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Gender, Performance, and Film: A Study of the Performance of Gender in a Selection of Jordanian Films in Light of Some Cultural and Social Effects

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GENDER, PERFORMANCE, AND FILM:

A STUDY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF GENDER IN A SELECTION OF JORDANIAN

FILMS IN LIGHT OF SOME CULTURAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfilment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Arene N. Al-Shara'h

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Title: Gender, Performance, and Film: A Study of the Performance of Gender in a Selection of
Jordanian Films in Light of Some Cultural and Social Effects

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This study is concerned with gender performances and how they are represented in Jordanian film. Three Jordanian films are studied here, *Transit Cities* (2010), *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012), and *Captain Abu Raed* (2008). These films introduce interesting characters who imply the embedded cultural and social construction of gender roles in the Jordanian society. By asking questions related to gender performance and representation the researcher aims at discussing the stereotypical gender images as well as gender performances in Jordanian film as it resonates in Jordanian society. Moreover, the theory of performance introduced by Richard Schechner as well as post-Jungian approaches to film studied by Greg Singh are utilized in this study to analyze the films in accordance with the textual analysis methodology.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sitting in a dramatic scene where it is 5:58 am and I am still at IUP's library, full of emotions, eyes covered in tears, remembering every moment that passed by throughout this journey, and as a final step of writing this thesis I reach to the point where I can actually express my deepest love and appreciation to everyone who supported me during this rough journey! And I apologize, for words are never enough to express what inhabits the heart.

First of all, I would like to thank *God* for giving me the strength to complete this work and for blessing me with the wonderful people in my life.

To my parents … Your love and support lightened up the ending of a dark tunnel where hope, love, and happiness reside … Thank you does not encompass my appreciation for every word of encouragement, every phone call, every prayer … I dedicate my success in life to you two … I love you both unconditionally!

To Mais … I stared at this page for 5 minutes and didn't know what to write! Seriously! I don't know where to start or where to end so I'm just going to say THANK YOU for being my sister, my friend, my everything … Love you Meeso thank you for everything!

To my other siblings … Yazeed, Suhaib, Aban, and Sarah… Thank you for being part of my life and for your continuous emotional support, I love you all more than anything in life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Art does not imitate things or even experience, but "action."… Art imitates

patterns, rhythms, and developments. In art, as in nature, things are born, they

grow, they flourish, they decline, they die (Schechner 5)

Art is a mirror of the world around the artist; experiencing the world through the eyes of

artwork offers new perspectives about life and leads to realizations about society, culture,

history, and other aspects of life. Film and literature are forms of art that reflect the world and

tell stories representing people living in this sphere. Film, like literature, is a form of art that

mirrors people's lives; it deals with many sociocultural issues that are connected to how society

is built and how it has come to the structure it has. According to Carolyn Korsmeyer, artistic

works "provide a means by which we can understand our own historical times, our values, our

social identities" (116). One side of the power of film resides in its ability to depict different life

experiences and represent them to the audience in order to impact the way they perceive their

surrounding culture and society. In the introduction of *Film and Religion: An Introduction,* Paul

Flesher and Robert Torry claim that "film may be the most powerful form of artistic expression

used in contemporary culture" (1).

Film began as a representation of history and a record of certain events that happened in

the past. According to Tom Gunning, "when we look at films from the period we now call early

cinema, one might say we are by definition looking at 'historical films'" (1). Film of that period

befitted the role of preserving history; thus, film became a way to preserve the past experiences

of societies. However, as film became more popular it began to move from being restricted to

historical evidence and representation into being a form of expression about people's daily lives, identity performances, and struggles.

Film has been discussed and studied from multiple viewpoints, whether in relation to literature, religion, society, or any other aspect of life. In relation to religion, Flesher and Torry state that

> Major cultural debates are often closely intertwined with religious sensibilities, so it is not surprising to find that films frequently express themselves through religious ideas or images, playing to one or both sides of an issue. […] [F]ilms often draw explicitly upon religious characters and stories, and frequently make implicit use of religious symbolism and beliefs in otherwise secular contexts to help make the story and its message effective. (1)

The effectiveness of the message they are discussing is seen in films like *The Passion of the Christ* which reach huge audiences.

One important aspect of society and identity performance is gender. Gender as a performance is, in one way or another, forced on people due to the nature of any social structure. This performance is usually influenced by or subjective to the traditions and cultural practices of societies. The importance of gender lays in the fact that both males and females constitute society. Moreover, a large portion of the constitution of norms in societies is built around gender and gender roles. These roles are governed by the cultural, social, and political practices of the given society. In addition, identity performance is connected to gender, and constitutes a large part of it. Furthermore, performance is part of film, as it is built around the idea of performing a role to the audience. However, both kinds of performance share some commonalities. Performance in film is a representation of a certain reality, yet it builds its own reality, and real

life has societies which control how people should perform their gender properly. Thus, film is a performance of a performance.

Essentially, the scholarship of this thesis is a reflection of what has been stated earlier. This thesis will concentrate on the performance of gender in Jordanian film and how it is affected and influenced by the social and cultural structures of Jordanian society. Thus, a selection of Jordanian films will be analyzed, and how Jordanian sociocultural structures affect the performance of gender and gender roles in these films will be a main focus in this thesis.

The Problem of the Study

Since its beginning, Jordanian film has received little attention by both academics and media whether nationally or internationally. Although there is some recognition by some international film festivals, many people are not aware of the existence of Jordanian film; the audience is usually those who are filmmakers or those who are interested in film studies.

Jordanian film dates back to 1957 beginning with an amateur attempt by a few Jordanian cinema lovers. This attempt brought to life the first Jordanian film *Struggle in Jerash* (1957) which is in black and white. Adnan Mdanat, a Jordanian filmmaker and critic, claims, "the history of Jordanian long narrative film could be divided into four periods" (Mdanat). The first period (1957-1969) is the one in which *Struggle in Jerash* (1957), *My Home, My Love* (1962), *The Road to Jerusalem* (1969), and other films were produced. In the second period (1970-71) the film *The Snake* was produced by Jordanian Television and directed by the Jordanian Jalal Te'ma. The third period is when the Jordanian director Najdat Anzor made *An Oriental Tale* (1991) which was an "individual and independent effort" (Mdanat). The fourth and last period began in 2008 and continues to the present. This period is where one can see real progress in the situation of Jordanian film and from this period one can say that a Jordanian film industry began

to thrive. A good number of films have been produced since *Captain Abu Raed* (2008), a film used in this study; these have the quality to compete in international film festivals with high quality films.

Like any other society, Jordanian society contains sociocultural issues; one of these is gender and identity performance. Media, including film, deals with these sociocultural issues. The problem of this study lays in the depiction of gender performance in Jordanian film. Also, as art in general and specifically film is a mirror to people's lives, it should have a message and should try to introduce an issue of the depicted society and try to find solutions for it or at least lead the audience to think about solutions. This is also connected to the problem of this study in the way it is looking for the message of the film and the depicted issues of Jordanian society in Jordanian film. In specific, the presence of the sociocultural issue of gender performance in Jordanian film is what this study aims at finding, analyzing, and discussing. One might ask, why would gender performance be a sociocultural issue? Since gender is a socially constructed concept, it is created within a system. This system, like any other, could be problematic for some individuals, which leads them to rebel against this system. Just like any other construction it encompasses many ideologies and it differs from one individual to another, or one society to another, and this is one of the reasons that could mark gender performance as a sociocultural issue.

Background and Gap of Knowledge

For the purposes of this study a theoretical framework will be provided as well as a literature review of previous studies in the field. This is introduced in Chapter II which will be divided into two parts. The first part will introduce the theories that will be utilized in this study, which are mainly Richard Schechner's theory of performance and Greg Singh's utilization of

post-Jungian approaches to film. Moreover, since there are no specific previous studies on Jordanian film, the second part of Chapter II, which is the literature review, will deal with literature of Middle Eastern film, like Lebanese, Egyptian, and Israeli films among others.

The gap of knowledge in this thesis is focused on the lack of knowledge about the sociocultural issue of gender performance as it is represented in Jordanian film. Through this thesis the researcher will try to fill in this gap by looking into a selection of Jordanian films and studying how gender as a performance is depicted in these films. Moreover, as Jordanian society is different in many ways from other Middle Eastern societies, say Egyptian or Lebanese, the matters that would be depicted in Jordanian film are different than those in Egyptian or Lebanese film. Thus, it is not accurate to generalize the studies done on Middle Eastern film on Jordanian film as it has its own representations that are specific to its society. However, the funding issues and the distribution of these films is in some cases similar to that of Jordanian film.

The Purpose and Methods of the Study

Jordanian film as a mirror of society should be dealing with issues in the society and should also try to provide the audience with ideas on how to solve these issues. This study's purpose is to see how Jordanian film deals with gender performance as a sociocultural issue. In addition, it attempts to figure out to what degree Jordanian film bears the burden of representing gender as it is in the society. If so, how gender performance is represented in the selection of films used in this study is a main purpose of this study.

By analyzing a selection of Jordanian films this study intends to establish a base for further studies on Jordanian film. The study will concern itself with issues of gender performance in three selected films, *Transit Cities* (2010), *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012), and *Captain Abu Raed* (2008). In order to study the performance of gender in these films, the

researcher conducted a thorough study of literature concerning the theoretical aspects of identity performance and gender roles focusing on Richard Schechner's notions of performance, Judith Butler's ideas on gender performance and performativity, and Greg Singh's studies of post-Jungian approaches to film. In addition, the textual analysis methodology is employed where film is treated as a text that is further explored in order to reach to conclusions that fit the purposes of this study. Also, interviews were conducted with a selection of Jordanian film critics, directors, and producers. These interviews included questions about the history of Jordanian film and the representation of Jordanian society in Jordanian film. Another implemented method is the application of the theories of gender performance and roles on the films and analyzing them within the conventions of these theories.

As a result of the application of theory on the selected films, the expected outcome is finding out whether these films give a true representation of Jordanian society or not, which could provide the reader with a better understanding of Jordanian film and new perspectives that could lead to realizations about issues in Jordanian society.

Questions of the Study

The questions this study attempts to answer are many. The questions are as follows. (1) How are gender performances portrayed in the three selected films? (2) What gender stereotypes are represented in the selected films? (3) Does Jordanian film attempt to address and/or solve the sociocultural issues concerning gender performance? (4) How is gender performance in the films affected by the sociocultural realities concerning gender in Jordanian society? (5) Does Jordanian film give an authentic representation of Jordanian society? By addressing these questions in the researcher is trying to fulfill the purpose of this study.

Significance of the Study

Societies are built on the existence of human beings, who are males and females, which means they are the most important part of the society. These humans perform a role in the society in order to build it; this role is governed by rules that differ from one society to another. Gender is an important aspect of the human being's life, and different genders have different roles that are performed in accordance with the specific society they belong to. Thus, gender could be considered one of the most powerful aspects of constructing a society. Film, on the other hand, is a powerful medium of representation that represents aspects of the society. As a result, this study focuses on gender roles as performances represented in film.

With no critical attention, Jordanian film will probably remain unknown to academia and this is where this study becomes significant, as it will introduce the reader with some important aspects of Jordanian film and society. Also, it is significant because it gives the selected films a chance to be explored in depth. Moreover, this study is particularly significant because it is speaking of people's lives in Jordan and trying to find out whether Jordanian film is giving a fair representation of the lives of these people. Also, it is important because gender is usually a troublesome topic to deal with, and this study must consider it within the specific context of Jordanian society. The researcher will show that the gender performances and roles addressed in this thesis are part of what the society suffers from, in one way or another; thus, studying this issue might present a new view of Jordanian society. Whether these representations are helpful or harmful is an important question this research is trying to explore.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are many; the lack of research around Jordanian film is one of these limitations and could result in limiting the researcher in terms of the literature review.

Also, since this lack exists the researcher could be limited in terms of data collection. Moreover, the study could not include the opinions of Jordanian people on Jordanian film due to the limitation of time and place. Another limitation would be the fact that this study is built around three selected films which means it is specific to them; therefore, the findings will be limited in relation to all Jordanian films. Also, generalization is also a limitation that could result in representing a false image. The last limitation is the fact that most resources that are related to Jordanian film are written in Arabic and have no translations, which means the researcher will consume a lot of time translating the texts in order to use them in the thesis.

A crucial problem that faces this study is the lack of research and studies on Jordanian film, which makes it hard for scholars to write about these films. This lack of scholarly research arises from the issue of the lack of advertising for Jordanian film. Thus, this thesis is trying to give a voice to Jordanian film by examining the selection of films from the theoretical aspects of gender performance and gender roles and how they are represented in Jordanian film.

Definition of Terms

As some terms might be problematic to the reader, here is list of possible problematic terms with their definitions.

