The Kibbutz and Israeli Cinema: Deterritorializing Representation and Ideology

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Introduction

"Create the opposite dream: know how to create a becoming-minor".
(Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 27)

The study of Israeli cinema, which developed and crystallized from the late 1970s onward, has been concerned with initial mapping of the field by dividing around four hundred feature films produced in Israel from 1920 until the beginning of the 1990s into distinct periods and genres. The interpretation offered by the research focused on the manner in which Israeli film presented and reflected important topics, problems and conflicts that Israeli society was involved with. At the center of the researchers' attention was the films' ideological significance as well as ideological critique of the films. I refer to this methodology as the “symbolic-realistic" interpretation since it mainly deals with the subject matter and themes of films as a representation and reflection of reality (realism), while attributing symbolic, allegorical or ideological-national implications to the cinematic image. The research I present here begins with this approach and ends with a proposal and application of an alternative methodology for the analysis of Israeli film.

I began the research I am presenting here with writing about the history and ideology of around fifty films concerned with the kibbutz, which were produced between 1930 and 2006. These include both films whose entire plot takes place in a kibbutz and films that incorporate a kibbutz character or scenes set in a kibbutz. I wished to examine these films as a separate and unique corpus in Israeli cinema and to consider the reappearance of new films about the kibbutz, in cycles of every few years. My writing was based on the schools of thought I specialized in at the Tel Aviv University Film Department: Semiotics, Structuralism, Post-structuralism, Psychoanalysis and mainly Post-colonialism, methodologies used by prominent Israeli scholars who established the study of Israeli film: Ella Shohat, Judd Ne'eman, Yigal Bursztyn, Nurith Gertz, Moshe Zimmerman, Miri Talmon, Yosefa Loshitzki, Orly Lubin and others.

Yet, during the writing of the research study several occurrences led me to another direction and opened a new horizon for me. In the course of my work as a lecturer I gave a class about the kibbutz in Israeli film, where I attempted to intertwine several issues evoked by Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, perhaps as a reaction to the sense of unease with the historical and ideological interpretation and with the focus on the politics of representation and position. In the academic milieu where I operate, I should mention, the kibbutz is considered *a priori* part of the hegemony, a pivotal pillar of Zionism. In the Israeli version of Post-colonialism the kibbutz is part of the ideological apparatus that repressed and excluded the "other" (the Oriental or the Arab, for instance). In such a climate, it is simply politically incorrect to be concerned with the kibbutz or with films about the kibbutz.

I wished, at any rate, to follow the direction offered by Deleuze, that is to progress from the macropolitics to the micropolitics. This endeavor did not succeed, to put it mildly. I felt that Deleuze's writing and particularly his writing about film was probably more appropriate when discussing directors and films that are exceptional and non conventional in terms of style and filmic articulation. Directors such as Eisenstein, Vertov, Bresson, Godard, Antonioni, Rossellini, Hitchcock and many others mentioned in Deleuze's two books dedicated to film. In contrast, I believed that Israeli films are mostly dramas and comedies fashioned through a more conventional cinematic language. Their style usually preserves the flow of continuous space and time, and thus do not naturally allow a connection with Deleuze's writing about cinema. Indeed, colleagues from both my close and distant circles believed that this was a pretentious attempt.

I should mention that the choice to use Deleuze's theories in the context of Israeli film is not a self evident one. While there are several researchers from the field of philosophy who are occupied with Deleuze, his ideas are not studied in Israeli film departments at all, and certainly not in relation to Israeli cinema. Whereas one might find a random use of this or the other Deleuzian term, a more comprehensive or deep connection between the theorist and Israeli film is virtually non-existent. One of the main reasons for this omission is the great

difficulty in detaching from the ideological issues characterizing the interpretation of national cinema.

A reunion with my academic counsel, Professor Thomas Elsaesser, who arrived in Israel as a research associate for several months, enabled me to take up that new direction. Professor Elsaesser was willing to devote his time to watch some films, after which we conducted a few working sessions. He contributed two suggestions that gave my research a new momentum and path: He argued that it was possible, even necessary, to base my research on the dominant methodologies in the study of Israeli film, while still appropriate to try and distance myself from them. He also maintained that it was feasible to link the movies to Deleuze, and furthermore, that it was not imperative to use Deleuze's two books on film, in particular. Rather, it was up to me to discover which of Deleuze's (and Guattari's) numerous and diverse texts might be applicable and relevant to my study.

An additional stimulus that reinforced my will to progress toward a new methodological horizon came from a less expected place. While I was in the process of writing this dissertation, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art opened an exhibition entitled "Communal Sleeping: The Group and the Kibbutz in Collective Israeli Consciousness".[1] This exhibition featured 24 instillations of fine art, by artists who were born and raised in the kibbutz. Some of the artists had left the kibbutz, while some continued to live and create in it. The various installations aspired to exceed the collective discourse and memory, myths and historical and sociological debate about the kibbutz. The exhibition wished to express the private memory, the personal experience and trauma of the

[1] The communal sleeping arrangement was one of the revolutionary moves conducted by the kibbutzim from the time the kibbutz was founded in the nineteen twenties and thirties, until the gradual demise of this institution starting in the late seventies. Influenced by Socialism and various educational and social schools, the founders of the kibbutz wished to subvert the institution of the family and create a social and psychic infrastructure to communal life among kibbutz children, as well as enable more occupational freedom for women. The kibbutz children, from the age of six months till adolescence, lived, slept and were educated in communal group frameworks in special buildings that were allocated for that purpose (the division of the children was age-based). The relationship with the parents was mainly conducted during the afternoons and evenings.

communal sleeping arrangement in the kibbutzim. Also, it aspired to penetrate the secret of the "togetherness" that characterizes Israeli society. As Tali Tamir, the exhibition's curator explained: "The intensive observation of the Israeli 'togetherness' in the framework of the exhibition 'Togetherness: The group and the kibbutz in collective Israeli Consciousness' wishes to pass through its walls and follow the steps of the individual living in it, while attempting to understand both the pathology of this relationship and the source of its power and support" (40-41).

A substantial number of the instillations mainly conveyed negative images of the communal sleeping and the kibbutz and articulated pain, lack and loss. Examples are puppets hanging on a hook like slaughtered poultry, a people-reproducing machine, blindfolded dolls, enclosed and suffocating spaces, portraits of people in agony and a statue of six people stuck to one another. The exhibition evoked a very lively debate conducted mainly in the weekend arts and culture supplements in national newspapers as well as in local and the kibbutz press. The debate ran along expected and familiar lines: Was this a fair treatment of the kibbutz? Does it convey the truth or is it an exaggeration derived from the artists' excessive imagination? Should the circumstances of the kibbutz' past taken into consideration, and were there only negative sides to the communal sleeping arrangement, or positive ones, as well? More broadly, this public deliberation constituted another layer of the mounting criticism in the passing decade of Zionist values, which is expressed in the presentation of the binary oppositions dream/the shattered dream or utopia/dystopia.

I visited the exhibition twice, two weeks apart. The first time I was indeed impressed by the critical or negating side of the instillations. In retrospect, I understand that I had perceived many of the objects in terms of representation, symbol, metaphor and allegory of the kibbutz: the red colors as **representing** pain, the black colors as a **symbol** of mourning and loss, the blindfolded eyes as a **metaphor** of violence and victims, and the people-reproducing machine as an **allegory** to a life form that reproduces robots. In the second visit, however, I attempted to apply a different perspective, to arrive in fact with no preconceived perception, knowledge, patterns or terms at all. Instead of examining what the

objects represent and reflect, I tried to think and sense what they do, which links they create, what the body called a kibbutz enables one to do, to form, to invent.

Without the strict framework of a cinematic narrative with a beginning, middle and an end, I could drift freely and enjoyably around the exhibition space, moving in different directions and routes. Without knowledge of the interiority of the objects/characters or the intention of the artists (*auteurs*), I could sense the singular links of the different materials: wood, metal, glass, water, cotton fibers, various colors and textures. I was able to examine the instillations as expressions of desire, as desire-machines. I imagined myself conducting a dialogue with Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Deleuze and Guattari. I affiliated myself with what Deleuze calls the "secret link constituted by the critique of negativity, the cultivation of joy, the hatred of interiority, the exteriority of forces and relations, the denunciation of power."[2] In other words, I realized that I should borrow from Deleuze (and Guattari) these concepts that deal with entrances and exits, assemblages and machines, deterritorialization and reterritorialization, such as appears in the book they co-authored about Kafka's prose.

At this stage, the inner rationale and logic of the research began to crystallize: in order to examine and illustrate the transition from the existing methodology to the new approach which I am proposing, I have chosen to focus on a restricted corpus of films produced in the nineteen nineties and the early years of the 21st century and relating to the kibbutz. I have assumed that this period had not been analyzed comprehensively and it has also been my impression that the existing interpretation was repetitive and no longer satisfactory. Yet, I also realized that the period, the complex cultural context and the intricate intertext and generic aspects of the films could only be fully understood with the earlier films in background. I maintain that the films discussed in the research, by virtue of a cluster of tropes and motifs, and their mutually determining correletion and dynamics, belong to a unique genre in Israeli cinema – the genre of the kibbutz films. Therefore, films about the kibbutz produced between 1930 and 1990 are presented and analyzed. Thus, in addition to the ideological mapping derived of the symbolic-realistic reading (or the representational paradigm), I also highlight

[2] Deleuze, cited in Massumi's Introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, page x.

the generic components particular to these films, which the representational paradigm has overlooked.

This, then, is my research plan: the first chapter discusses the dominant theoretical frameworks and methodology of the analysis of Israeli film. The development of the academic writing about Israeli cinema, from the 1930s to the 1990s, is briefly surveyed. Most of the chapter reviews the predominant methodology in the field of interpretative academic writing regarding Israeli cinema, a discourse that evolved and had consolidated in the course of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. I also present prominent researchers in the field and dominant interpretations extensively and discuss the set of concepts and modes of thinking that emerge from these interpretations: representation, realism, genre, ideology, homology, East-West. Since I have chosen to highlight films about the kibbutz, I added at the end of the chapter some historical background for the benefit of the reader who may not be familiar with this unique phenomenon. I briefly introduce the concept of the kibbutz and its significance in the political, social and cultural arenas in Israel. Chapter 1, then, provides background material for the entire study. It touches concisely on diverse topics that will be elaborated upon and articulated in the following chapters.

In Chapter 2, I demonstrate how the methodology and key concepts that I present above are applied and activated as an interpretative approach, suggesting a division into periods, historical-chronological charting of films relating to the kibbutz during the years 1930-1990. I propose a division into periods in accordance with the themes and ideological approach expressed by the films and in relation to changing historical, national and cultural contexts. Each era and its repertoire of films are related to genres or film types in Israeli cinema from its beginnings up till the end of the 1980s. The chapter offers an ideological, symbolic and allegorical interpretation, integrating analyses derived from various sources including journalistic articles and academic literature.

This chapter charts and interprets a corpus of films concerned with a social phenomenon that has not yet been dealt with in Israeli cinema, the kibbutzim. Included in this body of films are around 50 films that were produced over the years, and either take place in the kibbutz, involve a character from the kibbutz,

or include a few scenes that are set in the kibbutz. I have chosen to discuss this topic wishing to resolve several questions relating to the genre: What are the functions fulfilled by the kibbutz in Israeli cinema over the years? How do these films reflect the thematical and ideological changes in Israeli cinema and culture? Why does Israeli cinema return to deal with the kibbutz, in cycles of every few years, and how does this relate to changes both in the cinematic field and in Israeli society? Can this corpus be referred to as a separate genre with unique semantic and syntactic traits? Do existing interpretations and studies relate only to the social and ideological significance arising from these films? To what extent are these films interpreted according to personal or collective memory, prior knowledge or prejudices, or perhaps due to the unsettling and deconstructing climate of post-modernism?

Chapter 3 deals with the nineteen nines and the early years of the twenty first century in Israeli film, and focuses on a small number of films related to the kibbutz in this period. The chapter presents the various modifications and transformations that occurred in Israeli cinema, Israeli culture and the kibbutz. Alongside a survey of the films, topics and criticism of Israeli cinema from 1991 to 2005, this chapter focuses on four films and stories that take place in a kibbutz, and three additional films with characters from a kibbutz. I describe the films at length and present a detailed analysis, including criticism written about these films. I examine the extent in which the interpretation of these films employs the concepts of the dominant methodology: representation, ideological significance, concern with national identity, the individual versus the collective, East and West, as well as generic components relating to repetition, continuation and change of semantic and syntactic aspects, such as characters, action, iconography, archetypes, myth and plot structure.

I suggest that these films, produced toward the end of the millennium, an era of social and cultural transformation in Israel, allow a different approach, an alternative methodology, and a new way of thinking about Israeli cinema. It is possible and quite legitimate to consider questions such as: What do films reflect and represent? What is the position and what are the beliefs of the *auteur* or what are the hidden meanings and overall structures? Do films actually express the

truth, or do they manipulate it? How do films reproduce and disseminate this ideology or another?

Yet, in our era it is possible, and perhaps should be expected that we engage in a different set of questions and problems: What does a movie do? What kind of links does it enable us to create? Is it possible to suggest a political interpretation that does not only deal with the macro-political level (the ideology and mythology of the Nation or large groups in society), but offer interpretation on the micro-political level as well – politics that take place in a complex of lines, planes, forces and relationships? For example, can these films be considered not as a representation of reality with ideological significance, but as creations that make it possible to rethink the relation to place, time and space? Is it possible to relate to the cinematic image not in familiar and preconceived ideological or mythical terms? Can the cinematic image be considered in terms of time, movement, speed, color, sound and texture, without involving or organizing them in a coherent arrangement or an organized spatial representation? Such a methodological shift reflects significant political and ethical issues as well as aspects of film theory.

The above questions reverberate with the philosophy and nomadic thinking of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, a philosophy that constitutes the foundation for my proposal of a new methodology for analyzing Israeli films in general and films about the kibbutz in particular. In Chapter 4, I focus on three films that are extensively analyzed in Chapter 3. However, I do so while employing a new and very different reading which will use concepts from Deleuze and Guattari's "Tool Box". These will include rhizome, machines and assemblages, deterritorialization and reterritorialization, molar and molecular lines and movement-images. In the fifth and final chapter I refine and summarize the approach of the entire research through the analysis of a new film about the kibbutz, which was released as I was about to end my study. Later on I suggest possible broader applications of my research.

The inspiration to focus on the writings of Deleuze and Guattari as a trigger for an alternative methodology came from various sources. I would like to mention that the topic of the kibbutz and the representation of the kibbutz in feature films

especially arouses my curiosity since the kibbutz status always involves tensions, paradoxes and ambivalent issues that seem to lend themselves to various and sundry readings. The kibbutz was formerly a central institution and now finds itself in the margins. It is both innovative and conservative; it is simultaneously socialist and capitalist; it has a productive material reality, but is mainly perceived as a symbol and a metaphor. The kibbutz is changing and the old ideology is breaking down, yet, it continues to exist in a new form. This dynamic is expressed in the films dealt with in this research study, but these are open to interpretation in various ways, as we shall discover in subsequent chapters.

The very use of terms and concepts such as “center”, “margin”, “breaking down”, or a comparison of the present with the past necessarily implies a particular way of thinking, specific beliefs and presuppositions. In other words, it involves using preexisting language and concepts or applying the cinematic image to *a-priori* ready-made forms and structures. Thus the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari in this specific context is that they allow for more freedom, flexibility and improvisation concerning the overall complex relations between image and reality, viewer and screen and subject and object. In general, what appeals to me is Deleuze and Guattari's resistance against ready-made concepts and methods and the fact that they stress the importance of letting thought remain open to what lies beyond thought. Art, they would argue, is the opposite of method. It is not a form that we impose on our experience or on our being. Art is a vehicle to express the anarchy of experience and an escape route from the dogma of forms and methods.

In conclusion, for the sake of decency and academic ethics, I must acknowledge not having encompassed every possible aspect. I have not reached everything written about Israeli cinema, and it is probable that I have not included all of the approaches and theories existing in the field. Clearly I addressed only a limited number of issues expressed in Deleuze's extensive and complex writing, with and without Guattari. Moreover, I do not attempt to explain these concepts, but mainly to employ them and play with them. This is an experiment in which I endeavored to create, with the help of the terms, new connections, new maps, in order to illustrate the numerous and varied possibilities and to exceed and part from what seems to me the dominant discourse about Israeli cinema. I am not

suggesting a complete disengagement, but rather conducting a dialogue between representative thinking and nomadic thinking.

The study I am presenting here conveys, among other things, this shift, my changing position and viewpoint as a spectator, as a researcher and as a person, expressing, one might say, both my visits to the exhibition. In parts of the study I cooperate with the dominant perspective, and in others I assume a becoming-minor stance; a little Oedipus and a little anti-Oedipus. To borrow concepts from another field: in certain parts of the study I use the means of conventional medicine, and in others I use terms from Deleuze and Guattari's "Tool Box." Applying them as Chinese needles, I insert to the films' energy core (*chakras*). It has been my intention to infuse new energy into the films, to the language that discusses them, and to the body and thought which encounter them.

Chapter 1

The Study of Israeli Cinema: Description of the Field

Film production in Palestine was launched in the 1920s. The early films were short (2-3 minute long) and silent, and were generally in the form of travelogues documenting the landscape and attractions such as the holy places in Jerusalem or the region's exotic "natives" (Arabs and Bedouin). In the following decades these cinematic enterprises developed and became more sophisticated: in the 1930s and the 1940s these were mostly documentaries, propaganda films, newsreels and docudramas, whereas only about ten full-length feature films were made, most of which were foreign productions or co-productions. From the 1960s onwards – as a result of the consolidation of production patterns, the cinematic infrastructure and national budgets – six to ten Israeli feature films have been produced every year.[3] This dissertation is only concerned with feature films, 530 of which have been produced in Israel up till now.

Interpretative writing about Israeli film had matured in a few stages. From the 1930s until the mid-1960s, the texts were mainly produced by film critics writing for the daily press or weekend supplements.[4] The second stage gradually unfolded in the mid-1960s as a response to the emergence of a young Israeli cinema that was referred to as the "Israeli New Wave." Inspired by the French New Wave and *Cahiers du Cinema*, a dialogue developed between young filmmakers and film critics whose mutual goal was to create a comprehensive cultural discourse regarding a medium that had not until then enjoyed status and recognition in Israeli cultural life.[5]

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[3] These processes are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

[4] This type of writing and the manner in which the films are received continue of course until today, and it also includes film criticism in other media such as radio, television and the Internet.

[5] As in France, there were Israeli film directors who also acted as film theorists and critics.

Important changes in this field occurred in the course of the 1970s, partly due to the inauguration of academic cinematic studies at Tel-Aviv University, around 1972. This framework, which attracted filmmakers and film critics as well as lecturers from various other fields (such as history, the arts and literature), naturally evoked for the first time a wish and a need to teach Israeli film in a systematic, organized manner.[6] This goal was to be achieved by providing an introductory "history" and a "theory" of Israeli cinema that had by that time produced about 100 feature films, in addition to a large number of documentaries and shorts. Clearly an academic and organized approach to cinema resulted in an ever-widening exposure to international cinematic research, based on semiotics, structuralism and narratology and later on Marxism, psychoanalysis and feminism, and from the end of the 1980s on post-Marxism, post-colonialism and gender-oriented theories as well.

Various writers, in particular Judd Ne'eman, laid the foundation for a historiography of Israeli film and were responsible for categorizing it according to periods and genres, and for addressing the repertoire, funding methods, production techniques, political aspects and more. This was also the first time that researchers turned their attention to long-forgotten films that had been made in Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s. These studies began to appear in the Film Department course compilations and in film publications and journals, thus gradually increasing academic awareness of Israeli cinema. It is worth mentioning that during the 1980s a wave of films adopted a sharp critical stance regarding Zionism in general and the conquest of the Occupied Territories and the harsh treatment of Palestinians in particular. Consequently, the spotlight of political and public debate was turned on Israeli cinema.

The third and most significant stage in the development of Israeli cinematic criticism began in the mid-1980s. In the course of just a few years several early books, devoted to analyzing Israeli cinema from various theoretical standpoints, appeared. These included *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of*

[6] An especially fruitful dynamic was created in the Film Department both because of the combination of practical and theoretical film studies, but also due to the high percentage of students from other faculties in the university (especially students of art, literature, sociology and anthropology).

Representation (Shohat, 1987), which mainly presents a post-colonial approach; *Face as a Battlefield* (Bursztyn, 1990), a book based on Marxist approaches and cultural criticism; *The Hebrew Film – Studies in the history of the Israeli silent and talking cinema* (Nathan and Jacob Gross, 1991), which deals among other issues with film creation and production, as well as the degree of acceptance of the films by the public and the critics; *Motion Fiction – Israeli fiction in film* (Gertz, 1993), a book that relies on semiotics and structuralism, together with a polysystem theory; *Israeli Cinema – Facts / Plots / Directors / Opinions* (Schnitzer, 1994), the first lexicon of Israeli cinema; and Nitzan Ben-Shaul's book, which combines psychological and poststructuralist approaches (1997, in English), in a discussion of the siege symptom in Israeli cinema. These books laid the foundation for the advancement of study and research of Israeli cinema, and provided the academic basis for initiating or participating in cinematic and interdisciplinary conferences in Israel and abroad.[7]

In recent years, a similar number of books have appeared, including those by Talmon (2001), Lushitzky (2001), Zimmerman (2001; 2002), Schweitzer (2003), Irma Klein (2003) and Yosef (2004a). Hence altogether there are today quite a few books on the subject of Israeli cinema. In addition, dozens of articles have been published in journal as well as M.A. theses and dissertations, some of which have been profoundly influenced by gender studies, such as those of Friedman, Lubin, Yosef and Munk. In the course of the 90s, additional colleges and educational institutions for film studies were established, and their graduates began to take up teaching positions, and to research and publish academic articles both in Israel and abroad. Resembling a process that occurred in the academic world abroad, in Israel too researchers from other fields (art, history, literature, sociology, etc.) have offered their contributions to the body of texts relating to national cinema. In Israel today there is no publication dealing exclusively with cinema, but the recognition and respect gained by writing about Israeli cinema have facilitated its regular appearance in various academic journals in the country.

[7] The most important of them is a biannual Cinematic Studies Conference organized by Tel-Aviv University's Film and Television Department that takes place as part of the International Students' Film Festival.

1.1 – Symbolic-Realistic Interpretation: Key Concepts

This section introduces the key concepts and approaches of the cinematic image analysis, which are used in the dominant research discourse regarding Israeli cinema. The major scholars in this field are discussed, as are those familiar and influential texts that are mostly studied in film departments in Israel and constitute the starting point for subsequent papers and studies dealing with Israeli cinema. The approaches and concepts presented here are at the core of this research, which investigates them, as well as their limitations, in an attempt to suggest a new, alternative methodology.

Classification (Periodization, Mapping, "Genres")

The concept of representation and its ideological significance, alongside other ideas that will be presented here are the main basis for the division into periods, genres and film types in interpreting Israeli cinema. Changes in the film repertoire from decade to decade – characters, plots, conflicts, themes and iconography – were interpreted and categorized in relation to concepts such as "Zionist ideology," "the individual and the collective," East and West," etc. In addition, these changes were perceived as a "representation" and a "reflection" of transformations that had taken place in Israeli society and culture over time.

My use of the "genre" concept should be understood in the context of Israeli cinema, referring mainly to a formal framework through which individual films are examined, evaluated and classified. The emphasis is principally on the repertoire of films – common plots, themes, iconography and characteristic forms. When several films express a new repertoire, they are referred to as a genre, type or group. Thus, for instance, a group of films taking place in Tel Aviv in the nineteen nineties are dubbed the genre of Tel Aviv films. Most Israeli scholars have accentuated the ideological function of local genres; that is, genres which reflect the dominant ideology's interests, hidden messages and constructed representations.

Some aspects of the genre are, however, less relevant to Israeli film and the writing about it. The term "film industry" is problematic in a state where only about ten feature films are produced per year. In Israel there are no "studios" and therefore it is difficult to speak of an intentional use of familiar forms and of the

public's common expectations. That is certainly true since the nineteen seventies, when it became difficult to point to directors', producers', distributors' and the audience's shared interests. A master plan or a formula that repeats itself and survives more than a decade, evoking expectations and prompting the audience to go to a certain movie is impossible to detect. Most Israeli films, furthermore, tend to be realistic and deal with current social, cultural and political issues, and so have no direct connection to the stylized "worlds" of Hollywood genres, such as film noir, the musical, and science fiction or mafia films.

In general, the films made between the years 1920-1970 were categorized as the **Nationalist Cinema** (Gertz). Shohat and Ne'eman suggested a subdivision into **Zionist Realism** or **Beginning of the settlement period** (films that were made up to 1948, prior to the founding of the state of Israel), which mainly includes short films, documentaries and propaganda films and a small number of docudramas. With considerable pathos, these films depict the beginnings of the Zionist endeavor in Palestine (departure from the Diaspora in favor of immigration to the new country, founding settlements, constructing the infrastructure of roads, electricity, water, the beginnings of agricultural and industrial production, etc.). The identification with the Zionist project (hegemony and ideology), while ignoring other issues (East-West, the Arab presence in the country), was subjected to harsh criticism: "The Arabs appear in the films of Rosenberg, Ben-Dov, Axelrod, Halachmi and Agadati merely as a Biblical embellishment of the idealized landscapes of the country" (Bursztyn 36). From the perspective of the 1980s, the cinematic image is perceived as a propaganda vehicle whose aim is to educate the viewer and convince him to identify with the values and norms of Zionism. Shohat, for example, offers a symbolic and allegoric interpretation: "Images of this valley reinforce the connotative link to the Biblical past…the wandering, the desire for the Land, and the entry into the Promised Land are viewed then as a recapitulation and a prolongation of ancient events" (34).

The films that were prompted by the 1948 War of Independence and up to those made after the 1967 War were categorized as the **Heroic-Nationalist genre** (Shohat) or **Nationalist Cinema**. These films, inspired by the Hollywood war film, reflected the nation's historical transition from a group of settlements to a

sovereign state. They depicted the heroism and self-sacrifice of people in time of war, delineating military operations, the hard living conditions on the border, the integration of immigrants and refugees into the national effort, etc. Among other things, interpretation of the cinematic image contrasted new imagery with old: "The heroes were presented in opposition to the prototype of the Jew, that is, as brave warriors having initiative and resourcefulness, men of action, not of spirit" (Gertz 1993: 17). The relationship between the individual and the collective, self and others was examined, for instance, in Talmon's interpretation of the film *They Were Ten* (1961). "The relationship between the group and the woman exemplify the supremacy and centrality of the masculine component of Israeli identity in the years when the film was produced" (51). An allegorical reading of the cinematic image as a representation and reproduction of the dominant ideology (East/West, First World/Third World) can be found in Shohat's interpretation of the film *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer* (1955): "The transformation of a British officer into a pro-Zionist soldier, then, allegorically evokes the recruitment of the West for the Israeli struggle" (65).

From the early 1960s onwards, as a result of various changes both in the cinematic system and in Israeli culture, there was a gradual decline in the popularity of **National Cinema** films[8], and two other film types or genres appeared, namely the **Israeli New Wave** (or **Personal Cinema**) and **Ethnic-Class Cinema** (or "**Bourekas**" films)**.** This period also marks the inception of generic interpretation and a frame of reference of cinematic inter-texts, that is, a methodology that compares new films to earlier genres or films. For example, Ne'eman states: "The two cinematic models, the personal and the ethnic, that were formulated in Israel in the 1960s, were in effect one cinematic phenomenon that expressed a turning away from the ideological and aesthetic values represented by 'Zionist realism'" (1998: 12). According to this commentator, the shifts in plot, theme and style represent a reaction against the dominant ideology (socialism, collectivism).

[8] National cinema and the war film formula returned to favor for a few years in the aftermath of the 1967 war. As stated above, I will discuss these and other changes in subsequent chapters.

The desire to free art from national politics in addition to the influence of European modernism resulted in a series of *avant garde* films by young directors produced between 1968 and 1971. These films were entitled the **Israeli New Wave** (Ne'eman, Zimmerman, Schweitzer) and in the 1970s they were categorized under the heading of **Personal Cinema** (Shohat, Gertz). In terms of the individual and the collective, the private and the national, **Personal Cinema** films were perceived as a rejection of Zionist collectivism in favor of a preoccupation with the individual: "The films deal with impossible love stories between men and women, with the fantasies related to these relationships and with the despair that results in their failure…They present protagonists who are unable to live according to accepted social codes" (Zimmerman 1989: 33). Conversely, the disconnection or gap between the personal level and other levels has also been an object of Gertz's criticism, for example, regarding the film *My Michael* (1974): "The shots of the city only illuminate the loneliness and alienation of the heroine and are not related to more complex social, psychological and human situations" (Gertz 1993: 160-161).

The concept of *Auteur* was introduced into the Israeli cinematic discourse through the **Personal Cinema**, which was influenced by the French New Wave. The term referred to films created by filmmakers who were concerned with expressing their inner world and individual style, rather than serving commercial interests or catering to the demands of the public. Over the years the *Auteur* approach has been both appraised and criticized from different angles. Shohat, for example, claimed that in political and ideological terms, these films were not subversive enough: "Most of the films developed a serious tone, employing, however, neither the ironic, subversive charm that typified the early films of Jean-Luc Godard and Francois Truffaut, nor the intellectualized hieratic poeticism of Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras" (198). Zimmerman claimed that the **Personal Cinema** films were artsy and elitist and that they deliberately distanced themselves from the consensus: "While trying to be artistic, this group was guilty of elitism, self-induced isolation, and uncommunicativeness, all of which caused it to sink into self-pity" (1989: 33). Ne'eman, on the other hand, defended the **Personal Cinema** films relying on an ideological approach and a Freudian symbolic interpretation: "The modernist aesthetics…was tantamount to a death mask: cold, beautiful, terrible, representing a balanced, organized

expression of the death wish of the generation that grew up after the State was declared" (1998: 27).

The term "*auteur*" should also be understood in the limited context of Israeli cinema and the academic writing about it.[9] As aforementioned, the term refers to Israeli directors whose films express aesthetic taste, but mainly their social and political stances. In this respect, a large part of the Israeli films produced from the late 1960s and on are personal films. In academic writing, components of the *auteur* approach have been intertwined with other approaches (Shohat, Gertz, Ne'eman, Zimmerman) particularly in the writing about specific directors (Uri Zohar, Efra'im Kishon and Amos Gutman, for example). Certain filmmakers have enjoyed more comprehensive research, among them Amos Gitai, one of the most fertile filmmakers in both Israeli and international cinema, about whose work Irma Klein has written a book (2003, in Hebrew). Another director is Yehuda (Judd) Ne'eman[10]

At the same time the **Personal Cinema** films played at movie theaters, a different type of movies gained popularity. Prompted by the tremendous success of the satiric comedy *Sallah* (1964), these films were comedies and melodramas of a class-ethnic nature which, for the first time, acknowledged a large sector of the population – the Sephardi (Oriental) Jews – who had been utterly ignored by the mainstream dominant culture. These films related to the Oriental Jews' sense of collective deprivation and frustration, yet ultimately they conveyed a message of cultural and social integration, as expressed by "the melting pot". Producers and directors were aware of the public's demand for humorous, entertaining films and created a kind of plot formula in which the peripheral protagonist of oriental origin confronts and triumphs over an individual Ashkenazi nemesis or over the establishment itself. Nurith Gertz categorized these films under the heading of **Ethnic-Class Cinema**, but they are generally referred to as

[9] Originally, this term was attributed to Hollywood directors who succeeded in inserting subversive messages and personal expression that evaded the notice of producers who dominated the 1940s and 1950s Hollywood film industry.

[10] A retrospective at the Israeli cinemateques was dedicated to Judd Ne'eman's work, as well as a journal (Munk and Sivan, 2006).

"Bourekas" films.[11] In contrast to the personal films, which did not succeed in attracting a large audience, the "**Bourekas**" films were exceedingly popular until 1977, and some of them even enjoyed the status of cult movies in later years.[12]

The "Bourekas" films were critiqued from various angles. Shohat's approached them through the prism of the East-West axis (see below). Other film critics and scholars were inspired by Marxist concepts, such as "ideological apparatus" and "hegemony". Ne'eman wrote: The "'Bourekas' films perpetuate the system by anesthetizing the audience's critical faculties and political awareness; they exploit the social distress and lack of education of second-class Israeli citizens in order to fill the producers' coffers" (1982: 22). Gertz emphasized the connection to national values and the perception that the film's characters represent an ethnic group or social class: "So, if on the one hand the "Bourekas" cinema preserves stagnant national values as personified by its "national" character, on the other hand it preserves Israeli Ashkenazi middle-class standards by presenting the hero as an oriental character, whose inferiority in fact exemplifies the superiority of the culture that he is allegedly criticizing" (1993: 32). Ben Shaul suggested an economic and ideological common denominator between the personal cinema and the "Bourekas" films by viewing them as a reflection spirit of the time: "In fact, in various ways these two cinematic forms represent a capitalist-liberal-autonomous ideology that was gradually crystallizing during that period" (128).

Research related to films that were made from the late 70s until the end of the 80s recognized generic continuity while also categorizing new genres. Shohat claimed that personal cinema continued into the 1980s in a variety of forms and styles, in films dealing with the struggle between the individual and the collective or those dealing with peripheral characters (208-235). She mainly related to a group of films or a genre that she referred to as **The Palestinian Wave** in Israeli cinema (or **conflict films**), whose topic was the Israeli-Palestinian or Jewish-Arab conflict against the background of the Lebanon War

[11] "Bourekas" is a popular and inexpensive oriental pastry dish. The title "Bourekas films" was originally used as a derogatory term.

[12] The reference is to films like *Sallah*, *Charlie and a Half* (1974), *Today Only* (1976), and others. The next chapter will present the reasons for these films' popularity as well as the cause of their decline at the end of the 70s.

