume the superiority of the inside over the outside, the familiar over the different. As Balibar puts it, "the construction of identity is not an imaginary process but a *processing of the imaginary*" (1995, p. 187, italics in original). And the "idea of nation is inseparable from its narration" (Bennington 1990, p. 132). Thus, the representations of Islamic fundamentalism in these cinemas seem to follow the classical view of Otherness as telling us more about "us" than it does about "them".

Background

Characteristics of Islamic fundamentalism

There has been a considerable degree of disagreement over the term Islamic fundamentalism. The term originated in the Christian tradition as referring to groups that regard the Bible as the literal word of God (Tehranian 2000). The term was later appropriated by the media to describe certain Muslim political groups, and thus the term has been seen as a Eurocentric label that has not originated from the peoples it is describing (Agha 2000).

Though in this chapter I am using the term to refer to various groups and traditions, it has to be stressed that each should be looked at in a specific historical context (for example, there a difference between the "fundamentalism" of Saudi Arabia and that of Iran) (Tehranian 2000). The term has been defined from various angles, and to describe diverse and unrelated movements (Agha 2000). The term can refer to "the growth of Islam as a religious force and a political ideology and... to the desire to reinstate the Islamic legal code" (White, Little and Smith 1997, p. 7). The term can also refer to "the emotional, spiritual and political response of Muslims to an acute and continuing social, economic and political crisis that has gripped the Middle East" (Ehteshami 1997, p. 180). However, it has also been defined as a challenge to America's position as a global power and its hegemonic interests, a term used by the United States as a shorthand to discredit opponents as irrational and irresponsible

(Saikal 2000). At the same time, it has been seen as a challenge to Western ideologies in general like secularism (Mowlana 2000). It has also sometimes been defined as synonymous with terrorism (White, Little and Smith 1997). This has led the Organization of Islamic Conference in 1997 to explicitly condemn terrorism as being against the principles of Islam (Tehranian 2000). The term fundamentalist has also been used to describe someone who represents the essence of society, and thus Islamic fundamentalism has become a metaphor for a terrorist Arab society (Bleiker 2000). Islamic fundamentalism has also been seen as a branch in a general mode of fundamentalism, "defined as cultural intolerance and violence... secular as well as religious" (Tehranian 2000, p. 217). The term has caused such controversy that it has been proposed that it should be avoided altogether. This is because it "has become a psychological scapegoat for those who refuse to acknowledge and take responsibility for the real international and intercultural problems" (Tehranian 2000, p. 217). In this chapter I am using the term loosely to refer to "a diverse set of competing political opinions held within the Muslim community" (Ehteshami 1997, p. 179). In short, my use of the term emanates from the fact that other terms (Islamists, extremists, fanatics, etc.) are no less damaging, and also carry their own complications. Thus, I am using "Islamic fundamentalism" in the political sense, to refer to groups that use Islam as a basis to achieve political power.

What links the various Islamic fundamentalisms are three characteristics, which are at importance when examining fundamentalism in the context of Egyptian and American cinemas' representation of politics. First, even if it is a religious movement, Islamic fundamentalism is also a political one that aims to establish a "polity of believers" (Hamzeh 1998). This conflicts with the idea of a secular nation-state, adopted in many countries, such as Egypt, where fundamentalism exists. For example, Sayyid Qutb—an Egyptian fundamentalist guru—has been quoted to say that a "Muslim's nationality is his [sic] religion" (quoted in Faksh 1997, p. 10). Indeed, Qutb has himself engaged in an active opposition to Nasser's nationalist-secularist regime, which ended in Qutb's execution in 1966.

Second, Islamic fundamentalists believe in Islamic authenticity, juxtaposed with what is seen as Western hegemony, which in turn is believed to threaten this authenticity. Western hegemony is not confined to Western countries; it also applies to secular people in the Muslim world who are seen as even worse than the "foreign infidels" (Faksh 1997, p. 9). They are seen as "representing the interests of the...

formerly... colonial powers" (Taheri 1987, p. 16). Again this has resulted in conflict between secular governments such as in Egypt and fundamentalist groups.

Finally, fundamentalist groups seem to agree on the necessity of Jihad (holy war) in order to preserve the Muslim community. However, the groups differ in their interpretation and application of Jihad. While some see Jihad as non-violent, others like the Islamic Jihad Organization view Jihad as being military.

Castells sees the Islamic fundamentalist identity as a resistant one, and describes it as an expression of "*the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded*" (1997, p. 9). He sees the Islamic fundamentalist identity as being defensive against the dominant institutions/ideologies. Indeed, Islamic fundamentalism may have been a reaction to the state in countries like Egypt, but Castells' description excludes cases like pro-Western Saudi Arabia where Islamic fundamentalism is itself the dominant ideology. However Castells' view of fundamentalism is useful as he points out the construction of the Islamic fundamentalist identity as opposing "failing ideologies of the post-colonial order" (1997, p. 17), like nationalism, capitalism and socialism. Yet what Castells misses is the cooperation between fundamentalism and these ideologies themselves, as, for example, fundamentalism was used in Egypt to support the nationalist project in the 1930's. It was a means to rally the masses against British rule. In the case of Saudi Arabia, we can also see no conflict between fundamentalist ideology and capitalist business ventures. Thus, Castells' supposed net/self binary is challenged.

Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt

Nationalism has been argued (for example by Kedourie 1961) to have a totalitarian side. This can be particularly seen in post-colonial military authoritative regimes such as Egypt's. Such regimes are problematic in that they tend to continue the "oppression" against their people. In Egypt this is seen in the conflict arising from nationalism taking over religion's role in society (Brennan 1990). This is escalated by the Egyptian fundamentalists' rejection of what they see as a pro-Western state. Islamic fundamentalism started in Egypt with the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 by a teacher called Hassan al-Banna. The Brotherhood aimed at moral, social and economic reform and at eliminating British (foreign) influence on Egypt, a cause it declared a Jihad against in 1951 (Hiro 1988). In the 1940's the

Muslim Brotherhood became a politicized movement aiming at establishing a Muslim polity. In the 1950's this clashed with Nasser's nationalism, the latter—being socialist—seen by the Brotherhood as a further departure from Islam (Hammoud 1998).

Fundamentalists tried to assassinate Nasser in 1954 (Hiro 1988). Nasser responded by oppressing his fundamentalist challengers, incarcerating them and executing their leader Sayyid Qutb in 1966 (El Saadawi 1997). The fundamentalists were not deterred and conspired against Nasser after the defeat of the Six Day War in 1967 (Said Aly and Wenner 1982), which they viewed as holy punishment. The 1967 defeat resulted in many people resorting to religion for solace, and Nasser released hundreds of imprisoned Brothers in 1968. But Nasser's continuous oppression resulted in the sprouting of various militant Islamic fundamentalist groups, which relied on violence to achieve their aims, the latter ultimately being replacing the state (Hammoud 1998). Thus, the Islamic Jama'a—among others, like al-Takfir wa al-Hijra (Excommunication and Emigration), Al-Najun min-al-Nar (Saved from the Inferno), and the Islamic Liberation Party—was born (Sackur 1994).

Sadat tried to gain favors with the fundamentalists, as he wanted to depart from Nasser's socialist regime into a capitalist one. He projected an image of himself as the "believer president" by praying publicly, using his first name Mohammad and wearing gallabiyyas. He allowed the fundamentalists to operate freely and publicly. He institutionalized Islam—the religion of the majority of the population—as a source of legislation in 1971. However, Sadat's pro-Western economic and political policies, especially his open-door policy that resulted in inflation, and his signing the Camp David accords in 1978 (which he got a fatwa (religio-legal counsel) for from Muslim ulama), led to fundamentalist dismay (Ayubi 1982). One group, the Islamic Liberation Group, attempted to overthrow Sadat's regime in 1974 but failed. Sadat retaliated by refusing to recognize any fundamentalist groups as political parties in the 1976 parliamentary poll (Hiro 1988). Later, the fundamentalists viewed Egypt's 1979 treaty with Israel as a buying-off of the country by the United States as part of American support for Israel (Beeley 1995). Eventually, Sadat was assassinated by another group, Tanzim al-Jihad, in 1981.

Mubarak has adopted a free-market approach that has encouraged foreign investment. This resulted in the creation of the nouveaux riche whose consumerism and control of the economy (mainly as agents for multinational corporations) has left

the rest (and the bulk) of Egyptians behind. With the resulting growing unemployment and the decline in social services, largely due to the peasant migration into Cairo, the Islamic fundamentalists' popularity has grown as they provide an alternative to the government's inefficient services (Hyman 1985). The appeal of Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt thus lies in its call for economic, political and social reform. This has attracted students and intellectuals who are eager for change due to their dismay with the existing corruption, and also the urban poor, mainly the unemployed youth (Faksh 1997). Among the employed, fundamentalism prospers among young professionals—doctors, lawyers, teachers—who are in constant demand for more rights at work. An interesting point here is that Egyptian cinema mostly portrays Islamic fundamentalists as living on the edge of society, thereby ignoring the fundamentalists' considerable participation in the work force.

Mubarak has tried to integrate the Muslim Brotherhood into the system by letting its members participate in union elections, many of which they have won. He however, like Sadat, did not allow any fundamentalist groups to run for parliamentary elections and did not recognize any as a political party in an election law issued in June 1983. The fundamentalists have found their way around this by nominating their candidates under secular parties' names, such as the New Wafd Party in 1984 and the Socialist Labor Party in 1987 (Sackur 1994; Moussalli 1998). An important observation about the parliamentary elections is how they were rigged. The election of April 1987, for example, featured the arrest of

> "750 opposition supporters, chiefly fundamentalists... ballot boxes... stuffed with the votes of the dead, absent and under-age for the ruling National Democratic Party, and... polling stations in many villages... closed several hours ahead of schedule to prevent legitimate voters from exercising their right. Yet the Brotherhood-led Alliance gained seventeen per cent of the popular vote and sixty parliamentary seats, displacing the New Wafd as the main opposition party" (Hiro 1988, p. 86).