Performance:

In his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* Ervin Goffman identifies performance as follows:

A "performance" may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants. Taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contribute to the other performances as the audience, observers, or co-

participants. (qtd. in Schechner 23)

The question of what "is" performance is also important to ask. Marvin Carlson gives an interpretation of what "is" performance in his book *Performance: A Critical Introduction.* He states,

> The term "performance" has become extremely popular in recent years in a wide range of activities in the arts, in literature, and in the social sciences. As its popularity and usage has grown, so has a complex body of writing about performance, attempting to analyze and understand just what sort of human activity it is. [. . .] The recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behavior raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as "performance," or at least all activity carried out with a consciousness of itself. [. . .] If we consider performance as an essentially contested concept, this will help us to understand the futility of seeking some overarching semantic field to cover such seemingly disparate usages as the performance of an actor, of a schoolchild, of an automobile. (qtd. in Schechner 25)

According to Richard Schechner,

> Something "is" a performance when historical and social context, convention, usage, and tradition say it is. […] One cannot determine what "is" a performance without referring to specific cultural circumstances. There is nothing inherent in an action in itself that makes it a performance or disqualifies it from being a performance. […] Performance theorists argue that everyday life is performance. (30-32)

> As Schechner states: "any behavior, event, action, or thing can be studied 'as'

performance, can be analyzed in terms of doing, behaving, and showing" (32).

In the following pages four more chapters are introduced, where each is concerned with an aspect of this thesis. Chapter II introduces the theoretical framework as well as a review for literature in the field. After that comes Chapter III where the methodology used in this thesis is given to the reader in detail. Moreover, Chapter IV is concerned with the findings from the selected data and a brief analysis. Further, Chapter V, the last chapter in this study, is where the discussion of the findings is introduced to the reader in order to reach to conclusions about Jordanian film and answer the questions of the study, which are all included in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the previous chapter it should be clear that the problem of the study lays in the complications of gender representations in Jordanian film and their surrounding sociocultural aspects of life. This study provides interested scholars and readers with some of the issues related to gender as they are represented in a selection of Jordanian films. Within the boundaries of this study the researcher aims at reaching to results that are both fair to the representation of gender in the films and the controversial issues that surround the constitution of the image of gender and its performance in Jordanian society.

This chapter is concerned with setting the theoretical framework this thesis follows. Also, there is a specific part where the literature of previous studies is reviewed. This is done in order to set a background for this study and locate its importance in the field of film studies. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part is concerned with presenting the theory of performance introduced by Richard Schechner. Specifications that are useful for this study are introduced in this part. Also, gender performance and Judith Butler's notions of gender performativity are included in the discussion of Schechner's theory. Moreover, the second part is more related to film theory, where Greg Singh's understanding of Carl Jung's notion of the gaze and its relation to gender and its performance is a main point of discussion. The third part, however, is concerned with reviewing studies from the field and their importance in setting the back ground for this specific study.

Richard Schechner on Performance Studies

The term performance is a very broad one, it could encompass any type of performance whether a real life performance or a performance of the aesthetics which has its own reality and its own world. "The one overriding and underlying assumption of performance studies is that the field is open. There is no finality to performance studies, either theoretically or operationally. There are many voices, themes, opinions, methods, and subjects" (Schechner 1) as Sechechner states in the beginning of his book *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. Thus, performance theory could be applied to almost anything; anything that could be understood as a performance, for example, film. Richard Schechner's theory of performance stems from performance in the arts, specifically theatrical performance. However, he sets his theory with little boundaries, thus, his theory could be applied on various forms of art, including film.

In an attempt to explain what is meant by the word performance, Schechner explains that showing what you are doing is performance. In a Youtube clip, he claims that "if you are showing what you are doing, you are performing." However, if a person is explaining what is being performed this person moves to the realm of Performance Studies. In his book *Performance Studies* Schechner refers to Erving Goffman's definition of performance. "A 'performance' may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (qtd. In Schechner 23). Thus, performance is part of an individual's daily life.

Sechechner discusses performance in terms of values and their construction in the arts. He states:

> Values belong to ideology, science, the arts, religion, politics, and other areas of
> human endeavor and inquiry. Values are hard-won and contingent, changing over

time according to social and historical circumstances. Values are a function of cultures, groups, and individuals. Values can be used to protect and liberate or to control and oppress. In fact, the difference between what is "liberty" and what is "oppression" depends a lot on where you are coming from. (Schechner 1)

Values are usually part of performance in film, characters perform roles that include cultural values which might be liberating or oppressing. Oppression and liberation are two concepts that are understood differently in different cultures, what might be deemed oppressive in one culture might not be for another, and the same applies to liberation. Film represents these concepts through the behaviors of characters in accordance with their assumed culture; thus, the detection of what is oppressive or liberating lays in the analysis of cultural practices performed by the characters.

This particular concept of the oppressing/controlling or liberating/protecting power of values will be utilized in the discussion section of this thesis. For instance, in *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012) Monaliza faces issues with the oppressive nature of some of the values she has to follow, one of the most obvious examples is the way she is expected to do everything her sister, Afaf, tells her to do because she is the one who raised her and took care of her after the death of her parents. Monaliza does not agree with everything Afaf tells her to do and it could be interpreted as one of those oppressive and controlling values according to Monaliza, however, it is seen as a form of protection from the point of view of society as well as from Afaf's. Such examples are further emphasized in Chapter V in order to give an understanding of Jordanian film in terms of what could be an oppressing or liberating value in accordance with the cultural representations in the selected films.

According to Schechner "[P]erformances are actions. As a discipline, performance studies takes actions very seriously" (1). Action at the same time is an integral part of film as characters perform actions out through the things they delve into, and those actions are what constitute the performance. While some might argue that performance is only connected to the arts, Schechner argues:

> Performance must be construed as a "broad spectrum" or "continuum" of human actions ranging from ritual, play, sports, popular entertainments, the performing arts (theater, dance, music), and everyday life performances to the enactment of social, professional, gender, and class roles, and on to healing, the media, and the internet. (2)

Schechner here interprets performance as a possibility for every human action. His discussion of how performance works in sports, for example, as the actions of the players in a football game or a baseball game is a performance that amplifies the visual pleasure and appeal to the audience. As it involves a spectator, any action could become a performance of some kind.

The process of studying a performance or studying an action as a performance might be a window to unlimited interpretations that can change the experience of spectating an action. "A performance studies scholar examines texts, architecture, visual arts, or any other item or artifact of art or culture not in themselves, but as players in ongoing relationships, that is, 'as' performances" (Schechner 2). This ongoing relationship involves rethinking the possibilities of understanding the text; whatever type of text is under consideration. By understanding what a performance is capable of presenting, meaning becomes of great value. The meaning-making process, a concept that will be made clearer later in this chapter through Singh's discussion of it, involves thinking and rethinking the possible interpretations of the same "text"/performance in

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order to make sense of the performance, or to get to a point of satisfaction with the findings from this performance.

The "behavior" is important in performance studies, it is the behavioral aspect of a fixed "text"/performance that changes its meaning over time. Every time a spectator/viewer looks at a painting, an example Schechner uses, it is the same; however, the experience of looking at it and interacting with it could create different meanings. As Schechner puts it "the artifact may be relatively stable, but the performance it creates or takes part in can change radically" (2). This performance could be different each time it is looked at; the spectator's experiences of the world could change their perspective on how they look at and interpret the same performance each time it is viewed. According to Schechner:

> In performance studies, questions of embodiment, action, behavior, and agency are dealt with interculturally. This approach recognizes two things. First, in today's world, cultures are always interacting – there are no totally isolated groups. Second, the differences among cultures are so profound that no theory of performance is universal: one size cannot fit all. (2)

Culture and performance are interrelated forces that affect each other. By performing cultural aspects the performance elevates to possibly being deeper in what it is representing. Moreover, as performance theory is an interactive universal theory, the claim that it could be applied on any field could be justified.

Performance incorporates many fields, especially humanities fields. Psychological, sociological, and cultural studies are usually employed in the understanding of what performances mean. Schechner believes that "a performance act, interactional in nature and involving symbolic forms and live bodies, provides a way to constitute meaning and to affirm

individual and cultural values" (23). The construction of meaning is important in performance studies as it has resonance in cultural and social constructions of human perspective on the performance. Schechner argues "[W]hile positioned squarely within the field of speech communication, [the name] 'performance studies' suggests clear links to theater, ethnography and folklore, popular culture, and contemporary literary criticism" (23). This links performance to film as it is usually considered part of popular culture. The positioning of film under the umbrella of performance ensures the importance of the process of meaning-making as it involves a spectator, cultural background, and visual pleasure. The understanding of performance in light of Schechner's discussion enforces two categories that are crucial to interpreting any performance "as" performance and "is" performance. He claims, "there are limits to what 'is' performance. But just about anything can be studied 'as' performance" (Schechner 30). Hence, he distinguishes between them by setting boundaries for what "is" performance. He states:

> Something 'is' a performance when historical and social context, convention, usage, and tradition say it is. Rituals, play and games, and the roles of everyday life are performances because convention, context, usage, and tradition say so. One cannot determine what 'is' a performance without referring to specific cultural circumstances. There is nothing inherent in an action in itself that makes it a performance or disqualifies it from being a performance. From the vantage of the kind of performance theory I am propounding, every action is a performance. But from the vantage of cultural practice, some actions will be deemed performances and others not; and this will vary from culture to culture, historical period to historical period. (Schechner 30)

Thus, he puts "is" performance in the dimensions of how a society and a culture conventionalize a performance; meaning those set rules or conventions that societies follow are within the boundaries of "is" performance. For example, the rituals of marriage, although distinct for different cultures, are under the category of "is" performance; hence, they are normalized performances or could be referred to as institutionalized performances. Normalized or institutionalized performances are possibly those notions that are built in societies and seen as part of their development, like marriage for example, or some of the institutionalized corruption in some societies; meaning corruption that is known as corruption but covered up and normalized within the society to the point that it might not be seen as corruption anymore. The example of marriage is important as it is reflected in the three selected films in this study as a very important aspect of a woman's life as well as a man's.

"As" performance is related to the idea of "is" performance, although it holds its differences. As Schechner articulates it "[A]ny behavior, event, action, or thing can be studied 'as' performance, can be analyzed in terms of doing, behaving, and showing" (32). Thus, everyday life events and actions could be studied as performances. Schechner exemplifies this by using maps to illustrate and further explain the idea of the possibility of understanding anything and everything as a performance. He uses Mercator's mapping of the earth and claims that "maps are not neutral. They perform a particular interpretation of how the world ought to be. A map is a 'projection,' a particular way of representing a sphere on a flat surface" (Schechner 32). Also, he adds a very important aspect of performance by stating that "[M]ercator's map enacts the world as the colonial powers wished to view it" (Shechner 33). Thus, Europe as a colonial power is placed in the Northern hemisphere, while Africa the colonized is, for instance, in the Southern hemisphere. This suggests that because Europe is the colonizing power it is above the colonized,

that is Africa. This is important as it could be applied on any other issue and it could be easily understood as a performance; "it enacts power relationships" as Schechner declares. The enactment of this power relationship could easily apply on gender, especially in patriarchal societies.

Just like there is performance in the arts there is performance in everyday life. Schechner argues, "that making art involves training and rehearsing is clear. But everyday life also involves years of training and practice, of learning appropriate culturally specific bits of behavior, of adjusting and performing one's life roles in relation to social and personal circumstances" (23-24). Culture gains a level of importance as it is what defines the act/performance appropriate or not. This varies from a culture to another, however, the construction of roles and rules for humans to follow are present in every culture. Moreover, according to Schechner:

> A painting 'takes place' in the physical object; a novel takes place in the words. But a performance takes place as action, interaction, and relation […] [T]o treat any object, work, or product 'as' performance – a painting, a novel, a shoe, or anything at all – means to investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other objects or beings, and how it relates to other objects or beings. Performances exist only as actions, interactions and relationships. (30)

In accordance with the ideas presented in this quotation the researcher points out that film in this study is investigated in terms of what it does, how it interacts with the audience or the scholar, and how it relates to the cultural background from which it comes and the cultural background of the audience or scholar.

In an attempt to justify the importance of performance Schechner gives seven functions of performance that are important as each represents an aspect of the performance:

1 to entertain

2 to make something that is beautiful

3 to mark or change identity

4 to make or foster community

5 to heal

6 to teach, persuade, or convince

7 to deal with the sacred and/or the demonic. (46)

It is rare, according to Schechner, to find a performance that applies all of these functions. However, most performances employ more than one function. These functions of performance are crucial as they help the spectator in the process of constructing meaning.

When a performance is made to entertain as well as to make something beautiful, a painting for example, it interacts with the spectator and possibly holds cultural significance, it is meaningful as a performance. Entertainment, as a concept, is defined by Schechner as "something produced in order to please a public. But what may please one audience may not please another. So one cannot specify exactly what constitutes entertainment – except to say that almost all performances strive, to some degree or other, to entertain" (48). The force entertainment holds in relation to performance is significant as it constructs the spectator's appeal of the performance.