(1982), the expanding occupation of the territories and the fact that Israeli politics turned a blind eye to the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. The generic approach was applied by Shohat not only in order to categorize films by new ideological perspectives, but also to compare them with previous genres: "Since the decline of the Heroic-Nationalist films, Israeli cinema had tended to repress the Arab issue on the screen…The Israel-Arab conflict and a siege mentality remained latent, however, an unspoken presence in 'Bourekas' as well as in the Personal Cinema" (238).

Shohat examined whether the representation of Arabs and Palestinians in these films constitutes an expression of the "Other", or if in the last analysis they actually present the Israeli point of view: "Although the films offer progressive images within the history of the Israeli representation of the conflict, they operate within the general framework and assumptions of Zionism" (240). The gap between personal expression and national ideology and the relation between the artist's intentions and Zionist hegemony is bridged through the concept of "focalization": "Both on the narrative level and through the images, it is the occupier-protagonist who forms the dynamic force, who generates and focalized the narrative, and it is he whom the camera obediently follows, even when he is walking through Palestinian towns" (255).

Gertz suggests a similar subdivision, which in effect corresponds to Shohat's two subdivisions, and categorizes most of the main films that were produced at this period as belonging to the genre of the **Outcast and the Alien**. Gertz emphatically compares the new films to former genres: "The cinema of the outcast and alien returned, then, to national cinema, confronted it, criticized it and in this way attempted to build a new model out of its doctrines and content" (1993: 17). According to Gertz, the cinematic image represents and expresses an attempt to deal with Israeli identity and with questions regarding the relationship between the individual and the collective, the personal and the national, national values and universal values. Among other matters, her criticism deals with the fact that these films do not offer an alternative: "…The films reject the social and collective order, but do not offer any alternative, any new meaning. The outsider, from his position outside the framework of the collective, does not present any

other options since his world is subjected to the world he rebels against" (190-191).

Representation (Realism, Homology, Allegory)

In the above quotation from Gertz's critique, she refers to "the social and collective order," to national values and norms. The dominant methodology in interpreting Israeli cinema relates to the cinematic image as a representation of reality and a reflection of the period, extra-cinematic processes, events and conflicts on the social and national level: "Films bear witness to a period: an expression of the collective subconscious of society; a mirror of the taste and culture of their time" (Bursztyn: 12). The Israeli film is perceived as a commentary of an artistic creation or its creator on existent reality, as the expression of an opinion and a judgment. As Ne'eman states: "The films that they made in the aftermath of these wars functioned as a repeat exposure of their personal shell shock experience and a conscious processing of the collective trauma" (1993: 30). The physical world of the film (*mise-en-scène*), the characters and their actions, behavior or speech are not perceived as fictitious but as an expression of a familiar, real world.

The cinematic text is perceived, comprehended and interpreted in relation to a specific historical and cultural context. As Shohat writes: "As a kind of bridge between text and context…[The concept of homology enables] me to draw parallels between filmic microcosm and social macrocosm" (10). According to this approach, the cinematic image will always represent a social group, a social class, an ethnic group, a social institution or the political establishment. For example, Gertz writes thus about the films of the 1980s: "The cinema of the outcast and the alien can be defined as cinema that placed Israeli politics at center stage, especially the question of Israeli social identity and its way of relating to the world around it" (1993: 176).

This approach is complemented by criticism of films that do not faithfully represent reality or that are perceived as being divorced from reality all together. The **Personal Cinema** films were the object of this type of criticism. Gertz writes: "Israeli personal cinema in general tended to ignore the social conflicts of its time and place" (1993: 130). In her criticism of **Personal Cinema**, Shohat

takes a similar position: “Israeli personal filmmakers went to great length to eliminate any references to the Israeli context, preferring always to develop an esthetic of transcendence, abstraction, and “airy nothing.” (201).

It is worth mentioning here the almost self-evident tendency of Israeli film towards realism. The concept of realism in Israeli cinema has a few different contexts: due to a lack of funds or massive government backing, not a single film studio has been produced in Israel to date. Films are almost inevitably shot at real locations, for example on streets blocked for the purpose of filming or in apartments where people live. To the fact that this is a real physical world and not an artificial one are added additional limitations that enhance realism, such as the relative lack of opportunity to determine and control the means of cinematic expression, for example lighting, complex camera movement, etc. (all of which are easily accomplished in a film studio). The dominance of realistic expression is due to other reasons, one of which is historical. During the years 1964-1969 about twenty *avant garde* films were made in Israel inspired by European modernism as represented by Godard, Resnais, Antonioni and others (see **The Israeli New Wave** above). These films were indeed supported and acclaimed by film critics, but were seen by an audience of only a few thousand viewers, at most. Young film directors drew the necessary conclusions from this and went on to make more conventional films. In Zimmerman's words: “the time had arrived for the mainstream film. This film did not shy away from confronting the problems of Israeli society while still appealing to any intelligent viewer” (1989: 33).

Ideology (Zionist Ideology, Hegemony, the Personal and the National)

As aforementioned, the dominant methodology for interpreting Israeli cinema had evolved in the course of the 1980s and was influenced in my opinion by two main critical foci, one local and the other international. On the local level, films made between 1930 and 1985 were now observed and perceived from a historical distance, and as a result various social, cultural and political processes were being explored and understood from a more mature viewpoint. In addition, and perhaps most significantly, a perspective expressing dissatisfaction and reservations about the Israeli government policy crystallized. This process originated with the trauma of the Yom Kippur War (1973), was exacerbated by

the colonization of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the construction of dozens of settlements and the infringement of basic human rights (from 1979-1981 and onwards), and reached its peak during the Lebanon War (1982).

The stance, which criticizes Zionist ideology in the here and now, was inevitably applied to the understanding of the past as well as to the interpretative writing regarding films produced in the past. This kind of interpretation focused, among other things, on the extent in which the director or the film identified with the consensus and the "Zionist" master-narrative (and so reproduced Zionist myths) and examined the extent of the criticism the director or the film expressed toward Zionism. This is what Bursztyn, for example, had to say about the film *They Were Ten* (1960): "People, faces and their stories are no more than an excuse for presenting the Zionist vision and its realization" (41). And Gertz remarked on the film *He Walked Through the Fields* (1967) thus: "The Western served to fortify the national aspect: to give a foundation to the ethos of national-Zionist settlement, and to present it according to the ethos of the pioneers of the Wild West" (71).

The second focus relates to the influence of socio-political approaches and theories to analyzing popular culture, from the Frankfurt School to post-structuralism. In one form or another, Zionist ideology began to be perceived as a "hegemony" (Gramsci), while groups, institutions, establishments or phenomena such as the Hebrew language, the educational system or the army were perceived as the "ideological apparatus" of the State (Althusser). Myths, in the same token, became an expression of the "Zionist Master-Narrative". This is how Shohat describes the "language war" of the 1930s: "By attributing an affiliation of the Hebrew language to their native European tongues, the Ashkenazi population imperiously assigned a negative value to everything specific to the Hebrew language. The practice of de-Semitization of Hebrew received, furthermore, institutional legitimization" (58).

These two points of reference greatly influenced the approach to interpreting Israeli film. The resulting methodology not only perceived the cinematic image as a representation of ideology, but also as an expression of power relations in which the State's hegemonic and ideological mechanisms imposed a regime of

values, norms and worldviews or attempted to veer the individual to a single homogeneous national identity. Thus, Ne'eman writes: "cinema served in those days as clay in the hands of the Zionist leadership…The alliance between Israeli cinema and the political vanguard was forged in the days when Zionism was still perceived as a national liberation movement" (1998: 11). Zimmerman writes mockingly about the film *This is the Land* (1933): "The pioneers appear in the film as people void of any personal goals or private lives, who gladly harnessed themselves in favor of the [universal] Zionist cause for the benefit of their people [and humanity]" (2001: 147).

This perspective was applied not only to early Israeli cinema, but also to films of the 1980s. As Gertz writes: "By means of the outsider, the films uncovered rifts in Israeli existence and in Zionist ideology, but they also tried to repair them, to discover what was accepted and shared, to hang onto a national identity that was gradually crumbling" (1993: 190).

To a great extent, ideological interpretation rests on the way the films express the relationship between the individual and the collective, between the private and the national and also between the local and the universal. In Gertz's words: "The **Cinema of the Outcast and the Alien** highlighted those who had previously been rejected by Israeli society, and thus attempted to establish society on a new, different basis: on exceptional, misfit protagonists worn down by the burden of national and military norms…characters who were wounded in the war and have stopped functioning…heroes found at the fringes of society…Holocaust survivors…or protagonists whose ideological stance or behavior are unconventional" (189).

In the framework of these presuppositions, the collective indicates the (Jewish) people, social consensus or hegemonic national myths, but also sub-collectives such as institutions and establishments, the kibbutz, the army or male society. Talmon writes as follows about the film *The Paratroopers* (1977): "The film does not pose an alternative to the overbearing masculine collective identity. It presents the stretcher maneuver as a kind of rite of passage, through which the internalization of the collective social norms leaves the social order intact" (243). About the film *One of Us* (1989), she comments that it deals with "…the

individual's struggle against a mechanical, impersonal army apparatus, and the moral decisions that are imposed on the fighter who does not share the attitudes of this system" (244).

In the 1990s, a feminist and gender oriented ideological criticism evolved, through which the relationship between individual and national was examined. For example, Friedman writes about the film *Repeat Dive* (1982): "The film presents Mira as the object of the stubborn gazes of her husband's army buddies, but at the same time it gives her the strength to stare back at them no less cynically" (38). Raz Yosef, who researches homoerotic aspects of Israeli cinema, writes: "Zionism strove to create a 'standard' Jewish male sexuality, which was contrasted with the 'deviant', supposedly homosexual sexuality of late 19th Century Europe" (2004b: 31).

East-West (Orientalism, Europocentrism)

The preoccupation with matters related to gender indicates the penetration of post-structuralist approaches to the study of Israeli cinema. These approaches made it possible to analyze the cinematic image as representing and reflecting a regime of knowledge and power that touches on the relationship between "I" and the "Other," or between the dominant culture and excluded minorities. These relations are currently conceived in terms such as construction, subjugation, oppression, repression, positioning, reproduction, etc. Post-structuralist approaches formed the basis of a methodology that examined, broke down and criticized these relationships in Israeli cinema, such as the reproduction of Zionist myths, the construction of the "Sabra" (native-born Israeli) image, the oppression of oriental Jewish culture or the repression of Arab-Palestinian existence.

Ella Shohat's profound, innovative research exerted a decisive, almost revolutionary, influence here: "Israeli cinema, as the mediated expression of this multiplicity, is necessarily marked by the struggle of competing class and ethnic discourses, of conflicting ideological impulses and political visions, most obviously by the conflict with the Arabs generally and the Palestinians in particular, as well as by the tensions between Oriental Sephardim and European-origin Ashkenazi Jews, between religious and secular, between 'left' and 'right'"

(1). Shohat wrote the history of Israeli cinema and divided it into periods and movie types on the basis of anti-colonialist discourse, especially in light of the ideas of Edward Said and the concept of "Orientalism". Said, it will be remembered, used this concept to criticize the discourse by means of which European culture succeeded in ruling and creating the "Orient".[13]

The conjunction of various aspects of Zionism (the West), on the one hand, and settlement in Palestine and the conflict with another people (the East), on the other, justified a discursive framework and a critical stance based on the East-West axis regarding Israeli national politics in general and the cinema in particular. It is important to remember in this context three important facts: a) the Zionist endeavor developed and crystallized in Europe (Russia, Poland, Germany) and was nurtured by various ideas or tendencies characterizing the 19th and early 20th centuries such as revolution, enlightenment, socialism, liberalism, nationalism, etc.; b) many of the Jews who arrived in Palestine until the nineteen thirties had been members of European Zionist youth movements; c) the decades before the establishment of the State of Israel (1948) and up till 1977 were under the hegemonic rule of the Israel Labor Party, which originated in Europe and most of whose members were socialist Ashkenazi and secular Jews who perceived themselves as expressing the "true" spirit of Zionism.

"East-West" was the geographic-cultural dichotomy or metaphor at the core of Shohat's analysis and history of Israeli cinema. This dichotomy referred to a number of oppositions and tensions characterizing Israeli society and that find expression in Israeli film: Ashkenazi Jews of European descent vs. Sephardi Oriental Jews, Jews-Arabs, First World-Third World, hegemonic Eurocentric culture as opposed to repressed oriental/Arab culture. Shohat relates to various aspects of Israeli film – narrative, characters, *mise-en-scène*, focalization, camera positions or allocation of screen time – as manifesting the way the West/Zionism perceives and imagines the East. For example, she relates thus to the film *Oded the Wanderer* (1933) (**Zionist Realism** genre): "As in European humanist-

[13] See Said. We might mention that Shohat's theoretical basis and critical stance were part of an extensive critical discourse that developed in other fields of academic research in Israel, which was referred to as "Post-Zionism." The said phenomenon is discussed in Chapter 3.

colonialist literature, the Bedouins are presented as 'natives' who have never before seen Western clothing and who are bedazzled by Oded's stories about the world of modern technology and education" (37). Regarding the film *Sabra* (1933), she writes: "The films thus reproduce the colonialist mechanism by which the Orient, rendered as devoid of any active historical or narrative role, becomes the passive object of study and spectacle" (43). This also holds true of the representation of Arabs in the **Heroic-Nationalist genre**: "The historical elision, then, is reproduced in films such as *Hill 24 doesn't Answer* (1955) through their nonrecognition of Arab-Palestinian history and culture. The Arab attack is decontextualized, rendered as irrational and malignant, while the spectator is prepared psychologically and historically to take the Israeli side…" (63).

If Shohat identified in early Israeli cinema Zionist beliefs regarding the Arabs and the East, in the 1960s and 70s she examines Ashkenazi Zionism's convictions regarding Oriental Jews in **Bourekas** films: "According to that mythic discourse, European Zionism "saved" Sephardi Jews from the harsh rule of their Arab 'captors'. It took them out of 'primitive conditions' of poverty and superstition and ushered them gently into a modern Western society…" (115). And further: "First World attitudes toward the Third World are reproduced in their Ashkenazi/Sephardi variants, at times quite explicitly in comparisons of Oriental Jews to Arabs and Blacks" (116).

Sallah (1964), according to Shohat, indeed places an oriental protagonist at the center of the narrative and makes fun of the Zionist bureaucratic elite, yet, she claims relying on symbolic and allegoric interpretation: "This representation, then, reproduces the official ideology by which the low economic and sociopolitical standing of Sephardim is held to result from the pre-modern 'backward' countries of origins of Sephardi and from their 'backward' mentality, rather than from the class nature of Israeli society" (151). Another example of Shohat's allegorical reading is evident in her interpretation of the film *The Girl from the Dead Sea* (1966): "The Sephardi is associated with images of underdevelopment, poverty and backwardness…The Orient becomes, therefore, a world immersed in death" (158).

When addressing the films of the 1980s, Shohat remarks favorably that the films of the **Palestinian Wave** expressed recognition of Palestinian existence. In these films, Arab characters were granted a story, a voice and self-representation. Shohat refers to this Arab visibility as "the return of the repressed." However, she argues, these representations were still subordinated to the views and beliefs of liberal Ashkenazi Israeli: "The very exhibition of an Israeli film on a Palestinian issue certifies, as it were, the reality of democracy and reassure the liberal conscience of both the producers and the receivers of the images" (210). But, more than examining the distress and desires of the occupied Palestinians, these films were concerned with assuaging the consciences and affirming the morality of the Israeli occupier: "The lament, therefore, is not primarily for the national oppression of the Palestinian people, but rather for Sabras' own torment, as passively innocent Isaacs to be sacrificed in fear and trembling, on the altar of Abrahamic (nationalist) faith" (265).

These, then, are the major approaches and concepts, which shape the dominant methodology that is used in the analysis of Israeli film. In the following chapters, I will use this methodology for writing about the history and the ideology of the kibbutz on film from 1930 to 2005. At a later stage, I will examine this approach and propose an alternative one. Since the current research is concerned with the kibbutz, and because this institution has undergone many transformations since it's founding, I will now review the kibbutz's place in the Israeli historical, social and cultural arenas.

1.2 – Kibbutz, Cinema, History

In relation to films that were made about the kibbutz I will present and examine two different methodologies. From about 530 feature films that have been made in Israel to date, about 50 films are concerned with the kibbutz. Thus far they have not been treated as a separate category, but were classified according to the time periods and genres presented above. On the one hand, films about the kibbutz invite the "obvious," that is, the interpretation of these films as a representation and reflection of social, cultural and ideological changes. On the other hand, they have the potential to suggest an interpretation that is not

symbolic or conceptual, but one that relates to material forces, spatial relations, affects and time frames that exist simultaneously. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss these films and include historical and social background regarding the kibbutz as an essential part of symbolic-realistic interpretation. In these chapters I employ expressions such "the kibbutz idea" or "kibbutz ideology," it is, therefore, necessary to briefly explain these concepts here.

The kibbutzim were founded as collective and cooperative settlements based on livestock and agriculture. They constituted an important part of Zionist settlement (or colonization) in Palestine in the first half of the 20th century, from the period of Turkish rule, through the era of the British Mandate and until the War of Independence and the establishment of the State of Israel. During this era, the kibbutz had two major objectives: to realize the Zionist vision of the return to the land and its settlement and to create a prototype of a just socialist society in the Land of Israel. The kibbutzim were generally established in remote and isolated locations and were part of the Zionist program of populating frontier areas and taking hold of the land.

The seeds of the kibbutz idea are generally attributed to the Second Alia – immigration wave (1904-1914), although schemes to establish cooperative settlements did exist in Palestine earlier, as did communal experiments. About 40,000 people arrived in the land in this wave of immigration, most of them having undergone a traditional Jewish education, some of whom were students and activists in workers' movements in Russian and in Jewish socialist organizations.[14] These new arrivals were integrated into cities and small towns, whereas only a few thousands of them became agricultural workers. These constituted the ideologically active segment of the Second Wave of Immigration. In addition to the Zionist idea – the return of the Jewish people to the Land – this group also discussed and dreamed of a social revolution – the creation of the "new Jewish individual". The main principle of this revolution was a transition to a life of labor in general and physical agricultural labor in particular (as an

[14] At the end of the 19th century there were about 400,000 inhabitants in Palestine, most of them Suni Moslems and 40,000 Jews. About 1.5 million Jews moved to the United States at that period, whereas only a few tens of thousands chose to immigrate to Palestine (Gorny 1987: 22-23).

antithesis and in revolt against the typical figure of the Diaspora Jew, who was involved in trade or services). An even smaller number advocated a personal moral revolution: managing with little, setting an example, respecting others, founding an egalitarian society and recruiting the individual in favor of the Zionist cause. At this period, in which the idea of a small, intimate commune (with 20-30 members) was still dominant, the first kibbutz, Degania, was established (1910), and by 1920 twelve more kibbutzim were set up with a total population of 600 inhabitants. During those years the kibbutz was considered an esoteric experiment of merely a few eccentrics that was doomed to fail.

The first kibbutz settlers were young people who emigrated from Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, and were influenced by political doctrines that were rife in that country – Socialism and Marxism. These ideas included fair distribution of resources, confiscation of property from the wealthy, ruling classes and its redistribution to the lower classes (workers and farmers) and the creation of a just society in which the working class would assume political power. This ideology opposed the "bourgeoisie," which represented for these young idealists the stagnation and degeneration of their parents' generation. Some of these ideas were integrated into the Zionist vision and resulted in the intent to "cure" the Jewish people and turn it into a nation like all others. For this end, Jews were to turn to a life of physical labor and toiling the land reflecting the Marxist idea of "productivization" (according to which the experience shapes consciousness). The kibbutz idea was also influenced by Utopian thinkers such as A.D. Gordon and Martin Buber, who advocated a return to the simple life, going back to nature, managing with little, fair, comradely relationships between people, not exploiting or subjugating others, etc.

Scholars researching the Kibbutz conduct an on-going debate regarding what shaped the kibbutz as we know it. Was the kibbutz the result of a preconceived set plan, or was it a way of life that was suitable to the difficult times and the settlement needs of the Zionist endeavor? Those who support the former assumption claim that the early kibbutz forefathers were influenced by socialist ideas as well as by Jewish values and the Old Testament (especially the Prophets), and that it is in this spirit that they formulated a vision of a utopian, cooperative-based, egalitarian society. The latter demonstrate how this way of

life was adapted to real-life conditions. Due to economic difficulties there was no choice but to live communally and distribute the profits. Group living provided considerable social and protective benefits when settling areas that were at that time isolated frontier zones, surrounded by hostile populations.

The development and consolidation of the kibbutz's status was a result of the Third Aliyah (1919-1923), whose members were influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and by the education they had received in the "Hechalutz" youth movement. They brought the idea of setting up national work cadres that served as precursors of kibbutz settlements and advocated larger, more open kibbutzim, which would dedicate themselves to national objectives. By 1930, 29 kibbutzim had been set up (numbering a total of 3,900 inhabitants) and they began establishing the social and economic life of permanent settlements. In the 1930s and 40s, the kibbutzim gained respect, support and national resources, both due to the establishment of dozens of kibbutzim at the period of the Arab uprising (1936-39) and to the absorption of refugees and survivors after the Holocaust, but also due to their vital role during the War of Independence (1948). At this period, the kibbutz constituted a social elite that was a source of pride in Israel and abroad. In 1950, there were already 214 kibbutzim with a population of 67,000, but with the transition from a settlement community to a sovereign State, the status of the kibbutzim was diminished due to various reasons (see a detailed discussion of this in Chapter 2.) Today there are 270 kibbutzim in Israel with a total population of 100,000.

A kibbutz is a community of people organized in an independent settlement as a cooperate society. It is based on an ideology which includes communal ownership of property, equality and cooperation in all fields of production, consumerism, education and decision making, mutual security and members' recruitment to serving Israeli national goals. Kibbutz ideology can be summed up in the slogan: "From each according to his ability – to each according to his needs." Every member is asked to contribute as much as possible to the kibbutz (without expecting a commensurate reward), whereas the kibbutz will provide its members with a uniform standard of living, in addition to budgets for special needs such as illness, disability and higher education.

The kibbutzim were originally small groups of young people from similar social and cultural backgrounds, united around common beliefs and values and identifying completely with their pioneering role. Over the years, the kibbutzim evolved into heterogeneous communities inhabited by an average of 500 residents of varying ages and different needs and desires. As a result, a high level of institutionalization and formal codices became necessary to replace the voluntary system that was characteristic of the early years. Applying ideology to daily life necessitated arrangements and institutions that developed over the years. Today a large number of kibbutzim have undergone extensive changes in the lifestyle they are offering, so that the description below relates to the period ending in the 1990s, but still holds true of a small number of kibbutzim.

Work per se was the primary value of kibbutz life. The kibbutz strived to regard all types of labor equally, attributing the same value and status to all, so that members working in various places and in different jobs would enjoy the same privileges and the same budget. The kibbutz also tried to apply the principle of self-sufficiency in the work force, managing the kibbutz without employing hired workers from outside. In addition, a equality in division of labor between women and men was also an important principle in the kibbutz way of life. However, these principles were gradually abandoned due to various contingencies. Kibbutz economy is organized according to “branches” – animal husbandry, agriculture, workshops, industry, tourism, catering services, etc, while every branch constitutes a kind of center of activity and income that is at the same time autonomous and subordinated to the general management. Over the years, most of the members acquired a profession and a permanent workplace, and no longer engaged in unprofessional manual labor.

The internal management and organization of the kibbutz were based on a combination of representational and direct democracy. The important decisions were made at the general meeting, in which every member had an equal vote. (For example, all the members voted on whether or not to accept new candidates for membership). The day-to-day management was the responsibility of administrators who were elected every few years (general secretary, farm manager, treasurer), as well as being in the hands of elected committees who were responsible for various spheres – education, manpower, culture, etc. The

obligations and rights of the members were anchored in the kibbutz charter, which was legally binding. The acceptance of the kibbutz's authority (the general meeting's decisions) depended to a great extent on the degree to which the member identified with the kibbutz.

The kibbutz was responsible for providing the needs of its members, while in some spheres there was communal consumerism. The general standard of living was determined by the kibbutz institutions. Some consumer goods and services were communally provided by the kibbutz in the dining room (communal meals), the laundry, cultural activities, gardening, while the rest was paid for by the members from their personal budget. The tendency in recent years is towards privatization, transferring budgets from the commune to the individual, so that members pay for services from their private budget.

The kibbutzim fulfilled important functions in the spheres of security and politics in Israel. In the security arena, numerous kibbutzim were established along Israel's borders with Arab countries and served as defense posts against infiltrators and terrorist attacks. The proportion of kibbutz members in elite crack units, such as the Air Force and commando units, greatly exceeds their ratio in the population. In the political sphere, the kibbutzim exerted a considerable influence, especially in the early years after the establishment of the State. The proportion of kibbutz members in the Knesset was far higher than their proportion of the population and their ideological influence was even more disproportionate. The left-wing parties considered the kibbutzim a privileged sector with extensive rights. The influence of the kibbutzim was also enhanced by their collective membership in national organizations. These represented kibbutz interests at the political level (especially in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Defense) and were responsible for setting up new kibbutzim, absorption of immigrants, legal advice, advising and aiding kibbutzim in financial trouble, etc. The influence and involvement of kibbutz members in the security forces and in political life gradually lessened over the years, until today they are merely "another sector" of the population, without undue influence.

Kibbutzim have a major role in Israel's agricultural and industrial production. Kibbutz income from agriculture in 2003 was 33% of the gross national agricultural product. In 2003 kibbutzim were responsible for 8.4% of the total national industrial market and 12% of total income from export of industrial products, while the kibbutz population constituted 2% of the total population in that year.

In the course of the 1980s, profound changes took place in the economic and political climate surrounding the kibbutzim. The political upheaval of 1977 and the new rightwing government precipitated a situation in which the kibbutzim lost their privileged position with the ruling establishment. Some in the new party in power, the Likud, did everything possible to bring about the kibbutz's downfall.[15] The kibbutzim lacked financial and human resources to economically cope with the new age of hi-tech and globalization, and many of them were "stuck" with outdated non-competitive factories. The 1984 economic stability plan, together with unsuccessful investments in the stock market, increased the cumulative debt in many kibbutzim to impossible levels. The supportive environment formerly identified with the kibbutzim – the moshav movement, the National Labor Union, the Workers' Corporation – disintegrated and collapsed. Within the kibbutzim, members of the third generation (who had been born in the 1960s and 70s) rarely joined the kibbutz as adults and preferred to pursue other directions. These events precipitated a deep crisis encompassing all spheres – demographic, social, economic and especially ideological. As a reaction to this crisis, it became clear that the kibbutzim would have to effect changes in their way of life, organization and structure. During the 1990s, several kibbutzim made the transition to a new organizational model, whose main principles were separating the financial organization from the community life, differential wages for members (while preserving the "safety net" of a minimum wage) and the privatization of almost all personal expenditure.

[15] It is worthwhile mentioning that, although seemingly opposite in its political orientation, the endeavor of founding the settlements in the Occupied Territories (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank), which was advocated by the Labor Party in addition to the Likud and the National Religious Party (from the 1970s onwards), was inspired by the earlier kibbutz settlement enterprise.

In conclusion: in this chapter I presented the theoretical and methodological framework of the dominant discourse concerning Israeli cinema. I described the development of the field and introduced the central terms and the principal scholars in the field. I briefly imparted the history of the kibbutz. In the next chapter we will examine how it works across sixty years of cinema and around forty films.

But we are anticipating too far ahead. So far, I have outlined the objects of the research, the various methodologies and contexts, the key concepts and the films that will be dealt with in this study. Therefore, I invite the reader to join me in a historical voyage back to the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirites of the 20th century, to the early days of immigration, cinema and kibbutz in Palestine-Israel.

Chapter 2

The Politics of Representation: The Kibbutz Film Genre 1930-1990

This chapter describes the history and ideology of the kibbutz representation in non-documentary Israeli films. This review offers a concise overview, which presents and analyzes the changes in the representation of the kibbutz from the 1930s up to 1990. The chapter opens with an analysis of the centrality of kibbutz representations in the decades before and after the declaration of the State of Israel (1948) and continues with the period of the late 1960s during which the kibbutz gradually disappeared from Israeli cinema. The chapter concludes with the 1980s, when the kibbutz once again became a significant concern in films, most of which were strongly critical of kibbutz society.

The description and analysis of these topics will contribute to the understanding of the background, context and generic aspects of the films of the 1990s, which constitute the research corpus and will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 3. In the analysis of the generic aspects I rely on Rick Altman's semantic/syntactic approach: "We can as a whole distinguish between generic definitions that depend on a list of common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations, sets and the like – thus stressing the semantic elements that make up the genre – and definitions that play up instead certain constitutive relationships that might be called genre's fundamental syntax. The semantic approach thus stresses the genre's building blocks, while syntactic view privileges the structures into which they are arranged" (1999: 219)

This research study divides the history of kibbutz representation in Israeli cinema into six different periods. This division is based on a synthesis of central parameters: the themes and ideology that emerge from the representation of the kibbutz and the manner in which these change from period to period; the relation of these components and changes to the shifts in the Israeli film field, in terms of themes, genres and ideologies. (It is important to note that the division into time periods is by no means definitive and that there is occasionally an overlap of a few years).

1) 1930-1939: Settling and production
2) 1939-1947: Absorption of survivors and rites of passage
3) 1948-1964: Heroism and the frontier
4) 1964 – 1980: New cinematic genres and the disappearance of the kibbutz
5) 1980 – 1990: The return to alien fields
6) 1991 – 2006: From Utopia to Dystopia (This period will be analyzed in Chapter 3.)

The description and analysis of the films in each time period will begin with a short introduction delineating the general historical background, the state of the Israeli cinema and a few relevant topics related to the history of the kibbutz. This will be followed by a description of the films belonging to each time period and an analysis of them based on three parameters:

1) a plot synopsis of all films dealing with the kibbutz, taking place in a kibbutz or including a character from a kibbutz;
2) an iconographic and thematic analysis of kibbutz representation in these films;
3) an interpretation of the myths and ideologies related to kibbutz representation in these films.

The present chapter will illuminate the most prominent and pivotal themes in each period, while attempting to maintain relevant balances and proportions. For example, in the early decades very few non-documentary films were made in Israel, but substantial references to the kibbutz were made in them, thus this period is dealt with in depth. On the other hand, from the mid-60s onwards, about ten films were produced every year, but few dealt with the kibbutz, and therefore the analysis of these time periods is more concise.

2.1 – Settling and Production: 1930-1939

This section deals with the films *Sabra* (1933), *This is the Land* (1935) and *Land of Promise* (1934). In different ways and with various emphases, these films describe immigration to the Land of Israel and the establishment, communal life and productive values of the kibbutz.[16] The cinematic treatment of these topics ends with "Tower and Stockade" films (1936-1939), which include documentary material and newsreels depicting the establishment of dozens of kibbutzim in a kind of military campaign in face of rule of the British Mandate and Arab resistance.[17]

Pre-state Palestine attracted filmmakers from the early days of the silent film due to the lure of the holy places and the mythical aura surrounding the area. The pioneers of cinema, Louis and Auguste Lumière, filmed a travelogue entitled *Palestine in 1896*, while Thomas Edison made a short film entitled *To Dance in Jerusalem* (1902). Murray Rosenberg filmed *The First Film of Palestine* in 1911 and Jacob Ben Dov, one of the pioneers of Israeli cinema, filmed *Return to Zion* (1921) and *Rebirth of a Nation* (1923).

Just like the pioneering enterprise of settling and populating the land in the first four decades of the twentieth century, local cinematic production was also in its early steps. This was a process that began with independent, random and private documentation of travelogues and short films, and gradually developed into the production of documentaries, propaganda films and newsreels that were commissioned and financed by local Zionist institutions. This process began with silent films whose technical level and quality of cinematic expression were very poor indeed. However, from the beginning of the mid-1930s, filmmakers reached

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[16] Other films from this period are: *The Pioneer* (1927), *Once Upon a Time* (1932), *Oded the Wanderer* (1932), *Dream of My People* (1933), *Toil* (1933), *Destructive Force* (1934).

[17] In Israeli historiography, this period is referred to as "The Great Arab Rebellion." The Arabs of Palestine rose against the British Mandatory Government with the demand to stop Jewish immigration to the land, and also as a result of the decision of the Peel Commission to partition the country to two states. Violent clashes took place between Jews and Arabs and the fleeing and expulsion of many Arabs from villages and towns was exploited by the Zionist leadership to seize lands and establish several settlements. (See Gorny, 82-87 and regarding "Tower and Stockade" settlements, Ben-Rafael, Yaar and Soker 9–22).

a reasonable level on both accounts. The Hebrew-speaking dramatic films, documentaries and docudramas produced at this time definitely attest to this development.

Film pioneers at this time not only documented the Zionist endeavor, but also identified with it and considered themselves an important part of it. Admiringly and with great pathos, they displayed the landscapes of the land, Biblical antiquities, the settlement of town and country especially emphasizing the construction of the land: the establishment of the infrastructure of roads, water and electricity, agricultural and industrial production, the building of houses and institutions, and so on. The pathos in these films is expressed by stylized dialogue, laudatory, exalted narration, subtitles praising the Zionist enterprise and stirring, sentimental background music. For this reason, these films were categorized as "Zionist realism", a reference to the "Socialist realism" of Soviet films of this period (Shohat: 25; Ne'eman 1998: 12).