Moussalli (1998) and Hammoud (1998) both see the formal exclusion of fundamentalists from parliamentary politics as one reason behind the militarization of some of their groups. Militarization is seen as the only way left for them to participate in politics. These militant fundamentalist groups, such as al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (the

Islamic Group) and the Jihad Organization, were described by president Mubarak in 1993 as being "not really Islamists but a group of mercenaries who belonged to whoever paid them" (Sackur 1994). The government has thus adopted an "Islamic" stance to beat the fundamentalists at their own game.

These militant groups have engaged in various forms of anti-state violence. They have attacked, among others, government officials, writers (such as Naguib Mahfouz), Copts (seen as infidels), and foreign (mainly Western) tourists in an attempt to cause terror and impose more economic hardship (tourism being an important source of revenue for Egypt) which they hoped would result in more popular revolt against the system (Moussalli 1998; Sackur 1994; Hammoud 1998). By the 1990's, in many areas in and outside of Cairo, the militants operated largely independently from the government, imposing their own rules and moral codes. On May 4, 1992, Islamic fundamentalists killed thirteen Copts in Asyut. Mubarak retaliated by passing an anti-terrorism legislation in July 1992, introducing the death penalty for terrorist organization membership (Hammoud 1998). Mubarak also appealed for Western attention to what he now labeled international terrorism, intensified after the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 by followers of the Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman, leader of the Islamic Jama'a (Sackur 1994; Faksh 1997). Mubarak also tried to flag the Egyptian government as Islamic by promoting Islamic programs and publications, while at the same time labeling the fundamentalists as heretics (Faksh 1997). Here it is important to note that Islam in Egypt's media is still "a religion made of externals, of gestures shorn of values: prayer, fast, pilgrimage" (Sivan 1985, p. 5).

If we are to accept that the nation is a construct of "pastness" (Wallerstein 1991), then the complication in the portrayal of Egypt in the films is that they seem to advocate a selective memory of the nation's past. Egypt is unique in the Arab world because, perhaps more than other Arab countries, it has a complex identity. It combines being Asian with being African, being Muslim with being Pharaohnic and Arab (Abdullah 2000). None of those identities can be seen as the "true" identity of Egypt, and Egyptian nationalism is built upon a mixture of all of those identities, though in different proportions; thus, while Islam may be considered by the majority of Egyptians as their primary identification, the official discourse on Islam has tended to ignore the contribution of Islamic fundamentalist groups to the "invention" of the Egyptian nation (rallying against the British in the 1920's), and, more generally, to

marginalize the role of religion in Egyptian national identity. Balibar (1991) argues that when national identity starts by integrating religious identity, it ends up replacing it, forcing it to become "nationalized" (p. 95). This is because there is a conflict between nation and religion over the same principles that cement a religious community and a national one (for example, love, respect, sacrifice, fear). Balibar (1991) argues that national ideology transfers those principles from religious affiliation onto its "ideal signifiers" (p. 95) (such as the name of the nation; thus Egypt would replace Islam). It is therefore understandable that a feeling of malaise may be generated among those minorities who still consider their only affiliation to be religion.

Islamic fundamentalism and the United States

The relationship between Islamic fundamentalism and the United States has been traditionally linked with the Middle East. Recently, much attention has been paid to Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist groups like Hamas who are engaging in suicide bombings against Israeli targets as part of what is labeled the "second" intifada which started in October 2001. The reasons behind the bombings are seen by various parties as the growing despair with the conditions the Palestinians live under, dissatisfaction with Palestinian leadership and Arafat's approach to the peace process (culminating with total rejection of peace with Israel), and using the Lebanese case as an example of the success of violence in forcing Israel to withdraw from occupied territories (following Israel's pulling out of the South of Lebanon in May 2000, after countless suicide bombings by Hizbullah). In short, Islamic fundamentalism has always been associated with the Arab/Israeli conflict in the region.

Saikal (2000) argues that the United States is partly to blame for the development of Hamas and Hizbullah. This is because it is perceived that Israel would not have been able to expand its territories without American support. Those groups are also alleged to resent the choice of the secularist PLO by the United States as a partner in peace negotiations, seeing that as confirmation of American opposition to "political Islam". They express skepticism towards the Arab-Israeli peace process (started in Madrid in 1991), which they see as favoring Israel (Ehteshami 1997).

Yet while Hollywood has briefly represented Islamic fundamentalism in the Palestinian context (namely in *The Siege*), it has generally tended to link Islamic

fundamentalism with Lebanon, perhaps as a result of various anti-American attacks conducted by Lebanese fundamentalist militias in the 1980's. This may imply the equalization of Lebanon with Islamic fundamentalism, thereby disregarding the fact that Lebanon is comprised of a large number of ethnic and religious minorities, and hence the difficulty of the dominance of one particular group. The Islamic fundamentalist groups that exist in Lebanon have been influenced, either directly or indirectly, by those existing in more uniform countries such as Iran and Afghanistan. The most recent incident linked to such groups is the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, connected to Osama bin Laden's al-Qa'ida group. Thus, the Lebanese Sunni Jama'a Islamiyya (a militant group) is based on the teachings of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, while the Shiite Hizbullah is directly linked with Iran (Khashan 1998). What links these fundamentalist groups is their belief in an unconcessional struggle against Zionism and the American support for Israel. They see violence against American and pro-Western governments as a sacred duty (Hamzeh 1998). Thus the activities of the Islamic Lebanese militias tend to be as part of the larger Middle East crisis, as opposed to those of the Egyptian ones, whose actions tend to be largely focused on domestic issues.

Hizbullah is considered Lebanon's most active Islamic fundamentalist group. Formed on February 16, 1985, its manifesto

> "described the West as the 'tyrannical world set on fighting us'. It accused the West of collaborating with the Soviet Union and waging war against the Muslims, charging that they had purposely defamed Hezbollah's reputation by labeling it as terrorist to 'stunt and deform our great achievements with regard to confrontations with the United States'. Hezbollah regards the West, and particularly the United States, as its staunchest enemy after Israel" (Jaber 1997, p. 55).

Jaber (1997) explains that Hizbullah's opposition to the United States stems from the US' support of Israel during its 1982 invasion of Lebanon. I add to that the anti-US sentiment in Iran—Hizbullah's supporter—occurring with the Iranian revolution in 1979. Jaber cites the Gulf War in 1991 as one reason why Hizbullah's popularity has grown. She says that it was a result of the contrast between the US' supportive attitude towards Kuwait and its silence towards Israel's occupation of

Lebanon. Lately Hizbullah's popularity has grown even more with the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the South of Lebanon—credited to Hizbullah by many. Hizbullah has openly declared that it will continue its anti-Israeli jihad with Palestine still being a conflict area. Hizbullah reject peace with Israel and claim that Israel ultimately has expansionist plans in the Middle East that aim at regaining the "Promised Land".

Hizbullah has also been alleged to engage in military activities against the United States or its citizens, including the killing of the president of the American University of Beirut, Malcom Kerr (Nacos 1994), and the kidnapping of the American bureau chief of Associated Press in Beirut, Terry Anderson. Hizbullah has denied some of these allegations, but it has openly declared its support of those acts, perhaps for increased propaganda (Martin 1990).

However, Hizbullah openly declared its responsibility for the hijacking of TWA flight 847 from Athens to Beirut in 1985. The plane was hijacked by members of the Amal and Hizbullah Lebanese militias, who demanded the release of 700 Lebanese Shiites held in Israel. Thus, we can see that the US has been primarily attacked as an Israeli ally, and that the attacks have mainly taken place in Lebanon by Lebanese militias (Threat Analysis Division 1987). However from the end of the eighties anti-American Islamic fundamentalist attacks expanded beyond Lebanon, with terrorists like the Saudi Osama bin Laden and the Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abd-ul-Rahman, both held responsible for the World Trade Center bombing in 1993. This bombing has been viewed by both Egypt and the USA as an act of international terrorism (Moussalli 1998), therefore constructing Islamic fundamentalism as a common enemy. Thus, from an American perspective, largely from a foreign policy perspective, we can see that fundamentalism is regarded as an enemy. Moussalli cites the American Department of Defense as looking at Islamic fundamentalism "as an ideological and geopolitical threat that had to be eliminated" (1998, p. 4). In the last two decades of the 20th century, the U.S. blamed Iran for the propagation of Islamic fundamentalism, and on the website of the Department of Defense it stated that "Iran poses the greatest threat to the stability of the [Middle East] region and to U.S. interests" (Defenselink 2001). The blame of Iran continues until today, but it is linked with other "threatening" countries like Afghanistan and Iraq.

Moreover, the Soviet Union had been blamed for supporting various "terrorist" groups worldwide, including Arab ones (Romerstein 1981). The American view had been that of seeing Communism as a threat to democracy, and of looking at

the Soviet support for "terrorism" as a "form of surrogate warfare—a substitute for traditional warfare" with the US (McForan 1986, p. 168). Schlagheck argues that the "two superpowers... carried their rivalry into the turbulent politics of the Third World" (1990, p. 177). With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islamic fundamentalism has been viewed from a similar angle to Communism (Moussalli 1998). Both are seen as totalitarian forces that cannot achieve their aims without relying on military action (Romerstein 1981). In this sense, Islamic fundamentalism is regarded as the new "Other" after the Cold War. However, it is important not to forget the United States' direct or indirect contribution to the creation of Islamic fundamentalism (the first seen in Afghanistan, with American support of the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet Union, the second in the resentment felt in Iran under the American-backed Shah, which led to the Islamic revolution in 1979) (Saikal 2000).

Hollywood and its fundamentalist terrorists

Against this historical/political backdrop, Hollywood has equated Islamic fundamentalism with terrorism. The Arab Islamic fundamentalist terrorist Other is constituted as possessing a fixed identity that poses a threat to the existing social order (Bleiker 2000). Connolly (1989) argues that terrorism is an Other which is essential for any state's self-definition. Bhabha argues that this is a feature of the ideological construction of Otherness in colonial discourse. He points to the contradictory nature of this "fixity", connoting "rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition" (1983, p. 18).