One of the parts of Schechner's discussion of performance relates directly to gender, which echoes with Judith Butler's notions of gender roles and performativity. Here, Schechner introduces the relation between gender and performance, with a focus on how gender, race, or any other social identification is constructed by society, culture, and power relations. Gender is a performative construct; what makes a female a woman is how she acts in accordance with the

socially constructed role for her, and it is exactly the same case for males. What makes a male a man is how he performs his role in society.

Gender is a socially constructed idea that is different from the biological sex of a person. The constructed roles for different genders differ from one society to another, one culture to another. The set of rules that a man and a woman should follow in order to fit in society are sometimes challenged by members of the society. Moreover, as the world is becoming more affected by globalization, cultures are being more prone to be affected by other cultures. Thus, people begin thinking differently about their situations in their specific society. This is where the people who do not follow the constructed role for them as gendered-selves suffer from becoming outsiders to the society they once belonged to.

Gender as a social construct labels people and stereotypes become significant, and actually, a way to fight those who defy cultural gender specific roles. In the case of the three selected films emphasized in this study, there are characters who defy this categorization and the stereotypicalization of what they should and should not do. Many theorists in the fields of sociology and psychology, among other fields, discuss gender as a set of rules constructed by society in order to seemingly keep order, order in their sense of the word is different from how this word sounds for different members of societies in this world. The interest of categorizing gender roles maintains power in the hands of those who are empowered by such a construct. In this part of the chapter concepts of gender and their theorization by Judith Butler are presented in order to be utilized in the fifth chapter of this study, which is the discussion of the findings from the selected films. By utilizing the understanding of Butler's ideas on gender, the researcher aims at delving into the world of cultural representations and their importance in the performance of different characters in these films.

Judith Butler's notion of becoming a certain gender is discussed by Schechner, he explains, "one's biological sex ('female' or 'male') is raw material shaped through practice into the socially constructed performance that is gender ('woman' or 'man')" (Shechner 151). This claim of gender being a separate entity from biological sex takes its authentication from looking at how gender is affected and constructed by social and cultural factors. Since sex remains the same as it is, the biological feature, in theory and practice it is separate from gender. People learn to perform their gender, the way they dress, talk, act, and walk among other actions are indicators of their gender. These actions are taught to a child in order to perform his/her gender in a mannerly way according to the society they live in. Such taught behavior indicates that gender is, in fact, constructed by society and culture: "To perform these [actions] 'successfully' situates a person securely within a given social world. To refuse to perform one's assigned gender is to rebel against 'nature'" (Schechner 152). The nature of gender differs from one society to another, one culture to another. Thus, it is a matter of construction that how a person acts reflects their gender. Moreover, in discussing performative acts Schechner points out an idea that Butler argues; "there are 'nuanced' in 'individual ways' of playing one's gender, but whatever these are, a person performs her or his gender in accordance with already inscribed performatives" (152). Here the reader reaches to the idea that the performative is the constructed.

Butler further discusses how gender is a construct by stating

> When Simon de Beauvoir claims "one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman," she is appropriating and reinterpreting this doctrine of constituting acts from the phenomenological tradition. In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceede; rather, it is an

identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized*

repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body

and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures,

movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding

gendered self. (Butler, Performative Acts 519)

Claiming that gender identity is constituted by a *stylized repetition of acts* means that it is

constructed and the repetition of acts concerning gender identification, like clothing, manner of

speech, and other gender specifying actions, are enactments of socially constructed roles

governing members of a given society.

Considering gender as a social construct leads Schechner to relying on an interesting

example examining whether there is a "gay gene" or a gay "lifestyle." If the "gay gene" is

considered true then it is natural to have homosexuals in the society and thus the idea of

homosexuality would be normalized in the social sphere. Likewise, if gay "lifestyle" is taken to

be true, then it is a matter of choice. However sexuality as interpreted, whether a choice or not, is

still affected by the social construction of gender. "What counts is both how people actually

perform their lives and what laws and conventions govern and guide them" (Schechner 153).

Therefore, it is crucial to keep in mind that society will enforce its gender constructed "reality"

upon members of this society and other societies. "People of the same sex can be, and often are,

of different genders" (Schechner 153). Hence, the idea of gender being one rigid thing connected

to what a person's sex is cannot be applicable or validated in this case. "Butler and others who

adhere to her point of view believe that gender is 'real' only insofar and in the specific way it is

performed" (Schechner 153). Although gender could be "real", it could encompass different

realities and performances. According to Schechner, "Unorthodox gender performatives are not

merely affronts to patriarchy; they challenge long-standing Western philosophical distinctions between appearance and reality" (153). The distinction between these two concepts could be deceiving and challenging; something that could be deceiving by nature holds a degree of riskiness, especially when defying the social construct. While homosexuality and heterosexuality are not a main concern of this study, discussing them strengthens the argument of gender being a social and cultural construct.

"Most theorists of performativity argue that all social realities are constructed. The construction of gender, race, and identity are three key examples" (Schechner 167). When there are multiple realities and interpretations to one thing or another that means it falls under the boundaries of the constructed. A society normalizes a construct in order to maintain "order" and power. However, if the construct is rebelled against by nonconformist actions from the members of the society then power is no longer in the hands of those who claim it. For example, in a patriarchal society where man holds power and constructs social rules that are normalized in the society, woman is excluded from the process of making a decision regarding whether these constructed social rules are acceptable or not, should be normalized or not. Consequently, the rebellion of those who did not normalize the construct in their minds is expected. Therefore, order is no longer maintained and power structures melt. This applies to film in that it has its own constructed reality that could be a reflection of a "real life" reality and affected by it. However, it is never the exact same performance. Each reality is unique although it shares commonalities with other realities. In the world of film gender is present, and it is a construct made by the represented society. Although in film and in "real life" the construction of gender roles is subtle; meaning there is no specific way to point out how or who constructed it, studying implications of gender reveals its constructed nature.

The longevity of a performance lies in its reception by the audience and the aftermath of the performance. Schechner defines the aftermath of a performance as a phase of the performance process which might extend to an indefinite time, depending on its physicality and accessibility "the aftermath persists in physical evidence, critical responses, archives, and memories" (Shechner 247). A performance that is physically available, like a photograph, a written text, or a film, if easily accessible lives longer than a performance that cannot be archived. Thus, film as a performance if accessible through different mediums and studied by researchers might hold more importance than performances that are not recorded in a physical sense of the word.

Schechner presents many ideas that could seem simple on the surface but complex if further studied. This might be done in order to make it clear to the reader that any idea could be further analyzed into being a performance. For example, an individual's identity could be a performance and thus could be analyzed as such. Schechner says, "One of the meanings of 'to perform' is to get things done according to a particular plan or scenario" (34). Thus, a film is a performance as it follows a specific scenario. A final remark would be, as said in the words of Schechner,

> The term performance incorporates a whole field of human activity. It embraces a verbal act in everyday life or a staged play […] It includes cultural performances, such as the personal narrative or folk and fairy tales […] It also includes literary performances […] In all cases a performance act, interactional in nature and involving symbolic forms and live bodies, provides a way to constitute meaning and to affirm individual and cultural values (23).

By employing the depicted aspects of performance theory on the findings of this study, the discussion part of this thesis, Chapter V, aims at giving an interpretation of the selected films in light of this theory and its relation to the following theory. Situating this theory in the world of film might bring in an interesting interpretation of how these three selected films work and what they are trying to represent. In this study the researcher will mainly interpret the text in accordance with how gender is performed. In terms of using Schechner's theory of performance the idea that gender is a performance or could be seen as performance is important and, thus, using such a theory is relevant to what the researcher is going to conclude from these films.

Greg Singh's Post-Jungian Approaches to Film

Why is film important? Why does it matter? What does it represent? And why does it represent whatever it represents in the way it does? Asking such questions would set a framework for studying film as a film, a piece of art, an artifact, and a performance. Greg Singh writes *Film after Jung: Post-Jungian Approaches to Film Theory,* where some of Carl Jung's theories are utilized to set a theoretical frame for how film can be studied in relation to Jung's theories. In the first chapter of this book, film is depicted as an important medium of representation; thus, it does matter, as it represents what a culture involves and how a society behaves. Film invokes a reaction from audiences and, therefore, it gains, or does not gain, importance. The level of importance differs from one audience to another, from one scholar to another.

Saying that all films are important might be a generalization; however, one could claim that each film has a level of importance in accordance with the audience of target, or maybe any viewer who claims the importance of a particular film. But why should and/or would film matter? Film is becoming a famous communicative and expressive form of art. It has also

become, one could say, a form of storytelling and a rhetorical documentation method. As any film represents a culture of one kind or another, it is telling stories about the people, the lifestyle, and/or the social realities of cultures and societies. Thus, it holds importance to those who are interested in the represented culture or set of cultures.

Singh touches upon a very interesting indication of the importance of film. He claims "the consumption of film as either a public or a private experience is […] primarily one of pleasure. Emotional responses and personal idiosyncratic notions of the films themselves are most often articulated in the most basic of terms, but in ways with which most of us are very familiar" (Singh 14-13). Therefore, film could be seen as a performance talking to people the way they talk to each other. It creates a reality that is different from the "real life" reality. However, it maintains the connection between characters in the film and the audience of the film. This connection is what makes film an important medium of representation. Audiences can emotionally connect to the happenings in the film, which might create a sense of belonging to the film. However, one should differentiate between the "imagined" reality the film creates and that which exists in the world of the audience.

This dichotomy of imagined and real interconnects in the mind of the audience while watching a film, and this is what creates the emotional response. From a theoretical standpoint, a scholar looks at the emotional responses the audience might reach to and creates a space for analysis. This analysis would bring the film's reality to the real life reality, where the film is seen in light of the represented society. Moreover, this would help in reaching to conclusions about how film is a representation of societies and cultures, hence, an eye on how societies work and how ideologies, such as gender, are constructed by culture and society.

As human audiences we tend to "'make sense' of the world of the film" (Singh 13). Thus, we connect it to the way we live our daily life experiences, and this is where the analysis and understanding of the film stems from. Singh states

> Part of the power and pleasure comes from the story's retelling, and of course this includes the playful telling of the tale through the real-world filter of production knowledge, the star system, and how we felt while watching the film. This adds to the 'making sense' of the film and gives it, and the experience of watching it, meaning. (13)

Each spectator retells the film from their own point of view. What one spectator might focus on, in the process of retelling the film, might not be the same for another. This depends on the perspective each spectator has on the film, and this creates richness in the experience of watching a film and creating meaning out of it. Moreover, making sense of the world of the film might help the spectator, through the process of making meaning out of the film, in making sense and meaning out of the world of the spectator.

The process of thinking, rethinking, and reaching a point of departure from the world of the film to the reconnection with the world of the spectator creates and invokes an alternative reality of speculations and analysis, possibly, to connect the two worlds together or to make sense of the two worlds in relation to each other. The experience of retelling the story of the film might make the spectator re-experience the worlds in different means of perspective. Film as it is, having its own world and reality, might give the spectator a chance to experience the world they live in differently. Further, a new process of making sense and meaning of the world the spectator lives in might be contingent on aspects of watching a film. Through experiencing a different world, the world of the film, a new perspective might spring in the mind of the

spectator. The spectator would, thus, be emotionally affected by the world of the film to a point where the world around them might have different meanings, this is possible to happen in the unconscious if not the conscious mind. According to Singh, "the embodied experience of watching film is felt to be a highly subjective experience" (14). This means the experience differs from one spectator to another, in accordance with their cultural background among other possible factors. Therefore, yes film matters, and yes there are reasons for its importance.

As film presupposes an "imagined" reality that is apart from the "real life" reality it, in the most part, reflects on the "real life" reality by sharing points of intersection with it. Singh expresses

> As so many of the clichéd descriptions of what film is and does, it (film and our relation to it) is often regarded as similar to observing the world, observing our selves. The proliferation of metaphors describing the experience of film form as a "window on the world", a "mirror reflecting the world", a "magical looking-glass", "dream machine" and so on, testify to this. (20)

This creates a point of interest in the mind of the researcher, as it depicts how a film can have its own life. However, it could reflect on the spectator's life and could, actually, affect the spectator's experience of life and making meaning out of it. Thought and action, according to Singh, "are given a meaning based on recurrent structures that form the very fabric of our social being" (20). Thus, a film might be a factor that could help the spectator in the process of making sense of the world around them.