From the historical standpoint, these films briefly cover a complex, critical period when the collective vision developed from idea to reality. Degania, the first kibbutz, was established in 1910, but was preceded by a series of unsuccessful communes and communal settlements. The films that will be presented here sum up two decades at the beginning of which the kibbutz was a peripheral esoteric experiment involving a few dozen dreamers, whereas by 1920 a number of isolated kibbutzim involving a few hundred settlers had been established. By the end of the period the three kibbutz movements had been established (1927-1929) and by 1936 some fifty kibbutzim with some 16,000 residents (Shepher 39). In fact, the films that will be presented here reflect this process, both in their narratives that lead from the past up till the time of the films' production and in their favorable attitude to the kibbutzim, which reflects the Zionist Organization's recognition of the centrality of the kibbutz and its contribution to the settlement of the land.

Plot Synopses

Sabra (Aleksander Ford, 1933) is considered the first Hebrew-speaking dramatic film to be made in pre-state Palestine. The plot of the film takes place in 1882 and describes the first attempts of Zionist pioneers from Russia to establish an agricultural commune on the land. A group of Jewish immigrants settles close to an Arab village after purchasing land from the Arabs. The immigrants must cope with considerable difficulties and suffering due to the infertile land, hard labor and general poverty. These difficulties are increased greatly when the Arabs accuse the Jews of casting a magic spell resulting in a drought. The Arabs are incited by a wicked sheik and attack the Jews just at a time when the latter have managed to find water. The Arabs stop the destruction when they learn that it was the sheik himself who blocked the well. The film ends with a torrential rain leading to harmony between Jews and Arabs.[18]

Land of Promise (Leman, 1934) was meant to be a non-documentary film, but in the end it became a short documentary lauding the accomplishments of the Zionist enterprise[19]. It was filmed all over Palestine and attempts to present a wide panorama of the Zionist endeavor and the various groups that participated in it, as well as giving expression to the different ways of life of the land's varied population. The film relates to religious practices in the country (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), various forms of settlement (cities, kibbutzim, Arab villages), different productive branches (agriculture, industry, trade), ceremonies, holidays and also leisure activities, sport and entertainment. With the aid of a fluent and polished cinematic language, the film succeeds in creating the impression that the Zionist enterprise in the Land of Israel created harmony and cooperation between town and country, pioneers and city dwellers, Jews and Arabs, religious and secular residents.

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[18] This film does not deal with kibbutz as such. See a lengthy discussion in Gross 116-118; Zimmerman 2001: 104-112; and Shohat 42-57. Two remakes were made of the film *Sabra* that will be dealt with below: *They Were Ten* (1960) and *The Dreamers* (1988).

[19] The film was awarded a prize at the Venice Film Festival in August, 1935, and was much admired by world Jewry. Albert Einstein, who was then a professor at Princeton University, wrote to the producer: "…I hope that hundreds of thousands of people will draw inspiration, pleasure and hope from this film." (See citation in Gross 120.)

This is the Land (Agadati, 1935) is considered the first Hebrew film to talk and sing in Hebrew. The film is a docudrama about the history of Jewish settlement in Palestine – the Land of Israel and describes the story of this settlement from 1880 until the beginning of the 1930s[20]. By focusing on central events in those years, the film gives its version of the Zionist enterprise in the land: the arrival of the first pioneers, the desert wilderness, the enlistment of the population during World War I, the Balfour Declaration (1917). The film continues with an expansive filmed account of the construction of the country and the productive activity in town and country: paving the roads, building houses, laying down the infrastructure of water and electricity, the establishing of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, commercial life in Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa, etc.

The dramatic, staged part of the film focuses on two young pioneers in a kibbutz who complain that the new immigrants prefer to settle in the city rather than on a kibbutz. Their journey to the city in order to recruit kibbutz members takes them to Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa and allows the filmmaker to document contemporary life all over the country: shops, busy streets, various institutions, cultural and sports activities. The two pioneers appeal to bystanders to leave the "decadent" city and join a kibbutz[21].

Numerous sequences in the film emphasize and extol the kibbutz enterprise: women threshing in the fields, cows grazing, sowing the fields, bulldozers digging in the fields, working in the vegetable garden, irrigation with sprinklers, lush wheat fields, harvesting and winnowing the wheat, the grape harvest and still shots of fruit, chickens and cows. In the background there is a Hassidic melody, a thanksgiving song and people clapping while the milking of cows and production of dairy products are seen in the background. The film continues with

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[20] The film is made up of archival footage from the 20s, dramatic, staged scenes and documentary material that were filmed close to the film's production. In comparison with films from that era, *This Is the Land* demonstrates impressive filming and editing skill, together with montage techniques influenced by Soviet films of the 20s (Zimmerman 141- 146).

[21] The call to join a kibbutz has a historical-political context. As opposed to the socialist pioneers of the Third *Aliyah* (1919-1923) who were instrumental in establishing the kibbutz, The Fourth *Aliyah* (1924-1927) was made up mainly of capitalists from Poland and Germany, who preferred to settle in the large cities. See also Gorny 48-68.

crowds of children, teenagers and young adults bursting out into the fields and dancing a rousing *hora* (Israeli folk circle dance).

Themes, Generic Aspects and Ideological Criticism

Land of Promise contains a long sequence devoted to the kibbutz. The editing and narration of this sequence explain the concept of "kibbutz" in an interesting and assured manner, aiming particularly for viewers from abroad, Jews and non-Jews.

a) A description beginning from the outside gradually zooming in: the sequence opens with a description of the agricultural work in fields and orchards surrounding the settlement, which is followed by the movement of sheep and cattle from outside through the fence and into the boundaries of the kibbutz. There is a continuum here that shows work with livestock – milking and feeding in the cow barn, work in the chicken-coops and herding the sheep – all of which take place within the confines of the kibbutz. The zooming in continues, with the next shots showing the settlement's houses and lawns and children playing, up to the focus on the entrance to the dining room, which is the central building of the kibbutz, both topographically and organizationally, culturally and socially. This is an authentic, accurate account, since this is generally the way anyone visiting a kibbutz, then and now, enters it.

b) A general to the particular description. The sequence opens with an extreme long shot of groups of people working in the fields, emphasizing the group rather than the individuals. The entrance into the farm and the work with the livestock are filmed in full or medium shot, an articulation of a social context both in the interaction between the subjects and the objects of their labor and also between the viewer and the figures on the screen. The sequence ends with medium and close-up shots of the dining room where community singing is taking place, and this allows personal closeness and identification with the *dramatis personae.*[22]

[22] Louis Giannetti suggests a semiotic categorization regarding filming distance and social interaction: very long-shot filming creates a public, anonymous space; long-shot panoramic filming creates a social space; medium-shot filming creates a personal space; and close-up filming creates an intimate space. See Giannetti 81-86.

c) A shift from the material to the cultural-spiritual (and in the spirit of Marxism, from the infrastructure to the superstructure). The sequence opens with productive, physical labor, which is the basis of the kibbutz's existence and also a central tenet of kibbutz ideology, and ends with social and cultural activity whose pinnacle is community singing. This is an embodiment of the Zionist-socialist ethos, "a sound mind in a sound body."

d) A description that shifts from the wild to the tamed – the transition in the film from the arrival of the immigrants and the movement towards the established kibbutz also as a transition from wilderness to civilization. It begins with the struggle with the broad expanses of the parched land, continues on to the water motif (a symbol of life and fertility) and then to the cultivated fields, livestock and houses – all of which symbolize development and the transition from the temporary to the permanent, from primitive to developed levels of culture. The transition from public to social includes symbolic rituals such as communal physical exercise and dining. The transition from social to intimate reveals local elements such as the simple dress of the workers, preparing food, eating, etc. (as stated above, in close-up). The sequence ends with a culmination of civilization and sublimation: music, singing, and spiritual uplift.[23]

Elements from this sequence will receive repeated treatment in subsequent kibbutz films, becoming an integral part of the genre's syntax. Even when this structure eventually is reduced to only a few shots, they reflect the codes or the DNA of some of the elements presented earlier: "agricultural settlement," "cooperative community," "pioneering," "early statehood," "a different culture," and more. This component contributes to the appreciation of the viewer who encounters a place which is both familiar and different.

This is the Land emphasizes the contribution of the workers' movement in town and country, while stressing the project of constructing Israel and the birth of the nation. In terms of screen time, the kibbutz is prominently featured, especially in the long sequence at the end of which the veteran pioneer calls the urban

[23] Four songs were written for this film by the poet Natan Alterman and the composer Daniel Samburski, which became classics of the period (among them the famous "Song of the Valley").

dwellers to leave the city and move to the kibbutz. The two pioneer protagonists, who are the only fictional characters in the film, represent the moral rectitude of the kibbutz. From the moment they appear in the film, the viewer is meant to identify with them and with the sense of purpose, determination and willingness to sacrifice that they represent. In addition, the direction of the scenes taking place in the kibbutz or related to the kibbutz allows the filmmakers to show the pioneers singing original Hebrew songs, an indication that the kibbutz is also creating a new, authentic local culture.

The scenes of toiling the fields and working with the livestock allude to the hard physical labor involved in kibbutz life, as well as the process of taming the wilderness and turning it into a blooming garden. Short shots showing women working with livestock embody the ideal of equal division of labor regardless of gender.[24] The display of different productive branches together presents a variegated, developed agricultural economy that is self-sufficient, an echo of the aspiration of the founders of the kibbutz to be economically independent. Hebrew singing and folk dancing in the kibbutz context allude to the attempt to create a new local culture and also to the important place of these activities in the kibbutzim at that time.

While *Sabra* deals mainly with taming the wilderness and the struggle with a hostile environment, *This is the Land* and *Land of Promise* emphasize various topics related to collective settlement and the kibbutz. Pioneering, the kibbutz and agricultural settlement in general are highlighted both in terms of screen time and the creation of an ideological hierarchy regarding the topics dealt with in the films. Images appear in these films that over the years would become archetypical of the kibbutz and an index of the kibbutz repertoire: fields, orchards, cowsheds, chicken runs, water towers, kibbutz dining rooms.

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[24] The ideal of equal labor, which was influenced by radical socialist thought, was aimed not only at the "bourgeoisie" but also at the position of women in traditional Judaism. This ideal was typical of the kibbutzim in the early decades, but gradually lost ground. This was due to the rise in the birth rate (the demand for women's work in children's houses) and kibbutz services (for example the dining room and clothing store) as well as because of the demand of the economic structure to increase profitability and production. (See Fogiel-Bijaoui 88-96; Tzur, Zvulun and Porat 61-70).

The narratives of these films, especially the opening sequences, echo the Biblical myth of reaching the Promised Land (the second part of the Book of Genesis). As in the Biblical narrative, the new immigrants set out on a journey, arrive in the land, attempt to settle down and survive in the harsh environment, negotiate the purchase of land and try to reach peace agreements with the inhabitants of the country (in the film *Sabra*, for example).

The extensive treatment of agricultural production constitutes a unique platform by which to convey the ideological synthesis between returning to the land and renewing and gradually reclaiming it. In cultural terms, the reclamation of the land symbolizes a tangible bond over time, a process that indicates both deep-rooted ties with the land and traditions that are passed down from father to son through the generations. Presenting a wide view of fields and a developed, defined kibbutz settlement conveys the concrete reality as well as the symbolic dimension of these images. The collective shots of masses of pioneers leaving the kibbutz to go to work, working together and returning home together connote solidarity, strength, perseverance and continuity over time.

The depiction of the kibbutz exerts magic and attraction since it presents a kind of cosmic, primeval continuum, a progressive natural cycle of human endeavor: plowing, sowing, flowering, harvesting, resting, and so forth. To these is added the water motif that appears frequently in conjunction with kibbutz scenes - irrigation canals, sprinklers, water towers, people drinking and washing – which serves to strengthen the themes of life, vitality, natural cycles and fertility. In contrast to work in the city, the depiction of agricultural labor lends a primordial dimension to the concepts of ownership and belonging, a primeval scenario in which the ownership of the expanse is marked by the line of the plow and the furrow (Rogoff 2000: 134-135).

“The pioneer’s interest in the land and earthiness was demonstrated by his speaking the language of the place not only literally but also through his body, and with all his being, thus create recreating the place as a Jewish creation - to reinstall Judaism back in the place and restore the place as a living basis for Judaism” (Eran and Gurevitch 22). Focusing on the body performing hard physical labor in the field, generally a male body stripped to the waist, reinforces

the idea of organically belonging to the land, and connotes an almost erotic bond with it. The pioneer's body became a work tool within the Zionist-socialist ideology, which glorified work as the highest achievement and one of the signs of modern achievement and efficiency. These images were part of the national rhetoric that sought to connect building a new identity with localism and authenticity.

The considerable emphasis on Hebrew singing and dancing in the kibbutz conveys the idea of the renewal of Hebrew language and culture, as well as the importance bestowed by the kibbutzim on cultural and spiritual activity in addition to material advancement. The dances and the pathos of the songs and the music suggest a feeling of emotional and spiritual ecstasy. They may be viewed as a mystical expression of belonging to the land, a kind of secular replacement and alternative to the rituals of Orthodox Judaism: "…like the hora dance, the singing had an element of a rousing, cohesive mechanism, similar in essence to choir singing in the ecstatic ritual of the synagogue congregation" (Almog 363).[25]

This interweaving of the earthy and the spiritual, the concrete and the mystical, expresses the tension that exists in Judaism and Zionism between the ideal and its realization. According to Eran and Gurevitch, "belonging to the place, in the full sense of the word, demands reaching further and further, rising to the level of the land, which is more an idea than a landscape" (24). The return to nature and cultivating the land thus become a striving towards exaltation, a kind of holy work. The feeling of holiness is conveyed by the transition from the People of the Book (the Jew) to the People of the Land (the Hebrew), by forsaking the text in favor of the soil. The dances and songs of the kibbutz pioneers embody the idea of attaining the Promised Land out of the place itself, where one already is.

The filming of agricultural production in the kibbutz also conveys the attraction and allure of the spectacle, that is, meanings suggested by movement, rhythm and composition without the need for verbal explanation. By following the

[25] It is important to note that many kibbutz residents came from religious homes and tried to integrate various religious ceremonies into the secular life of the kibbutz. See an extensive discussion of this in Tzur, Zvulun and Porat 105-120.

movement of herds of sheep or cattle and agricultural machinery over large expanses, these films create a lyrical, colorful and dynamic cinematic poetry, which is prominent in both films. Both employ horizontal and diagonal compositions of agricultural machinery in movement from one end of the screen to the other, of machines and people coming towards the camera or retreating from it, thus creating dynamism and rhythm. The editing, particularly the use of *montage*, allows the orchestration and juxtaposition of different shots in order to create a flow of motion in opposing directions and the treatment of a particular topic by a poetic implementation of movement.

From an ideological standpoint, the portrayals of pioneers and kibbutzim provided the Zionist hegemony with an important service, especially the workers' movement that was dominant at that time. In an era when there was no television, the cinema was the chief medium by which to reach the general public in Israel and elsewhere and an important tool for enlisting sympathy, support and financial contributions. The essence of pioneering and kibbutz settlement was represented as demonstrating a "revolution" in the life of the individual and the Jewish people as a whole, a casting off of the features of ghetto life and the building of a new identity in the Land of Israel.

The motif of redemption and construction of a new identity is demonstrated by the narration and iconography of *Land of Promise,* which juxtaposes shots of the newly arrived immigrants and the pioneers. This technique creates an ideological and normative transition between binary opposites: from the old to the new, from the Diasporic Jew to the New Jew, from passivity to activity, from trade to productive agricultural labor, from tradition to modernity. "Modernity" is marked by images and sound of machines and advanced production methods: a jackhammer, a hydraulic drill and water pump, a bulldozer, a plow, a sprayer, as well as irrigation canals and electrical cable. These are perceived as modern in contrast to the "primitive" work methods of Arabs and Jews that are shown at the beginning of the film. This transformation is also evident in matters of clothing. The clothing of the "Diaspora" - the skirts, suits, peaked caps, round glasses of the immigrants in Haifa Port - is contrasted with the local and "authentic" clothing of the pioneers: khaki clothes, shorts, undershirts and heavy work shoes.

The emphasis on work in these films embodies the idea of "productivity" promoted by the socialist Zionist movements. In order for the Jewish people to "recover" and become a nation among nations, the Jews must return to physical labor in general and agricultural, productive work in particular, thus realizing the ideal of controlling their personal and collective destiny. The kibbutz symbolized the socialist ideals of self-labor and Hebrew labor: the New Jew would subsist by his labor, and this was essential for Jewish rehabilitation and also for creating a more just social foundation. In the framework of the Zionist discourse, the cinematic presentation of the pioneer and the kibbutz embodies the prototype of the Zionist revolution. This included a return to and redemption and revitalization of the land, a strengthening of solidarity between the various immigrants, an emphasis on values and norms such as cooperation, volunteerism and national tasks, a willingness to make do with few material possessions, etc.

The films presented here and others from this period have been severely criticized in the academic discourse concerning Israeli cinema from the 80s onwards. These critiques do not necessarily relate to the representation of the kibbutz, but are nevertheless relevant to the present discussion. Shohat claims that these films embody the colonialist attitudes of Zionism. They perpetuate a stance according to which the enlightened West (i.e., Zionism) brought progress and modernity, thus redeeming the East from its backwardness: "Palestine is ultimately rendered as little more than a desert or a swamp, an unproductive land awaiting for Western penetration and fecundation" (44).

Shohat criticizes the Zionist-socialist ideals of *avoda ivrit* ("Hebrew labor") and "conquest of labor": "For the Arab *fellahin, avoda ivrit* meant the loss of employment, especially after the *effendis* (land owners) sold their lands to the newcomers" (32). Shohat claims that this attitude is incompatible with the ethos of fraternity and equality advanced by the socialist Zionists.[26]

[26] It is worthy of note in this context that at the end of the 19th century, there were 400,000 residents in the land, most of whom were Suni Moslems. The Jewish community comprised about 25,000 souls. Also see Gorny 16-18.

The director and researcher Yigal Bursztyn makes some aesthetic and ideological distinctions in relation to films from the discussed era. Regarding *This is the Land*, he writes: "The actors pretend to be people, while they are no more than a tool, a mouthpiece for ideology" (47). He claims that the pioneers were always filmed at a distance, as a collective, without close-ups that would emphasize the individual, since the individual was not important, but only the collective and the ideals of redeeming the wilderness and working hard. The researcher Moshe Zimmerman also criticizes the propaganda element of these films and the fact that they ignored other groups that existed in the country: "…*This is the Land* embraces with enthusiasm the historiosophic approach of Zionism, which emphasizes the part of Zionism and the importance of Zionist ideology in the shaping and forming of Jewish settlement in the land at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries" (2001: 142).

In the context of kibbutz representation, it is especially worth noting the idealization of the kibbutz in a period when life on the kibbutz was very difficult both physically and mentally. The cinematic representation in these films distances the kibbutz from a concrete reality and insurmountable problems and presents an exaggerated portrayal of the kibbutz as a romantic, pastoral entity. The effect of that construction is an **Idealistic-Pastoral** code, which will become dominant in the development of the genre from this point on. This pastoral and romantic aspect of the kibbutz image is expressed in the considerable amount of dancing and singing that takes place and in the accompanying music.

When making the transition from an urban to a rural (kibbutz) setting, the background music changes dramatically and significantly. The dramatic, rhythmic and rousing music that accompanies urban locations changes to pastoral, airy and sentimental music in the kibbutz setting, the kind of music typical of Hollywood films associated with children's adventure and nature films, fields and serenity. In this way the kibbutz is presented as a calm, serene, harmonious and perfect environment.

The visual medium of these films also creates a pastoral atmosphere by showing scenes embodying a romantic idyll. Sequences of sheep and cattle herds, poultry and ducks and shots of sunrises and sunsets are at times more reminiscent of

rural areas in Russia or Germany than the arid landscapes of the Middle East. The cinematic aesthetic also contributes to this idyll: in essence, the montage technique connects and juxtaposes action shots in order to convey an idea, image or metaphor. The result is that sequences showing fields, machines and animals (accompanied by light music and Hebrew songs) create harmonic, pastoral images devoid of the hard labor involved.

One of the effects of this idealization is a perception of the kibbutz a place of infinite abundance: a profundity of expanses, animals, running water, and more. Representing the kibbutz in this way is far removed from actual kibbutz experience, which then as now existed within the strictures of a shortage of manpower, means of production, capital, etc.

2.2 – Absorption of Survivors and Rites of Passage: 1939-1947

This section deals with the films: *My Father's House* (1947- 49), *The Great Promise* (1947 – 50) and *Out of Evil* (1947 –50). During the period these films were produced, a shift occurred in the issues related to cinematic kibbutz representation[27]. Depictions of the kibbutz as related to the settlement of the land and agricultural production were replaced by portrayals of the kibbutz mainly as an institution contributing to the absorption of immigrants and survivors. This change is reflected in the nature of the kibbutz locale: from a place devoted to production it became a place dedicated to the re-education and integration of the new immigrants, aiming to transform them into Zionist subjects.

In the years 1936 –1948, mainly documentaries and newsreels were produced in the country, with very few exceptions. After 1936, filmmaking ceased partly due to the technical difficulties involved in the transition to sound, but chiefly because of political events in the country. This situation deteriorated during World War II, especially as a result of the fact that the British authorities in Palestine produced a newsreel that was screened free of charge and reached wide

[27] Additional films on this subject: *Over the Ruins* (1938) and *The Illegal* (1947).

audiences. After the end of the World War II (1939-1945) and until the end of the War of Independence (1947-1948), only a small number of dramatized films were produced (most of them English-speaking co-productions). The films that will be presented here mainly reflect the reaction to World War II and the Holocaust.[28]

The kibbutzim were an object of admiration and respect at that period. They enjoyed material resources and exerted considerable political influence. This was due to three major factors: 1) Between December, 1936 and May, 1939, 52 settlements were established in an organized national effort, 37 of which were kibbutzim (the "Tower and Stockade" period). The kibbutz system was proven to be very effective in terms of short-term organization and settlement in remote and dangerous areas, a kind of military outpost that eventually would become a kibbutz. 2) From 1941 to 1947, the kibbutzim served as bases for training groups of volunteer soldiers that formed a part of a paramilitary organization called the Palmach.[29] This elitist status of the kibbutz was expressed in films made in the 40s, but especially in those made in the 50s and 60s. 3) From the mid-1930s, the kibbutzim invested considerable resources in sending emissaries to all parts of the country and to Jewish communities abroad. These emissaries spread the kibbutz idea and directed youth movements, many of whose members settled in kibbutzim.

The films that will be discussed here mark a shift in the thematic material and function of the kibbutz in cinema. The existence of the kibbutz is by now a fact taken for granted and it appears as a form of settlement that is geographically, institutionally and communally distinct. These films do not focus on the establishment of the kibbutz or agricultural productivity in it, but rather present the kibbutz as a community making a valuable contribution to absorbing immigrants, war refugees and Holocaust survivors.

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[28] The production of these films took a number of years due to the'48 War and also the intervention of the institutions that financed the films.

[29] Many of the Palmach officers and volunteers were kibbutz members. The Palmach constituted an important force in the struggle against the British and Arabs and along with additional military organizations was disbanded during the '48 War. A considerable number of Zionist cultural myths revolve around this organization. See a broader discussion of this in Ben-Rafael, Yaar and Soker 23-42; Almog, 65-70.

Plot Synopses

The Great Promise (Leytes, 1947-50) is a three-part docudrama. The film opens in the ruins of a ghetto in Europe after the Holocaust, where a Jewish soldier from the Jewish Brigade of the British Army tries to convince exhausted, hopeless survivors to immigrate to the Land of Israel. He presents them with three filmed stories regarding the success of the Zionist enterprise. The soldier is the protagonist of the first story, in which he returns from the war and is given a warm welcome by his friends in the kibbutz and also discovers that a first son has been born to him.

The heroine of the second story is Tamar, an orphaned Holocaust survivor, who arrives in the kibbutz, but has difficulties integrating into the closely knit community of kibbutz children. She hides things belonging to other children under a mattress, and when this is discovered becomes frightened and runs away to a nearby wood. When the children find her, she is afraid they have come to punish her, but discovers that instead they offer her support and even bring her food to replace the meal she has missed. After her fears and mistrust have been assuaged, she returns with the children and gradually outgrows the sense of alienation and strangeness. The final scene symbolizes Tamar's successful integration into the group: when two girls argue about how to dance a particular Israeli dance, she enters the circle and surprises everyone by performing the dance correctly.

At the beginning of the third story, a Holocaust survivor expresses doubts regarding the possibility of being absorbed and starting a new life in the land due to his advanced age. In order to convince him, a third story is presented, poetically delineating the course of the Jordan River as a kind of allegory of the struggle of Zionism with the forces of nature and fate. The Jordan, whose source is in the north of the country, allows the existence of irrigation systems in the fields, enables the operation of turbines for the production of electricity, and flows into the Dead Sea, to the dry expanses of the Negev and the industrial and agricultural enterprises that exist there despite great difficulties. The possibility of creating new life even when the river reaches its end, the "Sea of Death," convinces the Holocaust survivor to immigrate to the land.

My Father's House (1947-49) is a tale of the journey and quest of a young Holocaust survivor, David Halevi, who arrives in the land on board an illegal immigration ship. His father had sent him to the forests at the time of the Nazi occupation, and promised him that they would meet again in Palestine. David lived in hope that his parents had survived. David and other refugees are brought to a kibbutz in a fertile valley, where they are received lovingly by members of the community. They are given new clothes and told that they may either remain in the kibbutz or be transferred elsewhere. David feels deserted and abandoned, and after not succeeding in being absorbed in the youth village where he is sent, runs away and sets out on a journey to look for his parents.

The boy passes through various locales - Arab villages, cities, the Dead Sea - until he arrives at the Missing Persons Department of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem. Here he learns that his parents died in the Holocaust. As a result of the devastating news, he undergoes a nervous breakdown and is hospitalized in a mental hospital. David emerges from the crisis when he and his adopted parents in the kibbutz participate in the establishment of a new kibbutz. When he discovers an ancient stone on which the symbol of the Tribe of Levi is carved, he realized he has come home – to his father's house.

Out of Evil (Lerski/Krumgold, 1947-50) presents a more complex story that spans an era beginning before the Holocaust and ending with the War of Independence. The pioneers' challengingly difficult everyday routine in the kibbutz is interrupted by two interconnected events. A first child is born in the kibbutz and tension amounts between the parents and the other members of the group. Then, puppet show performers arrive to entertain the kibbutz members, but the performance leaves an uneasy impression since its plot is based on the Biblical story about the curse of Bila'am and the ass. The theater presentation functions as a mystical metaphor for the curse that hangs over the Jewish people, with the inconceivable events of the Holocaust in the background. According to the film, the curse stems from egotism, from a lack of mutual concern and from individualism. The members of the kibbutz invite the new parents to remain, but they feel ashamed and guilty and decide to return to Germany with the child. The parents are killed in the Holocaust, but their son is saved and returns to the land to participate in the Battle of Jerusalem in the War of Independence.

Two other films are relevant to the topics discussed in this section. *Tomorrow is a Wonderful Day* (Lerski, 1947-48) is a drama about an adolescent Holocaust survivor who has difficulty adjusting to a new life in an agricultural school. *Dream No More* (Krumgold, 1950) is a drama about a Holocaust refugee who immigrates to the land and tries to find his place in a kibbutz. He falls in love with a kibbutz born girl and this helps him overcome the doubts and obstacles of life in the land and on the kibbutz.

Themes, Generic Aspects and Ideological Criticism

The films from this period reiterate kibbutz iconography from the 1930s, and add references to developments that took place in the kibbutz over the following fifteen years. Panoramic shots emphasize the kibbutz as a distinct territorial unit, in which a heterogeneous agricultural economy is cultivated and advanced agricultural technology is employed. The settled and developed quality of the kibbutz is obvious in these films: children's apartments (a "home away from home" for kibbutz children, who lived and slept in large houses with their peers rather than with their parents), storerooms, libraries, play grounds and communal cultural events such as the celebration of holidays. The shots of baby houses, children's apartments and living quarters surrounded by beautiful blooming gardens emphasize the development of localism, permanence and continuity. These serve as an anti-thesis to the calamity and detachment typifying the survivors, as will become clear below.

In addition to the motifs of pioneering, agricultural labor and collective community, the kibbutz is also portrayed as a large family, both a private and a collective home that offers support and aid to the survivors. On the backdrop of the dramatic events of the period, the kibbutz is perceived and presented in these films as a contrasting metaphor to the horror and annihilation of the Holocaust. This contrast is conveyed by a transformation of binary oppositions that forms a part of an extensive discourse through which Zionist identity was constructed as a determined opposition to what the Diaspora Jews and Holocaust survivors stood for:

Europe and the Holocaust	→	The kibbutz and the Land of Israel
"there"	→	"here"
Death	→	resurrection and rebirth
ruin and destruction	→	construction and prosperity
isolation and alienation	→	belonging and continuity
homelessness	→	a new home
despair	→	hope and optimism
trangeness and alienation	→	solidarity and friendship
orphanhood	→	family
fear	→	heroism
the past	→	the future
mental disability	→	mental and physical health
passivity	→	activism

The theme of exchanging the past of the ghetto for a new Zionist identity for the survivors is blatant in the replacement of father figures in the film *My Father's House*. In the quest to find his father who perished in the Holocaust, David adopts various father figures that represent different kinds of belonging to the place (the Land of Israel) and time (the Biblical and Labor Zionist heritage). David "adopts" and abandons different fathers: his Arab friend's father, an orchestra musician in Tel-Aviv, a worker in the Negev, a symbolic Christian father in the church and a symbolic Jewish father in the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem. Only after David acknowledges that his father is no longer among the living can he truly embrace a substitute father figure and a new collective family: an adopting father from the kibbutz and the kibbutz itself to which he belongs by becoming a fully-fledged member.

As stated above, the kibbutz's role in the cinema is as a central agent in transforming the survivors into Israelis, a process symbolically embodied in the transition from death to life, from desolation to blossoming and thriving condition and also in territorial expansion as opposed to territorial displacement in the Diaspora. This renewal is also symbolized by the establishment of new, young kibbutzim in *My Father's House* and in the first episode of *The Great Promise*.

In these films, the kibbutz environment and the collective community are ideal for epitomizing a binary opposition to the events of the Holocaust. The representation of the kibbutz as an open space, the hard work and the life on the soil that result in prosperity constitute the perfect contrast to the closed ghetto and the stereotype of the Diaspora Jew living from "*luftgesheft"* (rootless, temporary business). In addition, the kibbutz represents a society based on equality and direct human relations, in which hierarchical barriers between one person and another are apparently removed. These norms provided according to the films an appropriate response to the catastrophe resulting from hierarchical, cultural and religious barriers and xenophobia. It seemed that in contrast to the shattering of Jewish aspirations for universal justice and a New World, the kibbutz utopia constituted hope for a better future. David Ben-Gurion's 1943 statement attests to this hope: "We must give them the feeling that not for nothing are they undergoing all this, that the Jewish people still has hope, still has a future" (quoted In Weitz 106).

In a certain sense, life in the kibbutz remains in the background of these films, and instead of emphasizing productive values, the kibbutz represents other elements that support the nationalist-Zionist apparatus. Yet, this phenomenon can also be interpreted as an expression of the concise and pragmatic aspect of the genre, summarizing familiar components while absorbing new ones. In these films the kibbutz functions as a provider and donor, a narrative function familiar from folktales and folklore.[30] In this role, the kibbutz provides a haven and social and psychological support for child protagonists, in order to help them overcome the many obstacles that stand in their way: the trauma of the Holocaust, orphanhood and difficulties of cultural and social adjustment to a new, strange place.

The kibbutz is presented as an ideal place to re-educate and transform the foreigner or the "other". It is possible to state that the former socialist theme of redeeming the land and the redemption of people in general is combined here both with the idea of redemption and rebirth of the survivors in particular and

[30] In the structure of a story, according to Propp, in Function 11 the hero leaves home and in Function 12, he is awarded help, a rite of passage and aid that will help the hero to achieve his goals (Propp 39-51).

with the ethos of ingathering the scattered exiles and transforming them into people of the land: "One of the most significant expressions of this identity change is their inclusion in the circle of dancing children or the group of working children" (Talmon 144).

The representation of the kibbutz as a provider and donor is intertwined with the transformation of the productive space into a place of initiation and transition. As in the case of the child survivors, David and Tamar, the kibbutz will become a place of initiation for children, adolescents and youths before and after the Army. The kibbutz will appear in films as a kind of "apprenticeship machine", while adolescence is the quintessential transitional zone where the past is abandoned, a process of apprenticeship is undergone, and a new, updated, suitable identity is formulated. The nature of this re-education and its components will depend on the narrative, historical and ideological context: ideological initiation (absorption of survivors), cultural-ideological initiation (new immigrants from the West and the East), military initiation (war films) and gender or sexual initiation. The historical and ideological context will determine whether the process is presented in a favorable, positive light, in a nostalgic mode (films up till the 1960s), or critically and problematically (films of the 1980s and 1990s).[31]

As stated above, different variations of the kibbutz as an initiation machine and a transitional- liminal space will be presented, either where the one to be educated is kibbutz-born youth or, the more common variation, where the protagonist arrives from outside. In both cases, the initiation process leads to remaining in the kibbutz or moving to another place, which in the films presented above means establishing a new kibbutz.

In the story of re-educating survivors in the kibbutz environment, it is clear why rites of passage are a common feature of films about the kibbutz. Rites of passage are rituals that accompany any change of location, situation, social placement and age. Victor Turner, following Van Gennep, points out that "rites

[31] For example, adaptations to the period when the film was made may be found in *I Like Mike* (1961), *What a Gang!* (1962), *Sallah* (1964), *Eight Against One* (1964), *Noa At 17* (1982), *Boy Meets Girl* (1982), *The Jordan Valley Railway* (1989), *Operation Grandma* (1999), and more.

of passage are characterized by three stages: breaking off, marginality and re-attachment" (87). The first stage involves the individual's or group's detachment from the social structure and the cultural conditions that were his lot in the past. In the second stage, also called liminal (in Latin, border or threshold), the characteristics of the object of the rite become blurred as he traverses a cultural field marked by few of the characteristics of his former situation. In the third stage, the passage is complete and the object of the rite settles in a relatively stable situation where he has rights and obligations to others (87-88).