In its reliance on terrorist images, Hollywood's portrayal of fundamentalists justifies "ruthlessness against the other by concealing points of similarity between the other and itself" (Connolly 1989, p. 334). While Hollywood condemns the intolerance of the fundamentalists towards Jews for example, it ignores how the "West" it is defending can itself be intolerant towards marginal groups. In *The Delta Force* the fundamentalist terrorists hijacking an American plane segregate the Jews (and those whom they think are Jews) from the rest of the passengers in what is compared to another Holocaust, whereas *The Siege* portrays Muslim American citizens being

locked up in cages by the American army as a means to arrest fundamentalist terrorists. In this sense,

> "[t]errorism becomes a monstrous evil... because it threatens to expose self-subverting characteristics in the global system unless it itself is defined to be the monstrous source of that subversion... Terrorism functions as a sign whose power of signification must be inverted to preserve the identity of sovereignty" (Connolly 1989, p. 334-5).

Fundamentalism as an essentialized Arabia

Hollywood's portrayal of Islamic fundamentalism is part of a national project that idealizes the American nation while essentializing the Other. There is a tendency in the West in general to refer to Arab countries as "Arabia". While this term has been generally accepted, it invokes images of a unified Arab world. The myth of Arabia has in part been created through the pan-Arab ideal, advocated by Nasser. Smith (1991) points out that despite the failure of the pan-Arab project (with inter-Arab wars such as the Gulf War and the lack of political consensus, especially regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict), the concept has emerged from and forged cultural links across the Arab world. However, Hollywood tends not only to blur Arab countries, but also Islamic fundamentalism and Islam as a religion with those countries and others in the Middle East region (namely Iran, as seen in *The Delta Force*). This is problematic because Islam is not parallel to the nation-state; its community is both smaller and wider than the nation-state (Worsley 1990). In fact, most of the world's Muslims (a population of 1.1 billion) live outside the Middle East (Ehteshami 1997). But Hollywood also portrays "terrorists" speaking Arabic (*The Delta Force*, *Hostage*, *Executive Decision*), associates Islamic prayer ritual hand washing with preparation for terrorist acts (*The Siege*), and gives the terrorist groups names such as "The Holy Freedom Party of Allah" (*Hostage*). Thus, even though Islam, both in the religious and the political sense, is not a monolithic force, but rather subject to various interpretations and practices, Hollywood has constructed the myth of a unified Islamic fundamentalist Arab world "represented as a monolithic bloc poised against the West" (Esposito 1999, p. 225). A characteristic of this bloc in Hollywood is how it is state-supported (Crenshaw 1990). The governments of the fundamentalist terrorists in

Hollywood either do not interfere with or openly support the terrorist acts (*The Delta Force*, *Executive Decision*, *The Siege*, *Hostage*, *Programmed to Kill*).

This utilization of a generalized Iranian/Islamic/fundamentalist/Arab identity is linked into an exclusionary visual imaginary as illustrated in Hollywood. While the films romanticize American nationalism, they vividly portray its ideology of exclusion. Cinema as a narrative of collectivity emphasizes not only the commonality of a nation's history, but also its difference from other nations (Preston 1997). The United States is often used as a classic example of nations emerging from the reconstitution of ethnic cores (white Protestants) and their integration with other ethnic groups (blacks, Chinese, Latinos/as, etc.). However the films analyzed show a reluctance to reconstruct the American nation to fit in the Arab minorities represented (*The Siege*). The American nation thus becomes a fortress society, with the American nationality becoming an exclusive one.

Richard Slotkin (1998) gives an interesting account of this situation by arguing that this exclusiveness is a result of a resurgence of the Myth of the Frontier, whereby the white hero is idealized in his fight against savages. Slotkin argues that the perceived threat posed by other peoples, namely through the various acts of terrorism against the United States in the 20th century, have started an extreme reaction against not just threat from abroad, but also cultural heterogeneity, so that the threat of the Other has been displaced upon immigrants as well (as seen in *The Siege*). As Slotkin puts it, the perception is that "the civilized world [is] threatened with subjugation to or colonization by the forces of darkness" (1998, p. 635).
Tracing the political context of the resurgence of this myth, Slotkin argues that the beginning of the eighties added to the American nation's feeling of malaise (heightened as a result of the defeat in Vietnam) with events like the 1979/80 Iran hostage crisis. The Reagan administration however regenerated the nation's morale through the resurrection of war against savage enemies (such as Libya). The Gulf War continued this tradition, with Bush declaring the war a "symbolic victory" regenerating the nation's spirit after Vietnam.

William McNeill (1982) refers to such national ideologies as public myths. He argues that public myths serve to sustain a society in the face of crisis, unifying the nation and holding it together. Public myths are not only given, but are also made. Throughout the 20th century, we can see that America's public myths have been used, read and rewritten selectively, according to political projects. For example, Iraq's

position has shifted from an ally during the conflict with Iran to an enemy with the Gulf War, shifting with it the myth of the Gulf friend to that of an all threatening essential evil embodied in Saddam Hussein. In the case of the representation of Islamic fundamentalism, Hollywood has acted as a generator and enforcer of the new Frontier Myth, thus acting as an important factor in strengthening an exclusive American national identity (Scott 2000). Being part of mass culture, cinema usually expresses "official memory" (Preston 1997, p. 65). With films like *The Siege* denying a part of the community (Arab-Americans) their say in the United States' official memory, we can see that a nation's historical memory is contested, representing a conflict between the powerful and the subordinates over the possession of history (Preston 1997). Thus Hollywood's representation of national memory implies a "selective interpretation of history" (J.W. LaPierre, quoted in Schlesinger 1991, p. 153). The only exception seems to be the Gulf War, which has challenged the myth of the existence of a unified Arab world. Esposito argues that the "greatest incongruity, perhaps, was that Saddam Hussein, the head of a secularist regime who had ruthlessly suppressed Islamic movements at home and abroad, would cloak himself in the mantle of Islam and call for a jihad" (1999, p. 252). *Three Kings* explicitly recognizes the separation between the notion Arab and the notion Iraqi in the Gulf War context, as well as, implicitly, the separation between Muslim and Islamic fundamentalist in its sympathetic depiction of Islam.

A characteristic of the fundamentalists belonging to the unified "Arabia" in Hollywood is their collectivism. Individualism (along with other ideals such as equality, democracy and liberty) is one of the major elements in the ideology of Americanism. This ideology is conceived of as a model to emulated by other nations, and hence is essentialized as both unique and superior (Preston 1997). While the Americans in the films are portrayed as being individualized through the focus on the ego-oriented hero who destroys the enemy single-handedly (*Executive Decision*, *The Delta Force*, *Programmed to Kill*, *Navy Seals*), the fundamentalists seem to operate in clusters or "collective social networks" (Shapiro 1999, p. 115) where the individual seems to be submerged in a larger system—that of the terrorist group. This "closed" identity is assigned to the fundamentalists in the films in a dogmatic way whereby non-conformists are punished. When the terrorists try to rebel or act outside of the group's cause, they are killed (*Hostage*, *Executive Decision*). This severe punishment

is contrasted with that of the conforming fundamentalists, who are merely arrested by the individual heroes (*Executive Decision*, *The Delta Force*).

This contrast can be traced to a misunderstanding by the individualist US of the collectivism of Islam. This is because each case presents a different configuration of selfhood. Individualism is characterized by three main elements: an internally driven goal orientation; the construction of the individual as an ideal type of or miniature society; and the individual's disembodiment from social relations. Collectivism, on the other hand is characterized by the group member's constraint by external forces; having a group, rather than an individual identity; and the absence of true personal authority (Friedland 1994). Under this collectivism, the group shares a common fate and common norms and goals (Triandis, McCusker and Hui 2001).This collectivism has been utilized by Islamic fundamentalists to challenge the responsibility of citizens to the state, by arguing that affiliation should be to a collective Muslim *umma*, where sovereignty lies with God, and not the people (Ehteshami 1997).

Fundamentalism as barbarity

Hollywood equates fundamentalism with killing, kidnapping and torture (*Executive Decision*, *Hostage*, *Programmed to Kill*, *The Siege*, *The Delta Force*). In doing so, "[d]eath... is called forth to secure the commitment" of the viewer to the films' supposed antiterrorist argument (Fortin 1989, p. 193). In particular, Hollywood represents fundamentalists executing their terrorist attacks against (American) civilians, including children (*Programmed to Kill*, *Hostage*), the elderly (*The Delta Force*, *The Siege*), and women (*Hostage*, *Programmed to Kill*). This "language of antiterrorism" as Fortin calls it problematizes "issues of world order and conflict... as issues of everyday life. The threats are universal and localized" (1989, p. 189). The fundamentalist terrorist threat then becomes more than an abstract threat to the world; it becomes a threat to "us" and "our" children. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. In such circumstances, whether "real" or represented, the local is embodied with a specific, national ideology. In a globalized world, the local and the global are two sides of the same coin; in this way a "global" threat such as Islamic fundamentalism becomes a localized threat. As Massey argues, "in the historical and geographical construction of

places, the "other" in general terms is already within. The global is everywhere and already, in one way or another, implicated in the local" (1994, p. 120).

Another thing that the films seem to be doing is victimizing political leaders in the same way as children and the elderly. This on one hand portrays fundamentalist terrorists as undiscriminating between who their targets are. On the other hand, Fortin argues that this serves to create "a strategic contagion of innocence among the subjects" (1989, p. 195). This "innocence" is then juxtaposed with the representation of the terrorist as a dehumanized monster. Two of the films also use religious figures as victims. Nuns and priests are among the passengers kidnapped in *The Delta Force* and *Hostage*. The films thus introduce a "diabolical reference" (Fortin 1989, p. 196) that evokes the classical myth of holy good versus unholy evil.

Hollywood has also constructed the figure of the primordial, Oriental "Other" who is at the same time despotic, rich, degenerate, and primitive (*Hostage*, *The Siege*, *Three Kings*). The iconic version of this mythical Other (Karim 2000) can be seen in *The Siege*. The opening sequence of the film sees a terrorist sheikh riding in the desert. The old, bearded man in a Mercedes recalls the Saudi international terrorist millionaire Osama bin Laden, who has been linked with terrorist activities such as the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 and its destruction in 2001, and attacks on tourists in Luxor in 1997, and who has blatantly "threatened attacks against Americans who remain on Saudi soil", as well as declaring in 1998 "the creation of a transnational coalition of extremist groups, the Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders" (Esposito 1999, p. 278). In *The Siege*, the image of the sheikh in his traditional dress riding in the desert is juxtaposed with that of American intelligence agents in Western clothing monitoring his journey via radars. The desert is thus used to signify Arabia or the Orient; the sheikh's traditional dress signifies primitiveness; and the Mercedes indicates the vulgar materialism often associated with, for example, the classical Orientalist representation of African tribal kings with leopard skins and Rolexes (*Coming to America*)--all contrasted with the "civilized us".