Film is a motion picture that tells a story, which has a beginning and possibly and ending, and might have a message to the audience. As naïve as the above sentence might sound, it is true, but it is not the full reality surrounding film. Film is, actually, a form of art that assumes a story

to tell and an aesthetic atmosphere to engage in. It could be interpreted in different ways and could be studied using different theories. A spectator can make sense out of it and thus, come up with a meaning that could be contingent to multiple interpretations. Singh says that "the questions of authorship and artistry emphasized in many approaches espoused by Jungian film scholars suggest that a discussion of the very notion of film as an art form, and the filmmaker as an author, is urgently needed" (27). The process of shooting a film involves thinking, rethinking, and refitting many elements in order to end up with a film that has a meaning and grabs the attention of the spectator. Just like it is in the process of writing a piece of literature or making a piece of art, this justifies looking at film as a form of art, as it involves art making criteria.

In order to understand a film the audience tries to make sense out of it. This involves a process of "meaning-making", as Singh terms it. This is a subjective experience where different individuals make different meanings out of the same film. Singh argues that the "preoccupation with artistic endeavour also located the importance of the psyche, or the capacity of human consciousness to articulate and express the experience of being-in-the-world (the experiential, the embodied) through artistic, analytic and other endeavours" (50). Through understanding the world of the film, the audience experiences being in the world from new or different vantage points. For Singh

> the subjective articulation of being-in-the-world is […] of prime importance in the notion of spectator-as-subject […] [film] was, after all, a mass art form that elicited highly subjective responses – a factor that mirrored shifting attentions, oscillating between objective reality and subjective experience, contributing to meaning-making processes, at least as commonly felt by audiences. (50)

This relation between film and audience is built on a subjective understanding of the world of the film. The spectator delves into the world of the film in order to make sense out of it and consequently, makes a meaning that is both contingent on the world of the spectator and the world of the film. Even though film has an unchanging story, fixed happenings in a fixed time and place, the spectator brings in their subjective opinion and meaning-making process, which makes the experience of watching film a changing process from one spectator's perspective to another.

To delve more into the relation between film and audience, film and critic, and film and theory Jung's notion of the gaze might be a good example of how the film is seen or perceived in accordance with a theoretical understanding of the gaze. The concept of the gaze implies a subject of the gaze and an object of the gaze. In the case of film it is the object of the gaze while the subject is the audience. Also, there are certain elements in each film that fall under the category of the object of the gaze. In a general sense, it is usually the employment of female characters that makes them the most gazed-at objects. Singh discusses this concept of the gaze in light of Laura Mulvey's discussion of it: "Mulvey states that woman stands in patriarchal culture as signifier of the male other: Woman is the bearer of meaning, bearer of the image; she is not maker of meaning, nor is she bearer of the look" (Singh 99). This points at the female image/representation in film; there is always an involvement of women in film. This gender representation in film is crucial to situating the film in the boundaries of a world reflecting the "real" world. Singh states "it is essential to recognize troublesome representations of gender in narrative film as, semiotically speaking, images of the human form in narrative cinema are generally to be considered iconic and therefore *representative* of humans in the real world in terms of appearance" (99). Gazing at a world that is similar to the world of the spectator helps in

the process of making sense and meaning out of the film. By connecting the world of the film to the world of the spectator, the making-meaning process becomes easier, and in some sense more pleasurable. Thus, the object of the gaze gains its importance in how it is gazed at.

The employment of the concept of the gaze in analyzing film plays a significant role in the way it helps in understanding the world of the film, meaning the employment of characters and events to create meaning. When subjects of the gaze gaze at the object, they see different aspects of the object. The subject grasps out meaning from the process of gazing. Thus, it makes sense to study the relation between what is being looked at and who is looking at it. The notion that a female character who possess a certain look and a certain attitude is employed in film in order to make it more appealing to the subject of the gaze might not be a false notion. Representing a beautiful female, a smart female, a dumb female, or any other type of female could make the film more pleasurable to the audience. Thus, female characters are usually looked at as the object of the gaze. However, it might be more accurate to say that the different representations of gender, whether male or female/man or woman, could be one of the main factors of the appeal of the film to the spectator. The meaningfulness of the film could be grasped from its representation of gender, and how it is gazed at is important to study in order to grasp that meaningfulness. In applying the notion of the gaze on the selected films for this study, it is important to note that the social gaze is what constitutes the analysis of the films in light of this notion. The social gaze here is the way society gazes and criticizes the gender specific roles that are represented in the films, meaning the embedded specification of "right/wrong" actions and "good/bad" performances of gender in relation to what society deems "good/bad" and "right/wrong." The utilization of the conventions of the notion of the gaze benefits the analysis of the films and situates them in a theoretical framework. The conventions of the notion of the

gaze are, generally speaking, connected to finding a subject of the gaze as well as an object. By defining who is gazing, at what, why, and what the results are, the analysis would reach a point where there is a recognition of these elements in the selected films and thus, there might or might not be a relation to other theories applied on these films.

Simply put the notion of the gaze involves a subject and an object. They relate to each other, especially in film, in that they affect the spectator's understanding of the world of the film. Whether the subject of the gaze is the spectator, the society and culture, or a character in the film it is interesting to see how these forces/subjects construct a meaning from the film. What is meant by society and culture being a subject of the gaze is that the social and cultural perspectives on what is happening in the film play the role of the gazer; here the gaze is a critique on how a character is performing their gender role in accordance with the social and cultural constructs. In Chapter V, examples of the subject of the gaze from the selected films will assist in analyzing gender performances and representations, and their importance as indicators of how the constructed roles for genders are a point of interest in the films.

While the notion of the gaze might be clear to the reader at this point, it is important to discuss gender in film as Singh suggests it. Singh uses Jung's concept/theory of the archetype in order to provide a clearer understanding of how gender works in film. The archetypal images found in film are contingent on cultural understandings or constructions. The idea of the collective unconscious comes into play in this case. What is shared in the collective unconscious constructs these archetypal images, such as the existence of mother, child, society, and so on. The notion of the collective unconscious could be understood as the shared archetypes between all humans. However, it is possibly valid to interpret that different cultures have different archetypal images shared in the collective unconscious of members of that culture; it may or may

not share archetypes with other cultures, yet, it has its uniqueness. By claiming that each culture possibly has its own collective unconscious, it is appropriate to say that what is an archetype for one culture might not count as one for another. This is employed in the discussion part of this study using Laila a character in *Transit Cities* as an example for a person who experiences a development in the collective unconscious as it shares archetypes from different cultures. This happens due to experiencing the Jordanian culture then moving to the USA where it is a totally different culture. By opening herself to a more flexible culture, the American culture, Laila cannot simply abandon her new ideologies when she returns to Jordan. If it is valid to say that each culture has its own collective unconscious, then the analysis of this particular character in light of this idea could be validated.

According to Singh "the form of narrative film is particularly suited to placing archetypal content within a narrative structure" (125). In each film there is resonance for archetypal images whether intentionally employed or not. Singh adds "the use of 'archetypal' contents or character types in film criticism is simple shorthand for the filmmaker to move the plot along, and for audiences to engage with character types that are perhaps immediately familiar to them" (126-7). Culture and society come into play in this case, where "reading anything further into the text requires a critical understanding of the source material, the historic, cultural and sociopolitical implications of production and consumption contexts" (127).

Gender is a construct that could differ from one culture to another, it could have shared implications between cultures; however, it is still unique to each culture. This construct finds itself in the collective unconscious of the culture through ideologies that are fixed in the unconscious of the members of the culture. Therefore, it becomes a matter of importance that the notion of the collective unconscious is understood the way it is depicted as unique to each

culture. In Singh's terms, male and female are used to denote biological differences, while

femininity and masculinity are emphasized as the gender construct. Thus, whenever female or

male is used it is clear what it implies, and the same is applied to the use of feminine and

masculine.

Singh is suggesting a new perspective on the understanding of Jungian psychology. He

draws his ideas from Jung. However, he has a unique way of interpreting Jungian psychology

and relating it to film. The ideas of the archetype and the collective unconscious hold a level of

importance in accordance with this study. Singh utilizes these ideas in their relation to gender.

He says "Jung wrote that of all the archetypes, the three that have 'the most frequent and the

most disturbing influence on the ego' are the shadow, the animus and the anima" (Singh 130).

The animus is the masculine aspect, while the anima is the feminine aspect of the personality.

Singh argues that one of the most important archetypes in Jungian psychology is the

"contrasexual archetype" which "represents those aspects of the personality that most typify

one's gender opposite" (Singh 127). Setting the anima and animus as crucial Jungian archetypes

suggests the importance of understanding how gender plays a role in constructing meaning out of

film. In dealing with the contrasexual archetype as a theoretical stance from which the researcher

can discuss film, one should remember that "the textual realm does not exist by itself, nor indeed

does it exist for itself: it exists for the audience, within the cultural realm" (Singh 145). By

looking at film as a product of culture made for an audience it becomes clearer that film has a

culture or follows a cultural construct in order to appeal to an audience. When the spectator finds

a familiar culture in film, the experience of watching film might become a matter of analyzing it

in accordance with one's culture. Greg Singh points out many interesting approaches to

understanding and reading film from a post-Jungian perspective. These approaches could be

helpful in dealing with Jordanian film, by looking at aspects of gender, spectator, and the experience of spectating and its relation to culture.

Literature Review

As the limitations of the study indicate, there is lack of research surrounding Jordanian film. Thus, the researcher reviewed some of the literature on studies done on film from the region. In Stollery and Lev's "The Question of Third Cinema: African and Middle Eastern Cinema," an attempt to provide a curriculum to teach African and Middle Eastern films is addressed. The authors provide questions by which a course would be thematically focused on to devote a sub-canon for films in Africa and the Middle East within the world canon of film. The authors emphasize how third world films have to be differentiated from first and second world when studied. Students should be "mapping these films within a new geography" (Stollery and Lev 55). This article highlights the theoretical and historical aspects that effected film productions in Africa and the Middle East. It concentrates on the effects of colonialism, anti-colonialism, and postcolonialism, in specific, the way those periods had affected the formation of national identity in third world films. Moreover, issues of class, gender, and sexuality are essential to this study. Reception and the audience are also focused on in the study.

In specific, the main points that Stollery and Lev's paper stresses are connected to the importance of knowing that the way western films are criticized and looked upon have to be different from that which African and Middle Eastern films should be addressed. The difficulties that the third world film industry is facing limit the production process of the films; the authors draw attention to the way those films are looked upon as "imperfect cinema," which is due to the "situational approach to film making and exhibition" (Stollery and Lev 47). There are two problems. First is the location of the third world and second is that the notions of the third world

may not be relevant to today's world. In addition, these are issues of financing and language usage; the decision to use one or more dialects over others affects the reception of the film. Also, the relationship between tradition and modernity. "Tradition/modernity," "Africa/the West," and "primitive/advanced" have to coexist in a "syncretic" way where those opposite poles become one (Stollery and Lev 49). The audience has to be considered; the audience shapes these films; "the study of Third Cinema is never just a question of film form" (Stollery and Lev 55). Content is relevant to the audience of the Third World (Stollery and Lev 55). Therefore, students should consider the fact that the third cinema is "a cinema of becoming" (Stollery and Lev 55).

Talking about Egyptian Cinema in specific, in El-Mazzaoui's "Film in Egypt," the author provides a history for Egyptian film industry. This study sheds light on films as early as 1896; yet, it emphasizes that Egyptian film identity began shaping in 1927. Technical issues were highlighted, such as light, stages, and location, which caused the quality of the films to be jeopardized. Distribution and production are also addressed as main difficulties that the evolution of the Egyptian film industry faced.

Moving along to discussing Lebanese film, in Livingston's "Lebanese Cinema," a study of the conflicts that face Lebanese films are addressed. There were many difficulties to promote for a Lebanese film caused by religion, by Egyptian competition, by the audience, by the technicalities of production, and by the way the film industry is viewed. The struggle to promote for a Lebanese film was caused by the limitations of resources in the film industry. The director and the actors were also the technicians working on the set, they had to build everything that made the film possible from scratch. In addition to this the subjects of the films in order for them to sell they had to create "propaganda films," films with a purpose that serves the issues of the third world and suits the audience (Livingston 36). Those issues were not the main issues that

frustrated film creators and movie stars, the obstacle of the name tag actor was and in many places still is a stigma socially unaccepted. The job title of actor or actress was not socially accepted due to the conservative religious confinements that were imposed upon the Lebanese society from both Islam and Christianity; the main two religions in Lebanon. In addition to the above, Egyptian films did not want Lebanese film industry to flourish because Lebanon was a main source of consumption in the Middle Eastern economic world when it comes to selling Egyptian films. Egyptian film tickets in Lebanese cinemas were sold cheaper than Lebanese film tickets; consequently, the audience would go to Egyptian films in Lebanon rather than watch Lebanese ones.