For the individual arriving in the kibbutz from outside, and this is true not only of Holocaust survivors, this means a process that always involves detachment from a known experience and the arrival at "another" place. In this context, the repetition of shots of the water tower, the cow barn, agricultural machinery and the kibbutz grounds are codes indicating the arrival at a different, "other" place. This "other-ness" overtly and covertly includes the unique symbolic culture of the kibbutzim: values, norms, behavior patterns, work practices, local language, local dress, and so on.

In other words, with the arrival of David, Tamar and others to the kibbutz, the first and second stages of the rite of passage are simultaneously initiated: both the detachment stage and the entry into a transitional, liminal stage. (Furthermore, liminality is doubled since these protagonists are also in transitional phases in their lives: childhood and adolescence.) The arrival in the kibbutz marks detachment from familiar past social structure and cultural conditions that, while the stay in the kibbutz is characterized by a process that begins with strangeness and continues with a transitional stage in which the individual both belongs and does not belong (a liminal condition): "Liminal entities are not here nor there; they are found in between the social positions that were determined by law, custom, tradition and ceremony" (Turner 88). This process is accompanied by learning and concludes with one kind of acceptance or another to the collective (in this context, acceptance to the kibbutz, to the nation, etc.). The kibbutz as a transitional and liminal space will become one of the major tropes and most recurring elements of the kibbutz film genre. In subsequent films this characteristic will carry semantic meanings steeped with

criticism and negative evaluations of the kibbutz as social organization and (re)productive unit.

The idealization of kibbutz life as a kind of Garden of Eden and endless abundance is combined in these films with the idealization of the integration of Holocaust survivors into the kibbutz community. The historian Anita Shapira claims that in the two decades after World War II, "the collective memory of the Holocaust served as a cover that blocked out the private memory, the personal experience" (96). The kibbutzim did indeed absorb many survivors, but as was true of many other matters, the kibbutz had both advantages and disadvantages as an institution dealing with the absorption of immigrants.

Testimonies collected over the years indicate the great difficulties that survivors underwent in kibbutzim. For example, a young girl who was absorbed in Kibbutz Ramat Hashofet testified: "I remembered my friends with whom I spent my childhood, and now black wings covered them forever. And here I was thrown into a faraway, strange environment. I covered my face with pain and I cried. Nobody knew or came to ask" (Yablonka 213). On the other hand, other attitudes were also expressed: "Holocaust survivors who braved the trauma of the first meeting with kibbutz society were ultimately totally involved and absorbed and became Sabras in all things" (Almog 146).[32]

A later criticism regarding the attitude towards Holocaust survivors appears not only in historical discourse, but also in film criticism. Thus for example Zimmerman writes about films like *The Great Promise*: "The films present the process undergone by Holocaust refugees on their way to the land positively, heroically, optimistically, unambiguously and superficially. Their involvement with the older settlers is also presented in this way. These films, exactly like the Jewish society in the country in those years, deny the severe distress of Holocaust refugees" (46). And indeed, Israeli cinema (and Israeli culture in general), will return to deal with the personal pain and adjustment difficulties of Holocaust survivors in films that were made from the end of the 1970s onwards.

[32] The opposing positions of Almog and Yablonka echo the debate between Zionist and post-Zionist researchers respectively.

These films will pass judgment on the attitude of Israeli society and the national leadership towards the survivors.[33]

2.3 – Heroism and Frontier: 1948-1964

This section spans a relatively long time period, since during the 1950s very few non-documentary films were produced, and these were mainly English-language co-productions. At the beginning of the 1960s, a relatively established and organized production of Israeli films begins, in which the kibbutz is presented in a variety of aspects, as will be discussed in this section. These include: *Ceasefire* (1950), *Pillar of Fire* (1959), *They Were Ten* (1960), *Exodus* (1960), *Blazing Sands* (1960), *What a Gang!* (1962), *The Hero's Wife* (1963) and *Eight Against One* (1964). These films are part of a large corpus of films describing the struggle to establish the State of Israel and the 1948 War (The War of Independence).[34]

In his book, *Imagined Communities,* Benedict Anderson states that a national narrative requires stories of war, valor and a willingness to endanger one's life for the sake of the state (Anderson, 2000: 39-40). In fact, films produced in the 1950s and 60s present stories of struggle and heroism involving the '48 War, along additional topics that will be presented below. In retrospect, these films came to be referred to as "the heroic-nationalist genre" (Shohat 1989; Gertz 1993). It is worthwhile keeping in mind that national and heroic subjects were popular in the late 1940s and 50s not just in cinema but in other fields of Israeli culture as well, such as literature, poetry, the theater and popular song.[35] Thus, for example, of the films mentioned in this section, *What a Gang!* and *Eight Against One*, as well as *He Walked Through the Fields*, in the next section, are

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[33] See for example *The Wooden Gun* (Moshenson, 1979), *Stalin's Disciples* (Levitan, 1987), *Tel-Aviv-Berlin* (Trope, 1987), *Due to That War* (Ben-Dor, 1988), *The Summer of Avia* (Cohen, 1988), *New Land* (Ben-Dor, 1994), and more.

[34] Additional films from this period: *Faithful City* (1952), *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer* (1955), *Every Mile a Stone* (1954), *Dan Quixote and Sa'adia Pancha* (1956), *Clouds Over Israel* (1962), *Sands of Beer Sheba* (1964) and others.

[35] For examples, see Hever 1999:12-46.

adaptations of popular books of the period concerned with national and heroic issues.

Heroic-nationalist films focus, as a main protagonist, on a brave warrior of high moral character who is prepared to risk his life for the sake of the state. At a time when there was not yet a local cinematic tradition of plots and genres, these films relied heavily on the Hollywood war film. Their central plot line concentrates on a warrior hero, a group with a national military mission, physical obstacles and mental hardships to overcome, and often a subplot involving a love story between the warrior and a female character (*Pillar of Fire* and *Ceasefire,* for example). In the Israeli attempt to create an "imaginary community," a few elements of Zionist nationalism were added to this repertoire: the illegal immigration, the absorption of immigrants and survivors, the socialization of new immigrants (especially those of oriental origin) and the attempt to rally non-Jews to the Zionist cause (*Exodus* and *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer*, for instance).[36]

The 1950s were lean years from the point of view of Israeli non-documentary films. However, after the War of Independence, newsreels continued to be produced and in 1952 two production companies were set up, The Israel Film Service and the Film Department of the Israel General Workers' Union (Histadrut), the result of which was the production of one film a year until 1960. In wake of the tremendous success of the film *Exodus*, financial incentives were given to producers and these gradually benefited the development of the Israeli cinema. In 1961, three features were made, in 1962 four and in 1963 five features. In 1967 eleven features were made, a production average that has been maintained till today.

As it is possible to understand from the list of films, the kibbutz was given a prominent place in the national-heroic genre as an expression of the respect and admiration for its contribution to the war effort. To the factors that were mentioned above (pioneering endeavors, absorption of immigrants and survivors, the Palmach), another layer related to the '48 War (The War of Independence)

[36] These films also adopted the visual pathos of the Hollywood war film: rapid editing to create tension, sharp expressive film angles and dramatic, tense music, etc. See a discussion of this in Gertz 1993: 16-17.

was added. Between the years 1940-1948, another seventy kibbutzim were established, half of them in the midst of the war years. Of the total number of kibbutzim, about a third were founded in frontier zones only a few kilometers from the borders of Lebanon and Syria (in the north), Jordan (in the east and the Jerusalem area) and Egypt (in the south). Many kibbutzim held the front line and suffered a great loss of life and property, and this also ultimately contributed to determining the international borders of the State of Israel.

Plot Synopses

The following films deal with the period before and during the '48 War:

Ceasefire (Amar, 1950) is a drama that takes place against the backdrop of the battles in Jerusalem at the time of the War of Independence. Shortly before a Ceasefire, Gideon, a kibbutznik and Palmach member, sustains a head injury from an Arab sniper's bullet. Miriam, a volunteer nurse from a wealthy Jerusalemite family, nurses him and saves his life. He is evacuated the next day to the hospital where he undergoes a long recovery period, but she does not come back to visit him. Gideon then returns to the kibbutz and starts a relationship with Ayala, a local girl. One day, Miriam arrives at the kibbutz in an elegant motor car and Gideon is tempted to follow her to Jerusalem. There, Gideon enjoys his new, but discovers that Miriam ignores him, preferring wealthy urban suitors. Finally, he returns to the kibbutz and to his beloved, who awaits him.

Pillar of Fire (Frish, 1959) is a drama about a group of fighters in a military post located between a kibbutz and the Egyptian border during the War of Independence. The soldiers at the post discover that an Egyptian tank battalion is on its way to Tel-Aviv. Despite their inferior numbers and insufficient firearms, they sacrifice themselves and bravely succeed in foiling the Egyptian tactic.

Exodus (Preminger, 1960) is a Hollywood drama that is included here due to its protagonist Ari Ben Canaan, a brave warrior from a kibbutz (Paul Newman). The film's plot returns to the mid-1940s and describes the effort of the Jewish establishment to bring immigrants and Holocaust survivors to Palestine despite the rule of the British mandate, which sealed the borders blocking any in-coming immigration. There is also a subplot involving a young Christian American

woman who, while searching for her husband, falls in love with the hero and is convinced of the righteousness of the Jews' cause in fighting for their land.

What a Gang! (Havatzelet, 1962) is a drama and an initiation film, whose plot depicts the era of the Palmach and the British Mandate on the eve of the War of Independence. A group of young people from the city is working on a kibbutz and receiving military training as preparation towards joining the struggle for the establishment of the State. The plot focuses on the dynamics within the group, the adjustment problems and the difficulties of an immigrant of oriental origin, and the romantic affairs and pranks that characterize the group, as well as their training and military missions.

Additional films involving the kibbutz or kibbutz figures belonging to the heroic-nationalist genre:

Blazing Sands (Nussbaum, 1960) a drama, tells the story of an adventurous journey of young Israelis who risk their lives when they cross the Jordanian border with the aim of reaching the red rock city of Petra. The perilous journey is led by a scout and field commander from the kibbutz, while en route the group is pursued by the army, the Bedouin and soldiers of the Jordanian Legion.

The Hero's Wife (Frye, 1963) is a drama and the first film to take place entirely in a kibbutz. The events of the plot are contemporary to the era in which it was produced. The setting is a kibbutz, which is under bombardment from the direction of the nearby Syrian border. The main character is a widow whose husband was killed in the War of Independence fifteen years earlier. Since that time, she has concentrated on working as a teacher and perpetuating her dead husband's memory. A young American Jew who has arrived to study in the kibbutz courts her, while a veteran kibbutz member also attempts to cement a relationship with her. The plot describes the widow's indecision and difficulties in dealing with the expectations, curiosity and stares of the kibbutz members.

Eight Against One (Golan, 1964) is a children's adventure film set in a kibbutz located near an Air Force base. A group of children from the kibbutz follow two Syrian spies and assist in their capture. They also help discover a bomb that was placed in a plane taking part in an air show. On the background of planes,

maneuvers, walkie-talkies, army slang, daily life at the base and a detailed description of military technology, all the familiar images from kibbutz life appear such as cowsheds, children's farm, kitchen, orchards, etc.

They Were Ten (Diner, 1960) is considered a remake of *Sabra,* although it employs a much more fluent and sophisticated filmic language. Ten pioneers settle on a barren hillside in Palestine in the 19th century. They are obliged to cope with the difficult conditions in the area and a lack of knowledge and agricultural equipment, in addition to the hostility of Arab villagers. This develops into a violent struggle over water sources and land. The film particularly emphasizes personal hardships such as hunger, despair and the temptation to give up and leave, as well as tensions and rivalries within the group.

Themes, Generic Aspects and Ideological Criticism

As the film synopses suggest, the kibbutz is presented prominently in the cinematic narrative regarding the origin of the nation and is regarded favorably as an important contributor to the national endeavor to establish the state in the past and secure it in the present[37]. These films allude to issues from the earlier period (pioneering efforts and spirit, the absorption of immigrants and survivors, illegal immigration) and reiterate visual archetypes such as cow barns, dining room and the kibbutz yard. However, two striking changes are evident in these films. First of all, rather than the whole collective, a single figure from the kibbutz may be found at the center of these films' narrative action. Secondly, the *mise-en-scène* emphasizes the kibbutz as a frontier, an outlying, exposed settlement rather than an established community characterized by a variety of agricultural and social activities.

The kibbutz protagonists or characters in these films form part of the genealogy of the founding of the nation: "At the birth of the nation, we find a story of the nation's origin: stories of national origins, myths of founding fathers, genealogies of heroes" (Bennington 121). *They Were Ten* retells the original

[37] Until the '67 war, many kibbutzim near the Syrian and Jordanian borders suffered from gunfire, bombing and violent attacks. These events were covered extensively in the media. The film *The Hero's Wife* relates to this period.

story of the numerous hardships of the pioneering forefathers. *Exodus* and *What a Gang!* retell the tales of the founding fathers, with anecdotes from the different underground groups, the illegal immigration to the country, the Palmach, etc. All these films form a genealogical narrative of heroism and sacrifice for the sake of the State, a struggle in which young people, women and children all take part. In other words, the films connect between the pathos of the pioneers and the kibbutz and the ethos of the war and the national struggle.

Regarding the *mise-en-scène* and the themes, the kibbutz is generally presented as located in a frontier or border zone (*Pillar of Fire, Wife of the Hero*) or in an arid outlying area far from the city (*They Were Ten, Ceasefire*). Edgar Morin, in Bennington (121), points out that the frontier is the area where opposing forces are reconciled or find a common denominator. This is an area of detachment and amalgamation, separation and articulation, a setting for the stories of past heroism and sacrifice that form the broad common denominator of the concept of a "nation."

Stories about war and the frontier are generally connected to defining the border between internal and external, between a nation and its enemies. However, the films under discussion here aim more at creating a communal ethos in a period when almost half the country's population were new immigrants who had arrived in the course of the 1950s[38]. The narrative regarding the construction of such a common denominator in a frontier area is expressed in the integration of a new immigrant within the group of warriors or the kibbutz community, his gradual adjustment to the new surroundings until his acceptance as an equal citizen having the same rights and obligations in society. For example, the protagonist of the film *Ceasefire,* the kibbutz member from the Palmach who is wounded in the war and eventually returns to the kibbutz, is of an oriental origin. The enlisted group in *What a Gang!* and the children's gang in *Eight Against One* also absorb and initiate an oriental immigrant, who becomes an integral part of the group/the kibbutz. In *Pillar of Fire*, Jewish immigrants from America join the struggle.

[38] Between the years 1949-1951 the population of the country doubled when more than 650,000 new immigrants arrived, about half of them from North African countries (Morocco, Libya, Algeria) and Asia (Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Turkey). See a discussion of this in Cohen-Fridheim 54-85.

The desire to create a consensus, integration and brotherhood between veteran settlers and new immigrants is expressed in some of the films by a wedding at the culmination of the plot. However, in the Israeli version, the purpose of the wedding is not only to unite the warrior with his beloved, but also to indicate an ethnic, class and especially ideological union. Some examples of this are the romance between the oriental immigrant and the local girl (*What a Gang*!) the joining of the oriental fighter and the kibbutz-born girl (*Ceasefire*), the romance between the American immigrant and the kibbutz widow (*Wife of the Hero*) and of course the love affair between the Palmach member and the young Christian girl (*Exodus*).

Presenting the kibbutz through the prism of the national struggle brings to expression an additional topic that is related to the kibbutz ethos: the great value placed by kibbutzim on volunteering for national missions in general and for the army and fighting units in particular. As stated above, in varying forms, this principle echoes through all the films that were described here. Examples would be the figure of the scout and guide (*Burning Sands*) and the proximity of the kibbutz to an Air Force base as an allusion to volunteering for the fighting forces (*Eight Against One*).

The films described here, as films from the 50s and early 60s in general, reiterate various topics relating to the Zionist hegemony, and what would eventually be called the "Zionist master narrative" (Shohat 61-64). Thus, for example, films like *They Were Ten*, *Pillar of Fire*, *Ceasefire* and *Wife of the Hero* express the distress of Jews under siege, the sanctity of dying for the homeland and the ethos of the "no-choice struggle" against the Arabs, a struggle described as one of few (Jews) against many (Arabs). These issues, along with the references to the absorption of refugees and Holocaust survivors, imparted legitimization and moral validity to the national struggle. "The unavoidability" of the struggle placed the burden of guilt on the opposing side and presented the war as a necessity above condemnation" (Shapir 485). Images of desolate frontier areas emphasized the connection between Zionism and the return to the land. In addition, images of fighters from the kibbutz and elsewhere personified important national codes such as determination, moral superiority, and especially a willingness to sacrifice one's life for the sake of the righteous cause.

Some of the films depict the traits of the generation that was born in the land – the Sabra culture. A tour on foot throughout the country (*Exodus*), a dangerous journey with a backpack and water can (*Burning Sands*), eating and sleeping in tents (*What a Gang!*) or the prominent place given to eucalyptus trees, dirt roads and water sources (*Wife of the Hero*, *Eight Against One*) are some of the characteristics of Sabra culture and are also identified with the kibbutz and youth movements. This culture fostered the contact between the body and the land (like the contact the "Sabra" (cactus) plant has with the earth) and group expeditions to learn the topography of the land: "Reconnaissance and navigation were also part of the didactic menu and complemented the field study done in the youth movements" (Almog 263).

Regarding the cinematic representation of the kibbutz, one can detect a shift from expressiveness to an instrumentalist purpose, which may be called the "**nationalist security code**": an over-codification of the kibbutz as a tool serving the state at the expense of local aspects (work, family, communal life). The cinematic articulation will not include the communal life of the kibbutz or the life of the individual per se, but rather what was related to national goals and values in general and security matters in particular. An expression of this characteristic may be found in the tendency to personify the concept of "kibbutz" through a single character of a fighter. Most of the films do not present the character or characters' complex ties with the kibbutz, but rather concentrate on content related to the national struggle.

The transition from expressive to instrumentalist imagery is apparent in the cinematic articulation of space in general and of the land in particular. In the films presented here, land does not bear a symbolic-spiritual value any longer. Rather it has an instrumental significance. The land becomes a territory that must be conquered and secured, as an end in itself. It seems as though the kibbutz is taken over by the territorial language of the State, which takes the kibbutz's existence for granted and refers only to those elements that glorify the national struggle[39]. In a slightly different context, Bursztyn calls this pornography: "The wild vegetation of the wilderness has no charm, neither in the eyes of the film's

[39] An echo of this may be detected in the transition from the defensive to the offensive ethos described by Shapira 1992: 460-462.

characters nor in the eyes of those who film them. There is a total disconnection between nature and human beings" (81).

This process is also evident in a shift in the transitional nature of the kibbutz space. In the previous period, the rite of passage focused on transforming the foreigner into an active participant in the work of the kibbutz and in its community. The center of attention in the films of this period is on the kibbutz as an ideological apparatus of the State, whose role is to transform the foreigners into fighters who have acquired military knowledge and power. For example, in *What a Gang!* and *Eight Against One*, the new immigrant is accepted into the fighting group due to his military skills, and not as a result of his participation in kibbutz activity.

The nationalist-security code sets up a mystifying smoke screen regarding the kibbutz. During the years 1959-1962, close to forty young kibbutzim found themselves in a state of crisis or even on the brink of dissolution. They succeeded in surviving only due to aid from the kibbutz movement, government budgets and the Jewish Agency. For example, the general assembly of Kibbutz Hatserim decided to abandon the place due to their inability to maintain a profitable economy, and members of Kibbutz Ramat Rachel demanded that the kibbutz be disbanded, as it had not recovered from the damages sustained in the War of Independence. In order to understand the historical roots of these crises, one must return to the period of the war and the establishment of the state. Dozens of kibbutzim were established at that time without any economic basis and in outlying, difficult areas; many kibbutzim were damaged economically and productively; others were destroyed or abandoned and many members killed (Ben Ari 1949; Shepher 1949; Tabenkin 1952). [40]

[40] The kibbutz press had already dealt with these crises after the War of Independence. The rhetoric generally lauds the achievements of the past, expresses disappointment regarding government policies in the present and points out the hope for a change of direction in the future. There is anxiety and fear that the kibbutz had exhausted its possibilities, "[…] that the magic had faded from the settlement movement" (Goldberg, 1948), recognition that the immigrants are ignoring the kibbutzim, "[…] that the new immigrants resolutely detest communal life" (Baratz, 1949; "[…] and that the help that is offered by the government to this purpose (housing and absorption) is very limited, does not fulfill needs and is far less than the sums budgeted for housing and absorbing the

The mystification described above reveals an ideological effect of the cinematic text in relation to the concrete reality. In the words of the French scholar, Louis Althusser: “Ideology is a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (152). In the context discussed here, the nationalist security code establishes the kibbutz as an exalted place, thus creating an imaginary relationship with a concrete reality, which was in fact replete with problems and crises.

In retrospect, films of the heroic-nationalist genre were severely criticized, especially in light of the post-colonial discourse of the 1980s, which indicated the ways the cinematic image was contaminated by Europocentric attitudes. In films such as *Pillar of Fire* or *Ceasefire*, the Arabs are presented as an anonymous, primitive and evil enemy. “Their exclusive and fetishized narrative function is to attack, a mechanism that reinforces spectatorial identification with the Israeli forces” (Shohat 60-61). The Oriental Jew, furthermore, was presented as having no past, tradition or history. “While European Jewish history is referred to in all three episodes…Oriental Jewish history is totally excluded from representation” (74). In these films, the Oriental is fully accepted into the community only after he joins the fighting group - the Palmach - and performs heroic acts in the name of the homeland (such is the case with the Oriental protagonists in *Ceasefire*, *What a Gang*!, *Eight Against One*, and more).

The generic approach highlights several aspects different from these emphasized by ideological interpretations. Yigal Bursztyn mentions that during this early period of Israeli cinema, individuals involved in filmmaking – producers, script writers and directors – could not lean on a local cinematic tradition, formula or norm on the basis of which one could construct a plot and communicate with the audience: "Israeli filmmakers are compelled (or were compelled until the 1970s) to constantly reinvent cinema" (1990: 126). Along a similar vein, Gertz points out that a film such as *They Were Ten* is based on certain elements from the Western (1993: 70-73). From this perspective the large number of kibbutz films has a generic as well as an ideological-national explanation. In the years when the Israeli film industry began to crystallize, it used the kibbutz as a label

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immigrants working outside the kibbutz (Lodzinsky [Luz], 1949). See references to these sources in Kedem 116-129.

familiar to the audience both from the cinematic discourse and the general public discourse. The kibbutz in films of this period constituted a scaffold on top of which elements borrowed from other more familiar generic formulas were constructed. That trait reflects the flexibility of the kibbutz film genre. Thus, for instance, *They Were Ten* is a sort of Western, *Ceasefire* and *The Hero's Wife* are akin to melodrama, *Pillar of Fire* is related to the war film, and *Eight Against One* is a children's and adventure film. The use of the kibbutz as a label is certainly prominent in a film such as *Exodus*, which appeals to an American film audience.

Both the use of the kibbutz as a label and the national-security code testify to the ideological function of the genre's films at that period. In particular we might mention that although the kibbutzim enjoyed prestige and appreciation, the decision to actually settle in a kibbutz gradually decreased. Yet, the kibbutzim benefited from a close connection to state institutions at that time, and therefore the message conveyed in the films was meant to convince people to volunteer to a life in the kibbutz. This message was stressed through the glorification of the kibbutz by way of incorporating elements of the frontier and heroism. Furthermore, the authorities wished to crystallize and enhance the status of the army and military service, at a time when recruitment became compulsory, by law. The combination of kibbutz, army and heroism in a popular medium such as cinema contributed to that goal (television broadcasting began only in 1968-1969).

An additional generic trait that will be discussed later is a symptomatic aspect I call "early warning function." The kibbutz films not only reflect cultural and ideological changes but also warn of future transformations in the genre, the kibbutz, the cinematic field and Israeli culture in general. The transition from expressivness to instrumentalism and the personification of the kibbutz and the collective through a single character signal the deflation of the status of kibbutz and Socialism in Israeli society, while also alerting of changes in the cinematic field. The semantic replacement of kibbutz-life repertoire with elements of the frontier settlement signals a sense of saturation with the agricultural and pioneering repertoire of the genre and with the kibbutz itself. Motifs of remaining or leaving, fidelity or betrayal appear indirectly in some of the films and will be consciously articulated and directly adressed in the next period.

2.4 – New Genres and the Disappearance of the Kibbutz: 1964-1980

This section deals with a group of films that greatly differ from one another in terms of content, style, genre and ideology: *I Like Mike* (1961), *Sallah* (1964), *He Walked Through the Fields* (1967), *Three Days and a Child* (1966) and *Every Bastard a King* (1968). A small number of films and the television series *Hedva and Shmulik* that were produced at the beginning of the 1970s will be mentioned at the end of this section. As will become apparent, this section will explain the diverse contexts that led to the disappearance of the kibbutz from Israeli cinema from the mid-1960s onwards.

In the mid-1950s and throughout the 1960s, Israeli society underwent significant changes, which permeated the Israeli cinema and were expressed on the screen in numerous and diverse ways. After the difficult war period, the absorption of hundreds of thousands of immigrants and a severe economic recession, intensive economic growth was initiated thanks to government and labor union supervision and guidance and significant development in the private sector (Eisenstadt 225). Also contributing to that state were the relative peacefulness that prevailed in Israel between the 1956 and 1967 wars and the dramatic changes in demographic and socio-economic structure as a result of mass immigration, as well as the economic headway made due to the nationalization of land in wake of the 1948 War.

In traditional sociological terms, this process may be described as a weakening of collectivistic conventions and socialistic values and a transition to individualistic norms and values of a more capitalistic nature. This process was marked by increased individual aspirations towards material gains, as well as by the evolvement of a culture emphasizing consumerism, leisure and entertainment (Bursztyn 89-94; Gertz 13). Generally, it may be said that economic, social and psychological energies were gradually channeled towards concrete and material issues in the present rather than towards the pioneering socialist-kibbutz ethos of the past: “The Israeli public searched for cultural products that would not reflect “self-evident” Zionist topics, but rather private, social, day-to-day worries” (Shohat 114). On the cultural-artistic front, the chief significance of these changes was a breaking free from the need or will to create recruited educating

art in the service of the state. There was an opening of this field to a dynamic of "market forces" on the one hand and artistic and individualistic autonomy on the other.[41]

This dynamic gradually permeated Israeli cinema as well. The most striking expression of this process was the gradual disappearance of the heroic-nationalist genre, two new genres developed. In 1964, two films were produced that are generally considered the forerunners of two new types of films that would take center stage in the cinematic arena from the mid-60s till the end of the 70s. *A Hole in the Moon* (Uri Zohar) was an *avant garde*, anarchistic parody that paved the way for a personal cinema that was influenced by "*auteur* politics" and the French New Wave. Personal cinema flourished in various forms between the years 1967-1977, receiving the recognition and support of film critics and the cultural elite, but generally failing with the public.[42]

The second film was *Sallah* (Ephraim Kishon), the most well known and successful Israeli film of all time. This film was a blend of satire, comedy and melodrama and dealt with ethnic and class tensions between Jews of Ashkenazi (European) and Sephardi (oriental) descent. The film's plot formula and stereotypes were later duplicated in dozens of films that became popular between the years 1966-1977. These films were called "Bourekas films" after a popular Oriental delicacy. Film critics ridiculed these films, but they became immensely popular with audiences.[43] Symbolically, these two films criticize kibbutz ideology, the first indirectly and the second directly. Even more significantly, both personal cinema and "Bourekas' films would later express a variety of important issues in Israeli culture, but would not relate to the kibbutz at all.

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[41] One aspect of market forces at work was the policy of encouraging Israeli films determined by the Government in 1960. The producers received a return of 50% for every film sold, at times even in the form of an initial loan. This decision explains in retrospect the interest in creating formulaic films that would ensure a large viewing audience in advance. See a critique of this system in Ne'eman 1982: 20-23.

[42] Regarding the status and acceptance of personal ethnic cinema, see a discussion in Gertz 1993: 27-49.

[43] Generally speaking, with a few exceptions, personal films were each seen by tens of thousands of viewers, whereas ethnic comedies and melodramas were viewed by more than half a million viewers each.

It is difficult to give a full account of the processes that the kibbutz underwent during this period. Of the 220 kibbutzim that existed in 1965, some kibbutzim had been established five or ten years earlier while others had been in existence for twenty or thirty years. Therefore it is clear that there was heterogeneity in terms of their economic and social situation, community structure and size as well as the various implications of geographical location, etc. In general, it is possible to categorize this heterogeneity under the headings of continuity, institutionalization and branching out. The expansion of the agricultural economy, the setting up of workshops and factories, the technological developments and the acquisition of higher education related to these areas, as well as the institutionalization of the relationship between the individual and the community (the establishment of organizations, committees, sets of rules, etc.) are all expressions of the continuity and diversification brought about by the needs, desires and demands of permanent settlements over time. For example, the first generation that was born in the kibbutz came back to settle there and was gradually integrated into the economic and communal fabric, starting families and turning the kibbutz into a multi-generation community with an assured future (Maron 63-791).

At the same time, the kibbutzim were struggling with considerable difficulties and crises. From the 1960s till the Six-Day War, only four kibbutzim were set up. The kibbutzim no longer attracted new members and their proportion of the population stabilized at about 4%. A lack of new potential members on the one hand and the constant thinning out of the kibbutz population on the other caused a situation where 1962 was the first year to see a negative growth ratio of kibbutz residents and workers. Several kibbutzim had to cope with a lack of productive resources (land, water, non-profitable branches), a lack of manpower and a lack of personal capital or vital government developmental budgets.[44] These problems were added to residues from the past: a feeling of failure in absorbing a significant portion of the mass immigration (1949-1951), the crisis of the schism within the kibbutz movement (1951) and political controversies that brought about a rift within the workers' parties (Mapai and Mapam).

[44] See an elaboration of this in Kedem 26, 63.

Plot Synopses

I Like Mike (Frye, 1961) is a comedy of errors and a satire on the adoption of bourgeois values by Israeli society to at the beginning of the 1960s. An army officer from a kibbutz in the Negev courts a Tel-Aviv girl while her mother uses all kinds of intrigues to make a match between her and a rich American Jewish tourist who is visiting the country. However, her plan fails when the tourist falls in love with an Israeli soldier girl of oriental origin, while their young, idealistic daughter goes against the bourgeois norms of her parents and falls for the officer. The film, which contrasts the life of luxury in the city with the pioneering life on a kibbutz in the Negev, concludes with two weddings.

Sallah (Kishon, 1964) is a witty satire criticizing the attitude of the Israeli establishment and the old settlers (Ashkenazis) regarding the new immigrants who arrived from Arab lands (Orientals). Sallah and his large family (seven children and a grandmother) arrive in the country and are sent to a temporary makeshift settlement, a "ma'abara," with the promise that they will soon receive a new flat. This promise is not fulfilled and Sallah must cope with the indifference of petty bureaucrats and the manipulations of politicians. He begins working as a porter in a kibbutz, and a central part of the film deals with the cultural gap between the kibbutz and the oriental immigrant while presenting the kibbutz as a place of arrogance and hypocrisy. Sallah does not look favorably on the double romance that develops between his daughter and a kibbutz-born boy and his son and a kibbutz-born girl. He plots to get his daughter engaged to a taxi driver in order to win a dowry that will help him buy a flat. In the happy resolution, Sallah gets a new flat and the two couples are united.

He Walked Through the Fields (Millo, 1967) is a drama, an adaptation of a famous epos that was written about the kibbutz and the figure of the Sabra on the eve of the declaration of the State. Uri, the first son of the kibbutz, graduates from a boarding school and decides to return to the kibbutz despite the fact that he has been approached and offered to join the Palmach. He begins working in the kibbutz, but feels alienated after he discovers that his mother is having an affair with an outsider and his father is yet again traveling abroad on a government assignment. Uri chooses to join the Palmach despite the objections of his girlfriend, Mika, a Holocaust orphan who is finding it difficult to adjust to

kibbutz life. He leads his men on missions and maneuvers without being aware of Mika's pregnancy. Uri volunteers for a dangerous military operation and is killed while blowing up a bridge controlled by the British Mandate Army. His parents receive the tragic news, but are comforted by the grandchild that is to be born to them.

Three Days and a Child (Zohar, 1966) is also a drama. Eli is a young Jerusalemite graduate student in mathematics who conducts a strange relationship with a zoology student. One day he receives a phone call from the kibbutz. His ex-girlfriend and her husband are leaving the kibbutz and ask him to look after their young child. Eli agrees to take the child under his care and for three days tours the city with him, while remembering episodes from his life in the kibbutz. For some unexplained reason, resentment, anger, jealousy, alienation, boredom or perhaps guilt, Eli plays dangerous games with the child and seems to try to cause his death. His violence is also directed towards his student girlfriend and a young man who is courting her.

Every Bastard a King (Zohar, 1968) is a drama that deals with the days before the 1967 War. An American journalist arrives in Israel accompanied by his wife, an ex-Israeli, to cover the tension in the area. He befriends two Israelis: Rafi, a skirt-chasing restaurant owner who plans to fly to Egypt to promote peace and Yoram, a tour guide, a down-to-earth, energetic type who falls in love with a soldier girl from a kibbutz. The three go out in Tel-Aviv and travel around the northern border and Jerusalem until the outbreak of the war. Yoram is revealed to be a brave warrior, who risks his life to save a wounded comrade, Rafi is desperate to leave the country and the frustrated journalist gets drunk and quarrels with his wife. At the end of the war, Yoram takes them to a kibbutz in order to meet the soldier girl, and the journalist accidentally enters a minefield and is killed.