Fundamentalism and political space in history

The representation of Islamic fundamentalist terrorists in the films implies a reconfiguration of political space. The terrorists in the films are not given a particular political agenda. Hence, "they represent nothing beyond themselves" (Fortin 1989, p.

196) and seem to remain outside politics. Even when they do have demands, the demands seem to be limited to "25 million dollars in gold" (*Hostage*). The films thus attempt to silence any legitimate claim the Other may have. The labeling of all Arabs as Islamic fundamentalists, and associating that label with negative connotations (mainly terrorism) is a process by which images are used as a means of cultural defense. In other words, cinematic space becomes a "political metaphor" (Schlesinger 1991, p. 144) whereby only one discourse (American foreign policy) is dominant.

It is interesting to compare this with the political/historical context: Ehteshami (2000) argues that, post colonialism, many Muslim states have been faced with economic and social problems that have required them to "withdraw from the public sphere and in doing so" to create "a political space that the Islamists have been quick to exploit and occupy" (p. 188) (for example through providing welfare services). Thus, political space is no longer defined by national territorial boundaries. Rather, it is contested by global forces outside the state's realm. So in addition to the influence exerted by the United States for example, there is a growing influence by Islamic fundamentalist groups which may be disparate but which are forming a kind of imagined community that transcends national borders (Beeley 1995; McGrew 1995). The films, as mentioned above, however deny the fundamentalists that political space.

Yet the films also seem to rely on historical facts in their portrayal of fundamentalist terrorist acts. *The Delta Force* opens with an account of the 1979-1981 Tehran American hostages case in which several Americans were held in the American embassy in Iran in anti-American fundamentalist riot. It—along with *Hostage* and *Executive Decision*—also uses the TWA flight hijacking in 1985 as a basis. Fortin argues that such a use of history puts the films "within the familiar" in order to gain credibility; the films seek "to comfort the initiated and signal a challenge to the unbeliever" (1989, p. 194). Moreover, the films make extensive use of proper names of places: Beirut (*Navy Seals*), Algeria (*The Delta Force*), Libya (*In the Army Now*), Tehran (*The Delta Force*). Barthes argues that such use also serves to gain credibility (Fortin 1989). At the same time, the names of places usually associated with terrorism in "real" life function as a connotation that projects actual horrific experiences onto the characters in the films. This also applies to the films' use of certain historical incidents. *The Delta Force*'s description of the fundamentalist terrorists' abuse of Jews as another Holocaust invokes ready imagery of horror. As

Shapiro argues, "the issue becomes not one of the fidelity of the representation to the real, but the kind of meaning and value a representation produces" (1989, p. 73).

The films seem to heavily rely on portraying plane hijacking (*The Delta Force*, *Hostage*, *Executive Decision*) by the Islamic fundamentalist terrorists. Fortin argues that this terrorist disruption of travel and communication "affects precisely those interests that are dependent on the regularity of exchange" (1989, p. 195), namely capitalism. Thus, the films indirectly send a message that the terrorists pose not only a localized threat but one targeted against Western ideals as a whole. This reliance on the portrayal of a " 'fortress community'... drawing lines between the West and the rest" (Shapiro 1999, p. 117) recalls Samuel Huntington's (1996) argument about the existence of a clash of civilizations of which Islam is the greatest challenge to civilizational coherence. Islam in this sense is seen as a totalitarian force. This is projected onto the films that also represent Islamic fundamentalism as a totalitarian force seeking to replace "Western" ways of life.

Shapiro counter argues by saying that "Huntington denies the interdependencies involved in producing and reproducing the West and the rest, as well as the ambiguities of the cultural orientations within the various groupings" (1999, p. 117). As mentioned earlier, Islamic fundamentalists do not exist in isolation from the "West" as Islamic fundamentalism is a global phenomenon that also depends on the West for its economic subsistence. One can even argue that fundamentalism needs the West for its existence just like how the "West" needs it. It is the "West" who is blamed for the "evils" that fundamentalism is supposed to overtly oppose: liberation of women, secular governments, colonialism. And the complex existence of fundamentalism as an Other within the "rest" also challenges this East/West dichotomy which assumes the uniformity of both the "West" and the "rest".

Islamic fundamentalism in Egyptian cinema: The Other within

Egyptian cinema is one way in which the Egyptian government is disseminating its anti-fundamentalist message. One of the most prominent figures in this context is the actor Adel Imam, whose films *Terrorism and Barbecue*, *The Terrorist*, *Birds of Darkness* and *Hello America* all oppose Islamic fundamentalists. This has led to his receiving death threats from fundamentalist groups who declared

him an enemy of Islam (Faksh 1997). His 1994 movie *The Terrorist* even witnessed intense security outside the cinemas showing it (Sackur 1994). The film has also been alleged to have been released as part of a wider government-controlled anti-fundamentalism campaign (Armbrust 2002).

In contrast with the monolithic way Islamic fundamentalism is represented in Hollywood (as terrorism), Egyptian cinema portrays Islamic fundamentalism from several angles that are generally more complex than Hollywood's. Egyptian cinema looks at both the internal (psychological distress, sexual repression) and external (corruption, terrorism) characteristics of the fundamentalist. What links these angles is how fundamentalism in this cinema is portrayed as an Other. The portrayal of Islamic fundamentalists in Egyptian cinema is in line with the way Islamic fundamentalism is viewed by the Egyptian government as a threat to nationalism and to democracy. The films explicitly portray the Egyptian government jailing Islamic fundamentalists. *Nasser* depicts the way president Nasser imprisoned his Islamic fundamentalist opponents in the fifties after they conspired against him. The way fundamentalists are treated at present is also represented in the films, with *Birds of Darkness* depicting the government's arrest and imprisonment of an Islamic fundamentalist political activist. In such films fundamentalists are contrasted with the image of the government, which is portrayed as being "good". However this does not negate the existence of government criticism; *Terrorism and Barbecue* criticizes the malfunctioning of government services. But the film at the same time subtly blames Islamic fundamentalists for this malfunctioning through the depiction of an Islamic fundamentalist man who spends his day in the office praying instead of working.

Fundamentalism as artifice

In this sense, one way in which fundamentalists are portrayed is as being corrupt and hypocrite. This hypocrisy can be seen on several levels. First, fundamentalists are portrayed as being hypocritical in relation to the West. While they preach against it, we see them buying weapons from it in *The Other*. The film portrays the fundamentalist Fat'hallah objecting to his sister's marriage to an American man while he buys weapons from the same man's mother.

Second, fundamentalists are shown to be hypocrites in the context of charity and morality. Thus while they emphasize family values, *The Other* sees the

fundamentalist Fat'hallah setting a trap for his sister in order to separate her from her husband and "sell" her to one of his friends. While they supposedly collect money from people for charity, we see them using this money to pay for their personal lawsuits in *Birds of Darkness*. The film shows the fundamentalists using zakat (Muslim charity) money in order to bail one fundamentalist man convicted of corruption. While the fundamentalists preach morals and values, they steal money in *The Terrorist*. Ali, the fundamentalist terrorist, raids his host's office with the justification that the host is an "infidel", and takes a sum of money, which the host—a medical doctor—had been saving to build a hospital in a needy village.

Third, fundamentalists are hypocritical about sexuality. In *The Terrorist*, while the fundamentalists on surface level practice Islamic ways, they use "infidel" women and hence are portrayed as contradicting Muslim sexual morals. Ali prays and reads Islamic books but sexually harasses his host's daughter. The fundamentalist man in *Terrorism and Barbecue* also stares at and tries to seduce a call girl.

Fourth, fundamentalism is hypocritical in its participation in national politics (parliamentary elections). Islamic fundamentalists in *Birds of Darkness* are not living on the edge of society when it comes to politics. Since they cannot run for parliamentary elections themselves, they back certain "secular" candidates and exchange favors. The fundamentalist lawyer Ali supports the politician Rushdie Khayyal in his campaign and the latter wins only after this fundamentalist support. The film shows how Rushdie is not a religious man: he indulges in parties and women, and marries his mistress in order to "appear" moral in front of his fundamentalist supporters. We later find out that Ali turned to fundamentalism after being a Communist because he realized the former would make him more money.

Moreover, fundamentalists in this political context are at the same time confused and manipulative. Several scenes in *Birds of Darkness* play on these themes. The film is critical of the government. When the lawyer Fat'hi is talking to his fundamentalist colleague Ali, he tells him "the government is smart. It has left you mosques. Lets you publish books. Hold interviews. All this to prove it is democratic". However, the film starts with a disclaimer saying that the film is entirely fiction. This self-censorship is linked with Egypt's reliance on a 30-year long emergency law that allows the president to censor any form of expression prior to publication in the interest of "national security", and also for arousing religious sensitivities (Silence in the Nile 1998).

The major fundamentalist figure in *Birds of Darkness* is the lawyer Ali. The film mentions how Ali once tried to sue the Minister of Culture for allowing "immoral" film posters to be posted in the streets. Fat'hi, the liberal lawyer, explains how Ali's stunt is merely to advertise the Muslim Brothers. Ali's character is smart, manipulative and calculating, in contrast to the fundamentalist majority in the film who are portrayed as being stupid and having no will of their own. Fat'hi walks into a fundamentalist gathering, walking in between two rows of bearded men dressed in white skullcaps and white gallabiyyas. He repeats, "May God separate you" to which they respond "Amen" parrot fashion. The film thus demarcates two kinds of fundamentalists who are nevertheless equally condemned: "true" fundamentalists who are mere blind followers who cannot tell right from wrong, and "fake" fundamentalists who are in charge but who are there merely for economic and political power.