Returning back to Africa, North Africa in specific, Algerian film is a highlight. Parker's "The Battle of Algiers" is a film review of Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers.* Parker notes that this film is an investigation of the "confrontation between nationalist feeling and colonialism" (Parker 62). In this review the author divides the article into three main bullet points. The first point is "Romanticism Versus Pragmatism," through which the author takes a look at the film with reference to Edward Said's *The Dictatorship of Truth.* He depicts situations from the film where sharp contrasts between "Us" and "Them," "Yes" and "No," showing the extremes of both colonialism and nationalism and how both are in quest to gain power. The second section is titled "Ironies," it addresses the ironies that the movie shows where this division between nationalism and colonialism in Algeria does not exist. Another important part of "Ironies" is the conservative view of women in Algeria. The woman is viewed as weak even though her position in the Algerian society varies and shifts from being the submissive female who is sub to man to becoming equal to man and fighting side by side with man. The third section is "The Question," the author claims that there is a question at the end of the film which

is posed to question the confinements of the social, national, and colonial ideologies on the Algerian society.

Relating Jordanian film to film in the region situates it in relation to the shared difficulties of the production process. Jordanian cinema is a Third World Cinema, thus, according to Stollery and Lev's discussion of Third world cinema it should be studied in its own conventions. In this study the researcher uses Western theories to apply them to Jordanian film, however, the interpretation of the films and the issue of gender performance is reflective of and specific to Jordanian society.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Content and Textual Analysis

Text is a very broad term, while some might understand text as written material only there is much more to it. Graeme Burton claims that "What we call 'the text' is not a given thing with given meanings. It means different things to different people at different times. It appears to have a material existence – the DVD, the magazine, even the broadcast live programme." (58) Moreover, a text is something that bears meaning and could be analyzed, thus, film as a media text is actually a text that could be analyzed, just like any other type of text. Textual analysis is used in this study as a methodology that could assist the researcher and the reader in the process of making sense of the chosen films. Alan McKee defines textual analysis as

> a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. It is a methodology - a data-gathering process - for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live. (127)

To achieve the goals of this study, the researcher employed the methods of textual analysis in collecting the data for this research, making sense of the data, and analyzing it in light of the chosen theories.

Alexandra Bogren provides close reading and distancing techniques that are used when operating the textual analysis methodology on a text. As this study considers gender representations and sociocultural implication in Jordanian film, both close reading and distancing techniques were used in the process of developing the study. Bogren argues

From the perspective of textual analysis, "close reading" refers to an aspect of

interpretation that starts out with the researcher's initial and immediate, common

sense-based understanding of what a text means. It helps the researcher to "get a

feel" for the data and to map the data according to themes. We may see close

reading as a step-by-step procedure that involves summarizing what a set of texts

are about, identifying themes in the text, identifying central concepts within

themes and identifying the chains of association that define these concepts. (75)

In accordance with the previous definition of close reading the researcher devoted time to close

read the chosen texts for this study. Using this technique, the researcher was able to clarify the

aspects of concern in the texts. Close reading techniques are mapped out by Bogren as follows:

(1) write down a common sense-based summary of what the texts are about;

(2) identify themes in the data;

(3) map important concepts and social categories within each theme;

(4) identify chains of association that define the meaning of central concepts and

categories; and

(5) apply distancing techniques to clarify meanings. (76)

The researcher followed these steps in order to ensure an explicit understanding of what is under

investigation in this study. In every step the researcher tried to be as objective as possible, thus,

distancing the researcher's personal subjective thoughts was important to the development of this

study.

The distancing technique is as important as close reading in this study. Bogren claims

that "the practice of looking for what is not said in texts serves to distance the researcher; such

omissions are information that is taken for granted. In this sense, distancing refers to a critical

practice" (75). This means that in order to achieve a critical judgment of the text, the researcher

should think differently and think out of the box. Moreover, Bogren refers to some distancing

techniques that are crucial to the progress of this study. She states "one common distancing

technique is to identify other ways of giving meaning to a concept or social category by studying

understandings of the concept or category in previous historical periods and in other cultural

contexts" (Bogren 75). This is employed by the researcher in situating the same events that are

seen in some scenes in the selected films in another cultural context. This is particularly

exercised in this study by comparing what the reaction would be if a particular event happened in

the American culture instead of the Jordanian, for instance, would the reaction remain the same

or would it be different since it is a different culture. Further, Bogren continues "another

common distancing technique is to use 'thought experiments' in which we imagine that we are

strangers to our own culture" (75). Since the researcher is dealing with her own culture this

technique was used to exemplify a foreign understanding of the scenes; meaning would a person

who is not familiar with the Jordanian culture understand the films just like a person who

belongs to the culture represented in the films? In this study this technique is used to clarify the

context to the foreign reader, or to make the foreign reader feel comfortable with reading such an

intense cultural material. Bogren also discusses an interesting tool concerning the distancing

technique; the commutation test. According to Bogren "the purposes of this test is to identify

significant differences or distinctive features that are crucial to the construction of meaning in a

story" (75). She mentions Fiske's definition of the technique as "involving 'changing a unit in

the system and assessing the change in meaning, if any, that has occurred' and its use is usually

quite imaginative" (75). In the context of this study the researcher used the commutation test on

one of the films to build an alternative situation that could position the study in the direction of

thinking beyond the limits of the text itself, in this case the limits of the scenes from the selected film.

Text could be interpreted through different methods that help in analyzing the multiple meanings it could tolerate. Arthur Berger discusses different techniques of interpreting text. He depicts four techniques that he believes conduct a valid analysis of a media text; semiotic analysis, Marxist analysis, psychoanalytic criticism, and sociological analysis. In semiotic analysis, as he claims, there is "an arbitrary and temporary separation… made between content and form, and attention is focused on the system of signs that makes up a text" (Berger 6). He then moves to the Marxist analysis which mainly deals with class and economic analysis of the collected data. Here he relies heavily on the Marxist notions of social injustice and economic distribution. Next comes the psychoanalytic criticism which is essentially based on Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytical theories. Further, Berger introduces the fourth technique which is sociological analysis, where he focuses on "the social relationships of men and women, in contrast, for example, to psychological matters such as the consciousness of individuals" (Berger 107).

Berger claims "learning how to interpret and analyze our culture's mass-mediated texts, the content of the mass media, is a way of learning about our culture and, indirectly, because we are members of this culture, about ourselves" (113). Such a claim justifies giving this technique a level of importance in the process of conducting this study. Semiotic analysis could be applicable for this study, since signs are explored to reach a conclusion about the selected data. Also, psychoanalytic criticism is very helpful in this study; as a matter of a fact, Jungian approaches to film are discussed in the analysis of the data. However, the researcher found it more applicable and appropriate to perform a sociological analysis, since the matter of concentration here is on

social and cultural perceptions of gender and its performance. And yet, there is an interchangeable use of the previous three techniques in this study.

Textual analysis methodology relies on theories that could help in giving a better analysis the films. The researcher used aspects of the theories of three theorists for the purposes of utilizing this study. These theories are Richard Schechner's theory of performance where the researcher focused on the idea of performing identity. Also, the researcher applied Judith Butler's theories on gender, specifically gender performance and gender roles in society to emphasize on the films' depth of representation of the Jordanian society. Moreover, a Jungian approach to studying film is utilized, especially his theories concerning the notion of the collective unconscious, the gaze, and gender in film. These theories are applied on the findings from these films which provides a clear analysis of how gender performance is depicted in the selected films with a focus on the social dimensions that create the image of gender in society. For this process scenes from the films were chosen and closely read in order to reach to a conclusion that would be reflective of the given analysis. Considering such theories helps the researcher in providing an understanding of the films in an objective manner.

For the purposes of conducting this research the researcher went through a process of close reading and distancing in order to choose the data for the study. The first step was choosing the topic. It was befitting for the researcher to work on a subject of interest and importance for her, thus, Jordanian film was the choice. The representations of the Jordanian society in those films were a main concern for the researcher, especially gender and the issues that surround the representation and the performance of it through the employment of stories and characters who could be reflective of the different social classes and behaviors in the Jordanian society. Gender is a powerful means in of reflecting upon the development of any society and it usually holds

importance as it is with no doubt an issue of concern. However, what is more important than the idea of gender is the way it is performed within a society and how it is constructed in the collective unconscious of the examined society.

In order to discuss gender performance and its representations in Jordanian film the researcher had to decide which films qualify as appropriate for this study. The researcher travelled to Jordan in order to collect information about Jordanian film. In one month background information about Jordanian film was collected through visits to the library of the Royal Film Commission as well as conducting interviews with different people who are involved in Jordanian film. The objective intended from the interviews was to understand realities connected to the Jordanian film industry. In addition, it was an issue of importance for the researcher to find whether these interviews would reflect the researcher's findings through the process of exploring these films.

Seven different interviews were conducted where aspects of Jordanian film were discussed. The first interview was with the Jordanian film critic and writer Rasmi Mahasna. He made it clear to the researcher that Jordanian film has not yet develop to the point of being called an industry. Also, he presented a brief history of Jordanian film which is claimed to have begun in 1957 when the first Jordanian film was directed, *A Conflict in Jerash* (1957). Moreover, Mahasna claimed that Jordanian film was built upon amateur attempts of some Jordanian young men who did not set up a base for a film industry in Jordan. Further, he stated that financial support is a huge issue that is preventing a real film industry in Jordan. The second interview was with Adnan Mdanat, a Jordanian film critic and director. Mdanat also provided the researcher with a brief historical background about Jordanian film and he emphasized on the point that Mahasna expressed, that it is hard to claim that there exists a Jordanian film industry. However,

he stresses that there are attempts that could, in few years, build up a film industry in Jordan if the production is continually active in the future. Several other interviews were conducted with Mirna Nakho and Sharief Almajali from the Royal Film Commission, Mohammad Alhushki the director of *Transit Cities,* Najih Hassan the film critic from Alrai newspaper, and the film critic Qasim Malkawi. All of them stressed on the importance of the Jordanian film and the frustration that faces Jordanian directors because of the lack of support from the Jordanian government, especially financial support.

Alhushki expressed the journey he went through in directing *Transit Cities.* He articulated the difficulties of directing this film. Having limited financial resources is one of the main difficulties. The budget they had, as he claimed, was actually intended for a short film. However, since the story could not be condensed into a short film the film makers decided to work with the budget they had to produce a long film. Given their financial situation many actors did not ask for money, and that is one of the main reasons behind the success of the film. Moreover, Alhushki stated that it was very important to receive emotional support because the film makers faced many issues that lead them to a stage of frustration. Also, he voiced his view on film making in Jordan, in a general sense. He argued that there are many bright ideas that young people have, nevertheless, without the support of the government and the community these ideas will never see light.

The sample of films used for this study is a random sample of Jordanian films. Three films were chosen. Although three films could be seen as a very small sample, the reality of the situation of the little number of Jordanian films, compared to Egyptian films for instance, renders this sample appropriate. The researcher followed an exclusion criteria, where more than ten films

where viewed in order to decide which fit into the boarders of this study. The films that were not seen as appropriate were excluded by the researcher.

Films have their own realities. However, they grasp their representations from the society of representation, in this case the Jordanian. After watching several films *Transit Citie* (2010)*, When Monaliza Smiled* (2012)*,* and *Captain Abu Raed* (2008) were chosen. These three films represent characters from different social classes and backgrounds. Also, the characters in those films are reflective of the gender issues that are discussed in this study. Although three films could not possibly represent everything in society, because no film can reflect the whole reality in society, these particular films were chosen because they fit the purposes of analyzing gender performance as it could be seen in the Jordanian society. Also, these films depict female main characters who are trying to achieve their ambitions in life, each one of them has her own story and yet they intersect in their longing for independence. Moreover, the three films carry importance in the Jordanian film industry as they have been shown in different cinema theaters around the country as well as their importance in some film festivals around the world.

To successfully conduct this study the researcher went through a process for deciding which scenes befit the aims of the researcher in conducting this study. An initial viewing of the films was performed by the researcher in order to make sure that they are suitable for the conventions of this study. Then the process involved a close reading of the films in the light of gender representations, performances, and roles. Bogren's techniques of close reading and distancing were applied. The researcher began with writing down summaries of each film. Then themes were identified and particular scenes of importance were chosen. After that, important concepts and social cues were identified. In addition, to emphasis on the social and cultural conventions of gender in the Jordanian society and in order to clarify the meanings,

distancing techniques were applied. Such techniques included situating some of the texts in different social contexts, here some comparisons were made. Also, situating the scenes in alternative realities, by using the commutation test, was employed to reach to a conclusion about the films. Involvement in the issue of gender and society might indicate a subjective analysis, however, to insure objectivity the researcher used Bogren's distancing techniques, which were previously discussed in this chapter. The last step for conducting this study was applying theory on the findings in order to further analyze the films in accordance with the conventions of the chosen theories. This was done to answer the questions of the study and to achieve the goals of the study. Finally, conclusions about the films and about the whole study were presented to the reader.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

One of the most important results the researcher has found is the intersection of the issue of marriage and gender performance. It is important to note that gender is depicted in the film through the importance of marriage especially for women. In this chapter there are three subsections where each film and its findings are presented. The focus here is on the main characters in each film. For example, the most important female characters from each film are Laila, from *Transit Cities* (2010)*,* Nour, from *Captain Abu Raed* (2008)*,* and Monaliza, from *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012)*.* Also, another issue that portrays gender in the Jordanian society is independence for women. All three characters are seeking independence but they are not given what they need. Presented in the following pages is the findings and some analysis of the data.