Themes, Generic Aspects and Ideological Criticism

Ostensibly, the presentation of the kibbutz in these films is a continuation and duplication of the kibbutz images from previous periods in general and the heroic-nationalist genre in particular. The iconography reiterates archetypal images of the kibbutz: desert landscapes, the cow barn, the water tower, the

kibbutz yard, orchards, irrigation, blooming fields, etc. The themes continues to imbue the kibbutz with important values for Israeli society and culture: settling the wilderness, contributing to the army and national security, absorbing immigrants and integrating them, educating youth to values such as family life, high individual morality, a cooperative society living in verdant surroundings and a pastoral quality of life.

In *I Like Mike*, the kibbutz is presented as the correct, proper antithesis to the petit bourgeois life of the city. Settling in the Negev is presented as a worthwhile goal for young people in contrast to the meaninglessness of the luxury and decadence characterizing middle-class city life. This principle is established through the figure of the army officer from the kibbutz, who appears in the narrative as an educational figure who is rooted in the land. The film constantly maintains two overlapping binary structures, which set up a double and contrasting constructive analogy: city life/the world of adults as opposed to settlement in the Negev/the world of the young. The first structure is presented as deteriorating and stagnant, whereas the second is presented as authentic and idyllic. From this stems the central direction of the narrative regarding the transition to the kibbutz.

Sallah makes fun of the kibbutz. Nevertheless it also attributes importance to the kibbutz, since the two central axes of the plot – Sallah's struggle to obtain suitable housing and the struggle of the young people to realize their love – involve the kibbutz. The negotiation between Sallah and the kibbutz result in financial gain for him and symbolic power which were denied of him when he failed in his negotiations with government bureaucracy, the political parties and the concept of the middle-class couple. The romantic union between Sallah's children and young kibbutzniks alludes to solidarity and the possibility that young oriental immigrants can find their place in the kibbutz. The kibbutz is also allocated relatively extensive screen time compared to the other locations, with the exception of the transit makeshift camp. As a result, the kibbutz is perceived as an important institution, even if on a covert and allusive level. The film also shares a utopian dimension with the kibbutz as both express a belief in breaking down barriers and hierarchies among people and closing material gaps.

He Walked Through the Fields perpetuates the genealogy of the heroic dynasty that is passed from one generation to another. A frame story is added in the movie which describes the return of Uri, the grandchild, from the '67 War battle fields to his father's alma mater. Here begins the flashback that introduces the film's story, dealing, among other issues with Uri's relationship with his pioneering parents. The film, however, minimizes the part dealing with tensions and problems within the kibbutz, while describing Uri's military training and missions in the Palmach in detail. In the film Uri is killed during a combat mission for the homeland.

Every Bastard a King establishes the girl soldier from the kibbutz as an anchor of sanity and stability in contrast with the hero's alienation, soul searching and nihilism. Through the character of the kibbutz-born girl, the film transmits norms of a permanent, orderly lifestyle including volunteering for army service in wartime and aligning oneself with the kibbutz as a frontier zone settlement in close proximity to a minefield. The girl soldier from the kibbutz has a marginal narrative function, but she personifies "worthy" womanhood in contrast with the wild young women in the city, especially the American journalist's wife. The latter, it turns out, was born in Israel and left the country. She is unfaithful to her husband and characterized by coldness, cynicism and dissatisfaction. Unlike her, the girl soldier from the kibbutz is presented as the ideal woman. She has firm roots in the country, is pure and innocent, is a patriot serving in the army and a reliable, faithful woman.

In *Three Days and a Child*, the kibbutz representation is more ambivalently. The film is narrated through the consciousness of the protagonist, who through flashbacks, reminiscences about events from his kibbutz past. Ostensibly, the film sets up a dichotomy between the hero's alienated life in Jerusalem and the kibbutz idyll. His life in the city is characterized by loneliness, despair, estrangement from his lover and a *mise-en-scène* that stresses desolation, graves and thorns. In the hero's consciousness, his kibbutz past is a memory of first love, flowering fields and flowing water. Yet, Gertz suggests that this perception of the protagonist is not so clear cut: life in the kibbutz wasn't so harmonious, whereas his life in Jerusalem was not so terrible. (Gertz, 1993: 107 – 109)

Kibbutz characters have in these films a duplicated effect: they function not only as a metonym for the kibbutz as a whole, but even further than that, they represent the other 220 kibbutzim that were in existence at that time, which were spread through the length and breadth of the country. In this sense, the kibbutz character represents a place without a location, a ubiquitous place that may be found anywhere and at any time. In other words, the kibbutz is here, there and everywhere and is certainly more here than simply "here". At the same time, characters from the kibbutz are a kind of ethos in motion. They embody the values of continuity and being rooted to a place in areas of a temporary nature: the transit makeshift camp (*Sallah*), the battlefield (*He Walked Through the Fields*, *Every Bastard a King*), the alienation of the city (*Three Days and a Child*) or the wilderness (*I Like Mike*).

It has been claimed in sociological literature about the kibbutz that in the process of establishing the State and creating national institutions (the army, for example) and the growing consolidation of social stratification and cultural diversity, the privileged status of the kibbutz in Israeli society gradually diminished. Issues in which the kibbutzim had a central role, both factually and symbolically – settlement of the land, absorption of immigrants, defense, security and volunteerism – were now assigned to state institutions (Talmon-Gerber, 1970: 1-5). This devaluation in the kibbutz status, together with the social and cultural changes that were enumerated in the introduction to this section, were expressed in various ways and levels in the above films and the cinematic arena in general.

In this era, the iconography of the kibbutz genre films did not change but to a large extent it was reduced and diminished (a process that may be detected even in earlier films such as *What a Gang!* for example). This development is striking, both in light of kibbutz representation in the 30s and 40s and also when one considers the extensive development that the kibbutz underwent in the 50s and 60s. The kibbutz image was frozen in time, unchanged and unaltered: the same long shots of the kibbutz landscape, the chicken coos, the dining room and the kibbutz yard. This stagnation is especially obvious in light of the kibbutz's agricultural, industrial and technological development and the expansion of its various institutions.

The cinematic time through which the kibbutz was depicted was also the time of the past: *He Walked Through the Fields* marks a return to the mid-1940s, *Sallah* returns to the era of transit makeshift camps sometime in the 50s and in *Three Days and a Child*, the beloved and the kibbutz appear in flashbacks from the past. When contrasted with the detailed, vivid descriptions of the city in films such as *I Like Mike*, *Three Days and a Child* and *Every Bastard a King*, the transit camp in *Sallah* and even the military zone in *He Walked Through the Fields*, the kibbutz appears as a faded, dried up, almost anachronistic place.

To a great extent, the experience of kibbutz life appears as a visual backdrop without any significant and concrete connection with the central plot. This lack of connection between the background and the plot is striking in the depiction of kibbutz figures. In these films, while the other protagonists are involved in a variety of interactions and situations in the city, the transit camp or the army, the kibbutz figures lack relationships with family or friends, position in the workplace or role in the economic or communal framework of the kibbutz. Whereas the other central characters in *Three Days and a Child*, *Every Bastard a King*, *I Like Mike*, and to a certain extent, *Sallah*, maintain a variety of interactions and private, personal lives, the kibbutz characters are presented without any connection or ties to the kibbutz. Thus, for example, the kibbutz characters have no private space of their own (house, apartment) and they also have no friends or acquaintances of the same age.

The one-dimensional nature of the kibbutz characters is also expressed at the level of their motivations and passions. The other protagonists are portrayed as having desires, passions and a wide range of dynamic behavior. Conversely, the kibbutz characters appear as stereotypes wearing khaki or army uniforms. They are also passive, have no desires and make no significant contribution to the plot. For example, the soldier girl from the kibbutz in *Every Bastard a King* has no wishes or role of her own in the scenario except as the trophy for the courageous warrior. The officer from the kibbutz in *I Like Mike* roams around as aimlessly in the city as he does in the Negev. The beloved from the kibbutz in *Three Days and a Child* appears on the screen primarily through the recollections/visions of the hero which appear in the form of flashbacks, even though she actually does arrive in Jerusalem. In *Sallah*, too, the kibbutz characters are stereotypically

delineated, presented without any ambitions or passions apart from the desire to exploit Sallah. This phenomenon emphasizes the disappearance of the kibbutz collective as a small community characterized by direct personal interactions.

This evaporation is also expressed spatially through the cinematographically. As mentioned above, the kibbutz's agricultural and collective activities were allocated quite a large amount of screen time in the 30s and 40s. This was expressed in relatively lengthy shots, in panning and in tilt movements, which emphasized kibbutz activity and incorporated the individual detail into the whole. In the films described here, agricultural activity and collective experience have entirely vanished, leaving only separate fragments unrelated to an organic whole: rapid shots, flashbacks, recurrent images of cow barns and chicken coos, and especially long shots of public areas having a remote, abstract and anonymous dimension.

The kibbutz in films was no longer a place where one comes to settle, as it was in the films of the 30s, 40s and 50s. Overtly or covertly, the kibbutz became only a place one passes through, ignore or leaves for someplace else. In *I Like Mike* and *Every Bastard a King*, the kibbutz is a place one passes by, and in *He Walked Through the Fields* and *Three Days and a Child*, the kibbutz is a place that one leaves. As stated above, the kibbutz in *Sallah* is also not a place one would choose to live in or belong to, that, at least, is the conclusion from the way the kibbutz characters are portrayed. Sallah flagrantly expresses his alienation from the kibbutz when he states at the beginning of the film: "Thank God (I'm not going to live in the kibbutz)."

The distant way of relating to the kibbutz also characterizes the hero of *He Walked Through the Fields*. As Gertz points out, in the literary source, the protagonist and the other characters maneuver successfully between individual wishes and desires and obstacles related to reality in general and the kibbutz community in particular. The decision to join the Palmach is peripheral and only two or three pages are devoted to it. In the film, on the other hand, the protagonist joins the Palmach due to his feeling of alienation from the kibbutz where he has not managed to fit in. This decision and his subsequent military

activity take up more than half the film.[45] It thus becomes clear that during the second half of the 60s, the kibbutz was more absent than present. This phenomenon may be called "structural absence," that is, a presence-absence that is a symptom of a dynamic in Israeli cinema in particular and in Israeli society in general.

The most blatant expression of the change in the cultural-cinematic agenda is to be found in the shift in the dominant genres/models in Israeli cinema: "The two cinematic models, the personal and the popular (ethnic), that were formulated in the country in the 60s were actually two expressions of a similar cinematic phenomena, which conveyed a rejection of ideological and aesthetic ideals as represented by Zionist realism" (Ne'eman, 1998: 12). The development of both personal and ethnic cinema expressed public weariness with the pathos and didactic tone of the nationalistic drama, and reflected the needs and desires of new audiences that were mainly concentrated in the cities, large and small. This was a younger generation, comprised to a large extent of oriental population that constituted half the population of the State. These trends were given a symbolic, enhanced and simultaneous expression in the mid-60s: both personal and ethnic cinema used the kibbutz as a point of departure, leveled criticism at it and abandoned it in favor of different content and values.[46]

In **personal cinema**, the departure from the kibbutz in the film *Three Days and a Child* was preceded by the ideological "abandonment" in the film *Hole in the Moon*. Among other things, this film is a parody of Zionist myths and the pioneering-socialist ethos. The first sequence of the film constitutes a mockery of the kibbutz ethos. The new immigrant arrives in Palestine on a raft, wearing a suit and tie, smoking a cigar and drinking whisky. He arrives in the desert, sets up a stand, and lives a life of ease only to discover a few days later that another stand has been set up directly opposite his. After an argument, the two enterprising vendors decide to move to the city together in order to establish a film industry in the Land of Israel. The parody as a modus of representation in this section of the film expresses the degeneration of outdated norms and values

[45] See a discussion of this in Gertz, 1993: 70-82.

[46] This claim corresponds with that of Ben-Shaul that the common denominator of personal cinema and Bourekas films is "a capitalist-liberal autonomous ideology" (128).

and relates particularly to the pioneering ethos and the kibbutz. The mockery is of course directed at the images of the pioneer and the kibbutz as they appeared in the cinema of the 30s and 40s: the pioneer wearing khaki shorts, holding a hoe, making the desert bloom, cultivating the land from morning till night and establishing a successful kibbutz, all of which were actions taken as a fulfillment of a collective national need, rather then deeds of a private entrepreneur pursuing a rootless, transient business.

As aforementioned, *Three Days and a Child* also features a kibbutz, although it is placed in the past and left behind. Nevertheless, this was the last mention of the kibbutz in personal cinema. The directors of the new films were young and had grown up in the city, absorbing the rebellious spirit of the mid-60s in music (rock 'n roll) and especially in existential literature (Camus, Sartre and Faulkner abroad; Oz, Yehoshua and others in Israel), and the French New Wave (Godard, Truffaut, Resnais and others). The directors of personal cinema wanted to detach themselves from art that expressed Zionist values at a time when the kibbutz was perceived as part of the national hegemonic establishment. They preferred the universal thematic content of loneliness, alienation, despair, ennui and lack of meaning, all intrinsic to the modern urban experience, rather than the atmosphere of the agricultural hinterland of the kibbutz. European modernism appeared, moreover, subversive, defiant and sexy, whereas the kibbutz appeared provincial, conservative and old-fashioned.

Sallah, which was made at about the same time as *Hole in the Moon*, expressed a similar paradigm regarding its attitude towards the kibbutz. It used the kibbutz as a narrative and ideological point of departure, while criticizing kibbutz values and heralding ethnic cinema, which would not relate to the kibbutz at all. The film expresses an initial forthright criticism of the Zionist establishment in general and the kibbutz in particular. It presents kibbutz members as arrogant and egotistical exploiters of cheap labor in a way inimical to socialist-egalitarian ideals. On the more covert level, the film reflects a new ethos that is partially *petit bourgeois* and capitalist (the desire to buy an apartment, family concerns) and partially ethnic-religious (the identification of the Oriental immigrant with Jewish tradition in contrast to secular Zionism). As Ne'eman points out: "Sallah, the 'all-Oriental' protagonist of the film, laughed at the Ashkenazi pioneering

myth and related heretically to the most sacred value of Socialist Zionism – the religion of work" (1998: 17).

In the introduction I mentioned the willingness of Israeli cinema to react to "market forces," a dynamic that particularly influenced ethnic cinema. Directors and producers began to recognize the demand for comedies and melodramas, become aware of the needs and topics that were preoccupying a large Oriental audience and enjoyed the financial incentives that were given to filmmakers in those years. The ethnic films were set in cities and slums. As Schweitzer points out: "In fact, the city constitutes the main backdrop, not only for the new sensitive films, but also for the other streams of Israeli cinema in the 60s, proof that Israel had become a modern urban society" (138).

The ethnic films relied largely on stereotypes and binary oppositions: Oriental/Ashkenazi, poor/rich, uneducated/intellectual, hired laborer/independent businessman, poor neighborhood/exclusive neighborhood. In keeping with the dictates of comedy and melodrama, these contrasts were strikingly evident in the *mise-en-scène* of these films, in everything relating to clothing, furniture, props, dwellings and also the kind of speech and exaggerated body language that was used. In general, the image and essence of the kibbutznik was unsuitable to this repertoire, since at that time it was difficult to imagine a rich, intellectual kibbutznik dressed in a suit and living in a large house. The kibbutz way of life, its communality and perhaps the secular, "lax" atmosphere, were very foreign to the oriental immigration. As Cohen-Friedheim writes: "The factor that caused the failure to absorb most of the immigrants from the East [in the kibbutz] was their will to preserve their culture, traditions and religious way of life in their new land" (249).

By relying on the repertoire of the comedy and the melodrama, ethnic cinema placed the family and more often than not, the traditional large family (the "clan")[47] at the core of the film. In these movies, most of the situations and tensions take place between families and are also concerned with the hierarchy within the family. Sallah quarrels with his wife and children, is involved with

[47] In this context, see also Dayan's article "From Bourekas Back to Ghetto Culture" (54-56).

finding a match for his daughter, loafs around instead of supporting his family, is trying to find suitable housing for his family, etc. The public image of the kibbutz is of a homogenous group of people having common interests and goals (national and social), and less as a community made up of families. This misconception is blatantly expressed in almost all the films that were presented above. Kibbutz characters are almost always unmarried young men and women without familial connections (parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters or children).[48]

The last chord of the heroic-nationalist genre was sounded in the wake of the euphoria following the victory in the '67 war, in about a dozen films that glorified and hailed the victory of "David over Goliath" (Israel fighting and prevailing against the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan). *He Walked the Field* and in a more problematic manner, *Every Bastard a King* belong to this corpus. The parting from this genre in Israeli cinema is also a symbolic farewell to Uri, the Palmach and the kibbutz. The kibbutz seems to appear or be "preserved" in these and other films of the period according to either a national or a security code: images of soldiers and borders *(I Like Mike, Every Bastard a King*), the Palmach and heroism (*He Walked Through the Fields*), absorption of immigrants and the melting pot (*Sallah*) and pioneering that has outlived its time (*Hole in the Moon, Three Days and a Child*).[49]

In the 1970s, the kibbutz disappeared almost entirely from the Israeli film screen (though as noted earlier, initial signs of this evaporation can be detected as early as in the mid-60s). From about a hundred non-documentary films that were made during that decade, only four relate to the kibbutz. Some of these films are relatively marginal and unknown, but some of the arguments made above are applicable to them as well. The plots center around 24 hours in the life of a young girl who has left the kibbutz to live in Tel-Aviv (*From the Other Side*, 1970), a truck driver from a kibbutz who tries to help a Tel-Aviv prostitute of Oriental origin (*The Highway Queen*, 1970), a young loafer who dreams of

[48] On the central role of the family in the kibbutz, see Maron 69-83.

[49] From another standpoint, the kibbutz is "maintained" in 60s cinema thanks also to extra-cinematic artistic creations of the 40s and 50s: *What a Gang*!, *Eight Against One*, *He Walked Through the Fields*, *Three Days and a Child* (literature), *I Like Mike* (theater) and *Sallah* (based on comedy sketches of the Nahal Troupe in the 50s).

getting rich and leaving the kibbutz (*Belfer*, 1978) and a pair of rascals from the kibbutz who set out to catch some criminals (*They Call Me Shmil*, 1973). It is also worth mentioning here the first Israeli television drama to be broadcasted on television, namely, *Hedva and Shlomik*, 1971. This series, which adheres more or less to the pattern set out above, deals with kibbutzniks who have left for the big city; in other words, the life of the kibbutznik begins only after he or she has left the kibbutz.[50]

"Multiple focal points, centers of knowledge, cause a fleeting movement from one idea, one identity, one place, from the place. The place empties out" (Eran and Gurevitch 12). This frantic movement characterizes the films that were described here, such as perpetual motion, moving from place to place (*Every Bastard a King*), transitions from reality to memory or hallucination (*Three Days and a Child*), or ideological "zigzaging" between the private and the public (*He Walked Through the Fields*). Perhaps the movement of characters from the kibbutz to the outside in search of another place represents a wish to escape from a sole identity and a single place. In Israeli cinema in the second half of the 60s, the kibbutz was "deflated." It became abstract and homogeneous and to a large extent was turned into a fetish (i.e., the kibbutz is presented through "ritual" props such as uniforms, goods, produce, cow barns and chicken coos). Day-to-day existence, the simple locality void of ideological pretensions was unsuitable to the trends of Israeli cinema from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s.

In the analysis of this period I have pointed to the various ideological meanings and generic characteristics. Thus, for example, we have seen that familiarity with the genre and the genre's flexibility enabled the film industry to gradually "beget" two distinct new types of films – the personal and the "Bourekas" film. In addition, we have noted that the warning elements from the previous period are expressed more candidly in this period. The motif of leaving the kibbutz, the kibbutz as a transitional place and issues of fidelity and betrayal are articulated openly and significantly. Thus, Uri's decision to prefer the army to the kibbutz is connected both to his father's betrayal (preferring to work abroad) and to his

[50] Again the kibbutz serves as the starting point for a new beginning – it was significant in the first television series that was inaugurated just after Israel Television began broadcasting (around 1969).

mother's infidelity (having an affair with another kibbutz member). The tone accusing the kibbutz of a condescending attitude and exploitation is certainly evident in *Sallah*. An element of betrayal is also linked to the *Three Days and a Child* protagonist, since some of the bullying the child suffers is explained in the mother's infidelity. In addition, one might add the protagonist's contempt and reservation concerning the indigenous Sabra culture associated with the kibbutz and expressed in hikes and treks and knowledge of the local flora and fauna.

Yet, these and other components begin to warn of a deeper change in the genre, as well as in the cinematic system and the kibbutz in its relation to the alien and the outcast. These components are insinuated in the films discussed here through the tension between the kibbutz and Sallah or in a different way between the kibbutz and Uri (*He Walked Through the Fields*). In *Three Days and a Child*, too, trusting the child to the protagonist is connected to the parents' decision to leave the kibbutz since they had been denied a leave of absence for studying. These elements point to a crisis in the kibbutz ideology and romantic image (the changing of the pastoral code). The Israeli cinema will once again be concerned with the kibbutz in the 1980s. Yet, some of the elements will shift direction, will be transformed and emphasize the conflicts between the individual and the collective. This conflict also hints of a tendency that will crystallize from the end of the seventies – the departure of kibbutz-born youths.

The geographical, ideological and emotional distancing from the kibbutz, as well as the alienation that some of the characters feel toward the kibbutz and the time freezing all warn that the kibbutz is turning from a familiar to an alien, other place – a heterotopia. According to Foucault, heterotopias are real concrete places, "which are sorts of actually realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reserved…" (1994: 178).

2.5 – Not the Same Fields Any More: 1980-1990

In the 1980s, Israeli cinema goes back to dealing with the kibbutz in a relatively large corpus of films. A prominent group of films in this corpus levels harsh criticism at kibbutz ideals and ethics: *Noa At 17* (1981), *Atalia* (1984), *Stalin's Disciples* (1987), *Once We Were Dreamers* (1988), and to a certain extent *An Intimate Story* (1981) and *Boy Meets Girl* (1982). The other films are less well known, among them nostalgic, rite of passage and coming-of-age films such as *The Valley Train* (1989), *How Come?* (1989), *Children of the Steps* (1984) and *A Thin Line* (1980). Additional films containing a kibbutz figure or a scene in a kibbutz are *The Vulture* (1981), *First Love* (1982), *Again, Forever* (1985), *Fellow Travelers* (1983) and *Avanti Popolo* (1986).

In the 80s, Israeli cinema returns to deal with social, ethnic and national conflicts alongside the proliferation of comedies, coming-of-age films, "candid camera" films, and more. Two groups of films attracted public attention and became this era's canon: the first deals with criticism of norms and values in society, the Army, the educational system, the kibbutz and regarding "outcasts" (Holocaust survivors, homosexuals, etc.). The second cluster of films was entitled "conflict films" and is concerned with the Palestinian conflict in view of the expanding colonization and the denial of human rights in the Occupied Territories (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank).

Gertz classifies the films of the 80s as "the cinema of outcasts and aliens": "…cinema that placed the political situation in Israel at the forefront, especially regarding the question of Israeli social identity and its relationship with its surroundings" (176, and in detail, 175-217). In a slightly different classification, Shohat claims that certain elements of the 70s personal cinema persists into the 80s. She especially means the use of the film as a personal and political expression of the filmmaker (the *auteur*) and the thematic material that deals with the marginal, the search for identity and the tensions between the individual and the collective (207-216; 227-232). In particular, she refers to veteran directors such as Ne'eman, Vollman, Yeshurun, Hefner, but also to younger filmmakers such as Guttman, Bat Adam and others. (In writing about the 1980s, Shohat focuses mainly on the "Palestinian wave in Israeli cinema" or "conflict films.").

These two groups express a growing discomfort and resentment in Israeli left-wing circles regarding the militant heritage and the stagnation of the Labor Party. This process began with the crisis of confidence regarding the ruling administration in the wake of the Yom Kippur War (1973) and with the disclosure of political corruption. It was augmented by the political upheaval of 1977, in which the nationalist Likud Party came to power after decades of Labor Party administrations, and nationalist trends that were highlighted through the expansion of settlement in the West Bank and elsewhere and the additional occupation of territories as a result of the Lebanon War (1982). The criticism leveled against the kibbutz in these films may be regarded as part of a broader trend of ideological crisis and a reassessment of the Zionist ethos.

In the course of the 70s until the middle of the 80s, the kibbutzim continued a process of economic and demographic consolidation. The kibbutz population grew from 98,000 in 1969 to 128,000 in 1983. The kibbutz economy entered more and more into the spheres of industry, business, tourism, and various services and made impressive strides in productivity and export. The second generation and new members, who had acquired higher education and gradually began to take over the management of the kibbutz, upheld these trends. Parallel to this, attention was being paid to internal processes. These included raising the standard of living, the transfer of children from communal children's houses to the family home in a large number of kibbutzim, the acquisition of higher education in professions that were not necessarily "kibbutz-oriented," members working outside the kibbutz, etc.

At the same time, and perhaps *post factum*, it may be said that the kibbutz economy flourished, but found itself in a state of "low-tech," as compared to the Israeli economy as a whole. For example, most of the kibbutz factories are in high-wage labor-intensive sectors (plastic, food, furniture, metal); a large amount of hired labor that expresses a gap between ideology and reality. The system of "concentrated credit" (the linkage of the kibbutz with one central bank) actually solved the problem of capital, but also cut off many kibbutzim from the market economy and made them dependent on government grants and at the mercy of the bank. Starting in the mid-80s, many kibbutzim found themselves in an economic crisis that would be revealed in all its severity from the end of the 1980s onwards.

Plot Synopses

An Intimate Story (Levitan, 1981) is a drama that deals with the family life of a kibbutz couple that enters into a crisis situation. The wife, who has born a stillborn baby, tries to convince her husband to try again. The husband, however, finds it hard to contain her feelings and finds solace in his work as a teacher and in peeping into the girls' showers. After becoming pregnant again, the wife must cope with the pressures of insular kibbutz society and feelings of guilt and shame.

Noa At 17 (Yeshurun, 1981) is a drama that harks back to the early 1950s and the political storms that resulted in the rift in the kibbutz movement (1951). Noa is a young girl who designs together with her friends the educational program of their youth group. The group also plans to volunteer to live in the kibbutz. Noa is aware of the falsity of the political slogans and searches for a way to express herself in face of her friends' conformity. Meanwhile, a distraught uncle arrives from the kibbutz for a visit and draws Noa's parents into political discussions and to the brink of family schism. Noa chooses to rebel against her friends from the youth movement, thus losing her boyfriend as well as her best friend, and remains alone, adhering to her own personal beliefs.

Boy Meets Girl (Bat Adam, 1982) tells the story of Aya, an eleven-year-old girl, whose parents are sent on a mission abroad and leave her in a kibbutz for a year. She must cope with the intrigues and slanders within the kibbutz children's group and survive the sanctimonious criticism of unsympathetic adults. Aya is in love with the best-looking boy in her age group, and this arouses the jealousy of another girl. The latter sets a trap for Aya, who is accused of theft. Aya must handle the accusations and insults, but finds solace in a soldier from the kibbutz who shows sensitivity to her and sympathizes with her situation. At the end of the year children's performance, Aya has the leading role and is accepted lovingly by both the children and the kibbutz members.

Atalia (Tevet, 1984) is a drama. Atalia is a forty-year-old widow in the kibbutz whose husband was killed in the army fifteen years earlier. In her search for love, she has an affair with a married man to the disgust of the kibbutz members, who consider her a witch and a harlot. Mati is a young man who joins the army but is

released due to medical problems. A romance begins between the two much to the displeasure of Atalia's young daughter. As a result of social pressure and the war raging in the background, Atalia is gripped with insanity and she burns down the hayloft in the cow barns. After the kibbutz assembly decides to cast her out, Mati comes to her rescue and they leave the kibbutz.

Stalin's Disciples (Levitan, 1987) is a drama that returns to the 50s and uncovers hard, bitter struggles in a kibbutz that identifies with Communist Russia: three shoemakers who blindly worship Stalin and abuse a young boy who dares to criticize him; an artist whose abstract paintings are ridiculed by the kibbutz assembly; a Holocaust survivor who is castigated for wanting to use her reparations money from Germany; and a family that decides to leave the kibbutz and return to Germany. The shoemakers' world begins to disintegrate after an emissary from the kibbutz is arrested in Czechoslovakia on suspicion of spying. Their blind faith in communism collapses after Stalin's terrorist regime was made public at the 20th Communist Party Convention.

The Dreamers (Barabash, 1988) is a drama that revisits the end of the 19th century. A group of pioneers from Eastern Europe attempts to set up a socialist commune in the difficult conditions of the Galilee. The geographical obstacles, the strict rules of the commune and as well as conflicts with Arab neighbors cause the solidarity within the group to erode and crumble. A couple that was engaged separates, the fanatical leader of the group is severely criticized and the girl who was in love with him commits suicide. The first losses of life are sustained in a battle with the Arabs, including Amnon the Yemenite and Muhammad the Arab who had tried to mediate and help the opponents to reach a compromise.

The following films are less well known, partially due to the fact that they were first films of young directors:

On a Clear Day You Can See Damascus (Riklis, 1984). The arrest of a kibbutz-born young man who was caught spying for Syria changes the worldview of his friends. One of them, a musician who is attracted to Arab music, is shocked to discover that a second friend, a volunteer from England, is an agent of the Israeli

secret service. The two are tragically caught in a power struggle between forces greater than themselves[51].

Children of the Steps (Pe'eri, 1984) is a drama in whose core is the daily life and tensions of boys who live in a poor neighborhood and are members of a youth movement and the crisis that is created when they meet up with kibbutz youth at a large movement conference.

Yossele, How Did It Happen? (Ron, 1989) is a nostalgic film about stories from the Palmach days, stories of flirtation and lovemaking. An "innocent," feather-brained city girl gives the boys everything in order to be accepted as their friend and infuriates the girls. Yossele's hopeless love for Na'ama ends under the bridal canopy.

The Valley Train (Paz, 1989) is the story of the childhood and adolescence of Gadi, the son of a Jordan Valley kibbutz in the 50s and 60s. Gadi chooses Yoav, a fighter and woman chaser who rebels against movement ideology, as his role model. Over the years, a strong friendship develops between the two that turns into rivalry not only on leadership, but also on a woman and the railroad tracks of the Jordan Valley Railway.

In a number of additional films, there are kibbutz characters, some of whom are marginal to the narrative and some of whom are only indirectly connected with the thematic and ideological nucleus of the film. I will relate to these films at relevant points of the analysis that appears below. The films are *A Thin Line* (Bat Adam, 1981), *The Vulture* (Yosha, 1981), *First Love* (Peres, 1982), *Again, Forever* (Kotler, 1985), *Fellow Travellers* (Ne'eman, 1983) and *Avanti Popolo* (Bukaee, 1986).

[51] This film is based on a true event – Udi Adiv from Kibbutz Gan Shmuel was convicted of spying for Syria.

Themes, Generic Aspects and Ideological Criticism

In the 1980s, a relatively large number of films were produced that dealt with the kibbutz. Especially prominent are a group of films that severely criticize kibbutz society, either directly or indirectly. These are also the most well known films about the kibbutz from this period and form part of the cinematic canon of the 80s: *Atalia*, *Stalin's Disciples*, *The Dreamers* and *Noa At 17*. In these films the narrative returns to the distant or recent past and level criticism on kibbutz society. This return to the past combines two perspectives: a) a historical distance that allows critical observation; b) political-ideological focalization that expresses a priori the filmmakers' dissatisfaction with the moral decline and nationalistic trends of Israel in the present. (This situation is partially connected with the activist legacy of Zionism and the Labor Party, and one must remember that the Israeli public identifies the kibbutz with the Labor Party.)

The most blatant theme in these films is the clash between kibbutz values and ideology and desires and needs of the individual. Ideological collectivism and a totalitarian approach to equality are presented as the cause of individual oppression, especially for those who are different. The totalitarian demand to turn over all private property to the collective, even intimate belongings, is one of the reasons for the girl's suicide in *The Dreamers*. The fact that the youth movement demands the Noa dress like everybody else (in the movement uniform) causes anger and despair in her (*Noa At 17*). The choice given to the Holocaust survivor either to refuse to take the reparations money or to put it into the kibbutz fund is presented as abusive cruelty towards an ailing survivor (*Stalin's Disciples*). This film also ridicules the three shoemakers, who each sport a huge Stalinesque mustache.

Totalitarian ideology and the life in a small, insular community are responsible for severely damaging the individual changing needs of the kibbutz member. Communal life brings to intrusive invasions of the members' privacy. Atalia's distinctive way of dressing is perceived as sexually provocative. The affair she conducts is the source of angry looks and poisonous gossip – she is called a "black widow" – and also gives her the image of the kibbutz harlot, which prompts one of the kibbutz members to attempt to rape her. The painter, who practices a "non-productive" profession, is insulted and jeered at in *Stalin's*

Disciples and Noa's friends cut off ties with her due to her desire for personal fulfillment that deviates from group norms.

These and other problems create a negative, intrusive dynamic within the closed community. In these films, some individual's problems are brought to public debate in the group or the assembly, in what resembles a public trial more than a discussion based on solidarity. The public nature of the discussion of personal needs is presented as an invasion of the kibbutz member's privacy and brings to the surface the negative side of communal life: hypocrisy, gossip, insularity, arbitrariness, bullying and meanness towards the individual on the part of the members and the collective. The ideological rigidity is depicted as causing intolerance, blindness and emotional indifference toward the lone individual. For example, the idealistic uncle from the kibbutz is busy giving political speeches where he mainly sees and hears himself and ignores the damage to Noa and her parents (*Noa At 17*). The leader of the commune in *The Dreamers* deals in ideological rhetoric and utopian visions without being able to perceive the emotional distress and despair of some of his colleagues.