The ones in charge are thus portrayed as putting on an act and not genuinely believing or practicing what they overtly do. When Fat'hi first talks to Ali in the film, Ali speaks to him in classical Arabic. Fat'hi tells him to save that for lawsuits, after which Ali speaks in colloquial Arabic. When Fat'hi's client Samira, a prostitute found innocent after Ali defends her case (a favor done for Fat'hi, who chose Ali for the defense because the judge is pro-fundamentalist), tries to kiss Ali on the cheek and offers him food to thank him, he quickly responds by "I take refuge in God" and refusing to eat "haram" food. Fat'hi sarcastically reminds him she is innocent in the eyes of the law. Ali has put his "beliefs" on hold in his defense of Samira. Thus, the world of fundamentalism is one of deceit and contradiction. The Egyptian films tend to make claims about the fundamentalists which, though they might be based on Egypt's experience of fundamentalists, tend to essentialize the identity of fundamentalists as an extreme Other. At the same time, the films essentialize the identity of Egypt as a homogeneous anti-fundamentalist monolith. This raises the question of whose experience of fundamentalism is being depicted. The exclusionary stance that the films adopt suggests that the Egypt we see is the one constructed by the Egyptian government. Thus, despite the existence of government criticism, the film, like *Terrorism and Barbecue*, in the end presents the government's "national story".

Psychologizing fundamentalism

Fundamentalism is portrayed as one way of dealing with personal psychological crisis. *The Other* reveals how Fat'hi—who is now the fundamentalist Sheikh Fat'hallah—had slept with his sister while they were teenagers, and how fundamentalism was the only way in which he could cope with his guilt (she on the other hand seems unfazed). The film thus psychologizes fundamentalism as a kind of post-traumatic-stress-disorder. At the same time, the film tends to portray fundamentalism as an unreasonable way of dealing with crisis. The message again here is that those with superior intelligence resort to more "rational" ways of dealing with their psychological problems. The Egyptian films differ from Hollywood's again here, as Hollywood represents fundamentalism as emanating from the nature of the Oriental primitive Other. The Egyptian film, on the other hand, tend to represent fundamentalism as a state of "becoming" as opposed to one in which one is born into.

Fundamentalists are sometimes also individuals with moral dilemmas. They are shown to struggle with their own desires. They are portrayed as fantasizing about women (in *The Other*, the fundamentalist Fat'hallah fantasizes about "loose" Parisian women whom he cannot get to except in his imagination; at the same time, he tries to separate his sister from her Christian husband; in *The Terrorist*, Ali fantasizes about his host's daughter).

They also struggle with their desire for personal freedom. In *Destiny*, fundamentalists kill a singer and try to ban dancing on one hand, and try to repress the desire to participate in a party by performing Sufi rituals on the other. In *The Terrorist*, Ali eventually sets his desires free, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and flirting with women. The fundamentalists thus are represented as being highly contradictory, while "we" are portrayed as having no such psychological conflicts.

In addition to the contrast with Hollywood's fixation of the fundamentalist identity as collective, Egyptian cinema differs from Hollywood is how it gives room for reform. Ali regrets his terrorist deeds at the end of *The Terrorist*. Yet his leader shoots him dead at the discovery. The message remains that hard-core fundamentalists are unforgiving and "evil", and that once one becomes one of them, there is no way out.

Fundamentalism as oppression (internal and external)

One way in which fundamentalists are portrayed in the films is as being terrorists. Terrorism in the films is linked with how the fundamentalists themselves are repressed and thus find refuge in killing. In contrast with the lawyer Ali in *Birds of Darkness*, who has clear political interests, the terrorists in *The Other* and *The Terrorist* have no political cause and act on mere personal interest. In *The Other* the fundamentalists are anarchists who do not hesitate to shoot at the Egyptian army or to plant bombs in Cairo killing innocent people. *The Terrorist* goes deeper into portraying all aspects of the Islamic fundamentalist terrorist's life. After burning a video shop, the film traces Ali's footsteps into his dark, barren apartment where he sits on a chest full of grenades reading a book about "the torture and bliss of the grave". Ali tries his best to cut himself off from worldly pleasures but finds himself fantasizing about his sexy neighbor whom he peeps at from his window while she sings and laughs. Later, Ali's leader, Ahmad, who uses Ali's fantasies and promises him a wife if he completes the task successfully, lures Ali into conducting a terrorist act. Ahmad does not deliver his promise but guarantees Ali a wife if he assassinates an anti-fundamentalist liberal government official. Ali's character is thus portrayed as being driven by his fantasies, as opposed to his mind, and as being highly compliant to his leader. This is the major difference between the Egyptian films' and Hollywood's portrayal of Islamic fundamentalist terrorists—being portrayed almost exclusively as killing and terrorizing people in the latter. Thus Egyptian cinema portrays everyday life aspects in its representation of the terrorists, though it is just as condemning as Hollywood.

Islamic fundamentalism is also portrayed as a threat to basic freedoms, such as freedom of expression and religion. The opening sequences of two films illustrate the first case. The opening sequence of *The Terrorist* sees fundamentalists destroying and burning the contents of a video shop. *Destiny* also begins with the image of a man being tortured then burned at the stake and hailed a heretic for translating the work of Averroes. The film then moves to directly accusing Islamic fundamentalists for the act, and later portrays them burning Averroes' books. *The Terrorist*'s burning of the video shop and *Destiny*'s burning of Averroes' books remind us of Egyptian fundamentalists succeeding in continuing the ban on some of Naguib Mahfouz's books (namely *Awlad Haritna* (Children of our Neighborhood)) (Moussalli 1998).

The book had been banned under Nasser's regime in 1959 for its allegorical suggestion that God is dead (Allen 1994), while other works continue to be banned for themes considered offensive to the religious authorities.

Islamic fundamentalists also attacked Naguib Mahfouz and stabbed him in the neck in 1994 after Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, leader of the Islamic Group (al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya), issued a fatwa excommunicating him (Silence in the Nile 1998). *Destiny* allegorically portrays the fundamentalists killing the singer Marwan and succeeding in converting the Caliph's son Abdullah into fundamentalism and away from the scenes of songs and dance. Chahine has used Averroes as a portrayal of himself, as Chahine was attacked by fundamentalists after they accused his earlier film *The Emigrant* of being blasphemous. Chahine's message against the oppression to freedom of expression exerted by fundamentalists is made even more blunt in a sentence that appears on the screen just after the film ends: "Ideas have wings, no one can stop their flight" (Privett 1999, p. 7).

Regarding products and people who are not strict Muslims as infidel and corrupt is a common stance taken by fundamentalists in the films (*Terrorism and Barbecue*, *Birds of Darkness*, *The Other*). Smith (1991) points out that nations are usually not invented, but are a matter of reconstructing existing and arriving ethnic and religious groups. These factors complicate the existence of a modern Egyptian nation, pointing out the need to integrate minorities into the core. However, the films seem to prefer a selective integration, celebrating the nationalism of the Copts while portraying Islamic fundamentalists as intolerant of people from other religions. Egypt's regime, though nationalist, is not entirely secular, as it relies on Islam as one source of jurisdiction, despite its large non-Muslim minority (Al-Ahsan 1992). This use of Islam is an "attempt to use traditional regulations as markers of communal identity, and not as part of a broader program for instruments for the totalistic reconstruction of society" (Eisenstadt 1999, p. 151). Eisenstadt sees this as one of the reasons behind the clashes between Islamic fundamentalists and the government. This is expressed in *The Terrorist*, where Ali's dream is to establish a purely fundamentalist state, excluding any Christians or non-fundamentalist Muslim "infidels". The fundamentalists' view of "infidels" is essentialized around their being inherently evil. *The Terrorist* puts this point across in a conversation between Ali and the Christian Hani. Unknowing of Hani's religion, Ali expresses his utopian views to Hani. When Ali later finds out that Hani is a Christian, he is shown to be shocked as

he had always perceived Hani as a "good" person. The film thus tries to deconstruct the fundamentalist ideal world, and even collapse it.

Essentializing Fundamentalism

Egyptian cinema depicts Islamic fundamentalists as an Other. In a classical Orientalist way, this Other is assigned everything the Egyptian national identity is not meant to be. The films also focus on how the fundamentalists themselves construct "boundaries between the 'pure' inside and the 'polluted' outside, as well as their self-perception as the 'elect'"; this is described by Eisenstadt as "utopian sectarianism" (1999, p. 90). In this light, the fundamentalist identity can be seen as intolerant towards those who are different, and thus fundamentalists are a threat to national unity. Eisenstadt points out how this drawing of boundaries necessitates the assignment of an "ontological enemy", such as "the USA, Israel, and Zionism" (1999, p. 90). While this is the list of "enemies" the fundamentalists are shown declaring their opposition to (if any) in Hollywood, the Egyptian films add to that list all non-fundamentalists. This mainly includes Christians and non-fundamentalist "loose" women (as discussed earlier in the cases of *The Other* and *The Terrorist*). In this light, the fundamentalist identity is portrayed as being intolerant towards those who are different, and thus fundamentalists are a threat to national unity.

West (1995) argues that the propagation of essentialist notions of "homogeneous national communities" and "positive images" (p. 161) is a means by which the authoritarian elite repress their heterogeneous populations. Thus, nationalism as advocated in the movies is a form of hegemony. Balibar (1995) sees this hegemony as creating a conflict for the "nonnational", forcing them to make a choice between their competing belongings, thereby implying that those belongings cannot coexist. Balibar (1991) argues that nationalism is an ideology built on the symbolic difference between ourselves and foreigners—an ideology based on the concept of frontiers. According to Balibar,

> "the 'external frontiers' of the state have to become 'internal frontiers' or... external frontiers have to be imagined constantly as a projection and protection of an internal collective personality, which each of us carries within

> ourselves and enables us to inhabit the space of the state as a place where we have always been—and always will be—'at home' " (1991, p. 95).

Balibar uses the term "fictive ethnicity" to refer to the idea that nations produce ethnicity, in the sense that

> "no nation possesses an ethnic base naturally, but as social formations are nationalized, the populations included within them, divided up among them or dominated by them are ethnicized—that is, represented in the past or in the future *as if* they formed a natural community, possessing of itself an identity or origins, culture and interests which transcends individuals and social conditions" (1991, p. 96).

The problem here is Islamic fundamentalists are not an ethnic group or a religious minority, but are constructed in a similar manner. I argue that the concept of nation as such is problematic, for it threatens to erase the pasts of those within it, forcing them to cling on to those pasts (for example the Maronites in Lebanon stressing their identity as being Phoenician). The films, acting as vehicles to strengthen national identities (besides other such vehicles, such as race, language and religion), add to that threat by naturalizing the nations they represent, or in other words, essentializing them.