Transit Cities

Transit Cities (2010) is a film directed by Mohammad Alhushki. It tells the story of a divorced 36 year old woman, Laila, who returns to Amman her home town, after fourteen years spent in the United States. She finds that many sociocultural changes took place and her family's life style changed accordingly. This creates some sort of an identity crisis for Laila, as now she feels that she does not belong anymore. The film carries significance in accordance with the sociocultural constructed ideologies related to the gender discourse of the Jordanian society, among other discourses. Moreover, a lot of scenes stress the importance of performing gender roles in the "right" way, according to the way society defines right and wrong. Further, the gender roles presented in the film are a reflection of the roles culturally constructed for men and women in Jordanian society.

Watching this film the researcher found many stereotypical images that stigmatize a woman's life as well as a man's. In order to be respected and well treated by members of the society, a woman or a man should conform to the set of sociocultural rules that are subtly agreed upon by members of the society. The collective unconscious here shares values that control the way people tend to perceive gender. When Laila leaves her collective unconscious for fourteen years, many things change. Her own identity is shaped through her experiences in those fourteen years and she begins unconsciously adapting to the collective unconscious of her new society, the American society. Thus, she does not fully fit with the collective unconscious she comes back to. In Laila's case, her gender is performed in relation to the changes that occurred to her during the fourteen years that she was away from Jordan. When she comes back she interacts differently and performs her gender in a way that is most of the time opposed by the Jordanian society. She does not share the collective unconscious of her original society anymore. Consequently, she is considered a rebellious woman due to her difference in acting out her gender. Moreover, the way Laila performs her gender as a woman does not reflect the sociocultural set of rules that are constructed for women in the Jordanian society. Hence, she is treated differently and she is not being understood or tolerated by her family nor is she given justice by her society.

To be a woman in the Jordanian society is to conform to the power structure and to conform to the constructed roles for being a woman. Being a man is mainly the same, although it carries different implications since the Jordanian society is mainly a patriarchal society. One of the earliest scenes that carry gender related implications is when Laila first comes home. When her father sees her he does not show any affection towards her. The mother, however, is full of emotions and greets Laila in a very sentimental way, and her sister does the same. As women

Laila's mother and sister are expected to show this much emotion, however, the man should not be emotional or he would lose some of his power. While the case of Laila's father is more connected to his distress with Laila, the audience might think, what if he was not all that mad at Laila would he have shown enough emotion? Probably not, because usually in the conventions of the Jordanian society a man should not be emotional, he should be firm and strong. A woman on the other hand is expected to delve into emotional conditions. Further, the roles of genders are connected to the power they hold, the man holds more power in the Jordanian society and to maintain this power he should appear strong enough to manage it. Thus, emotions of men should be subtle in order to emphasize the power they have, because it is commonly acknowledged by members of the society that emotional men are not in place of assuming power.

Moving a little forward in the film Laila meets with many frustrations that make her feel that she does not belong to the society anymore. The sense of belonging causes issues for Laila. At one point in the film she tells her friend Rabee' that when she was in the United States all she wanted was to leave everything behind her and go back to her home in Jordan. Nevertheless, when Laila finally comes home it is very hard for her to accept the changes that occurred in the society as well as the country and she begins feeling that she does not belong. This belonging crisis reflects on the way she treats people and on the formation of her identity. The audience notices that Laila's identity is facing a crisis, between living her life the way she sees fit and the way society demands a woman to conform to their constructed rules. This is seen all through the film from the first moment when she is at the door of her family's house up until the moment where she is assumingly leaving. The film has an open ending, thus, it is up to the audience to decide whether she leaves the country or not. As a viewer, the researcher believes that Laila

leaves the country because she is emotionally broken from all of the issues she goes through during her visit.

Gender is usually performed differently by different members of the society; however, most people conform to their roles and live performing them in order to be accepted in the society. Laila's sister is a good example for the woman who conforms to the gender role constructed for women in the Jordanian society; she conforms to the discourse. Laila, on the other hand, cannot perform her gender role in accordance with the Jordanian sociocultural discourse. Thus, she suffers from the stereotypical gaze for women who do not conform; she is not fully respected by members of the society. This reflects on her ability to cope with her surroundings. For example, while smoking is a widespread phenomenon in the Jordanian society, it is still considered by the middle and lower classes as a shameful act for a woman to smoke in the streets. Laila does not conform to this cultural rule; thus, she is not performing her gender in an acceptable manner in accordance with her surrounding society. When she lights a cigarette in the middle of the street, her sister claims that she has always been an attention seeking little girl, as if Laila is smoking in the street to bring herself the attention of the men around her. Her sister here is voicing the common social discourse and stereotypes connected to women who smoke publically. In the contemporary Jordanian society a woman who smokes in public is considered a bad woman; one who is seeking the attention of men, since smoking holds sexual connotations according to the Jordanian society, but only when a woman performs it. Thus, by acting the way she did Laila's sister is performing the role of the "good" woman who does not accept such a behavior. Moreover, this also applies to women living on their own. In a society where women are sometimes stigmatized by immorality if choosing to live on their own for no specific reason but having their own private life, people are usually looking for a mistake she would do in order

to judge her and prove their point; that women should not be given the freedom to make such a choice. When Laila chooses to move out of her family's house to a small apartment enough for her to have a little space of privacy, her mother opposes the idea and mentions that it is better for Laila to stay with them until her husband comes back. At this point the family is still not aware of Laila's divorce, which is another issue of attention.

Throughout the film it is noticed that Laila's sister is the provider for the family, she is the one who is paying the house loan and provides bread for the table. Laila's sister is depicted as the "good" woman in opposition to the image of Laila who, according to her family, does not care about anyone but herself; not knowing that she was trying to pay their debt but she could not. The representation of such a character puts the constructed gender role of women in place. Laila's sister performs her role in society as it should be. She takes care of her parents as well as her children and husband. Laila, on the other hand, does not perform her role as a woman in a way that suits the Jordanian society. She is always looking for independence and claims that she cannot be controlled by the sociocultural powers around her.

A socially independent woman is depicted as a dangerous woman in Jordanian film, because she would not make a "good" submissive woman. Also, this social independence might lead to a larger and more fearful issue which is sexual independence; meaning being sexually active out of wedlock. This might be one of the most sociocultural dangerous forms of independence as it is traditionally shameful and immoral for a woman to be free to choose sexual independence. It not socially accepted for neither a man nor a woman to have sexual relations out of wedlock. However, it is easier for a man to claim innocence from such an act as power lays in his hands. Women are usually stigmatized as immoral or sometimes as prostitutes if they commit such an act. When Laila moves to live in her own apartment and decides to have her

male friend Rabee' over for a glass of wine, her landlord disapproves her behavior and kicks her out of the apartment and almost calls her a prostitute. Laila objects to his performance and a fight begins where both end up at the police station. Her father bails her out of jail and she tries to explain to him that whatever he heard is not true and that the man who was with her is Rabee', their friend. By telling her father not to believe the landlord's claims about her, she indicates that a woman will not receive justice in such a society because the man is the one in power and he is usually believed over a woman. Laila's father does not seem to look down on her but he seems upset that she would allow such a situation to happen to her. However, when she is finally at her family's house her mother condemns her for what she did. The mother here performs the role of the "good" woman who does not accept such a behavior and hints that what her daughter did is very dishonorable and a disgrace to the family. At this point Laila tries to defend herself again, but it is all in vain. She is not powerful enough and according to the society she is in no position to claim power or even respect in this case. At this moment, the mother is in full control, she is supported by the sociocultural discourse and the enforcer of it, along with the support of Laila's sister and the passiveness of her father and brother in law. Moreover, the father in the film could be seen as a passive character, in fact, most of the male characters are not very influential. However, the power of men is still very dominant and they hold the grip of the power structure ladder. In a patriarchal society, like the Jordanian, men are given power by default. Even if they do not practice their power they are still the possessors of it and women should be submissive to this power. Furthermore, Laila's father and her brother in law do not have to articulate a word; however, their power as men is protected by the sociocultural construction of gender roles in the society. On the other hand, the mother articulates the sociocultural stereotypes and tries to bring gender roles into order.

Moving to another controversial issue, the idea of a divorced woman is quite complicated in the Jordanian society. Thus, divorce is an issue that affects the image of women in society. Women are usually blamed and condemned as bad women if they are divorced. Laila tries to hide her divorce from her family and her fears are always connected to the idea that her family warned her about marrying Walid. Besides, she is always concerned that if she tells them anything about her marriage or divorce, they will judge her for the choice she made fourteen years ago when she insisted on getting married to Walid. Thus, the complication of articulating her divorce to her family is given justification.

When Laila's family finds out about her divorce, her father seems calm about it. However the audience can still see distress in the way he speaks about it and his facial expressions. On the other hand, her mother is not very welcoming of the idea and she is mostly annoyed that Laila hides the truth about her divorce and claims that she is a naïve little girl. The mother in this film assumes the role of the keeper of the order in the family and the guardian of the social order and cultural rules. She tries to enforce her opinion on Laila and in some incidents she tells her that what she is doing is wrong and a woman should not behave in such a way. This is particularly explicit in the scene where Laila's father brings her back home after she was arrested by the police. This is right after the scene of Laila's fight with her landlord, which leads them to the police department.

As the scenes of the film progress, the audience is reminded of Laila's nonconformist gender performance. This is done through the way people talk to her and perceive her actions. In one of the scenes Laila's aunt comments on Laila's inability to make a cup of coffee. This is important as it indicates that a "good" woman should know how to cook and make good coffee. It is powerful how in this scene making coffee is an indicator of a gender role. Moreover, it

indicates that in the Jordanian society it is not a man's role to make coffee or cook food, however, a woman should be able to do such things. The domestication of the role of women in society is emphasized through subtle messages that are normalized as part of daily conversations between people.

Social values and cultural constructions of gender are being challenged by Laila. She is in a continuous state of dissatisfaction with the situation of the country and the society. She tries to rationalize their life style, yet, she is not convinced with what she is seeing in front of her eyes. Hence, she cannot conform to the system. Moreover, her struggle is with adapting to the constructed gender role she has to follow and abide by. Thus, she suffers from a sense of not belonging, and she is condemned a rebellious woman because of her gender performance in the way she sees fit. This causes her a lot of problems and leads her to leaving the country again, this time with a broken heart and a more complex identity.

When Monaliza Smiled

Fadi Haddad the director of *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012) depicts a story that introduces Monaliza, a girl who never smiles. When she falls in love with the Egyptian tea boy in her work she begins seeing life from a different perspective, and she finally smiles. The film carries significance in dealing with the issue of marriage and how each gender suffers from the social stereotypes connected to marriage and love. Also, the film depicts mainly the lower class of the Jordanian society. Thus, gender performance take another dimension; one that reflects people who already suffer from the hardships of being poor. Many scenes represent the sociocultural discourse of marriage especially as it is the case in the lower class of the society. A woman should snatch her chance of getting married because the man will be able to provide for her and protect her. Although Monaliza's sister Afaf despises the idea of marriage and wants Monaliza to

stay single, she does not do that because she wants Monaliza to choose what is best for herself. Afaf wants Monaliza to stay single the longest time possible because she is afraid of being alone.

Gender performance in this film is presented through characters who belong mostly to the lower class of the Jordanian society. The sociocultural constructed gender roles are stressed through many scenes that reflect situations that people go through on daily bases. At the beginning of the film Monaliza is holding bags in her hand which do not seem to bother her. However, a young man from her neighborhood, Asfoor, rushes to help her with the bags. This is conventionally a very normal scene where people are helping each other, yet, it carries significance in accordance with the representation of gender roles. As a man, by helping out a woman Asfoor is performing his gender role in society to be a proper and well respected man. Moreover, a woman is always seen as a weak creature who is always in need of help, thus, it is the man's role to be strong and help women out, even if they do not seem to need help.

Marriage and its discourse are suggested through many scenes in this film. There are only three cases of marriage represented, however, it is a crucial part of the daily conversations of most of the characters in the film. The first case of marriage is Monaliza's mother and father and the story is introduced to the audience in the very beginning of the film. Their marriage does not seem to be a very happy one. Monaliza's father belongs to the lower class, he works as a tourist guide and one day he helps out a foreign woman as her bag is being stolen. She gives him a picture of the famous Mona Lisa painting. His wife sees this picture, and to stress on her social class a level of ignorance is presented to the viewer, she erupts in anger because her husband has a picture of another woman. The wife goes through labor right after that and dies while giving birth to Monaliza. The husband's reaction to the death of his wife does not suggest any kind of grief over her death. This scene is meant to be a comic one, however, it represents a gender

stereotype connected to men and grief. This scene takes the viewer to an old setting and trend of thought where a man should not grief his wife in front of people and if he ever grieves he should do so when he is out of sight. This suggests a gender stereotype where a man should not be emotional or he would lose part of the power given to him by society; men should be firm and strong in order to be well respected. This also applies to today's society, while now it is more acceptable for a man to grief over his loved ones, it is still shameful for a man to cry in front of people.