The uncompromising idealism and group pressure are the cause of destructive personal distress: Atalia is at loggerheads with the whole kibbutz, and worst of all, there is a crisis of confidence between her and her young daughter. The young soldier feels shame and guilt that he could not meet the masculine macho convention of being a fighting combat soldier. Feelings of shame, guilt, frustration and bitterness are also found in the minor characters of *Stalin's Disciples*, *The Dreamers* and *Noa At 17*. Among other things, the subtext of these four films alludes to a total lack of tolerance, compassion and love within kibbutz society.

On more symbolic levels, a connection is made between the topics that were discussed above and bodily harm: the young suffering woman who commits suicide in *The Dreamers*; the outburst of anger that causes the uncle from the kibbutz to have a heart attack (*Noa At 17*); the shock of Stalin's death due to which the shoemaker lapses into depression and hallucinations (*Stalin's Disciples*); or Atalia's mad episode that causes her to burn down the hayloft (and perhaps also the theme of barrenness in *An Intimate Story*). In other words, these

are physical and mental symptoms of repressed desires. It is worth mentioning in this context that these physical disabilities indicate deterioration and degeneration regarding the pioneering kibbutz ethos in which physical signs such as sweat, blisters and bruises formerly symbolized high ideals of sacrifice, endurance and determination. On a more allegorical level, some of these films hint that the overcrowded life of the kibbutz can provoke behavior bordering on mental illness.

As stated above, four of the films relate to issues regarding historical crises of the kibbutz movement: the schism of the kibbutz movement, the matter of reparations from Germany and the identification of some kibbutzim with Russian communism.[52] More current and focused criticism appears only in some of the films, in *An Intimate Story* and especially in *Atalia*: the attitude towards the exceptional individual who has singular needs, the tension between founders and sons, the militaristic education and also the subject of hired labor.

Three additional films include some of these thematic elements, although they appear in different proportions. The narrative of *Boy Meets Girl* returns to the past, but it describes kibbutz experience from the marginal point of view of an external child.[53] Among other things, the film reveals the difficulties of an outsider attempting to be accepted into kibbutz society, the preferential treatment

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[52] From 1944 and onwards an opposition was formed (Faction B) within the dominant Zionist party (Mapai) and within the kibbutz movement. The leaders of Hakibbutz Hameuchad constituted part of the opposition to Mapai and Ben Gurion on two central issues. They unconditionally supported the Marxist Soviet Russian model and demanded activism on the security and political fronts in opposition to Ben Gurion's compromising stance. On the other hand, there were groups and members of Hakibbutz Hameuchad who did not support communism and did support Ben Gurion. This conflict split families and parents from their children and ultimately there was no choice but to physically and demographically separate many kibbutzim, a development that took place between 1951 and 1954 and was named "hapilug." There were kibbutzim of Hakibbutz Hameuchad where a minority that identified with Mapai set up their own kibbutz on the other side of the fence (Ein Harod, Ashdot Yaakov, Givat Haim). In others, the minority left and joined another kibbutz. Alongside personal tragedies, the Pilug dealt a hard social and demographic blow to many kibbutzim, a blow from which they did not recover for many years to come.

[53] A child who was not born in the kibbutz and whose parents live elsewhere. Usually these children came to kibbutzim from social-economically deprived backgrounds.

given to local children and the social pressure that is created in the closed children's group. *An Intimate Story* deals with the difficulties in the kibbutz related to marriage and family. The intimate problems related to sterility and the desire to actualize femininity expose the heroine to formal, alienated contact with the authorities as well as widespread gossip. From another viewpoint, the film *The Vulture* contains a scene in the kibbutz which jeers at the commemorative cult surrounding kibbutz soldiers who were killed in battle (a theme that relates to the critical attitude towards militarism that was mentioned earlier).

A more minor group of films revisits the past, in a nostalgic mode. *Yossele, How Did It Happen?* and *The Valley Train* deal with social and sexual adventures in the kibbutz of the 40s and 50s respectively. Together with *Boy Meets Girl*, they constitute a subgroup that reestablishes the kibbutz as a place where rites of passage take place, as well as coming of age and various life transitions (themes that I discussed regarding films of the 40s). In the context of the kibbutz and nostalgia, *To Be Continued* and *First Love* might also be included in which the love object from the distant past is from a kibbutz).

As part of the trends in Israeli cinema in the 80s in general, the films that have been mentioned here undermine kibbutz mythology and ethos. The films of the 80s return to deal with the kibbutz in order to expose, criticize and undermine the myths and ethos of the kibbutz in Israeli culture: "*The Dreamers* makes a clear intergenerational connection between the 'pioneers' and the shattering of the dream, which is the experience that the audience and the individual filmgoer faced at the end of the 80s" (Talmon 99).

Instead of a society characterized by harmony, equality and solidarity, the kibbutz is revealed as a place replete with contention and disputes, a space where utopian dreams of social justice have brought about a violent, predatory society. "*Noa At 17* reflects the struggle with the decline of collectivism and socialism as ideological and social norms…Kibbutz society and the workers' settlements began to be exposed as crumbling frameworks holding onto ideals that have lost their strength in Israeli society" (Talmon 152). Regarding the film *Boy Meets Girl*, Shnitzer writes: "It is disguised as a children's film behind which Michal Bat Adam wages a bitter attack against the idea of the kibbutz" (229). The 1980s

kibbutz films were infused with a complex, multi-layered inter-text. In the narrow meaning of the concept, it is possible to extract conflicting patterns of meaning between specific texts. For example, it is possible to contrast the attitude towards the widow in *Atalia* with that in *The Hero's Wife*. In the earlier film, the widow is involved in the life of the community, enjoys the understanding and support of the kibbutz members and succeeds in integrating individual desires into the collective framework. In contrast, between Atalia and the kibbutz members there is mistrust and hatred, she does not succeed in fulfilling her personal needs and in the end leaves the kibbutz.

Meanings that are created by intertextual links may also be extracted from additional films: the solidarity and optimism that characterized the group of pioneers in *Sabra* as opposed to the quarrels and pessimistic tone of *The Dreamers*; the supportive attitude towards Holocaust survivors in films such as *The Great Promise* compared to the cynical attitude towards the Holocaust survivor in *Stalin's Disciples*; the kibbutz as a place of rites of passage, acceptance and harmony among strangers in *What a Gang!* compared to feelings of alienation and exclusion in *Boy Meets Girl*; and finally, a ghost that appears as a figure from the past links *Three Days and a Child* with *Again, Forever* or *First Love*, etc.

As stated above, these films also have a wider inter-text that is related to criticism of Israeli society's values and ideals in films of the 1980s in general. This criticism indicates an ideological crisis in Israeli society and an attempt to reexamine fundamental ideas of Zionism and institutions identified with the Zionist hegemony: the kibbutz, the army, the school, the youth movement, etc. However, films about kibbutz in the 80s are not only antithesis and dissolution, but also create continuity. These films do not return to the kibbutz in order to tell a story of persistence, survival, continuity or transformation. Quite the opposite is true: they return to the kibbutz and reconnect in order to continue the criticism of the kibbutz that started in the second half of the 1960s.

In the films of the 1980s, the kibbutz continues to function as "a convenient screen for the projection of historical lessons."[54] The kibbutz was already presented in *Sallah* as a place where social-national tensions are raised for discussion, and, to a certain extent, in *He Walked Through the Fields* and *Three Days and a Child* as well. Especially blatant is the attitude towards the kibbutz as a framework for a kind of educational "morality play" that places an ideological discussion with a moral lesson at the forefront of the film and pushes the ramifications of life in an actual concrete place into the background (for example, presenting an idea at the expense of local or regional dynamics). In this context, there is a great deal of continuity and resemblance between *The Great Promise*, *What a Gang*!, *He Walked Through the Fields* and *Stalin's Disciples*, *The Dreamers*, *Atalia*, etc. Kibbutz characters that are mainly ideological mouthpieces may be found in *This is the Land* and *I like Mike*, as well as in *Noa At 17* and *Atalia*.

In a chapter entitled "Return of the Repressed," Shohat discusses the ways in which Israeli cinema returned in the 80s to deal with the presence of the Palestinian entity that was suppressed in earlier periods (both in Israeli cinema and Israeli society). The narrative and thematic expressions of this return are Palestinian figures at the center of the narrative, the Arab language and music and an attempt to allow the other side self-representation, in a contemporary narrative (237-253). In this context, the return to the kibbutz does not give it an autonomous voice of its own, but rather a continued subjugation of the kibbutz to ideological loftiness (the national code) or the position of the Israeli *auteur* that had already had reservations about the kibbutz in the 1960s.

This phenomenon reveals a paradox or a contradiction: the filmmaker or narrator-focalizer who criticizes the ideological totality of the kibbutz actually uses a similar position in regards with the film's objects. The representation of the kibbutz as a society of supervision and discipline fuses with the accusing gaze of the narrator- focalizer's self righteousness. The totality of the kibbutz ideology merges with the filmmaker's total and transcendental position, expressed in a return to the past and a clandestine hierarchy, granting preference to ideas and values over the concreteness of the present. This hidden hierarchy is

[54] This idea appears in a different context in Zuckerman 92.

revealed in films in the shaping of a fictional world that is designed in binaries of all-or-nothing, without any in-betweens: either the individual or the collective (*Noa at 17*), life or death (*The Dreamers*), complete harmony or madness (*Stalin's Disciplines*), perfect solidarity or estrangement and alienation.

As can be understood from the analysis above, the significance and various layers of these films cannot be grasped comprehensively without a reference to the place these films hold within the genre – the intertextual layers, the deconstruction of the myths and the shattering of the idyllic and harmonic image of the kibbutz as it was accepted in cinema and the public discourse (elements which were insinuated in the previous period as well). Yet, the most interesting question from a generic perspective is why Israeli film returns to deal with the kibbutz, after having departed from the genre in the previous period and in view of the deflation in the kibbutz status during the nineteen seventies?

One answer is the familiarity with the kibbutz film genre, that is, the audience's acquaintance with the repetitive characteristic of the genre: the iconography, the kibbutz as transitional area, the initiation rites, and familiar plot components such as the soldier's character or a character representing the kibbutz institutions. This prior knowledge has enabled comfortable communication with the viewers and also explains why most of these films return to the past, to the kibbutz as it is known in the collective memory.

Nevertheless, this explanation in itself is not satisfactory. I maintain that in the complex dynamics between the audience, the film industry and the genre, a mutual adaptation of the expectations, needs, and beliefs was created, and thus an essential transformation within the genre occurred. This change also testifies once again, to the flexibility of this genre. As Altman writes: "In fact, it is precisely the continued contestation among producers, exhibitors, viewers, critics, politicians, moralists, and their diverse interests, that keeps genre ever in process, constantly subject to reconfiguration, recombination and reformulation" (195).

It seems that a revisit to the familiar, known, old and conservative kibbutz, the kibbutz that Israeli cinema had parted ways from at the end of the sixties, was not interesting or appealing enough for the heterogeneous audience of the nineteen eighties. On the other hand, a return to the kibbutz as a different, strange and alienated place, where scandalous scenes are held, where sex - including innuendoes of orgy and perversion - is in the air is certainly much more interesting and attractive. These themes allowed the genre's films to reach both viewers familiar with the kibbutz and an audience of new immigrants and younger viewers who were unfamiliar with the kibbutz, and even an audience that had political and cultural reservations about the kibbutz. In other words, the curiosity about the kibbutz intertwined with a look at the familiar which is also alien and peculiar, a pleasure tinged with voyeurism. This claim also explains why the personal cinema, which was disenchanted with the kibbutz film genre in the nineteen sixties, addressed the kibbutz in the eighties while applying a personal- *auteuristic* position in films concerned with the kibbutz. Themes of alienation and loneliness, for example, and the concern with characters inhabiting the social margins were projected once again on the kibbutz. The kibbutz as a metonym of the state and Zionism constituted a convenient, available and even necessary object for criticism of Zionist values.

The kibbutz once again became a "sexy" item, intriguing and alluring compared to its position in the sixties and seventies. The nineteen thirties spectacle (tractors and machines) and the spectacle of the fifties-sixties (war technologies) turn in the eighties to a spectacle of sensational subjects, which serve as means of peeking "behind the kibbutz's curtains." From this generic perspective, the theme of the individual or the foreigner poised against the collective, as well as aspects of the ideological criticism merely serves as a narrative platform. Individuals or the foreigners are narrative positions through which the curious, voyeuristic gaze at "the other" is established. Through Atalia's position as an outcast widow, the film hints of rape, orgy, and a sensational affair between an older woman and a young man; *The Dreamers* hints of betrayals and exaggerated and threatening sexual closeness between members of the collective; *Intimate Story* presents the husband peeking to the women's showers and the heroine with a strange young man courting her. The motif of the woman's infertility, furthermore, insinuates of the husband's impotence. This impotence is also related to the three bachelors in

Stalin's Disciplines and to Shraga from the kibbutz who speaks endlessly in *Noa at 17*. These elements will appear more prominently in the next chapter and will enhance the "behind the scenes" aspect.

2.6 – Summary

In this chapter we saw how symbolic-realistic interpretation is applied, using the key concepts I presented in Chapter 1, namely representation, reflection, realism, homology, hegemony, ideology, allegory, myths, archetypes, etc. Using this methodology and the key concepts of this type of interpretation, I suggested a historical and ideological map of films about the kibbutz, a film corpus that had not previously been investigated as separate, distinct unit. Using different sources and interpretations from the field of criticism, I demonstrated how films are perceived and interpreted as a representation and a reflection of historical circumstances and social and cultural processes occurring in the kibbutz in particular and in Israeli society as a whole. We also saw how viewing films as a representation and reflection of social processes facilitates ideological, symbolic and allegoric interpretation and how this makes it possible to divide films into different periods and genres. On the other hand, the generic paradigm enabled me to refer to kibbutz films as a separate and unique genre and to highlight the many aspects that the representational approach had overlooked – symptomatic, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic aspects, such as the “early warning function”.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, discusses films made during the years 1991-2006 that are either set in a kibbutz or include a character from the kibbutz. I will first introduce major changes in Israeli culture, the cinematic arena and kibbutz society during those years. The chapter then analyses in detail a restricted film corpus and points to the intricate interaction it has with the genre of the kibbutz film. The chapter will discuss the coherent nature of this corpus according to traditional criteria through which cinematic representation is perceived: the narrative, themes, homology and ideology.

Chapter 3

The Shattered Dream: 1991-2006

This chapter presents and analyses films concerned with the kibbutz that were produced in the 1990s and into the beginning of the 21st century. These films are affiliated to a distinct genre for three reasons: first, they take place or relate to a specific place that is differentiated from other areas both geographically and culturally. Secondly, despite variations in plot, they are characterized by similar themes. Their subject matter crystallizes around one major concern that will be referred to here as "the shattered dream" or "utopia and dystopia". Thirdly, all the films relate either directly or indirectly to specific myths identified with the kibbutz, as well as to earlier films in the history of Israeli cinema that dealt with the kibbutz previously – the kibbutz film genre.

In the 1990s, new directions appeared in Israeli cinema and very few films focused on the kibbutz. While new, different thematic trends were developing in the Israeli film industry, films relating to the kibbutz continued same critical mode toward the kibbutz of films of the 1980s. In fact, the kibbutz was represented in even harsher terms than before, as being an asocial place in a state of conflict, degeneration and deflation, with no prospects in sight. This period's notable films which I will analyze in this chapter are *No Names on the Doors* (1996), *Operation Grandma* (1999), *Mother of the Gevatron* (2003) and *She's Not 17* (2003). In addition, I will refer to a number of films made in the early 1990s which involve a character from the kibbutz, particularly *Life According to Agfa* (1991), but also *The Lookout* (1990) and *Cup Final* (1991).

This chapter presents the prevalent interpretative approach when analyzing Israeli films in general and films about the kibbutz in particular. In addition, I suggest various and diverse links between these films and films belonging to the genre from previous periods (Chapter 2). It is comprised of five sections, the first and second of which provide the context for the films in the research corpus, namely the important changes occurring in the 1990s in the Israeli film industry, Israeli society and the kibbutz itself. The third section presents the films in the corpus and analyzes them according to various current prevailing approaches in

Israeli cinema discourse. The fourth section summarizes the findings of the analysis, while the fifth section present methodological questions and guidelines regarding an alternative approach for analyzing these films.

3.1 – New Directions in Israeli Cinema

From the late 1980s and onwards, Israeli cinema entered a phase that may be called "post-ideological". This shift was the result of a number of processes, some local and others universal. On the political-national level, they were chiefly the consequence of the political upheaval resulting from the 1977 elections, in which the hegemony of the Labor Party that had span from 1947 (and to some extent in the decades preceding the Declaration of the State) till that time was broken for the first time. The gradual infiltration of peripheral populations into the center of the political map – Oriental Jews, religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews – also gradually permeated Israeli culture, opening it to other narratives, new sensibilities and a developing multiculturalism.

It may be argued that the most significant event of the 1990s was the immigration to Israel of 850,000 Jews from all parts of the former Soviet Union. In contrast to the immigrants of the 1950s, this population did not blend in into Israeli society, but retained elements of its own unique cultural identity. The new immigrants continued to preserve and maintain the Russian language and culture. Furthermore, two Russian political parties were established, which attempted to further the cultural and economic interests of this population. Their separate identity was also emphasized by the establishment of two daily Russian-language newspapers, a Russian theater, and eventually a local Russian-language television station.[55] According to Munk, the Russian immigration significantly shifted the balance between Ashkenazi and Oriental Jews "…thus opening the wound of repressed memories from a past life in the Diaspora" (2004: 2).

[55] It is worthy of mention that this immigration was not culturally and socially homogeneous and what unified it was mainly the Russian language. It included immigrants from Asia (Georgia, Uzbekistan, The Caucasus, etc.) and Europe (The Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic States).

The Russian immigration constituted a core for a civil society and contributed to the trend of emphasizing ethnic-cultural distinctive characteristics and a preoccupation with the former original identity of immigrants, both new and old. This dynamic combined with and perhaps accelerated processes already existent in Israeli culture. The most prominent of these was the post-colonial discourse, conducted in the academic arena and the arts, which criticized and objected to the hegemonic and homogeneous (and in their opinion, Europocentric) identity that had been imposed by Zionism. Other narratives and identities that had been previously rejected or silenced were brought to light and given attention. The post-colonial dialogue painted a general picture of "a repressive, manipulative policy obscured by 'euphemisms' such as 'melting pot' and 'ingathering of the exiles' " (Peppe 99). The discourse was awarded the name "post-Zionism," and was profoundly critical of the ideology and attitudes that guided the leaders of the Zionist movement before and after the Declaration of the State.

On a more concrete level and from a cinematic point of view, the Israeli public appeared to be weary of viewing films concerned with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or tensions between the individual and national institutions (in films of the 1980s). The Israeli film-going public stayed away from films dealing with these matters in droves, partly due to the fact that the first Palestinian Uprising of 1989 (the First Intifada) was being widely covered by the media and broadcast to every home. The terrorist acts that crossed the green line and reached Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Haifa and the feeling of political paralysis created a feeling of burn-out, exhaustion and insularity.

The Oslo Accords (1994) and their subsequent failure, as well as Rabin's assassination, also contributed to the filmmakers' desire to retreat to the personal, private, intimate sphere: "Consciously or unconsciously, the younger generation in the press and the cultural arena chose to forget or block out politics, as they felt that there was no other way to save what was private and protect it from the gradually widening, accumulating doses of violence" (Taub 15). In this context, the significant development of Israeli documentary cinema in the 1990s must be mentioned; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the social periphery were now

chiefly dealt with in documentary rather than in dramatized cinema.[56] This process is also related to improvement in video technology and the ability to produce high-quality film using light, portable equipment. In other words, this new technology gave documentary filmmakers easy access to the Occupied Territories and the opportunity to document the daily reality of the civilian population under conquest as well as the behavior of Israeli soldiers.[57]

If the tone of the films of the 1970s and the 1980s was set by the first generation of native-born Israelis, it appears that the second generation has determined the subject matter, themes and ideology of films of the 1990s onwards. The expansion of cinema and television departments in Israeli institutions of higher education, as well as the proliferation of television channels and an ever-increasing number of original dramatic productions has resulted in the integration of numerous young directors, cinematographers and actors into the local cinema industry. This younger generation has been relatively free of the struggles of the "forefathers' generation" or the burden of past wars, thus have been more emotionally available to deal with matters less high and mighty than ideology and the political reality. Echoes of these processes may be found in the developing trend of root searching in Israel and elsewhere and the growing popularity of the genre of the testimony and autobiography in television, literature and film, etc.

Some of these phenomena and processes may also be interpreted as expressions of a desire for authenticity in an age of globalization: "On the cultural level, post-modern globalization deconstructs group cohesion, the sense of historical national continuity and the belief in lofty significance, and replaces them by different narratives… The collectivistic narrative is gradually being replaced by a new one, anchored in an individual, contemporary, achievement-oriented,

[56] In recent years, "special interest" channels have appeared on television and radio that cater to social peripheries, or ethnically-socially homogeneous groups, such as Oriental, religious or orthodox Jews and Jews from the former Soviet Union.

[57] Such filmmakers include Michal Aviad, Nurit Keynan, Asher Telalim, Amos Gitai and many others. In recent years, some Israeli documentary films have been awarded prizes at international film festivals.

consumerist and hedonistic identity, the diametric opposite of a cohesive, mobilizing, ascetic, unifying national identity" (Ram 48).

These processes have permeated Israeli cinema in two ways: on the one hand, voices and territories that were excluded by Zionist hegemony began to be represented in Israeli film. On the other hand, the plots of these films disregarded or were indifferent to Zionism's mainstream narrative and Europocentric orientation. This can be seen as a rejection of the "melting pot" approach while legitimizing multiculturalism: "Israel is gradually becoming part of the New World of dizzying variety in which cultural identities that were previously rejected, suppressed, hidden or pushed to the periphery are given center stage. At times these cultures are invented or emerge anew" (Kimmerling 30).

Some of the films highlight an Oriental protagonist and their plots take place for the most part on the geographical periphery of Israel. Their thematic core deals with a localism remote from the political sphere and the Ashkenazi-Zionist milieu. This category includes *The Quarry* (Ninio, 1990), *An Electric Blanket* (Dayan, 1995), *Lovesick on Nana Street* (Gabison, 1995), *Sh'Chur* (Hasfari, 1994), *Gentila* (Shiff, 1997), *Pick a Card* (Shles, 1997), *Desperado Square* (Torati, 2001), *Beitar Provence* (Inbar, 2001), *The Barbecue People* (Ofek & Madmoni, 2003), *Sima Vaknin is a Witch* (Shaul, 2003), *Bonjour, Monsieur Shlomi* (Zarchin, 2003), *Alila* (Gitai, 2003), *Turn Left at the End of the World* (Nesher, 2004), and others.[58]

The voices of other cultures and ethnic groups are beginning to be heard in Israeli cinema. The religious and ultra-Orthodox world has been revealed in such films as *The Appointed* (Waxmann, 1990), *August Snow* (Levi, 1993), *Time of Favor* (Ceder, 2000), *Kadosh* (Gitai, 1999) and *Campfire* (Ceder, 2004). Other films related to the Russian immigration such as *Saint Clara* (Folman, 1996), *Yana's Friends* (Kaplun, 1998), *A Trumpet in the Wadi* (Chaplin, 2002) or the Georgian community in *Late Marriage* (Koshashvili, 2000) and *Gift from Above* (Koshashvili, 2003). Films by second-generation Holocaust survivors also add a

[58] Regarding the emergence of other groups and the fading of the dominant elite, see an extensive discussion in Kimmerling's (2001) book, *The End of Ashkenazi Hegemony.*

dimension to this dynamic. They include *Blind Man's Bluff* (Preminger, 1993), *New Land* (Ben-Dor, 1994) *Under the Domim Tree* (Cohen, 1995), and others.[59]

The second trend in Israeli cinema of the 1990s can be characterized as depicting a post-Sabra world, a world in which the Ashkenazi Israeli, the hegemonic symbol, becomes a stranger and exile in his own land and/or is involved in personal and familial conflicts related to dealing with a disturbed identity: "The distraught leftist sector, that was used to being in a high standing on the social status ladder has lost direction in recent years among the new elite groups" (Fishbein, *Ha'ir:* 1998). This theme is typical of films such as *The Lookout* (Gabison, 1990), *Life According to Agfa* (Dayan, 1991), *The Distance* (Wollman, 1994), *Memorandum* (Gitai, 1995), *Passover Fever* (Zarchin, 1995), *Under Western Eyes* (Pichahazda, 1996), *Everlasting Joy or the Life and Adventures of B. Spinoza as Reported by his Vigilant Neighbors* (Bursztyn, 1996), *Birds in Neutral* (Shirai, 1996), *The 92 Minutes of Mr. Baum (*Dayan, 1997), *Foreign Sister* (Wollman, 1999), *Kippur* (Gitai, 2000), *Kedma* (Gitai, 2002), and others. As I will demonstrate below, according to the representational paradigm, films about the kibbutz generally belong to this group.[60]

3.2 – The Kibbutz Crisis

The processes undergone by the kibbutz movement and individual kibbutzim in the course of the 1980s and later were greatly influenced by the political upheaval of 1977 with the accession of the right-wing Likud party to power. From being the "blue-eyed boys" of the establishment, the kibbutz turned into a negative example that was condemn by the orators of the new administration. The Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, called kibbutz members "the millionaires with the swimming pools" and his Minister of Finance claimed that kibbutz members enjoyed excessive privileges regarding income tax. In a process that

[59] Also worthy of mention in this context is the development of Palestinian cinema and the Israeli public's acquaintance with the films of Elia Suleiman, George Khleifi, Rashid Masharawi, Ali Nasser, Nizar Hassan and others.

[60] I would like to thank Yael Munk for allowing me to read the draft of her doctoral dissertation, *Border Cinema – Space and Identity in Israeli Cinema in the 1990s*.

continued throughout the 1980s, the social-political periphery supporting what was called "the workers of Israel" went into a rapid state of collapse. Moshavim (semi-cooperative agricultural villages) were faced with crisis and most of them dismantled their internal cooperative frameworks; the Labor Union was severely weakened and business corporations such as "The Workers' Association" and "Koor" were no longer under its directorship.

Throughout the 1980s, the new administration took a number of steps that worsened the kibbutz movement's economic conditions and diminished the financing sources. The most important change was the substitution of agricultural planning for a "free market," in which farmers could enter a particular branch without any supervision or regulation. Some researchers of the kibbutz blame this measure for the collapse of kibbutz agriculture (Brom 37). An additional step was canceling the system of "central credit" that had previously been enjoyed by the kibbutzim and this at a period of massive investment on their part. Now the kibbutzim were forced to look for new, high-interest sources for both agricultural and industrial investment, as well as funding for new housing. (This became especially critical due to the need to expand living quarters in wake of the decision that children should henceforth live in their parents' homes.)

On the other hand, the banks awarded the kibbutzim large loans without adequate supervision, counting on the mutual assistance understanding between the kibbutzim and believing that the stronger ones would help the weaker if necessary. Due to the need to maintain the value of the currency at a time of racing inflation, as well as the temptation of easy profit, many kibbutzim played the stock market, among other things investing in bank shares, which collapsed in 1983 causing severe economic damage to some kibbutzim. In order to maintain their monetary value, the kibbutz movement invested trust funds speculatively and dangerously on the gray market. The financial plan for stability of the economy of 1984 resulted in a dramatic increase in the debt of many kibbutzim involving extremely high interest rates.[61]

[61] See detailed discussions of this matter in Rosolio; Ben Rafael, Soker; Levitan.

These economic factors and others resulted in a severe economic crisis from the end of the 1980s and onwards. The kibbutzim discovered that they had debts of 4-5 billion shekels, which they had no chance of repaying. A first necessary step was to lower the standard of living to a minimal monthly budget for each member. There was a sharp decrease in investment, and this included investment in higher education for young members. In 1989, it came to light that most of the elderly population of Kibbutz Beit Oren (the founders of the kibbutz) had no pension scheme or savings plan, and this added to the feeling of insecurity among the aging kibbutz population. (*She's Not 17*, which will be analyzed below, refers to this problematic affair). These developments and others motivated the younger generation to leave the kibbutz, but this was also true of members between the ages of 40-50. The latter group could see no future in the kibbutz, and so decided to leave while this was still possible. Together with the government and the banks, individual kibbutzim arrived at arrangements for repaying the loans, but these were too little and too late, and did not suffice for in-depth resolution of the grave economic crisis.

Towards the end of the 1980s, there were clear although still sporadic voices that predicted the end of the kibbutz in its historic cooperative form.[62] Various commentators pointed out that the kibbutzim were going in a "downward spiral," and that numerous parameters indicated a distressing decline in all areas (absorption of new members, demography, economy and cultural activity). The widespread opinion was that the kibbutzim must implement a radical structural change in order to survive. This involved transferring the responsibility for making a living from the kibbutz to the individual member; separating the business side of the kibbutz from the community; minimizing the members' dependency on the kibbutz; and a drastic cutting down of the kibbutz movement bureaucracy.

From the middle of the 1990s and especially in the past few years, most kibbutzim have been going through a process of drastic change. About 100 kibbutzim have undergone a transformation by adopting the "rejuvenating

[62] For example, see Harel 165-241.

kibbutz" model. According to this model, members receive a budget that is determined according to their salary (which is evaluated according to market rates) and services are almost completely privatized (education, health, household maintenance, etc.). The previous system of mutual assistance still applies only regarding guarantees to the elderly founding members, who receive a pension from the cooperative's treasury and the guarantee of a minimal wage for weaker populations (by a mechanism called the "security net"). In addition, in most kibbutzim there is an attempt to enact a system by which members will own their homes and property.[63] There remain a small number of kibbutzim whose members support the retention of the old cooperative structure. In kibbutzim who have adopted the new system, the economic situation of some members has improved, but this has not fundamentally provided an answer to the economic crisis and the inability to repay debts. The demographic predicament has essentially not improved either and in most cases the younger generation is not returning to change this.

These processes of change may all be bunched together under the heading of "privatization," a route in which Israeli society as a whole is also going: "Privatization, then, is the new procedural code of Israeli society since the 1990s. This new code has replaced the weakening national code, which in turn replaced the collectivist code that was prevalent before the State was declared" (Ram 42). Privatization may be seen to have affected all aspects of Israeli life: the decline of the traditional political parties and the birth of "popular television politics," privatizing of communications and commercializing radio and television, privatizing of lands and agricultural corporations, privatizing of education, sport, and more.

[63] From a legal standpoint, the land belongs to the State and is leased to the kibbutzim on a long-term basis.

3.3 – Utopia and Dystopia, Transience and Exilic Characteristics

The body of films from the 1990s and early 21st century that relate to the kibbutz should be perceived in light of the processes and contexts that are described above. Some of the films relate to the kibbutz crisis directly, while others refer to it indirectly. However, echoes of the failure of the Zionist-socialist hegemony and of the collapse of one of the chief symbols of this hegemony, the kibbutz, can be found in all these films. This section presents the plots of the prominent films from this period relating to the kibbutz and suggests an analysis for each. I examine each film separetly, noting the ideological, allegorical and generic aspects in them all.

She's Not 17 (Yeshurun, 2003)

She's Not 17 is a film sequel to *Noa At 17* (1984), which was analyzed in the chapter dealing with the 1980s. The director, Isaac Yeshurun, wished to revisit the characters from the previous film, who were now 20 years older. (The same actors play the chief roles – Noa, her mother and her uncle from the kibbutz.) As will become clear below, the emphases, the central theme and the background in the later film are different from the earlier one. In the first film, Noa, who was going through an adolescent crisis, was at the forefront of the plot, whereas the split in the kibbutz movement remained in the background. In the film under discussion, Noa remains more in the background, whereas at the forefront are the uncle from the kibbutz and the economic and social crisis occurring there, which press the action forward. *She's Not 17* is the only film that relates directly and openly to the 1990s kibbutz crisis, although the film deals more with its result than with its cause.

In the general assembly, attended mainly by older members, the kibbutz secretary announces that the kibbutz has found itself with a debt of 40 million dollars. The only way out of this disaster is to absorb young members and transfer the older members to another kibbutz or a retirement home in the city. Shraga, Noa's uncle, who appeared in the earlier film, leaves the meeting in angry protest against this suggestion. Bracha, Noa's mother, who also appeared in the previous film, follows him out and attempts to reason with him. By their

furtive looks, the viewer understands that Bracha has moved to the kibbutz and that they are now secretly romantically involved. (This becomes clear later in the film.)

Shraga set up a protest tent on the outskirts of the kibbutz with a few other older members, including one with heart problems and another one who needs a constant supply of oxygen. Clara, Shraga's wife, tends to favor accepting the kibbutz's offer, and thus engages in confrontations with her stubborn husband. The subsequent scenes introduce additional characters in the story: Sherry, Noa's daughter, who is traveling in India, phones her grandmother Bracha in the kibbutz and asks for money so that she can come back to Israel. Noa, the protagonist of the previous film, lives alone in Holland and works as a physician in Amsterdam. Reuben, Shraga and Clara's son-in-law is a successful businessman, who lives abroad and works in Japan. (Later it will become clear that his wife - Shraga and Clara's daughter - was killed in a car accident.)

Shraga and Bracha travel secretly to Tel-Aviv, where they continue their love affair in a rented apartment. In the kibbutz, Shraga continues to conduct demonstrations and debates, while lying to Clara. She is overcome by the tensions of the situation and takes pills in an attempt to commit suicide. Bracha is shocked by these developments and phones Noa to check the possibility of moving to Holland. Shraga and Clara phone Reuben for financial assistance, while Sherry returns from India and arrives to visit her grandmother in the kibbutz. Finally, Bracha demands of Shraga to stop lying and choose between her and Clara.