The naturalized nation is represented in the films by non-fundamentalist ordinary people engaging in various daily activities, from going to work to fighting with their spouses, while at the same time enjoying the pleasures of life such as music and alcohol. This norm is then contrasted with the lives of fundamentalists. We do see the fundamentalists performing everyday activities, but even these activities tend to be "different". While the "normal" Egyptian man has dinner with his wife and children (*Terrorism and Barbecue*), the fundamentalist man eats dinner with his four wives whom he communicates with they way he would with animals, not speaking to them but shouting and gesturing at them (*The Terrorist*). While the "normal" Egyptian woman goes to work freely at night, her fundamentalist sister is confined to working as a secretary or a messenger (*The Terrorist*, *Birds of Darkness*). In other words, while the modern Egyptian woman is portrayed as being active in her choices, the fundamentalist woman is confined to executing orders made by her male superiors.

The use of women here falls into the general view of women as symbols of the nation and the gauge that measures the nation's morality and modernity. By portraying Egyptian women as modern and independent (and not silent, the way Islamic fundamentalist women are portrayed), yet respectful of values, the message sent by the films is that about the Egyptian identity being as such. Islamic fundamentalists are used as tools to emphasize this moderate, non-corrupt identity.

This parallels Shapiro's view of films as "identity stories" which form "the basis for a nation's coherence" (1989, p. 47). Shapiro argues that identity stories by nature must create a boundary between "us" and "them" and "impose a model of identity/difference" (1989, p. 48). In other words, this post-structuralist formulation, with its insistence on margins against centers, constructs difference as a prior condition of identity (Bennington 1990). A complication of the above model occurs when the Other shares some of the characteristics of "us". In the case of Egyptian fundamentalists, the facts that they are Egyptian and Muslim, living in the same society as the Egyptian "us" perplexes their projected difference. Nationalism implies the existence of a social unit that governs itself; however it is difficult to define this social unit, who is included in it and who is not (Birch 1989). This is why national integration is a complex concept, namely when nations contain ethnic or other minorities. In this case, there is a danger that national integration becomes a form of totalitarianism. Which takes us to the point that, what with the potential conflicts in the name of national integration, nationalism is in the end an ideal (Kedourie 1961). Kedourie cites the Middle East as an example of governments oppressing their minorities post-imperialism even more than they were oppressed under the Ottoman Empire or under British mandate. As he puts it, "nationalism and liberalism, far from being twins, are really antagonistic principles" (Kedourie 1961, p. 109).

Thus, the films continue to try to demarcate the two sides, the "national" and the "fundamentalist". This is done in a variety of ways. Fundamentalists are portrayed as living on the edge of society as opposed to participating in it fully. The films make use of space to emphasize this point. While fundamentalists in Hollywood always operate outdoors (deserts (*The Siege*), planes (*Executive Decision*), destroyed cityscapes (*Navy Seals*)), in Egyptian cinema they are mostly confined to interior spaces, staying in a dark room while a joyful neighbor laughs and sings outside (*The Terrorist*), and talking about the outside world with ambivalence while spending all their time indoors (*The Other*).

The way the fundamentalists communicate is also portrayed as being alien. Not only do fundamentalists speak in classical as opposed to colloquial Arabic, they also have their own system of greetings (involving mutual shoulder kissing) and their own greeting phrases (elaborate "Islamic" greetings). They also have a distinct way of dress (long, white gallabiyyas and white skull caps) and a distinct appearance (with all the men growing beards) (*Terrorism and Barbecue*, *The Terrorist*, *Destiny*, *The Other*). The only way in which this appearance is altered to look like "ours" is when the fundamentalists want to blend in society in order to either execute a terrorist attack or achieve a political aim. The fundamentalist lawyer Ali in *Birds of Darkness* is bearded but wears a suit, which serves to add to his credibility in his political campaign. The terrorist Ali in *The Terrorist* goes further into shedding his beard and white gallabiyya (much to his dismay) in order to disappear in society so that he can assassinate an anti-fundamentalist government official.

The films' attempt at showing that the fundamentalists are utterly different recalls Shapiro's argument that "the claim to distinctiveness has required an energetic denial of otherness within." (1989, p. 54). This denial is part of the effort to preserve a national identity that simply does not recognize the fundamentalist's right to be represented. Still, the representation of Islamic fundamentalists in Egyptian cinema—from an Egyptian nationalist point of view—remains heavily reliant on "metaphors" which attempt at "fixing" the Egyptian culture as essentially anti-fundamentalist, thereby denying the dynamic nature of culture itself (Shapiro 1999; Tehranian 2000). Shapiro argues that this "alleged cultural unity" is one way in which the modern state seeks legitimacy (1999, p. 112).

Conclusion

Egyptian cinema and Hollywood differ in their treatment of fundamentalists in several ways. First, Egyptian cinema's portrayal is more complex than that of Hollywood, as Egyptian films portray various aspects of "being fundamentalist" as opposed to Hollywood's concentration on terrorism. Against this analysis arguments like Armbrust's (2002), that Islamic fundamentalism in Egyptian cinema "stands for nothing but violence" (p. 928), seem untenable. Second, while Hollywood portrays these terrorists as ruthless, faceless killers, Egyptian cinema psychologizes

fundamentalism. Third, Egyptian cinema praises religion but condemns extremism, while Hollywood blurs the two in the case of Islam. Fourth, while Hollywood essentializes fundamentalists as intrinsically "bad", Egyptian cinema's image of them is more complex and presents them as being misguided or traumatized. Fifth, Egyptian cinema does not blur Arabs (and some non-Arabs, like Iranians) into one primordial entity the way Hollywood does. Sixth, events relating to Islamic fundamentalism in Egyptian cinema often happen indoors (versus outdoors in Hollywood), which directs the focus to (inter)personal melodrama and away from naturalized images of deserts as the essential wild East. Thus, Hollywood still relies on an East/West divide, whereas Egyptian cinema portrays differences within the "East". Finally, Egyptian cinema differs in how it includes the view of Islamic fundamentalism as a *reaction* to "Western... influences in Muslim lands" (Hyman 1985, p. 3). This is seen in *The Other*, where globalization is perceived by the fundamentalists as synonymous with Westernization (Tehranian 2000).

But the two cinemas also converge in many ways. A distinct feature of the convergence between the portrayal of fundamentalists in Egyptian and American cinemas is that the two cinemas share the same "set of visual signifiers" (Karim 2000, p. 68) of Islamic fundamentalism: beards, white skullcaps and gallabiyyas, chador-wearing women. Thus, both sides use the same "sensationalist stereotypes" that are "meant to... reinforce a myopic vision of reality" (Esposito 1999, p. 220) about Islamic fundamentalists. The way Islamic fundamentalists are depicted to dress, in particular, serves to portray them "as 'medieval' in life-style and mentality" (Esposito 1999, p. 220), in contrast to the civilized "us". This constructs fundamentalism as being essentially anti-modern (O'Hagan 2000; Armbrust 2002), in contrast with both sides' portrayal of their respective nations as progressive and modern. This is interesting when you consider that fundamentalists, in addition to their reliance on traditional symbols, utilize modern weapons (computers, guns, etc.) in their fight against modernism (Agha 2000).

Also, both Egypt and the US in the films are portrayed as being "defensive, responding with counterattacks" towards the Islamic fundamentalist "instigators" (Esposito 1999, p. 221). This serves to increase the legitimacy of the two states, despite their respective government criticism (*The Siege* and *Terrorism and Barbecue*). Being instigators configures the cinematic images of fundamentalists as pathological in both cases.

Thus, both cinemas seem to rely on clichés in their representations of "us" and "them". In this sense the two cinemas can be said to be colonial towards Islamic fundamentalists, constructing the colonized (the fundamentalist) as a degenerate Other in order to justify their conquest of this figure. In their construction of the fundamentalist as an Other, the two cinemas seem to project the fundamentalist image as "a fixed reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (Bhabha 1983, p. 21). Both cinemas use similar techniques in their treatment of this Other. One is their reliance on the "cultural priority" factor in the "myth of historical origination" (Bhabha 1983, p. 26). The two seem to present the fundamentalists as alien and inferior to their cultures. They also rely on the ideas of lack and difference in their portrayal of fundamentalists, the latter lacking "our" morals and being essentially different from "us". At the same time, the cinemas' representations of fundamentalists are complex and paradoxical: the fundamentalist is "mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator" (Bhabha 1983, p. 34).

The representation of Islamic fundamentalism in both cinemas suggests the difficulty of establishing any concept of a global identity. Although the two cinemas and the two nations converge in their Othering of Islamic fundamentalists, in doing so they nevertheless resort to different, sometimes clashing, national experiences. This not only applies to the construction of Others, but also to the juxtaposition of Others with the national self. While each side strives to strengthen its national identity, each refers to separate and exclusive memories and collective pasts. We can thus see that despite the existence of a "global" enemy, the nation is not dead. In fact, the existence of this enemy has strengthened the plurality of national identity in a global world (Smith 1991). At the same time, seeing fundamentalism as an enemy suggests the limits in pluralism within the nation (Mouffe 1995). Moreover, we can see that the confrontation between Islamic fundamentalism and nationalism stresses how the former is a global force while the latter, though a global phenomenon, is a localization. Of course, even a global product like fundamentalism is localized when given interpretations that are different from those employed by the producers, and hence the need to look at fundamentalism in a historical context. In this sense, Islamic fundamentalism as seen in the films is contradictory: It is both about emergent and disappearing peripheries, hegemonization and fragmentation, expansion and contraction (Freidland 1994).

Having spoken about Islamic fundamentalists as defiled subalterns does not imply the necessity of reversing their status into a sanctified one. There is an equal danger in doing so; Chow argues that such a practice belongs to the same symbolic order as representing subalterns as defiled, in that it implies our own "self-deception as the non-duped" (1994, p. 146), a desire on our part to seize control. Only when the subaltern speaks can this situation change. But, as Spivak says, "If the subaltern can speak then, thank God, the subaltern is not a subaltern any more" (1990, p. 158).