The second marriage represented to the audience is Nayfa's. Nayfa, Monaliza's coworker, is a middle class woman who is depicted as a very arrogant, sometimes disrespectful, and a fearful character; everyone in her job fears her and tries to avoid her. Her marriage is depicted as a mess; there is a woman whom her husband took as a mistress and he marries her near the end of the film. Polygamy is not a widespread phenomenon in Jordan, however, it exists. When her husband marries that other woman Nayfa goes mad. She never expected her husband to do such a thing, for her it is a disgrace that her husband took another wife. Nayfa's marriage details are not provided to the audience, but since she is a strong independent character there has to be something that could put her down and bring her to her gender role. A woman according to the society should not possess that much power, and if she does something that would make her weak has to happen. Thus, the issue in her marriage happens and she is weakened by it. In one of the most integral scenes for this issue, her husband's second wife comes to where she works and Nayfa erupts in anger when that woman treats her disrespectfully. After she kicks that lady out of her office a dramatic scene of Nayfa crying in rage is presented. Everyone in her job finds a chance to ridicule Nayfa. This scene suggests that this woman got what she deserves because she does not conform to the gender discourse, men fear her as much as women. This should not be

the case, she should be submissive to men, among other things, and that is why everyone thinks that she got what she deserves.

The third case of marriage is Rudaina's. She is a young woman who lives right next to Monaliza and Afaf. She was married and her husband used to work as a truck driver, one day while he was going to Iraq to deliver a shipment he disappeared. In the beginning some people confirm to her that he is alive, and then they tell her that he is not found and he is probably dead. Rudaina tells her story to Monaliza. After seven years of her husband's mysterious disappearance she is still awaiting him, she washes his clothes everyday prepares food and waits until the day is over. The story of Rudaina is very sad as society condemns her for living on her own, while they do not know the details of her agony or her delusional thoughts. Again the idea of a woman living on her own is depicted as an issue. Afaf tries to convince Rudaina to live with her brother or remarry, claiming that it is better for a woman to have a man in the house who could protect her.

As noticed from the three previous cases of marriage, it is an essential component of the society. However, it is sometimes very complicated to decide if marriage helps in building the society, it is for sure a reproductive institution but it could sometimes play a destructive role to the people who are involved. Monaliza is always pushed by the people around her to get married, everyone except her sister who does not support the idea. Afaf suffered from a broken heart for many years and she is always afraid that Monaliza could go through all the pain she went through. That and the fact that she does not want to be left alone make Afaf refuse the idea of marrying her sister off.

In this film, the film makers are trying to fight some stereotypical images that are spread in the society, especially those connected to love and marriage. When Monaliza falls in love with

an Egyptian man it is seen as a huge step by the people around her. In the Jordanian society there is a stereotypical image concerning Egyptian men who work in Jordan. It is believed by some Jordanians that if an Egyptian man who works in Jordan marries a Jordanian girl he is trying to marry her in order to secure his job in Jordan, which means he is taking advantage of her. The film makers are trying to fight this stereotypical image by presenting Hamdi, who is and Egyptian man working in Jordan and falls in love with a Monaliza. They present an image of real love, not one built on taking advantage. The images and situations presented in this film are reflective of some gender performances that construct the image of gender in the Jordanian society. In the following chapter a deep analysis of the film and how it is reflective of gender roles and performances is going to be presented.

Captain Abu Raed

In this film two totally different classes are depicted, the upper class and the middle class. Abu Raed and the people in his neighborhood represent the lower class, while Nour and her family represent the upper class. This is significant to mention because although both classes belong to the same society, their gender roles hold some differences. In dealing with this film I will depict characters and the scenes where gender performance is depicted. I will begin with Abu Raed's character. Abu Raed is an old highly knowledgeable man who works as a janitor in Queen Alia International Airport in Amman during daytime and reads all sorts of books at night. He belongs to the lower class and lives in a poor neighborhood. Abu Raed went through a lot in his life to the point that he was not living anymore. After years of trying to bring a child to life, Abu Raed and Um Raed give birth to Raed, who dies tragically at a young age. His death leads Abu Raed to lose all his hopes and dreams in life, and Um Raed dies and according to Abu Raed "everything died with her." One day Abu Raed finds a Pilot's hat in one of trash baskets in the

airport. He wears it on his way back to his house. As a result, kids in his neighborhood take him to be a pilot and insist that he tells them stories about his adventures around the world. He tries to convince the kids that he is not a pilot but it is all in vain, so he begins telling stories about Captain Abu Raed's adventures around the world. Moreover, Abu Raed is a gentle man, he always tries to reach out to people who need help and helps them with the means he has.

Abu Raed performs his gender in a proper way; he is a respectable man who follows the rules of the society and tries to be helpful as much as possible. His help is sometimes considered as form of unauthorized involvement in people's personal life. At one point in the film Abu Raed goes to the house of the one of the kids to convince his father to let him go to school instead of working. Here the man feels that his power is being stepped on and he tells Abu Raed that he has no say in how he treats his kids, as if they are his own property. In the Jordanian society men are the utmost holders of power in the family and some practice this power in a hurtful manner. For example, in this case Abu Mohammd, Tareq's father, practices his power on his children as he deprives them from going to school in order to work and provide for the family. Moreover, Abu Mohammad feels that his power is threatened when Abu Raed talks to him. Furthermore, threatening his power in such a way suggest that Abu Raed does not see him as man enough, or at least this is how Abu Mohammad thinks. This is obvious from the choice of words and the way he speaks to Abu Raed about this particular matter.

Another character of importance in this film is Nour. She is a successful female who works as a pilot and belongs to the upper-class of the Jordanian society. Nour suffers from her family's continuous efforts of marrying her off to a wealthy well-mannered man. Her continuous refusal of suitors drives her father to a point where he makes it clear to Nour that he wants grandsons and granddaughters and since she is his only child he expects her to get married as

soon as possible. Also, he stresses that she is getting old and that no one is going to want to marry after few years since she is thirty years old. The issue of marriage is a big one in Nour's life, she claims she is not ready while her father keeps pushing her to get married.

The idea of a female pilot is not very common in the Jordanian society, it is being slowly accepted but it is still not a norm. Nour is empowered by the film makers, as being a pilot is a highly respectable job in the Jordanian society. Also, by presenting a female pilot the film makers are trying to fight the stereotypical image that women are not capable of having such a responsibility. In the Jordanian society a woman is believed to be weak and driving a plane is not an easy task, a task that a lot of people think a woman cannot do. Fighting such a stereotypical image is empowers Jordanian women.

Murad is another character of recognition in this study. Murad is a young kid who belongs to the lower class and is continuously physically and emotionally abused by his father. He gives up on being successful in the future, because he does not believe that a poor person would ever be able to have a good job. This is seen when he tries to convince other kids in his neighborhood that Abu Raed is not a captain because it is impossible for a person who lives in their neighborhood to have such a respectable job. Murad's frustration reflects some of the ideologies that exist in the mindset of the lower class of the Jordanian society. However, the experiences these people go through make the audience sympathize with their situation and understand where they are coming from.

Abu Raed plays a great role in Murad's life. When Abu Raed realizes that Murad's father is abusive he decides to help Murad and his family. First he tries to talk to Murad's father but it is all in vain. Thus, with the help of Nour, Abu Raed manages to help the family run away from their abusive father. A glimpse of the future is given by the end of the film showing Murad as a

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pilot in Queen Alia Airport. By showing such an image the film makers give a space for hope in the hearts of those who are less fortunate. There are other important characters in this film, however, the above mentioned characters are a focus in this story and their stories inspire the people around them.

CHAPTER V

DISSCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

This study aims at examining gender performance and its representations in Jordanian film through textual analysis for three selected Jordanian films. The study investigates stereotypical images that surround gender performance in the Jordanian society along with portrayals of gender roles and the power structure in the society. As previously mentioned in Chapter I, the problem of this study lays in the portrayals of gender performance in Jordanian society as they resonate in Jordanian film. This chapter answers the questions of the study through discussing the findings from the films in light of the theoretical framework utilized for this study. The questions of this study are as follows. (1) How are gender performances portrayed in the three selected films? (2) What gender stereotypes are represented in the selected films? (3) Does Jordanian film attempt to address and/or solve the sociocultural issues concerning gender performance? (4) How is gender performance in the films affected by the sociocultural realities concerning gender in Jordanian society? (5) Does Jordanian film give an authentic representation of the Jordanian society? After answering these questions through the discussion, the researcher will present the conclusions of this study and further issues of concern that could be studied later on when developing this study. The following films were examined in order to reach a conclusion about gender performance in Jordanian film: *Transit Cities* (2010), *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012), and *Captain Abu Raed* (2008).

Throughout studying these films the researcher found many scenes where the constructional aspect of gender is presented through subtle messages found in the daily conversations of the characters in the films. To emphasize gender roles one must note that all

three films have lead female characters, who are presented as strong women looking for independence in a society where women cannot claim their full independence. Laila, from *Transit Cities* (2010), Monaliza and Nayfa, from *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012), and Nour, from *Captain Abu Raed* (2008), are all representations of nonconformist women. Although they vary in the level of nonconformity, their actions and performances are indicators of their nonconformity and independence seeking. In each film there are scenes that represent gender roles. For example, in *Transit Cities* (2010) most of Laila's actions are depicted as "bad" because she refuses to perform the gender role constructed for women in the Jordanian society. The scene where she fights with her landlord and ends up in a police station is the one that presents her nonconformity the most. Her performance is no accepted by neither her family nor her society. However, she does not think that what she did was wrong and fights to show that what she did was the right thing, since her landlord invaded her privacy. In other societies Laila might be given justice, however, in a patriarchal society, like the Jordanian, the man is usually believed over a woman. Since she was doing something that a woman should not do according to the conventions of the Jordanian society, which is drinking and having a male friend over in the house where she lives alone, she is seen as a person who deserves punishment. The social gaze plays a great role in this case. Society does not accept Laila's behavior even if she finds it a normal thing; it is not normalized in the society, thus, she will suffer from the stereotypical social gaze of being an unrespectable woman. The performance of gender in this film is important as it indicates what is "right" or "wrong" in accordance with the Jordanian society. Laila's continuous effort for being an independent woman in the Jordanian society makes her a "bad" woman in the eyes of some members of the Jordanian society.

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Moving along to the other films it is noticed that gender performance is also an important matter. In *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012) the main character, Monaliza, is continuously fighting a battle with her surrounding society because she is in her 30s and not married yet. This is seen in the scene where she first begins working and her colleague Nayfa makes a negative remark when she discovers that Monaliza is not married yet. Here Nayfa is implying a stereotype towards women, in the Jordanian society if a women passes a certain age and she is not married yet it is believed that she might not be a good enough woman and she might not get as good suitors as a woman in her 20s. Implying such a stereotype leads to realizing how important marriage is in the Jordanian society. In light of Schechner's performance theory, social realities are constructed and the performance of those realities normalizes them in the minds of the members of this society. Thus, these constructed ideologies become the reality. Marriage is a constructed social reality that has its rules; it is a very important performance in the Jordanian society. The three selected films argue marriage in different ways, however, it all leads to one conclusion; women should be married in order to live a good life. Stating this commonly believed ideology one reaches to the thought that a woman is incapable of living a normal life without being controlled or lead by a man. Man is the ultimate holder of power in the patriarchal society; the Jordanian society.

In *Captain Abu Raed* (2008) Nour is the character who suffers the most from the continuous efforts of her family and surrounding society to get married. Her father the enforcer of the stereotypes in the family keeps pushing her to getting married and presents to her suitable suitors while she is in a constant state of refusal. Nour claims that she is not ready yet, and she has not found the person who she wants to be with. However, her father and, in fact, her mother do not see her reason as rational they just want to see her married with children. In each film the

lead female characters tend to refuse the cultural gender role constructed for them and their

defiance of these roles makes them look "bad" in the eyes of the members of the society.

Values, which include norms, traditional cultural practices, and the power structure in the

society, are defied through the portrayal of strong female characters who challenge some of these

values. Values as discussed by Schechner could be used to protect and liberate or to control and

oppress. The concepts of liberation and oppression differ for different members of the society;

what could be seen as oppressive by someone could be liberating to someone else. Family

values, for example, are very important in Jordanian society. In *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012),

Monaliza's family constituted of her and her sister, since her sister is older than her and took the

role of the mother, father, and sister for Monaliza; Monaliza has to respect her no matter what.