When Noa and Reuben arrive at the kibbutz, old skeletons begin to emerge from the closet. It turns out that Reuben, rather than Sherry's presumed late father, is her biological father – the outcome of Noa's brief affair with Reuben when she was already married. This revelation sets off heated arguments and mutual accusations between Noa and Bracha, Noa and Sherry and Reuben and Shraga. Shraga reveals the truth to Clara about his love for Bracha, and consequently Clara confronts Bracha. Sherry refuses to speak with her parents. Shraga and his friends pack up the protest tent, and then one of the elderly protesters drops dead.

Finally, Shraga and Bracha's families gather in the kibbutz apartment together, possibly for the last time.

She's Not 17, like most of the films that will be analyzed here, belongs, according to the representational paradigm, to the second stream of Israel cinema of the 1990s and onwards. As aforementioned mentioned, these are films dealing with the shaken or shattered identity of those identified with the Ashkenazi hegemony or the socialist-Zionist elite. *She's Not 17* focuses on two major difficulties stemming from this: the economic and ideological crisis facing the kibbutzim and the fact that young people are leaving the country and settling abroad. The first focus is outlaid as early as in the opening scene of the film, when it is announced in the general assembly that the kibbutz has gone bankrupt. The second focus is presented through the concept of the end of a dynasty and the scattering of offspring in the Diaspora. The second generation left the country and is attempting to survive abroad (Noa, Reuben) and the third generation is traveling around India, personifying Israeli society's spiritual quest for existential meaning. These focuses combine together to create a sense of alienation in a place that was once the symbol of the Zionist national homeland: not only the younger generation, but Shraga, the embodiment of the pioneering founders' generation, has become a stranger in his own home.

The themes of the film are organized around binary oppositions that fall under the main subject heading – the shattered dream. As the film's director notes: "This is another reality in which somehow the dream of the past has been renounced. There is no longer any conflict, but rather the kibbutz movement has been relinquished and destroyed."[64] The kibbutz, which in the past was a symbol of harmony and solidarity, is presented in the film as a place in conflict, which can no longer fulfill the needs and desires of all its members. Instead of cooperation and group activity, a bitter struggle is taking place between conflicting interests. Intergenerational harmony, which was the kibbutz's hope for continuity and a source of pride for its members, appears in the film as a gap that cannot be bridged. Symbolically speaking, Shraga's main weapon is the

[64] From an interview with the film's director, Isaac Yeshurun, in the DVD version of the film.

strike, an activity identified with the socialist working class. But this weapon is not turned against political enemies, but rather against his comrades. In any event, it is carried out on the periphery of the kibbutz, and influences no one.

Egalitarian ideals of helping the old, sick and weak are replaced by "capitalist" considerations of a market economy – efficiency and expediency, profit and loss. The enormous debt in which the kibbutz finds itself indicates that ideals can no longer withstand the test of reality and survive in a world of free competition. Considerations of expediency and the need to survive compel the young kibbutz leadership to ignore moral or sentimental considerations and to act according to the cold financial logic. The inferred ideological significance of transferring the older members to a retirement home is acknowledgment that the kibbutz utopia has failed, as these are the founding members of the kibbutz: "Ideas of solidarity and self-realization were distorted into lies, deceit and wickedness. On the personal and social level… the subject of the film is treachery and betrayal of faith" (Fuchs 2003). The film also presents this failure in less obvious nuances. For example, the kibbutz, which was once filled with creative activity, young people and scores of children, is presented in the film as a desolate space most of whose residents are elderly and where people are shut up in their houses trying to survive.

The filming and the *mise-en-scène* heighten the feeling of crisis. The film was shot during the winter and it is raining in a large proportion of the scenes set in the kibbutz. A bleak, pessimistic feeling is created by the mud covering the paths, the gray tones and the shots of isolated buildings emptied of people, while the editing also intensifies the sense of stasis and numbness. Throughout the film there are constant transitions between the stark landscape of the kibbutz and dynamic, lively and colorful scenes in Tel-Aviv, Tokyo and Amsterdam. Life in these cities is depicted as fast and dynamic - cars, trains and streets filled with people - in sharp contrast with the stillness of the kibbutz. Open spaces and mobility are contrasted with recurrent shots of the kibbutz fence, with all its connotations.

The conflict within kibbutz society is emphasized by the analogy between the crisis taking place in the collective public sphere and that transpiring in the private family sphere. The kibbutz's economic and ideological crisis permeates and fuels the quarrels and mutual accusations between Shraga and Clara, and between them and their children. The betrayal of kibbutz ideals reverberates in Shraga's unfaithfulness to Clara, and Noa's infidelity to her husband topped by the lovers' concealment of the truth from Sherry. This analogous plot structure also typified the earlier film, in which the tension between the parents ran parallel to the tensions between Noa and her friends in the youth movement. Such a structure, furthermore, is typical of other films of the 1980s as well, such as *Atalia*, in which the tension between Atalia and the kibbutz precipitates a crisis between Atalia and her daughter.

This narrative structure establishes three obvious levels of meaning. First, struggling for a home is multiply expressed, since the objective is to preserve and perpetuate both the private home (the family unit) and the collective home (the kibbutz). It appears that Shraga is waging a battle on both fronts and is not prepared to compromise on either of them. The second level of significance is Shraga's image as an archetype of the founding generation. On the one hand, the kibbutz founders were filled with immense ideological fervor and total commitment to the kibbutz ideal, but on the other hand, they could be accused of stubbornness, rigidity, blindness and an inability to adapt their vision to a changing reality. A character of this kind appeared in *Stalin's Disciples* and *Once We Were Dreamers*, and to a certain extent also in *He Walked Through the Fields*. In a broader context, there is an echo here of the struggle accompanying processes of privatization in the kibbutz today. A battle is being waged between "conservative" forces who seek to retain the original kibbutz structure at any cost and those who believe that there is no option but to relinquish dreams and effect change in order to survive.

The third level of meaning refers to the nature of kibbutz society, in which there is indeed no separation between private and public, between social and economic or between formal and informal. Films such as *The Great Promise*, *He walked Through the Fields, The Hero's Wife, What a Gang* and others emphasized solidarity and mutual aid, norms derived from a harmonious integration of the

private and the public. In contrast, *She's Not 17* and other films from the same period emphasize friction, gossip and a life of intense social pressure. For example, one of the members tells Shraga that apart from his wife, everybody in the kibbutz knows he is having an affair. In other words, even the most intimate facts become communal property. When Sherry returns from India, she is surprised to see Shraga hurriedly leaving her mother's room. Shraga explains: "It isn't what you think." Beyond the embarrassment, this is another aspect in which the private and the intimate become public.

If in the past the kibbutz symbolized a dynamic, developing entity facing a secure future, this film conveys a sense of a "dead-end," decline and death. This is expressed in the plot by the fact that Shraga has no heirs. His only daughter left the kibbutz and subsequently died in an automobile accident and his son-in-law is a citizen of the world. The kibbutz is not an option for his "newfound" granddaughter (Sherry), as it used to be for Noa, her mother, in the earlier film. "Go and don't come back…it's terrible here," Shraga warns Sherry towards the end of the film. The final scene nicely sums up the idea that the kibbutz is at the end of the road: the whole family gathers one last time in Shraga's room before they go their separate ways, some in Israel and some abroad. This meeting appears like a condolence call. The scene is shot from outside, and the windows serve as frames separating the characters from one another. Each one is shown to inhabit a separate world, and there is a blatant lack of communication between them.

One of the images in the film, a kind of *mise en abyme*, beautifully represents the theme of the shattered dream. Towards the end of the film, Shraga and the other protesters load their tent and the rest of their equipment onto a wagon harnessed to a horse. They intend to move it all to another area in the kibbutz, but one of the elderly men seated in the wagon dies. The image of the wagon, the personal belongings and the transition from one place to another creates a many-faceted, complex cinematic and cultural inter-text. The implication of the scene creates a contrast with the myth of reaching the Land of Israel from the Diaspora imparted by a wagon scene in films such as *This is the Land* or *Sabra*. In these films, the pioneers arrived riding on camels and donkeys in order to redeem the land and grow roots in it. In films such as *My Father's House* or *The Great Promise*, such

a scene also symbolized leaving an established kibbutz in order to set up a new settlement. In these films and others, the wagon was also used for productive purposes to transport bales of hay or boxes of fruit. In *She's Not 17*, we have come full circle, and the pioneers seem to be returning to a wanderer's existence. The loaded wagon in the film is not only stationary, but in fact it even becomes a pallbearer's cart.

No Names on the Doors (Nadav Levitan, 1996)

No Names on the Doors is a film based on four short stories by Nadav Levitan, who also directed the film.[65] The narration of the film oscillates alternately between various stories, and is held together by the voiceover of the narrator, who is sitting in a room somewhere in the kibbutz, telling the story from his point of view. The film is a kind of an elegy lamenting the fall of the kibbutz at the end of the 1990s.[66] The elegiac tone is heightened by a vocal ensemble that accompanies the film with a song that opens with the words: "This is the end of the first chapter of a beautiful life legend…".

The film opens with a quiet funeral scene in which kibbutz members and soldiers follow an army vehicle to the cemetery. At the opening of the film, the characters are introduced; each subsequently features in his or her own story. Adina is the bereaved mother whose only son was killed in the army. She goes around the kibbutz dressed in dark clothes and must deal with members' stares. She seeks comfort in transforming her artist son's studio into a memorial room. Kuba is an elderly widower who takes care of his son, a forty-year-old man suffering from paralysis and retardation. Kuba, who himself suffers from heart trouble, has a hard time looking after his son, dragging him to the bath, washing him and feeding him, but he refuses any offer of help.

[65] The book is named *Food of Desire* and was published by Sifriat Hapoalim Publishing, 1996.

[66] The language of funeral elegies provided opportunity for plaintive, melancholy generalizations on death or on the state of the world (Fowler 72).

Simcha and Mordy are two forty-year-old bachelors who came to the kibbutz from broken city homes. They live next door to one another, spend a lot of time together and support one another. It seems like this intimacy compensates for their being single and lonely in a community that is chiefly made up of families with children. Their friendship is disturbed when Simcha tells Mordy that he has been corresponding with a girl in Finland, and this leaves Mordy shocked and upset.

Four other characters are involved in these three stories: Aya, the kibbutz nurse who tries to help Kuba; Eli, the kibbutz secretary, whose job it is to deal with personal problems and who gets involved in conflicts with the kibbutz members; Amos, the narrator and Aya's boyfriend, who is sitting in his room and recording the stories he hears and sees on his laptop computer; and Uzi, a mature professional soldier who comes to visit Aya.

Kuba has nightmares. He dreams about his own funeral during which his son Israel follows his father's coffin in a wheelchair. Mordy refuses to speak to Simcha and sneaks into his room to see the letters and photographs from the Finnish girl. Adina turns the studio into a memorial room, thus annoying some of the kibbutz members, as the room is the property of the collective. Kuba gives in to Aya's pleading and they go together to check out an institution for his son Israel. Israel is frightened by the place and has a panic attack, so they all return to the kibbutz.

Uzi the army officer visits the kibbutz to talk with Aya, who was his son's girlfriend and then was killed in the army. In the course of the conversation about his dead son, he bursts out crying and hugs Aya, who is surprised and embarrassed by this. From the window, Mordy watches Simcha with his Finnish girlfriend and the kibbutz members who are gathering in the dining room to celebrate the Passover holiday. He passes by the dining room, goes to the cowshed and sings to the cows after which he climbs to the top of the water tower and kills himself. At the funeral, Simcha tells his girlfriend that the kibbutz is going to sell burial plots to people from outside in order to make money.

Eli the kibbutz secretary comes to the studio and asks Adina's permission to give her dead son's bed to Kuba. He also hints that she will have to vacate the room, partially because the kibbutz is interested in renting rooms to outside residents for the financial gain. Kuba, who is already suffering from partial paralysis, appears before the general assembly and tries to convince the members to let Israel stay in the kibbutz. One of the members says that it is costing the kibbutz too much money. Aya tries to comfort and encourage Kuba. Adina vacates the room and Eli gives the bed to Kuba, but Kuba dies during the night. The film ends with his funeral, while the chorus is heard in the background singing the theme song that opened the film: "This is the end of the first chapter of a beautiful life legend. But this is the beginning of the melody, not its end."

No Names on the Doors focuses on the topic of loneliness in the kibbutz and envelops this subject in feelings of desperation, melancholy and nullity. This existential theme activates two obvious inter-texts. The film continues the direction of 1960s personal cinema by dealing with alienation and isolation (for example, in *Three Days and a Child* and *From the Other Side* that were discussed in Chapter 2) and the personal cinema of the 1980s with its focus on the tension and conflict between the individual and the collective (*Atalia*, *Once We Were Dreamers*, *Noa At 17*, etc.). In addition, it harks back to the early works of the famous Israeli novelist, Amos Oz. Oz was born in Jerusalem, but like many other young people of his generation, he chose to move and settle in a kibbutz (in 1957), through identification with the idea of self-realization and settling the wilderness. He took his first steps as a novelist in the kibbutz, and in the 1960s he published a collection of short stories and a first novel. On the cover of this novel it states: "The characters in this story are well acquainted with pain and suffering, ugliness and nausea. But they are also not strangers to mercy and joy and fraternity."[67]

No Names on the Doors, therefore, is also a continuation of the themes in Amos Oz's early work, but it chiefly emphasizes "pain and suffering, ugliness and nausea". The three pivotal stories in the film – the widow, Kuba and Israel and

[67] The novel and the short story collection appear in the bibliography. Amos Oz left the kibbutz in the 1980s.

Mordy and Simcha – express variations on the theme of loneliness that exists surprisingly enough in a small community that is supposed to be characterized by unmediated personal interactions: "This is a story about people in crisis, in a period in which solidarity – which was typical of Israeli society and the kibbutz – is disintegrating" (Hadas, 27.2.1996). The topic of loneliness in the community is mainly expressed by the story of Mordy and Simcha. This is not a friendship based on male codes related to exploits in the army or in the kibbutz (as is true in *Atalia*, for example). Mordy and Simcha's friendship is presented in the film as compensating them for the isolation experienced by kibbutz residents who are without families. They both have a monotonous routine life and cling to one another until the appearance of the girl from Finland.

Two scenes epitomize and emphasize Mordy's loneliness and despair. In the first, the director creates a composition in which singing people celebrating the Passover holiday in the communal dining room can be seen. Mordy is seen through the windows dressed in festive clothes. He peers in from the outside, but remains alone. The next scene creates an array of contrasts by Mordy's festive attire inappropriately displayed in the cow-barn where he dances and sings among the cows. In addition to juxtaposition the religious and secular, the spiritual and earthly, this scene conveys the message that Mordy no longer has any human friends, only animal ones. Mordy kills himself and his body remains where it fell for a long time before it is discovered, and the fact that nobody in the kibbutz even notices his disappearances intensifies the feeling of misery. Mordy's choice of the kibbutz water tower for the suicide jump is not a random one. The water tower, which in films of the 1930s and 1940s symbolized the life of a new settlement, its connection to the land and its roots, receives an altogether different role here, and the irony of the new role puts the theme of the "shattered dream" in sharp focus.

It is interesting to note that the thematic focus of films of the 1950s and 1960s was group cohesion, solidarity and the individual's commitment to collective goals, with an emphasis on the "integrating ethos," for example in *What a Gang* and *He Walked through the Fields*.[68] In contrast to these films, in the films of the

[68] See the discussion in Talmon 233-236.

1970s and 1980s, strangers and misfits were prominent: “That which delayed cinematic plots of the 1950s, or damaged their unity, became the central motivating factor in literary and cinematic narratives in the 1970s and 1980s” (Gertz 381-402). It appears that in *No Names on the Doors,* the exceptions become the rule. Mordy and Simcha (as former external children), the widow, the retarded son, the sick old man and the sensitive writer are the true, authentic characters, and by contrast the established mainstream members of the kibbutz, including the secretary, seem insensitive and indifferent to others’ problems.

The story of the bereaved mother echoes the stories of earlier cinematic widows, from *Atalia* (1984) and *The Hero’s Wife* (1963), while the preoccupation with mourning and remembrance in the kibbutz is also reminiscent of *He Walked through the Fields* (1967) and *The Vulture* (1981). Together with the abnormality of Kuba's retarded son the film reveals the fragmentation of community life (each for himself), the erosion of solidarity and mutual aid and the inability of the kibbutz community to find a place for those who are different. However, the “other-ness” of the widow and the retarded man is given a totally different context in comparison with the earlier films, namely that of economic-financial motivations: “In many Israeli films the kibbutz is not only the arena of the action but also a way of life for the characters, and this way of life is analyzed and judged by the work of art, for better or worse” (Avishar 1995: 80). By displaying an unsympathetic attitude towards atypical or nonstandard person together with the Kibbutz's highest regard for expediency as a first priority, the kibbutz stands accused of being a cynical, closed-minded society.

This cynicism is delineated in three situations in the film. The dilemma about whether to send his son to a special institution is taken out of Kuba’s hands and brought before the general kibbutz assembly. Kuba appeals to the members, and one of them replies: “Your Israel is not the only retarded person we have in the kibbutz…it’s not a personal issue, but one of principle. It’s not economically feasible to keep your Israel here in the kibbutz.” The bereaved mother, who has turned her son’s apartment into a memorial room, is asked by the secretary to vacate the room. He informs her that if everyone in the kibbutz were to set up a shrine commemorating their loved ones, not a single available room would remain in the kibbutz. However the real reason for this is revealed previously in

the narrative: the kibbutz wants to rent the apartment out to vacationers from the city in order to increase its profits. The third occasion in which the combination of money and cynicism occurs is in the cemetery after Mordy's funeral. Simcha, Mordy's good friend, tells his Finnish girlfriend in an offhand manner that the kibbutz is going to sell burial plots to people from the city, as a regular business proposition.[69]

The financial aspect, which was given some justification and dealt with relatively delicately in *She's Not 17,* is taken to extremes here, especially since it is directed against helpless people whose lives are already filled with suffering. This set of circumstances establishes a binary opposition: the transition from a society believing in socialist principles of equality and aid for the needy to a society motivated by concerns of expediency, profit and loss, norms identified with capitalist logic and the competitive market. The film shatters myths of equality and camaraderie that were the pride and joy of kibbutz society for many years. Furthermore, the theme of relapsing to a life of wandering and exile that was presented in *She's Not 17* is here given a new dimension – commercial interests. The pioneers, who were proud of returning to work the land and contrasted themselves with the Jewish merchant from the ghetto, are returning at the end of a hundred years' journey to the same lowly status and contemptible occupation they rebelled against and strove to free themselves from.

Operation Grandma (Dror Shaul, 1999)

Operation Grandma is a parody that over the years has achieved the status of an Israeli cult film. The film is shown every year on television and has its own Internet site, which includes vignettes and trivia quizzes about the film. The main characters are three brothers who have left the kibbutz and are living in Tel-Aviv. Alon is the eldest brother (about 30), a professional soldier in the Israeli army, and the chief character in the film. Benny is the middle brother, an

[69] This practice began as a humanitarian gesture free of charge towards kibbutz members who requested to bury their relations in the kibbutz and non-Jews who were denied burial in Jewish cemeteries due to Jewish ritual laws. Today, there are four or five kibbutzim, mainly in the Tel-Aviv area, that exact payment from city folks who wish to be buried in the kibbutz.

electrician and gifted technician who works at hooking up private homes to a satellite television network. Idan, the youngest brother (in his early twenties), is a counselor in a Zionist youth movement. The brothers' parents are dead, and the three communicate constantly by phone.

Alon is assigned a task related to maneuvers in Gaza, which is why he returns to his home kibbutz located in southern Israel, not far from the Gaza Strip. However, Alon comes back to the kibbutz not as a full-fledged member, but as a resident renting an apartment, and therefore he does not hold the same rights or obligations of a member. Since he knows his way around the kibbutz, he goes to the pool and makes advances at a Swiss volunteer. Later he has an argument with Deborah, the kibbutz secretary. He asks for a refrigerator, but she refuses his request since he is not a member (as stipulated in the kibbutz charter), although there are at least eight refrigerators in storage that are not being used by anyone.

Benny is having difficulties at work since he demands a bonus for every satellite dish he installs. In addition, he plays "cat and mouse" with his girlfriend, an athlete who is preparing for the Israeli judo championships and uses him to practice on. Idan is a rather childish, naive and needy young man. He tries to transmit "old-fashioned" Zionist-socialist values of solidarity, cooperation and brotherhood to the youngsters in his care, but none of them pay any attention to him.

The three brothers' routine is interrupted when they receive word that their grandmother has passed away. The grandmother had lived in the kibbutz, but two years previously was transferred to a retirement home in the city. The brothers phone the kibbutz secretary and ask her to deal with transferring the body to the kibbutz and making the funeral arrangements. They are shocked to hear that the kibbutz refuses to take responsibility for this since she was no longer a kibbutz member when she died. According to the secretary, "The kibbutz does not finance funerals or weddings for those who have not lived here for the past two years."

Thus begins a comedy of errors. After the difficulties of releasing the body from the hospital, Benny and Idan stop off at the Central Bus Station in Tel-Aviv to buy Idan a refrigerator. Meanwhile, a municipal tow truck turns up and tows away their vehicle with the body inside. Benny and his girlfriend travel to the kibbutz while Idan gets notification from Benny that he must release the car from the police garage and transport the body to the kibbutz. Meanwhile, in the kibbutz carpentry shop, Sergio, an older member, instructs the volunteer who works for him to finish building the coffin, while he rushes off to a romantic rendezvous with his lover (Deborah the kibbutz secretary…)

Meanwhile, Alon is planning a complex military maneuver whose aim is to eliminate a terrorist in Gaza and which is supposed to result in his promotion to a higher military rank. However, Alon's commanding officer doubts his competence and claims that the plan is faulty (possibly because Alon is preoccupied with phone calls with his brothers and running after the Swiss volunteer). As a result, Alon losses his composure, ties the commander to a chair and threats him. It becomes clear that the commander grew up in the same kibbutz as the brothers and was always known to be a smooth, manipulative character. The commander eventually gives his approval to the plan and Alon puts on an Arab headdress and a fake mustache and rushes off to the funeral. (He is dressed as an Arab for the military operation, which is supposed to take place immediately after the funeral.)

The three brothers arrive at the kibbutz, along with a small number of kibbutz members who have come to participate in the funeral. They open the trunk of Idan's car when to their astonishment they discover that he has arrived without the body. The brothers begin to hurl accusations at one another, but just then the mail van arrives and unloads the coffin with the body. (It turns out that Benny's girlfriend has dealt with releasing the body from the police.) The surrealistic funeral procession passes through the cow barns in order to arrive at the cemetery, where it turns out that the grave is much too deep, and when the coffin is lowered into it, it shatters into pieces. The secular burial ceremony customary in kibbutzim is also ridiculed: Deborah the secretary makes a flowery speech and a female singer accompanies herself on a guitar. Alon cuts them both short, claiming he has no time for all of this (since he is rushing off to the military

maneuver). After the ceremony, the three brothers return to the city and vow never again to visit the kibbutz.

Operation Grandma echoes previous films, but also evokes characters and beliefs firmly rooted in public discourse concerning the kibbutz. On the narrative level, the film is reminiscent of a whole set of films about those who leave the kibbutz or kibbutz members who attempt to live elsewhere. These include *I Like Mike*, *Three Days and a Child* and *Ceasefire*, the television series *Hedva and Shmulik* and to some extent also *Life According to Agfa*, *The Highway Queen* and others. In most of these films, the focalization emphasized the kibbutz character's alienation in other locations or used kibbutz characters in order to accentuate the sense of estrangement of city life. Other films used the opposite strategy: a character from the city or from another culture tries to adapt himself to life in the kibbutz, thus establishing the sense of estrangement of kibbutz life (for example, *Sallah, Boy Meets Girl* and to a lesser degree, also *He Walked Through the Fields, What a Gang* and *New Land.* In this respect, *Operation Grandma* may be said to maintain a kind of thematic and ideological equality. The film demonstrates that misunderstandings, chaos and absurdity exist to the same degree in the kibbutz, the army and the city. In addition, the three brothers who have left the kibbutz are revealed to be resourceful and have the appropriate skills to run their lives relatively successfully and to achieve their goals equally whether in the kibbutz, the city or in the army.

The film parodies the topics, institutions and rituals identified with the kibbutz by depicting them as degenerate and absurd. The ridicule is mainly directed at kibbutz red tape and its stubborn adherence to regulations, a phenomenon that is well familiar to people who live in the kibbutz, but also to the general Israeli public.[70] The film deals with two bureaucratic issues in the kibbutz and presents them at their ultimate absurdity. First, the kibbutz refuses to provide Alon with a refrigerator since it is against the rules, despite the fact that there are eight refrigerators in storage which nobody uses. The second issue is the ambiguity concerning the responsibility for funeral arrangements. Despite the fact that the grandmother had lived there for many years, the kibbutz refuses to take

[70] In the cinema, the kibbutz bureaucracy is criticized as early as *Sallah* (1964).

responsibility for her burial since according to the rules a person who has lived elsewhere for two years does not qualify for this privilege.

The film belittles and mocks rituals and patterns of behavior that in the past had epitomized kibbutz solidarity, symbolizing the sense of belonging to one large family. For example, dealing with funeral arrangements in the kibbutz and the burial ceremonies exemplified the cohesion and support given by the collective to the individual in times of crisis. The kibbutz burial ceremony has always been considered unique in Israeli society, as it includes secular elements such as music, poetry or other literary texts, while deliberately avoiding religious rituals such as the well-known Jewish "Kaddish" prayer. The ceremony is usually conducted by a secular member of the kibbutz rather than by a rabbi, so the orthodox Jewish establishment is not represented.

The film satirizes these norms by using several estrangement techniques. The kibbutz carpenter leaves the construction of the coffin to a stranger who does not know the deceased and the latter builds the coffin to the strains of loud "trance" music. (The funeral procession is also accompanied by happy, bouncy music, thus creating ironic dissonance between the situation and the sound track). The fact that the grave is too deep and that the coffin splinters into pieces indicates the impersonal, detached attitude of those involved in the burial ceremony. Although the funeral oration is filled with pathos and flowery language regarding the deceased ("The cypress trees will bow down, the cornfields she sowed with her own hands will shed a tear…"), it is delivered by the kibbutz secretary who had previously refused the grandmother a final merciful generosity by denying the deceased a decent burial in the kibbutz. The film alludes to the fact that this is an impersonal, standard, recycled speech and that on each occasion only the name of the deceased is changed. In addition, the manner in which Alon cuts the speech and the singing short indicates his contempt and lack of respect for the ceremony.

On a more covert level, through the characters of the brothers, the film deals with codes unique to the kibbutz. Each of them is a parody of a kibbutz archetype and certain values associated with kibbutz society. Idan is a naive, confused type who

identifies with kibbutz ideology and tries to contribute to the national effort by volunteering to be a counselor in a youth movement. However, this is subverted by the fact that Idan talks in slogans, none of his charges listen to him and one of them even threatens him physically. Benny typifies the practical kibbutz member, the one who is technically skilled and knows how to operate agricultural equipment, mechanical and electrical devices, etc. This type tends to leave the kibbutz and aspire to a comfortable middle class urban life, often dreaming of emigration to America in hopes of getting rich. This construct parodies the ethos of kibbutz sons as "the salt of the earth," firmly rooted in the soil of the country and of course never abandoning it.

The parody is conveyed principally through the character of Alon, who exemplifies a number of codes and patterns of behavior. The most blatant parody involves inappropriate transposition of codes from one context to another. For example, Alon runs the burial operation exactly like a military maneuver: he gathers his brothers at his military headquarters, spreads out maps, assigns responsibilities to each one and sets a final deadline by which they must carry out their orders. He addresses his brothers as an army officer giving orders to his subordinates would, thus introducing inappropriate army rhetoric, formality and hierarchical structure into family relationships. In other situations in the film he is shown not conducting conversations with his brothers, but mainly shouting at them and issuing commands. For example, he orders Benny not to bring his girlfriend to the funeral. He shouts at Deborah the kibbutz secretary as though she was an officer of inferior rank. The way he arrives at the funeral in the kibbutz dressed up as an Arab makes fun both of the funeral ceremony and his incongruous behavior.

A crossover of codes also takes place toward the other direction, that is, from the realm of the kibbutz to the realm of the army. This distortion is depicted in two different spheres. The first occurs when Alon interrupts important military consultations, at which officers of superior rank are present, in order to discuss the funeral on the phone with his brothers. Here, the intrusion of family matters causes a kind of anarchy that is incompatible with the strict, hierarchical military world. In the second occasion Alon's commanding officer threatens to call off the military maneuver, thus harming Alon's chances of promotion. Alon wrestles

with the commander and warns him, reminding him (and the audience) that they both come from the same kibbutz, where the commander was known to be lazy and irresponsible. Here Alon brings kibbutz folklore into an army situation, thus upsetting the chain of command and rationalistic army procedures. Alon's clumsy, brusque courtship of the volunteer is another sardonic reference to kibbutz folklore. In one of the scenes he asks her: "Want to come to my room? Cup of coffee, fuck of tea?"[71]

The film's post-ideological stance, which is achieved through ridiculing the kibbutz, is imparted in a number of ways. The most striking of them may be found in the slogan quoted by Idan at the youth movement gathering: "All for one, one for all." Beyond the fact that this catchphrase is received indifferently by the children, the film deconstructs one of the most prominent myths of Israeli society, demonstrating that this guiding principle is no longer put to practice in society in general (especially in the army) and in the kibbutz in particular. On the one hand, the film presents a set of characters who are mainly concerned with their own self-interest (Alon, Benny, his girlfriend, Deborah, Sergio) and on the other hand depicts a microcosm in which they are all in conflict and everybody tricks and deceives everybody else. This reflects the claim that Israeli society in the last decade has become a sectarian, tribal society in which every group is concerned mainly with its own self-interest – settlers in the Occupied Territories, ultra-orthodox Jews, Oriental Jews, Russian immigrants, kibbutzniks, moshav folk, the powerful workers' organizations, etc.

In a more political or ideological context, the sub-text of the film demonstrates that the younger generation has deserted the kibbutz and that such ideological concepts as "vocation" and "social-realization" have degenerated. As in *She's Not 17*, the kibbutz has become a transit station, a society that has lost direction, where no challenges remain for young people to address. Furthermore, there is a sense of absence of a place, of homelessness and therefore of a longing to be someplace else. The three brothers epitomize variations on the theme of the temporary and transient. Benny is immigrating to America; Idan has no home; Alon is living temporarily in the kibbutz. This transience is also symbolically

[71] The mention of female volunteers as "easy" sex objects is a part of kibbutz folklore and appears also in *The Troupe* (Nesher, 1979), *Atalia*, *An Intimate Story*.

represented by the principle locations where the film was shot. The hospital, the Tel Aviv Central Bus Station and the cemetery are all transitory, impermanent spaces – in both senses of the word terminal.

Transience also ties in with Foucault's concept of "heterotopia". Like many of the films that were mentioned in Chapter 2, the film under discussion represents the kibbutz as a pastoral, calm place (the swimming pool, flirtations, light music) and later disturbs this idyll by introducing characters who are not acquainted with the "hidden" internal norms of the kibbutz: "There are others, on the contrary, that look like pure and simple openins, but which generally conceal curious exclusions. Everybody can enter these heterotopian emplacements, but actually this is only an illusion: one believes he is inside and, by the very fact of entering, one is excluded" (Foucault 1994:185). The irony in *Operation Grandma* is dual. While in former films, the sense of alienation alludes to strangers who have come to the kibbutz and become residents (as in films of the 1930s and 40s) or strangers who have come to the kibbutz, but remain outsiders (as in *Sallah*, *The Highway Queen* and *He Walked Through the Fields*), in *Operation Grandma* it is in fact the former native residents - the three brothers - who feel excluded. Alon's return to the kibbutz seems straight forward enough until he discovers that his new status of "outside resident" excludes him from privileges enjoyed by the members.

Mother of the Gevatron (Ayelet Gill and Shahar Magen, 2003)

Mother of the Gevatron is a documentary film whose subject matter and themes resemble that of the dramatic films that were presented above. The film describes the rise and fall of the Gevatron, a vocal ensemble made up entirely of members of Kibbutz Geva. The ensemble was founded in 1948 and remained very popular until the end of the 1970s. It is strongly identified with kibbutz life and the pathos of folksongs and songs related to work and toil, especially the lyrical, sad melodies brought over from Russia by the early settlers, "that have in them nostalgia for the past and hope for the future that played on the Sabra's patriotic feelings" (Almog 365). The film is a *Rashomon*-like reconstruction of the causes and repercussions of the replacement of the founder and manager of the troupe by a business manager from outside.

The main focus of the film is the long-term friendship between two women aged 70 plus: the founder of the ensemble, Rina, who was its manager until the late 1980s when she was fired (and who due to old age or illness is now in a wheelchair) and Mika, the kibbutz hairdresser, who continues to sing with the troupe. The two women meet in the kibbutz archives, the hairdressing salon and other locations and reminisce about the founding of the ensemble the different musical parts each was awarded and various events in its history. Their reminiscences are accompanied by black-and-white vignettes from the past in which the troupe appears before soldiers and large audiences in the city (in the 60s and 70s respectively).

The film exposes the "backstage" life of the group, which had previously been the pride and joy of the kibbutz and had achieved a special status. The members met for rehearsals and performances after work hours, and this caused exhaustion and burnout. To the annoyance of several kibbutz members, candidates were often accepted to the troupe on the basis of family connections or good looks. The group's popularity declined in the 1980s, record sales dropped and there was a drastic reduction in concert engagements. In an attempt to rejuvenate their repertoire, a new manager was appointed and Rina, who until then had been in complete control, was replaced as manager. It was suggested to her that she continue to appear with the group, but, angry and insulted, she refused and left altogether.