Both Egyptian cinema and Hollywood use their Others to strengthen their respective national identities. In her analysis of the extremism of Pauline Hansen, Ang warns that the danger lies in how any such argument is too essentializing. For Ang, "the national... is not to be defined in terms of 'identity' at all, but as a problematic process; the national is to be defined not in terms of the formulation of a positive, 'common culture' or 'cohesive community' but as the unending, day-to-day hard work of managing and negotiating differences" (2000, p. 9). This is the climatic link between the Hollywood and the Egyptian films. In their strong national parade, both tend to construct communities devoid of Others. And this is where the two sides end up telling different versions of the same subjective "Truth", and where the "East" and the "West" seem not to be divided that much after all. Thus, Said's discourse on Orientalism is complicated as the East tries to exclude a part of itself as an Other while the West excludes it.

Epilogue: On Difference, Resistance and Nationalism

Cinema is a powerful tool of cultural production. This thesis has shown how both Hollywood and Egyptian cinema function within nationalist projects that narrate the American and the Egyptian nations respectively, while also using their portrayal of Others in order to construct and strengthen their own identities. The analysis has also both applied and complicated theories on the East/West divide, namely Orientalism and globalization, while highlighting the power struggles over Truth exhibited by the different players, the United States and Egypt. The themes discussed in the study can be summarized under three headings: the films' construction of the identities of the Self (as national identity) and the Other; the complication of notions of resistance; and the films' relationship with nationalism.

On difference

Both the American and the Egyptian national identities in the films are defined in terms of difference. This difference relates to both external Others and to Others within. Hollywood's imagining of the American nation is one where the US is contrasted with Arab terrorists who are associated with Islamic fundamentalism and who pose an external threat to America. Hollywood's construction of fundamentalism can be seen, in the words of Abaza and Stauth, as a "new 'orientalism'... [which] attempts to reconstruct new images of the East" as "native" (1990, p. 223). They argue that following the "old" Orientalism which used the harem to symbolize the Orient, this "new" Orientalism has established the veil and the mosque as *religious* symbols of the culture of the "native" Other. Abaza and Stauth (1990) add that those notions of nativism are associated with irrationality, thereby maintaining the divide between the civilized West and the barbaric East. Abaza and Stauth's use of the terms "new" and "old" is an attempt to overcome Said's problematic construction of Orientalism as a fixed discourse over time. Although Said's book *Orientalism* deals with a particular period in history beginning in the 18th century, Said's discussion of Orientalism also locates it within practices of the present; in his new introduction to

the book, published in August 2003, Said (2003) argues that he wrote the book 25 years ago and yet it is still relevant today. The analysis in this thesis has shown that imaginings of the Arab Other do change with the political context, and therefore it complicates Said's discourse by reflecting on Orientalism as process. The analysis has also drawn on parallels between the construction of the Arab Others in Hollywood and that of the Americans and others in Egyptian cinema, and thus complicates the exclusionary discourse employed by Hollywood by showing how the Other and the dominant forces may embrace similar values, meanings and practices.

Egypt in the Egyptian films is imagined in contrast with the portrayal of the degeneracy of Israel and the United States. This again establishes the Egyptian identity as different from external Others. However the case of Egypt is more complicated. The Othering of Israel and the United States in the Egyptian films seems ironic considering Egypt's peace treaty with the first and its reliance on the aid of the second. Therefore it can be argued that Egypt's Othering of the two countries plays a role in bringing Egypt closer to the rest of the Arab world that is feeling a degree of dismay towards the role of the United States in Middle Eastern politics (namely in the context of the cases of Palestine and Iraq), and also dismay about the strength of Israel in the region vis-à-vis Palestinian resistance. At the same time, this solidarity with the Arab world is an attempt at reviving a lost pan-Arabism that glosses over what are seen as shameful divisions within the Arab world. As Karr (1997) argues, "As nationalism was a way to divert the attention from inner conflicts in the colonizing nations, so does nationalism in the struggling colonized countries divert attention from its inner problems and directs it towards fighting the outside imperialist enemy".

However this is complicated by Egyptian cinema's representation of Islamic fundamentalism as an enemy within. Both Egyptian cinema and Hollywood converge in their construction of their nations in opposition to Islamic fundamentalism. This common Other complicates essentialist notions of East versus West. However the representation of Islamic fundamentalism in the cinemas is not always convergent. Egypt's more nuanced portrayal of Islamic fundamentalism provides a challenge to Hollywood's essentialist equation of Arabs with fundamentalist terrorists. Egypt's Othering of fundamentalists is part of a nationalist agenda aiming at establishing a religious but not extremist myth of Egypt. In this sense, Egyptian cinema can be seen as offering resistant discourses to those of Hollywood through participating in the construction of alternative identities and perspectives.

On resistance

The main aim of the thesis has been to complicate theories and discourses on the East/West divide. This has been demonstrated through a number of issues. The analysis of the films has emanated from the need to undo cultural barriers. The attention to Egyptian cinema has been a step towards "unthinking Eurocentrism" (Shohat and Stam 1994), and shifting the focus of cinematic analysis from Hollywood and other Western cinemas. Even within the label "world cinema", a problematic title, Arab cinemas have not traditionally been given much attention. The analysis has thus attempted to give Egyptian cinema a voice.

The analysis has also highlighted aesthetic differences between the American and the Egyptian films, especially in their representation of space. The use of camera shots and locations in Egyptian cinema is different from that of Hollywood. This is due to economic factors, as the Egyptian films are not as well-funded as the Hollywood ones, and also to generic factors, as the Egyptian films tend to be melodramas, focusing on interior spaces, while the American ones are mainly action films, focusing on exterior spaces. But the differences can also be related to the two sides' position on the politics represented, with Hollywood's spatial use mirroring American mastery, and Egypt's in contrast assuming an insider view.

The analysis has stressed the importance of analyzing complex social and political issues not addressed in the mainstream. The analysis of the Egyptian films has shown how they address issues of local relevance and interest that are overlooked in a dominant cinema industry like Hollywood. Issues like everyday life aspects of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Palestinian diaspora in refugee camps, and the way of life of Islamic fundamentalists, are all represented in Egyptian cinema while being absent in Hollywood. Those representations are a statement supporting the richness of socio-political experiences in the Middle East that play an important role in the constructions of the Self. This therefore goes beyond Hollywood's reductionism in its imagination of the Middle East; Egyptian cinema has challenged dominant Hollywood discourses by providing a space for underrepresented peoples to "speak". The depiction of the experiences of the Palestinian diaspora for example can be seen as an attempt to challenge their oppression and their under-representation in Hollywood. However, with processes of globalization, a number of those issues are no longer confined to a local realm. The Arab-Israeli conflict and Islamic

fundamentalism mainly are issues that go beyond the physical and political boundaries of the Middle East. Thus, the analysis presents a challenge to core-periphery models where certain political issues are relegated to the space of the Other.

Moreover, in presenting those issues, the analysis has shown how Egyptian cinema can be a means of resistance. This parallels what Fanon (1994) calls the literature of combat. On one hand, the films can be seen as presenting an "oppositional form of "reading practice"" that confronts dominant ideologies (Bahri 1996). In other words, the films form an alternative way of knowledge production that challenges the dominant narratives of Hollywood. In this sense, the films are resistant because they take a position against imperialism and Eurocentrism, as seen in *The Other* and *Hello America*, which reject American values, and the films on Israel, which form a clear opposition to an essential enemy. For example, *Girl from Israel* criticizes assimilation into the culture of the Other by portraying an Israeli woman trying to convince a young Egyptian man of his "difference", and therefore of his position as "one of us" (Bhabha 1994, p. 117). The complication with this oppositional practice however is that simply reversing Otherness as polarizing means that the films are engaging in polarization themselves. As Parry argues, "a simple inversion perpetuates the coloniser/colonised opposition within the terms defined by colonial discourse, remaining complicit with its assumptions by retaining undifferentiated identity categories, and failing to contest the conventions of that system of knowledge it supposedly challenges" (1994, p. 172).

On the other hand, resistance is not conceptualized only in the sense of mere reversal of dominant agendas or as being simply oppositional to them. The Egyptian films' resistance is threefold, presented as opposition, but also as subversion and as mimicry (Bhabha 1994), both in style and in content. Chahine for example, in *Destiny*, has taken a Hollywood genre, the epic, and made it his own, using it to depict a contemporary issue (the clash with the intolerance of Islamic fundamentalism). Subversion is also seen in how the Egyptian films illustrate the hybridity of the Egyptian identity. The complexity of the Egyptian national identity, especially in the way it embraces "Western" elements, has challenged essentialist notions of self and Other.

The analysis has also challenged West-focused models of discourse generation. It challenges theories of cultural imperialism and neo-imperialism which

focus on the West's active role in representation while denying the East that role by highlighting how the "East", through Egyptian cinema, also engages in representation. At the same time, the analysis complicates theories on Orientalism. This presents a challenge to an East/West dichotomy not only by showing how the "East" represents the "West", but also how the "Orient" represents itself. Furthermore, by showing how the films reflect history from different perspectives, and also by showing how they play a role in reshaping national histories and traditions, the analysis poses a challenge to a uniform, unilateral writing of history that is projected from the West to the rest.

The analysis can be located within postcolonial theory, yet complicates notions of postcolonialism. The research is postcolonial in two main ways. First, Prakesh (1990) argues that postcolonialism sees "third world identities as relational rather than essential" (p. 399). The research has followed this by looking at the nation as position, rather than origin, which presents a challenge to Zionist constructions of Israel for example, seen in the Hollywood films which construct Israel's relationship with Jews as a place embracing a people of common ancestry. Second, the analysis challenges the fixity of positions of heterogeneous circumstances and societies implied by terms like East/West or First/Third World. This research can thus be looked as at occupying a space "neither inside not outside the history of Western domination, but in a tangential relation to it. This is what Homi Bhabha calls an "in-between, hybrid position of practice and negotiation" (Prakesh 1997, p. 491). The analysis therefore has not placed Egyptian cinema in opposition to Hollywood, but rather has compared the two sides in order to complicate binaries of East and West, good and bad. Comparing Egyptian cinema with Hollywood thus does not imply romanticizing the East vis-à-vis the West. The analysis has shown that notions of the Orient representing itself also mean that the Orient carries discourses of Otherness as demonstrated by the cases of Islamic fundamentalism, Israel, the United States and gender divisions in Egyptian cinema.