Some of Afaf's actions are very oppressive for Monaliza like her continuous effort for keeping

Monaliza with her for the rest of her life, however, this action and others are socially justified as

Afaf is trying to protect her sister, although it is oppressive for Monaliza. Likewise, in *Captain*

Abu Raed (2008) Nour has to respect her family's wishes and get married if she really loves

them. Nour's family's continuous push for marriage is very oppressive for Nour, but at the same

time it is seen as a form of protection in accordance with the society. Thus, this too is justified.

The seven functions of performance that Schechner introduces in his book *Performance*

Studies: An Introduction are applicable on the three selected films which justifies calling them

performances. First of all, they are all made to entertain an audience. The entertainment part

resides in the storyline and its appealing presentation to the spectator. Then the aspect of

presenting a community and the conventions of it is also employed in these films. In addition, the

films could be seen as forces that could teach or reach out to the audience to convince them of

the importance of the social values implemented in the films.

Gender roles are very important indicators of performance in the films. Gender as a social construct is performed by the characters in the film, however, some of the characters challenge the gender role constructed for them; which intern deems them as "bad" representations of gender. Gender construction is mainly challenged by women. The representation of nonconformist women indicates the patriarchal aspect of Jordanian society. None of the men in the three films is represented as someone who is nonconformist or "bad" it is always the women who reside under the category of nonconformist or "bad". Such a representation vindicates the patriarchal nature of Jordanian society. Men are always right and believed over women. An example of this could be drawn from *Transit Cities* (2010); when Laila fight with her landlord for a just cause but he is believed over her in the police station and she is represented as a "bad" woman. Also, the oppression of women is seen throughout the three films, however, it is most obvious in *Captain Abu Raed* (2008). Um Murad, a character in this film, is represented as the lower class woman who is always afraid of her abusive husband. Although he is abusive, his behavior is justified by the society and this is clear when Um Murad herself says that he only abuses her and her children because he is always stressed from work. Giving justification for the abusive man connotes a stereotypical social behavior where men are always given justification for the wrong things they do. In the conventions of the patriarchal society this is how things should be dealt with.

The normalization of the constructed gender roles in Jordanian society is seen through all of the films utilized for this study. The normalization is noticeable from the daily conversations of people. Interestingly, in the three films gender roles are implied mostly in the conversations of women, who continuously voice out how a woman should behave. The use of women to set the boundaries of gender roles, especially for women, implies that some women are blinded about

some unreasonable realities surrounding the situation of women in Jordanian society. For example, the domestication of the role of women in the Jordanian society is still seen as the norm as it is expressed by Laila's aunt in *Transit Cities* (2010) when she claims that a woman who cannot make good coffee is not a proper woman. Laila opposes this ideology and challenges it when she fights with her sister and tells her to keep herself occupied with cooking and taking care of her husband and children. Making such a remark suggests that Laila is not very happy with the domestication of women and that her sister is blinded. The fact that Laila's mother and sister do not support or understand Laila's claim for independence shows that her actions are not the norm and they are, in fact, seen as nonconformist actions. Similarly, in *Captain Abu Raed* (2008) Nour by claiming independence and not wanting to get married is defying her family's wishes; which makes her personality nonconformist to the social discourse. Additionally, *When Monaliza Simled* (2012) presents a strong female character, Nayfa, she is successful in her job and to stress that her social behavior is not the "right" one everyone in her job fears her. The amount of hatred and distress she has for people around her, and the gloomy personality she has is interestingly employed to show that a non-submissive behavior is not acceptable from women. Something had to be done in order to put Nayfa in her constructed gender role, thus, the issue in her marriage is discovered by the people she works with and she is ridiculed by everyone. The fact that people think that she deserved what happened to her indicates that women should be submissive and should not be more powerful than men. All these examples are presented to reinforce the dominant ideology that women should be submissive and conformist to the conventions of the patriarchal society they belong to and if that is not done they are punished in one way or another and they are considered out of the norm.

The meaning-making process that Singh introduces, in his Jungian approaches to film, includes making sense of the world of the film, which incorporates a spectator relating to the happenings in the film. The cultural constructions presented in the films makes it easy for the spectator to relate to the film and as a result make meaning out of it. As the film is a representation of a "real life" performance it includes characters who are just like any human, they go through good moments in their lives as well as bad moments. The spectator, thus, can analyze the film in accordance with what they see as "right" or "wrong" from their own perspective. What makes the spectator connect to the world of the film is the shared similarities between the world of the film and the world of the spectator. However, this means that a subjective understanding of the film will occur. This is said to notify the reader of this thesis that the understanding of the films is subjective to the researcher's perspective on the film in light of the chosen theories.

The concept of the gaze is important in understanding the three selected films for this study. Film in its totality is an object of the gaze, however, in each film there are objects of the gaze as well as subjects of it and it is important to locate these in each film. The film is the object of the gaze in the case that the spectator is the subject of the gaze. The spectator performs the role of looking at the film and interpreting it, and this is where the relation between the film and the spectator is located. Further, in each film there are characters who fall under the category of the object of the gaze while others fall under the category of the subject of the gaze. Women are usually presented as the object of the gaze while men are the subject of it. For example, when Laila, from *Transit Cities* (2010) goes to a bank in Amman the representative she meets with is a man who seems to claim the role of a religious man. In that scene she is wearing a short skirt which makes this man give her a piece of cloth to cover her legs. By doing so the man is

implying that Laila is an object; her body is the only thing he can see and it is appealing to him and pleasurable to gaze at, thus he wants her to cover it. As a man he is more powerful than Laila, thus, she has to conform to his power and cover her legs, he practices he power in a very trivial way. Laila unwillingly conforms and covers her legs. Nevertheless, as her nature does not allow herself to be submissive at one point in that scene Laila removes the cloth and leaves the office of the representative. Moreover, the patriarchal society could be seen as the subject of the gaze; this is in the way the social construction, through the comments of men as well as women, judges the actions of the members of the society, especially women. The social gaze is embedded in the cultural ideologies of members of the society. Women judge other women in these films, they voice out the social gaze and judgment on nonconformist women. For example, in *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012) Rudaina is most of the time judged because she lives alone. Even Monaliza judges her at one point until she hears the whole story behind her living situation. This is also seen in *Captain Abu Raed* (2008) in the scene where Nour's mother justifies the father's state of anger on Nour when she refuses to listen to him while he tells her how she needs to get married. Nour's mother rationalizes the father's anger by stating that he said what he said because he is looking out for his daughter's best interest, so she should not be angry at him. The employment of female characters to show how other women are not being conformist to the social structure indicates the power the patriarchal society has over women and how the cultural stigmatizations of women are embedded in the minds of people.

Moving along to the theory of the collective unconscious it is mostly applicable on *Transit Cities* (2010). Laila's character endures the application of the theory of the collective unconscious. Laila moves from one collective unconscious to another which creates an identity crisis for her. The theory of the collective unconscious as introduced by Carl Jung concerns

archetypal images that are shared between all human beings, however, as mentioned in Chapter II the researcher found it possible to understand the theory of the collective unconscious from another perspective. Each society is possible to have its own collective unconscious, which means what might be shared in the collective unconscious of a specific society might not be the same for another. By moving from one society to another, a collective unconscious to another, Laila becomes incapable of adapting to either society, especially the one she comes back to, the Jordanian. The way she performs her role in society is seen as oblivion by the members of Jordanian society. She does not accept the patriarchal power, nor does she conform to it. This creates a conflict between her and her family, as well as between her and members of Jordanian society.

Conclusions

The essential aim of this study was to examine gender performance in a selection of Jordanian films through a textual analysis of the films in light of performance theory and Jungian approaches to film. Thus, the following questions were posed in order to investigating gender performance in Jordanian film. (1) How are gender performances portrayed in the three selected films? (2) What gender stereotypes are represented in the selected films? (3) Does Jordanian film attempt to address and/or solve the sociocultural issues concerning gender performance? (4) How is gender performance in the films affected by the sociocultural realities concerning gender in Jordanian society? (5) Does Jordanian film give an authentic representation of Jordanian society?

By analyzing some scenes from the films in light of the given theories the researcher reaches to answers to the questions of the study. For the question concerning how gender is portrayed in the films, it is obvious that gender performances are constructed in a way the favors man over woman. Through depicting characters of both genders and their relation to each other,

the film makers manage to represent an image of how gender has its own conventions in Jordanian society; anyone who does not conform to the constructed gender role is not fully respected and is sometimes seen as an outcast to the society. Moreover, gender stereotypes are also represented through depicting situations where people are judged for their "improper" performance of their gender. Further, Jordanian film addresses the issues concerning gender through depicting the stereotypical images associated with gender. However, a solution to the issues is not given to the spectator. The images concerning gender in these three films are actually drawn from the reality of the situation concerning Jordanian society. Although there might exist some exaggerations, as a person belonging to the Jordanian society, the researcher can claim the existence of such gender performances in Jordanian society. However, saying that the three selected film give an authentic image of the Jordanian society or not is very hard to claim, since the concept of what is authentic differs from one perspective to another.

One of the most interesting happenings in the three selected films for this study is the revolutionary moments of some characters. Depicting characters living in a relatively conservative nature presupposes a conservative narrative. However, in the midst of conservativity the spectator finds moments where rebellion is introduced through the use of certain characters. For example, although the narrative in *Transit Cities* is relatively conservative, Laila, the main character, is a revolutionary figure who does not accept the way society treats her. However, although these revolutionary moments are presented they are usually fought by members of the society. The fact that Laila moves out of her parents' house to live on her own is considered revolutionary in Jordanian society, thus, Laila struggles with her mother who is always voicing out the common social ideology and who brings the narrative back to its "normal" arch. Depicting revolutionary figures in film gives space for representing difference,

yet, sometimes this difference is not accepted and is considered to be out of the norm, thus, someone should fight it. The use of a female character to voice out the common ideology related to gender performance, especially for women, shows how the constructed system controls individuals to the point where they are blindly following without questioning if it is right or wrong. Almost the same thing is found in *When Monaliza Smiled,* although both stories hold significant differences, the revolutionary spirit could be found in Monaliza. When Monaliza follows her heart and gives her love to Hamdi she is being revolutionary in the eyes of her older sister, Afaf, who does not agree on her behavior for the simple fact of Hamdi being an Egyptian. Those revolutionary moments in a conservative narrative give the spectator a glimpse of what is beyond the boundaries of the films, which is the actual society of representation. Most of the time revolutionary moments are criticized to show that they are not good because they are not the norm. However, the inclusion of these moments is very interestingly intertwined with the narrative of the films.

Gender performances as represented in *Transit Cities* (2010), *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012), and *Captain Abu Raed* (2008) include stereotypical images that are mostly concerning females in Jordanian society. When females aspire for independence they are shocked by the reality that indicates that in a patriarchal society a woman can never be fully independent and she should be dependent on man in order to be successful. Moreover, man is depicted as the powerful figure and his power is always justified, even by women in the society. Further, women are usually blinded by the embedded ideology that a woman cannot live her life without depending on a man who would "protect" her and provide a good life for her.

The goal of this study was to investigate gender performances in Jordanian film by selecting a group of Jordanian films that embody this issue. This study is thus limited in terms of

not representing all Jordanian films. Also, the limitations continue to include the absence of the opinion of Jordanian public on the films. Moreover, generalization is a form of limitation in this study as it could encompass a false representation of the society. However, as the perspectives of humans are different it is very hard to claim these perspectives and include them in one study. Thus, the researcher depended on her own perspective in light of the chosen theories. Further research is needed to include more social aspects of Jordanian society as it is represented in Jordanian film. Also, for further development of this study opinions of people on the films should be included and studied. Moreover, further research is required to amplify the aspects of gender performance, especially for how it is performed by men. This research tends to deal more with the issues that women face in their gender representations, however, it is also important to deal with the representation of the male image and role in society. Also, further research is needed for the amplification of the idea of the collective unconscious as it is discussed in this study.

After studying the group of Jordanian films utilized for this study, *Transit Cities* (2010), *When Monaliza Smiled* (2012), and *Captain Abu Raed* (2008), the researcher reaches the following conclusions. (1) A nonconformist woman is deemed a "bad" woman according to the conventions of Jordanian society. (2) Women are given independence, however, it is not a full form of independence where they can do whatever they want, they are still living under the umbrella of the patriarchal society; thus, they should be submissive to man power. (3) The distribution of power in Jordanian society follows a patriarchal pattern where power is mostly attributed to men and women should be "protected" by men and subservient to their power. (4) The defiance of the constructed sociocultural gender role results in casting away the nonconformist figure. (5) In different social classes gender roles are different. (6) Most of the

messages concerning gender roles are given through subtle everyday life conversations of people, which means they are normalized in the society.

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