However the research complicates notions of postcolonialism. Postcolonialism has been presented as a challenge to master narratives like nationalism. This is challenged by the zeal for nationalism seen in both Hollywood and the Egyptian films. Nationalism has also been looked at as a Eurocentric model in postcolonial theory (Prakesh 1990). The advocacy of nationalism in Egyptian cinema

thus shows that Egypt has not fully rejected Eurocentric models, but rather has adopted them and transformed them to fit in its political agenda.

Postcolonialism has also been alleged to exclude discourses on ethnic groups in conflict, instead focusing on relations between the East and the West (Dirlik 1997). While Islamic fundamentalism is not an ethnic entity, the conflict between the official government discourse and fundamentalist discourse in Egypt draws attention to the importance of analyzing power struggles within the East. This relates to Dirlik's point that postcolonialism excludes radicals who believe they are still colonized. This point is an account of the position of Islamic fundamentalists in Egypt who believe they are dominated by the West. Yet the Egyptian films complicate this further by making connections between the imperialism of the West and the extremism of Islamic fundamentalism (as seen in *The Other*).

Finally, Dirlik points out how notions of hybridity within postcolonial discourse are always constructed as being between the First and Third Worlds, but never within the Third World. The Egyptian films illustrate both points. They do not construct the Egyptian identity as stable and separate from that of the West. The Egyptian identity is formed as a hybrid of a multiplicity of affiliations (Arab, African, Pharaohnic, Islamic) while also carrying elements of the West. An example is the positive, progressive perspective on Che Guevara expressed in *The Terrorist* (where a young Egyptian man has a poster of Guevara on his bedroom wall), and the acceptance of Western popular culture in the same film (where the man's sister listens to songs by Michael Jackson). In this sense, we cannot speak of Egyptian culture as carrying a separatist identity based on absolute disjuncture from the West.

The films also focus on inter-Arab connections that illustrate the construction of a hybrid Arab identity. This refers to notions of pan-Arabism that are resurrected in the films. However the films fail at adopting pan-Arabism wholesale, indicating how the past can be reclaimed but not reconstituted, and so it can only be revisited and realized in partial, fragmented ways.

Therefore, to argue that the Egyptian identity is merely constructed as "different" risks the label of essentialism and the embrace of Orientalist discourse. The way the films embrace elements of Western culture (like popular music and attire) can be seen as marking them as hybrid, but also as an example of how the resistant carries traces of what it resists. In this way, the films rearticulate elements of the West, making the films themselves a kind of "liminal space" where dominant

cultural ideals are unsettled (Young 1995). Yet the problem with hybridity as such is the risk of over-simplification. By that I mean that the films do not perplex Western culture wholesale or without discrimination. They seem to carefully select those components seen as salient to the establishment of a modern nation (such as education, democracy, technology) while at the same time adhering to more traditional values. It can therefore be said that the films articulate sameness (being democratic like the West) as well as difference (seeing the West as morally inferior).

On nationalism

The films' main focus is the strengthening of national identities. Scholars like Said (1988) and Chatterjee (1992) have argued that national identity is fixed. Chatterjee adds that this perception of stability has led to violence that takes place "in the name of patriotic affirmation of identity in the Middle East" (1992, p. 215). However, this view on national identity is centered around the Third World, and therefore is misleading as it implies that such violence cannot or does not happen in places like the United States. The films complicate this; *The Siege*'s depiction of the violent rejection of Arab-Americans is perhaps the best illustration of this point.

Said's and Chatterjee's argument is also implicated by the notions that the nation is inherently coercive, and that national identity is not only stable, but also fixed. This is challenged by the American films, which carry a strong nationalist stance that has moved on with the times. The American nation is for example now symbolized by caring yet still tough men (as in *Three Kings*), thereby replacing its symbolic representation by the action heroes of the Cold War era.

Said's and Chatterjee's argument is also challenged by the Egyptian films. First, the films complicate simple notions of nation as coercive (Ahmad 1994) through their celebrated representation of issues like the Palestinian intifada and of Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal. Second, the Egyptian cultural identity in the films is far from being fixed. As Stuart Hall (1994) argues, cultural identities are not essentialist and are forever transforming. The films' homage to the past, in their representations of Nasser for example, are not about finding a lost Egyptian/Arab identity, but are about negotiating the past to make sense of the present. By that I mean that the Egyptian national identity under Nasser seen in films like *Nasser 56* and

Nasser is not the same one seen in films set at the present time. However this "difference" does not imply that there are two national identities present; rather, looking at the films in a social/historical context reveals the way national identity transforms and develops (for example, from being symbolized by idealized, domestic femininity in 1950's to being symbolized by modern women in the public sphere at present). This transformation is also in response to changes in the political climate. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism has meant that the Egyptian national identity is also constructed in opposition to identities of internal Others.

In this way we can see that the representation of Egypt as a postcolonial nation is not just defined by its relation to colonizers. The reality of Egypt in the films is thus not constituted by a "singular experience of colonialism and imperialism" (Ahmad 1995, p. 79). The films do not only highlight Egypt's relationship with the enemy (be it the US or Israel), but also the internal struggles in Egypt, namely among classes and genders and with Islamic fundamentalists. Ahmad (1995) argues against the assumption of a unitary colonial experience: in fact, looking at the films reveals that the experience of colonialism is different for different members of Arab society. The assumption of a unified Third World or Arab or even Egyptian experience of colonialism risks homogenization under an Otherness label. However the divide between the modern Egyptian identity and that of Islamic fundamentalist identity signals a battle over discourses of self-definition. While the Islamic fundamentalist identity as expressed in the films presents itself as a "nativist alternative", the Egyptian identity is presented as being wary of such notions. This does not, however, mean that the Egyptian identity advocated in the films is not coherent (Parry 1994).

Following this argument on nationalism we can see that the American and Egyptian films present conflicting views on the nation. First, we have the representation of the nation as unifying, seen in Hollywood in films celebrating racial diversity (*Courage Under Fire*, *Rules of Engagement*, *Three Kings*), and in Egypt in films about Nasser or films depicting harmony between Egyptian Muslims and Christians (like *The Terrorist*). Second, we encounter nationalism as separatist, demarcating the Self from the Other, seen in American films representing Arab terrorists like *The Delta Force* and *Hostage*, and in Egyptian films like the "anti-globalization" film *The Other*, which marks a distinct Egyptian identity that is oppositional to that of the United States. Third, nationalism as presented in the films can also be looked at as being totalitarian, advocating one coherent identity denied to

Others (Arab-Americans and Islamic fundamentalists respectively). Finally, we have to pay attention to the employment of gender within national discourse. While the American nation presented in the films is based on masculine ideals, the Egyptian nation is feminine, yet is ultimately patriarchal.

Beyond the East/West divide

This thesis has juxtaposed Hollywood with Egyptian cinema in their representation of Middle Eastern politics in order to complicate an East/West dichotomy. Hollywood, or the West, has not been used as a reference point when analyzing the non-West (Egyptian cinema); as Said (1988) warns, this trap means that "every opposition to the West only confirms its wicked power" (p. 70). But at the same time, Fee (1994) also warns against implying absolute disjunction from Western discourse in works of resistance. She argues that it "is not possible simply to assume that a work written by an 'Other' (however defined), even a political Other, will have freed itself from the dominant ideology" (p. 244). She defines works of resistance as those which are "struggling, of necessity only partly successfully, to rewrite the dominant ideology from within, to produce a different version of reality" (p. 244-5). Hence we can speak of the Egyptian films as works of resistance in the sense that they are on the margin but subvert the center. Thus they complicate any simple notion of the margin by "choosing" it as a space of resistance (hooks 1991), and hence break down the essential East/West divide.

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Black Rain (Ridley Scott, US, 1989)

Black Sunday (John Frankenheimer, US, 1977)

Bowling for Columbine (Michael Moore, US, 2002)

The Closed Doors (al-Abwab al-Moghlaka) (Atef Hetata, Egypt, 1999)

Coming to America (John Landis, US, 1988)

Courage Under Fire (Edward Zwick, US, 1996)

The Delta Force (Menahem Golan, US, 1986)

Destiny (al-Masseer) (Youssef Chahine, Egypt, 1997)

The Emigrant (al-Mouhager) (Youssef Chahine, Egypt, 1997)

Execution of a Dead Man (I'dam Mayyit) (Ali Abdel-Khaleq, Egypt, 1985)

Executive Decision (Stuart Baird, US, 1996)

Girl from Israel (Fatat min Israel) (Ehab Rady, Egypt, 1999)

Hello America (Nader Galal, Egypt, 2000)

Hostage (Hanro Mohr, US, 1987)

Hot Shots (Jim Abrahams, US, 1991)

In the Army Now (Daniel Petrie Jr., US, 1994)

Iron Eagle (Sidney J. Furie, US, 1986)

The Insider (Michael Mann, US, 1999)

The Little Drummer Girl (George Roy Hill, US, 1984)

Love in Taba (al-Hob fi Taba) (Hisham Abd el-Hamid, Egypt, 1992)

Naji al-Ali (Atef at-Tayyeb, Egypt, 1991)

Nasser 56 (Mohamed Fadel, Egypt, 1996)

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October (Oktyabr) (Sergei Eisentstein and Grigori Aleksandrov, Soviet Union, 1927)

The Other (al-Akhar) (Youssef Chahine, Egypt, 1999)

Power (Sidney Lumet, US, 1986)

Programmed to Kill (Alan Holzman and Robert Short, US, 1987)

Rambo: First Blood (Ted Kotcheff, US, 1982)

Road to Eilat (at-Tarik ila Eilat) (Inaam Mohamed Ali, Egypt, 1986)

Rules of Engagement (William Friedkin, US, 2000)

The Sheik (George Melford, US, 1921)

The Siege (Edward Zwick, US, 1998)

South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut (animation) (Trey Parker, US, 1999)

The Terminator (James Cameron, US, 1984)

Terrorism and Barbecue (Al-Irhab wal-Kabab) (Sherif Arafa, Egypt, 1993)

The Terrorist (al-Irhabi) (Nader Galal, Egypt, 1994)

Three Kings (David O. Russell, US, 1999)

Trap of Spies (Fakh al-Jawasis) (Ashraf Fahmi, Egypt, 1992)

Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens) (Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1934)

True Lies (James Cameron, US, 1994)