In the film there are interviews with various people regarding Rina's departure, showing both its positive and negative aspects. Parallel to this, there are scenes of the ensemble preparing its traditional annual performance (on the second evening of Passover) for the members of Kibbutz Geva. There is much speculation as to whether Rina will attend this performance (after years of avoiding the group's performances). After much persuasion, Rina does agree to attend, in order to see her good friend Mika who continues to sing with the group. Time passes, and Mika is shown on her way to the kibbutz cemetery to attend Rina's funeral. The ensemble appears once again, this time at a memorial performance in Rina's honor.

Mother of the Gevatron is a documentary film, but it has a place alongside the dramatic films being reviewed here since it establishes the same major theme, "the shattered dream". The film's documentary format creates a broad inter-text with documentaries and propaganda films about the kibbutz that were made from the 1930s onwards. Films such as *Land of Promise* (1935) showed the kibbutz to be a dynamic, lively place where young, happy people were building their future and that of the country. In stark contrast, *Mother of the Gevatron* presents the kibbutz as a static place filled with old people, totally lacking in enthusiasm and hope, with an anachronistic culture having no foreseeable future. For example, Laor states: "The film about the Gevatron deals with adults as though they are children or geriatric cases…an anachronism that is suitable for Independence Day" (2003).

The film includes black-and-white footage, which documents the Gevatron's appearances in the 1960s. In these vignettes, the members of the ensemble look young, happy and optimistic, members of a group demonstrating cohesion and solidarity that proudly contributes to national goals (by performing for soldiers). These clips are accompanied by rhythmic songs and they are filmed and edited so as to give an impression of dynamic lively activity. This footage is alternated with static, almost still, shots of the kibbutz, backed up by slow, sad music on the soundtrack.

Throughout the film, the editing stresses the transition from the socialist ethos of the kibbutz to more capitalistic norms. The kibbutz ethos is represented by the filmed performances of the troupe where the members appear in working clothes, holding shovels and hoes on a background of cowsheds and fields. These symbolic scenes are contrasted with the present incongruous reality of Rina's replacement by the new manager, a businessman with no interest in music. He is filmed in a big modern factory of industrial machinery or working at a laptop computer in a well-appointed office. These modern images are contrasted with the simplicity of the kibbutz in its early years. These are also perceived to be symptoms of that same privatization which was discussed earlier: privatization of cultural symbols such as the Gevatron is added on to privatization of health and personal welfare (*She's Not 17*) and privatization of communal property (*No Names on the Doors*).

The contrast between the black-and-white and color footage establishes a series of transitions between past and present. The ensemble, which had been very popular in the past and had recorded dozens of records, hardly performs or records in the present. If in the past the group appeared mainly outside the kibbutz, in scenes from "the present", the film concentrates only on performances inside the kibbutz. In order to gain exposure in the media, the group has to rely on the good will of a young, popular group, Tippex, which represents the mainstream of Israeli pop music today and invited the veteran group to perform with them, as their guests. The invitation to the Gevatron to appear on a radio program is perceived as giving "last gesture of respect" to an old troupe and all that it stands for. In a broader context, Tippex is identified with Oriental and world music, hence this gesture also constitutes an ironic comment regarding the former "Ashkenazi" hegemony, which for many years dismissed Oriental music as inferior and vulgar.

Since the main part of the film concentrates on the firing of the group's manager and the arguments that have arisen surrounding this, it exposes the infighting, frustration and bitterness as a contrast to the lofty image of the group in the past. The film focuses on the personal relationship between Rina and Mika, who are over 70, and hardly features any of the younger residents of the kibbutz. This spotlight on the elderly, together with the decline of the ensemble, creates an image of a world that is disappearing, an image that is intensified by the fact that Rina can no longer walk and must use a wheelchair and that the film ends with her demise. These representations correspond with footage from the past, in which both women are seen full of energy and at the height of their abilities. The final scene shows an evening that is held in Rina's honor, at which a song is performed expressing yearning, nostalgia and pain. This performance appears to be a gesture of farewell, not only from Rina, but also from the ensemble and the kibbutz itself.

Life According to Agfa (Assi Dayan, 1991)

The films that have been analyzed up to now were produced between the years 1996-2004. However, at the beginning of the 1990s a number of films were made, which also include characters from the kibbutz. These films were set in other locations, yet the characterization of the kibbutz entity is reminiscent of the

"shattered dream" motif, which it precedes. The most prominent example of this, and one of the most important films to be made in Israel in the 1990s, is *Life According to Agfa*, which I have chosen to analyze here.

Life According to Agfa is the first part of a trilogy made by Assi Dayan, a director who began his career as an actor in the 1960s (he portrayed the protagonist in *He Walked Through the Fields*) and an individual who was considered for many years in Israeli culture to embody the idea of the Sabra.[72] The film is an apocalyptic drama that takes place during one night in Tel Aviv a few years into the future. The main plot is set in a Tel Aviv pub, to which various people arrive, "who symbolize by their professions and behavior sectors of Israeli society while what they all have in common is a dream that has not come true" (Schein). The film presents a pessimistic view of a society filled with despair, violence and absurdity and lacking in divine grace. It is filmed in an expressionist style in black and white, thus intensifying the bleakness of the characters' world.

The central character is Dahlia, a woman in her 60s, who is the tough manager of a popular pub called "Barbie."[73] She assuages her loneliness and the meaninglessness of her life by "one-night stands" with young men who are passing through. She would like to establish a relationship with Eli, a man of her own age, but he is married with children, apart from being ill with cancer. There are various employees in the pub, including a bar attendant whose boyfriend is unfaithful to her, a waitress who sniffs cocaine and dreams of immigrating to America, some Arab kitchen workers and a pianist who provides the melancholy music that accompanies the action in the pub.

A group of soldiers in uniform enter the pub, make a lot of noise and provoke the waitress and one of the Arab kitchen workers. This angers Benny, a macho policeman, who pulls out a gun and throws the soldiers out. Ricky, an eccentric, disturbed girl who has lost her way in the streets of Tel Aviv, also wanders into

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[72] Assi Dayan is the son of the late Moshe Dayan, who was the Minister of Defense and one of the best-known Israeli politicians both in Israel and abroad.

[73] The name "Barbie" refers to "Abarbanel," which is the name of a well-known Israeli mental institution.

the pub. It turns out that she has been ousted from the kibbutz after leaving her husband and young son. Benny jumps at the chance and exploits her difficult situation by taking her off to his place. While she mutters nonsense about solitude in the city, Benny takes her to bed and appears to rape her. After he leaves, she kills herself by jumping out of the window of his high-rise building.

Meanwhile at the pub, the disturbance that had been previously caused by the soldiers is nothing compared to the uproar caused by three new arrivals – two pimps of Oriental origin and a Romanian prostitute, who seem to be weird anomalies in a pub that is the generally patronized by secular Ashkenazi Israelis. Finally, after various other events, a new day is dawning, and Gila finds comfort in the arms of a Swedish U.N. officer. Just when it seems that everyone is on their way out the door, the previous group of soldiers returns and shoots down everybody in the pub, including Gila, Benny, the waitress, the pimps and the prostitute, the bar attendant and the Arab workers.

Life According to Agfa continues to feature certain motifs related to the kibbutz that are familiar from earlier films, but it also contributes topics that will be developed in later ones. The film continues to relate to the kibbutz in the context of those who have left (*Three Days and a Child*), their difficulties in adjusting to big city life (*From the Other Side*, *Hedva and Shmulik*) and the fate of those who are forced to leave the kibbutz *(Atalia)*. It is worthy of note that the subject of involuntarily departure from the kibbutz was already dealt with in *Sabra* (1935). In that film, the group of pioneers includes a well-dressed woman from the city who is asked to leave the group since she is not considered suitable to the difficult, ascetic life of the settlement. *Stalin's Disciples* and *Atalia*, moreover, already dealt with the association between kibbutz members and mental illness.

On a more general, abstract level, the film continues the trend of treating a character as a symbol or a metaphor for the kibbutz rather than as a three-dimensional being with concrete and complex connections with kibbutz life (a rhetorical form that was analyzed in the previous chapter). This construction is also apparent in critiques of the film: "Ricky has no existence apart from the kibbutz, which is perceived as just as suffocating, the end result being that she jumps to her death – a ceremonial anomaly and nihilistic gesture in a world

whose protective, communal and ideological frameworks have broken down" (Talmon 269). In other words, although the kibbutz does not actually appear in the film, Ricky is acknowledged as an agent representing a judgmental-ideological statement regarding the kibbutz.

On the other hand, the film also foreshadows the topic of the "shattered dream," which will appear at the end of the 1990s. For example, it is possible to see Ricky's expulsion from the kibbutz due to mental problems as foreshadowing the ideological dilemma involved in committing a retarded man to an institution. The despair, loneliness and feeling of betrayal that motivate Ricky to take her own life will acquire a more complete and intensified expression in the character of Mordy in *No Names on the Doors*. The fact that the film shows Ricky as having no friends or a support system introduces the topic of orphanhood. This motif characterizes Mordy and Simcha (in *No Names on the Doors*), and especially the three brothers in *Operation Grandma*.

Life According to Agfa also foreshadows additional topics that were analyzed above regarding later films. For example, the theme of "every man for himself" and a conflict of interests among everyone would be developed in *She's Not 17* and *No Names on the Doors.* The sense of isolation and homelessness would be emphasized and expanded in the kibbutz context in the films *Operation Grandma* and *She's Not 17.* A preoccupation with expulsion and a feeling of betrayal in the character of Ricky would be brought from the background to the foreground in the films *She's Not 17, Mother of the Gevatron* and others. Like the later films, the sub-text of the Ricky character may be interpreted as follows: it is not only hard to survive in the kibbutz; it is also hard to die. If in the films of the 1980s it was difficult to live in the kibbutz (in *Atalia* and *Stalin's Disciplines*). In the films of the 1990s, it is still hard to live in the kibbutz, but even harder to grow old and die there (*She's Not 17*, *Operation Grandma*, *No Names on the Doors*, *Mother of the Gevatron*).

The alienation and getting lost in the big city motif embodied by the Ricky character refers to another film of the early 1990s, *The Lookout* (Gabizon, 1990). In retrospect, this film seems like a more subtle version or parody of *Life According to Agfa*. Its plot also takes place in the big, alienated metropolis, Tel

Aviv, and it also includes a cross-section of characters from different backgrounds whose lives are fraught with anomalies, estrangement and a search for the meaning of life. There are a few scenes in the film where a Gevatron-style singing troupe from the kibbutz gets lost in the big city: “The kibbutz singing troupe is presented as a piece of history frozen in time, sunken in a world of unquestioned, lofty Zionist ideals, in a hay aroma atmosphere, cultivation of the soil and harmonic singing, totally unaware of the numerous social and cultural changes that have taken place around it" (Schwartz: 317).

Ricky’s violent eradication from the narrative (involving a suspected rape and a subsequent suicide) calls to mind yet another film from the early 1990s, *Cup Final* (Riklis, 1991). In this film, which relates to the 1982 Lebanon War, an Israeli officer and soldier are captured by a group of Palestinian fighters. The plot deals mainly with their journey to Beirut, in the course of which the Palestinians become friendly with the Israeli soldier, while what links them together is their mutual desire to watch the Cup Final that is taking place in Italy. But before the group sets out, a quarrel breaks out between the Palestinians and the Israeli officer, who comes from a kibbutz. The Palestinians accuse him that his kibbutz was founded and built on the lands of an Arab village. At the beginning of the journey, the officer attempts to escape and is shot to death by shots that seem to be coming from both sides, the Israeli and the Lebanese-Palestinian. This scene is filmed to look like an execution, since the officer is shot with a wall behind him against which he collapses with his hands lifted at his sides while blood spatters the wall.

Again it is worth mentioning that the kibbutz reference appears to mark an interesting transition in the direction of Israeli cinema. In *Life According to Agfa*, *The Lookout* and *Cup Final*, all dating from the early 1990s, the kibbutz character (the symbol of the hegemony) seems to be “eliminated” in order to “make way,” in the cinematic space for the new directions taken by Israeli cinema and described above. The “removal” of the young woman from the kibbutz in *Life According to Agfa* makes room for the oriental characters in the sequel, *An Electric Blanket* (Dayan, 1995). The “elimination” of the Israeli officer from the kibbutz in Cup Final will allow the Oriental hero, the football fan and lover of the simple life, to take center stage in the narrative and possibly

become friends with the Palestinians (an all-Oriental encounter). The kibbutz troupe that is parodied in *Shuroo* exposes the cultural irrelevance of the kibbutz in the new, post-modern, post-ideological world.[74]

3.4 – Summary

In the previous section I indicated the coherence of the kibbutz film corpus regarding traditional categories of cinematic representation as a reflection of social, cultural and ideological changes, but I also noted the films' place within the genre of the kibbutz films. As we have seen, this group of films reflects, either overtly or covertly, the social and ideological transformations the kibbutz has undergone and continues to undergo in the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century. These changes are conveyed in films through the shattered dream theme and an ideological interpretation that reads the cinematic representation as dystopia, both in relation to the real past and to the former kibbutz vision (utopia). This, for example, is what Munk writes about Assi Dayan's work: "Assi Dayan's Tel-Aviv trilogy – which numbers among the most significant Israeli films made to date – delineates the dystopia whose source is liminal, chaotic existence, progressing towards an unclear future" (2001: 194).

The various interpretations that I have presented suggest that all these films deconstruct myths and archetypes identified with the kibbutz as well as refer by opposition to previous films about the kibbutz (inter-text), especially those produced from the 1930s to the 1960s. These coalesce to an inverted binary construction, which corresponds with the one I presented in Chapter 2, referring to the second period:

[74] I have chosen to use the Hebrew word, *hissul* (elimination) due to its phonological and etymological affinity with the Hebrew word "*ehusal*" and the message of the end of Zionist-socialist hegemony, according to Kimmerling 's *The end of Ashkenazi Hegemony*.

The kibbutz in films of the past, the myth	→	The kibbutz in the present (the films presented here, 1991-2006)
Utopia/the dream	→	Dystopia/ the shattered dream
Socialism	→	Capitalism
Agricultural labor	→	Commercial enterprises
Innovativeness	→	Anachronism
Social justice	→	Discrimination
Harmony/solidarity	→	Competition/conflict
Productivity/ fertility	→	Sterility
Honesty and mutual respect	→	Hypocrisy and exploitation
A "sanctified" place	→	A "secularized" place

Furthermore, the sub-text of these representations is linked to the privatization process undergone by kibbutz society since the late 1980s: "Until the mid-1970s, the kibbutz was perceived as an economic organization whose objective was not to produce profits but mainly to function as an altruistic entity with a mission. Individual matters were pushed aside in favor of the collective's, accumulating capital was frowned upon and the family-like business was mainly run to fulfill the needs of society and the state" (Bashan). We have seen these processes reflected in films, particularly in *She's Not 17* (the privatization of the socialist system), but also in *Mother of the Gevatron* (efficiency, dismissing workers, competition), *No Names on the Doors* (turning the cemetery into a lucrative enterprise) and *Operation Grandma* (cold-hearted decisions without any sentiments regarding those who have left the kibbutz).

Since the privatization is part of the capitalization and globalization processes experienced in Israel by the public as a whole, these representations may be interpreted as a national allegory and an expression of "the collapse of the welfare state." In the words of economist Linda Efroni: "The State of Israel has reached unprecedented low ebb from an economic-social point of view. Inequality in general and wage disparity in particular have skyrocketed from a ratio of 1:6 in the 80s to a ratio of 1:13 today. Such acute inequality is among the highest in the world" (Efroni 18).

The topics suggested in the previous section - the shattered dream, alienation, losing one's way, transience and wandering - also constitute a closing of the circle regarding the matters that were discussed in Chapter 2, in films dealing with the early days of settling the land: "The land is distanced upwards (since immigrants "do *Alia*", they literally ascend to it) or downwards (since it is a land that consumes its residents and from which they flee). The land contains a seed of strangeness that results in a cultural merry-go-round that is characteristic of the Israeli identity discourse" (Eran and Gurewitz 9). The films presented here portray both elevation (the dream) and lowering (the shattered dream). This crisis is expressed through the depiction of the kibbutz as a place "that devours its inhabitants" or one that people leave for somewhere better (in Israel or elsewhere). In addition, the same "cultural whirlpool" and a preoccupation with identity can be found in these films that, as portrayed both in the characters' movement to and from the kibbutz as well as in the conflicts and ideological arguments included in the plot.

A sense of alienation is also expressed in kibbutz films by the inability to integrate into the place and in the motif of wandering and exilic characteristics. These motifs are the antithesis of the classic Zionist vision of building both a private and a national home (as was described in the first and second periods in Chapter 2). These topics are represented in an amplified manner in the films through death, suicide, exile, abandonment, as well as a feeling of detachment and transience. All of the above create an experience of liminal, borderline existence in which the subject does not succeed in being spatially and temporally adapted and connected. Past experience seems to be disconnected and insignificant, while the future seems unclear or hidden from view. Hence, for example, the same unpaved path which the characters of *She's Not 17* continually tread on. From a metaphorical point of view, it seems to come from nowhere and lead nowhere, or we could say that it is a path where the characters are stuck between sovereignty (the kibbutz, Zionism) and exile (the retirement home). If in films like *The Great Promise* and *My Father's House* the kibbutz space was presented as a safe, protected home, in the films in the corpus discussed here, characters such as Kuba, Adina, Mordy, Shraga, Bracha, Clara and Rina experience it as hostile and violent.

The topic of liminality or the blurring of boundaries is expressed in the experience of the lack of a home and absence of a place and is portrayed in these films in various ways. For instance, the three brothers in *Operation Grandma* have all left the kibbutz, but have found no alternative place to live in, only temporary arrangements. Another example is the troupe that gets lost in the strange territory of Tel Aviv in the film *Shuru*. Yet the most striking instance of homelessness is the character of Riki in *Life According to Agfa,* who aimlessly roams the city. In Riki, liminality appears as amnesia, a state between memory and forgetting, as she speaks in a confused, fragmented way and doesn't seem to know where she is.

In all these examples, it appears that the characters are stuck in an in-between state, no longer in the kibbutz but not anywhere else either. They seem to lead a borderline existence in a dim, delayed, liminal space. In this context, Yael Munk claims in her comprehensive study of Israeli cinema of the 1990s: "Metropolitan spaces reveal the self-destruction, stagnation and death of the hegemonic sons of Zionism…" (2005: 21).

Another aspect of space may be added to the one described above. As mentioned previously, in the early films, for example *This is the Land* or *Sabra*, the pioneers looked towards the wide open spaces of the "Promised Land." This viewpoint from the present to the future symbolized ownership and appropriation of the territory by the Zionists who arrived from Europe. Conversely, in the corpus of films analyzed here, the spaces depicted are crowded, obstructed places that do not allow a clear view beyond the present. This kind of closed, claustrophobic space is mainly characteristic of the film *No Names on the Doors*, in which every scene presents a composition of a frame within a frame. The inner frame, located between the foreground of the image and the background, generally includes a window, a door or a wall. These compositions block the characters' view and establish a metaphoric sense of claustrophobia and suffocation.

The sense of alienation and disorientation is strengthened by the thematic codes of orphanhood and variations on the absence of a father figure. The orphanhood motif is surreptitiously ironic and relates to that same closing of the circle and return to wandering and exile that was referred to earlier: "Zionist parents raised

their own children to see themselves as historical foundlings, worthy of more dignified, romantic and powerful progenitors" (Shohat 40). Living close to the soil, working the land and being part of a collective were perceived as compensating for and replacing lost parents and formed part of the myth of the reborn, healthy Jew, fortified in mind and body. The orphanhood motif symbolized a kind of latent ideal of being released from the past. The case of Ricky and others lends a measure of irony and represents the closing of a circle. On the one hand, Ricky is driven out of the kibbutz (land, roots, collective) and, on the other hand, she is alien to the city as well. We find in this construction echoes of the myth of the homeless, wandering Jew, who is persecuted wherever he goes. This allegory, from which there is no escape, results in Ricky's suicide. If, as Shohat claims, the pioneering films of the 1930s were a "didactic allegory of renewal," then *Life According to Agfa* and the other films analyzed here are a didactic allegory of degeneration and decomposition.[75]

As stated above, one can locate in these films various aspects of the disintegration of the multi-generational family, a dynasty that for many years constituted the foundation for the existence and development of kibbutz society.[76] The crumbling of the dynasty and the lack of a father appears in relation to the characters of Riki, Mordy and Simcha as well as the three brothers. This theme also represents the failure of the founding generation, through the character of Shraga in *She's Not 17* (as well as the elderly member who is connected to the oxygen balloon). These aspects tie in with interpretations that suggest that when the father is absent, everything falls apart and that his absence symbolizes chaos. These may be read as an allegory of the distortion of the tribal ideal that was a central component of the Zionist ethos, which viewed the second generation not only as a justification for the revolution, but also as a realization of redemption from exile and wandering. The father's absence or failure, then, is linked in kibbutz films with the feeling of chaos and alienation: "It may be said not only that the death of the father does not bring us closer to redemption, but that it also passes on to the son a sense of alienation and strangeness regarding the place" (Munk 2005: 18).

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[75] See Shohat (63-65).
[76] See Chapter 2.

All of the above may be perceived as an identity crisis of the hegemony. For example, it is possible to apprehend the characters of Shraga, Rina and Adina or Riki as undergoing forms of "internal exile" of varying degrees of intensity. Adina and Rina are restricted by the narrow, isolated space of their homes, Shraga and his friends establish a kind of small "ghetto" on the outskirts of the kibbutz and Riki is an exile in the big city (not to mention Noa who is in exile in Amsterdam, or Benny who decides to leave for America). Again, it is possible to interpret these representations as an allegory, the antithesis of and rebellion against the central Zionist tenet of "negating the Diaspora." The inter-text here, among other things, refers to early films, especially those from the second period described in Chapter 2, which dealt with absorbing immigrants and Holocaust survivors. As mentioned earlier, in these films the survivors were obliged to shed their exilic qualities and become Israelis. Munk adequately summarizes this aspect in one of the central arguments of her research study: "In many of the films of borderline cinema, it is the repressed Exilic order, which may be perceived as an objection to the idea of negation of Exile" (2005: 105).[77]

In addition to motifs and tropes of identity, wandering and exile, it is also possible to interpret the conflicts between the protagonists and the kibbutz as metonymic of the antagonism that exists between the protagonists on the periphery, who have been distanced from the centers of power, and the state. This element is expressed in the way the kibbutz is presented as a secluded place that seems to be isolated from the rest of the country. The feeling the films convey is one of entering into a limited, private space, far from Israeli public life. *Mother of the Gevatron* can serve as an allegory for this aspect, since the troupe rarely performs outside the kibbutz and is busy with preparations for a performance before kibbutz members only.

Again, these films express more openly the signals that appear in the films of the genre from the eighties. The films are no longer concerned only with the individual/collective, struggles, alienation, transience and the exilic existence but also represent the kibbutz as a heterotopia (the other place), a place of crises, deviations, scandals and sensations – a place reflecting both proper society and

[77]For criticism of the idea of "negation of Exile," see also: "Exile within Sovereignty: Toward a critique of the 'Nagation of Exile' in Israeli culture." (Raz-Krakotzkin).

its inversion. Shraga, for instance, betrays his wife, having an affair with another woman, Noa betrays her husband and Sari finds out who her real father is. The scandal of the old people's expulsion from the kibbutz (*Not 17*) is another example, as is the adultery of the carpenter and the kibbutz secretary in the "Kibbutz Memorial Room," the easy sex with the volunteer, the demeaning manner the body was shipped around and the carnival atmosphere surrounding the burial of the dead (*Operation Grandmother*). More manifestations of the same phenomenon are the grave sale and the bereaved father's attempt to court his dead son's girlfriend (*No Names on the Doors*), Ricky's violent expulsion (*Agfa*) and the parody of the singing troupe (*Shuru*).

The positioning of strangers, outcasts and guests in the films is a narrative and generic strategy to lure the viewers. The use of a gaze reflecting curiosity, identification and revulsion, establishes pleasure and voyeurism. The connotation of madhouse is also much more apparent here. As mentioned earlier, since the Israeli film audience of the nineties was heterogeneous, the character and type of pleasure is diverse as well and depends on the varying stances and beliefs. This assumption is corroborated by Altman: "I underemphasized the fact that genres look different to different audiences, and that disparate viewers may perceive quite disparate semantic and syntactic elements in the same film" (207).

The range of issues related to genre which are discussed here and in the previous chapter make it clear that these films not only reflect aspects and issues derived from either the filmmaker's or the industry's stance or the dictations of the changing reality. They also do not merely express the administration or hegemony's messages or manipulations. Some aspects are in fact the outcome of the genre's syntax. Those include five basic components:

a) Disconnection - the arrival of an outsider to the kibbutz and/or a character who lives in the kibbutz.
b) Establishment of an initiation rite or a liminal situation.
c) Negotiations and/or conflict between the character and a kibbutz representative (agent of the law)
d) Supporters, assistants and the opposed
e) Closure: remaining in the kibbutz or leaving it.

The articulation of these discrete units could only have been reached in view of Chapter 2, where the entire genre from its beginning is surveyed. An interesting point is the flexibility and the versatility of the semantic axis and the syntactic one, as we have seen in films from 1930 and until 2006. And that is **the pivotal point from a theoretical perspective**: on first glance it seems these units are not unique to this genre, appearing, for example, in the Western as well. Yet, what makes this syntax interesting, productive and pragmatic is the kibbutz's utopic, dystopic and heterotopic character. Thus, **Unit A** can create around the semantic axis any character regardless of age, gender, color, character and traits, origin or culture – whether of a guest/stranger or a kibbutz-born character. Since in the kibbutz the private is immediately merged with the public and "everything is political", almost any action or event in **Unit B** can potentially create a crisis, an initiation rite or a liminal situation, and almost any character can take this position. I have noted such flexibility in the films of the genre from the thirties to 2006: a child, refugee boy, Holocaust survivor, oriental or European new immigrant, a widow, a bachelor, an old man, a diseased or disabled person, a soldier. The kibbutz secretary or any other official can personify the confrontation or negotiation in **Unit C**. In fact, the confrontation can be with any character – another member, a neighbor, colleague, father or mother figure. This aspect is also true for **Unit D**, since anyone in the kibbutz (or outside it) can be a supporter/assistant or an opposed.

And what about **Unit E**? It is really not important whether there is closure or an open end, remaining or leaving. The question whether the order was reestablished in the kibbutz or chaos remained is not significant, since the character of this unit is connected more than anything to the viewer's position, personal, cultural and ideological experience (to a certain extent this assumption is true concerning the rest of the units as well). Viewers who are reserved about the idea of the kibbutz and identify it with aspects of collectivism, Socialism, Anarchism, or Zionist hegemony will find their position corroborated whether the film concludes is staying, leaving, madness or death. And vice versa: viewers who identify one way or another with the kibbutz will be strengthened in their belief that in spite all of the crises and problems, the kibbutz continues to exist. In *Not 17*'s open end those reserved will view the movie as an expression of the deconstruction and end of the kibbutz, while those identifying with it will

appreciate the kibbutz's struggle for survival. In both cases, whether the protagonist (Shraga) remains or leaves the kibbutz is not important.

3.5 – Towards a New Methodology

In the third and fourth parts of this chapter, I presented the interpretation that is generally dominant in analyzing kibbutz films. I demonstrated how the cinematic image is perceived as representing and reflecting historical, cultural and social processes and how various themes and motifs are integrated into a symbolic, metaphoric and allegoric interpretation, which I called symbolic-realistic (or the representational paradigm). Through the generic paradigm I have noted the components, aspects and meanings that the representational paradigm has overlooked, thus creating a fuller, more comprehensive picture. In the next chapter, I will attempt to examine if it is possible to break out and shake off this tight interpretative framework whose basis is dual, dichotomous thinking: individual-collective, private-national, hegemonic-marginal, center-periphery, presence-absence, sovereignty-exile, I-others, socialism-capitalism. In other words, I suggest disconnecting and disengaging both from the representational paradigm and the generic paradigm.

I would like to examine whether it is possible to suggest a different approach, a new methodology, an alternative way of thinking. Is it possible to suggest a political interpretation that does not only deal with the macro-political level (ideology and myths of the nation or large sectors of the population) but presents a micro-political interpretation – politics that occur in a complex of lines, planes, forces and relationships? For example, can we consider the films that were presented here not as a reflextion of reality (in crisis), but as films that afford a new perspective on the connection with a place, a territory or a time? Can the cinematic image be viewed other than in terms of values, ideologies and genres known and established *a priori*? Is it possible to relate to cinematic imagery in terms of duration, movement, speed, color, sound and texture without organizing and involving all of these in a coherent whole or organized spatial representation?

Is it possible to relate to the films that were presented here without imposing the creators' intentions or the commentator's set of values on them? Is interpretation possible that does not rely on one viewpoint only (of the creator, the commentator or the "ideology"), but rather on multiple points of view and perhaps an impersonal standpoint? Is it possible to relate to cinematic imagery without an "I" or a "we", to relate to films not as though they show what is, what exists, what is seen and revealed, but rather what is in process of emerging, what is unlimited and unseen? Is it possible to perceive non-visual forces instead of reproducing what is observed? This kind of interpretation would allow the expression of differences, heterogeneity or multiplicity, and not one that imposes homogeneity or judgments of good and bad, true and false, normative and pathological.

Is it, moreover, possible to consider cinematic imagery not as a representation of something, but as an expression of precepts and affects, to consider the cinematic image in terms of new thoughts, relationships, perceptions and sensations? Is it possible also to ask what the imagery and the films are doing rather than what they are showing, to consider the imagery not in terms of representation-vision-eye, but in terms of the physical, the sensational, the intuitive, the creative, as immediate sensual perception of the world of objects? Is it possible, finally, to free thought from limiting images, from thinking based on accepted knowledge and rigid structures?

The next chapter will attempt to answer these questions, and in addition will deal with other topics and points of view, by employing Deleuze and Guattari's "toolbox" and the ideas of other theorists.

Chapter 4

From Representation to Rhizome

In this chapter, I present an alternative reading to three films analyzed earlier: *No Names on the Doors*, *Operation Grandma* and *Mother of the Gevatron*. I examine the films separately, reading each closely and referring to relatively restricted contexts. The rationale behind this individual attention is an attempt to construct an alternative view to the one evoked by both the representation paradigm and the genre paradigm presented in chapter 3, which fuse the films together. As a consequence of the focus of the two paradigms on plot, themes, myths, archetypes, binary oppositions and ideology, the films seem quite similar to one another, expressing the same notion: the shattering of the dream, utopia-dystopia and de-mystification of kibbutz ideals. In contrast, therefore, I now wish to reach maximum differentiation and distinction between the films.

The chapter consists of three parts, each devoted to a multifaceted analysis of a single movie. I have refrained from addressing thematic cross-sections in order to avoid repetitiveness or redundancy. Instead, I elicited some of the concepts, the ideas and the directions offered by Deleuze and Guattari, related them to the films and created through them links that lead to as varied routes as possible. The discussion I am suggesting relies on different texts by Deleuze and Guattari in addition to articles and books written about them. In a rather random manner, I relied on fragments from three main sources that, at least at the beginning, seem different and thus cover potentially a wide range of possibilities. The texts are *Kafka – Toward a Minor Literature* (1975) and *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) by Deleuze and Guattari, and Deleuze's *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1983). Whenever possible and appropriate, I pause to explain some of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts and moves.

I selected certain concepts from their toolbox that will help me to break both from the kibbutz as homogenous and coherent signifier and from the notions of structure, binary oppositions and foundation. To that end, I am choosing those tools that apparently express the dynamic of process, production and change: the

rhizome, reterritorialization and deterritorialisation, assemblages, machines, desire, becoming, affects, molecular lines and few more.

Through the alternative reading of the films discussed here, I critique the analysis of the films presented in the previous chapter and challenge some of the concepts and thought patterns of the symbolic-realistic interpretation. This dynamic reflects several moves and goals I mentioned in the course of the study: I am attempting to distance and disengage myself from the traditional dominant interpretation in order to reach new horizons. I believe the traditional interpretation is insufficient and that a need for an unconventional approach for analysis of films has arisen. The discussion and analysis here imply that films produced in the passing decade about the kibbutz do not necessarily, as might be suggested in chapter 3, merely repeat, reiterate and continue the themes and ideology of earlier periods, but also evoke an altogether different reading.

The remark concerning the similarity of the films, as they are presented in Chapter 3, as if they express the same ideas, alludes to Deleuze and Guattari's critique of what they call "the representational thinking." That critique claims that the representational mode of thinking relies on models of identity, similarity, analogy and contrast. We have seen, for example, how in the previous chapter meanings are constructed based on dichotomies (contrast), realism (identity or similarity between the representation and the object) or allegorical interpretation (analogies). Contrary to this mode of thinking, Deleuze and Guattari propose the concept of rhizome and nomadic thinking. The rhizome expresses an anti-methodological, anti-systemic or anti-structural thinking. It is a net of dots that cannot be encompassed or contoured by a set frame, a net where different areas have different tasks, where various connections are formed, sometimes in surprising ways. The rhizome has no boundary, and since it is always broken there is no beginning and no end. Therefore one is always in the middle and can find and locate certain connections but not all. In the rhizome way of thinking, everything expands over the surface, without any depth or height, whether mental or metaphysical. They argue that "The rhizome is antigenealogy" (1987: 11). That is why Deleuze (and Guattari) prefer to think in terms of exteriority: topologies, forces, relations, lines, nets, formations, ties, connections, engagements and encounters.

The purpose in creating rhizomatic maps, among other things, is to construct a new way of thinking and new perceptions. That is the object I have set up to reach in the current chapter. The challenge was to approach films and a body of knowledge that is apparently contoured, organized, familiar and recognizable - the kibbutz and films about the kibbutz – and to draw up and use new maps, alternative connections, unfamiliar directions and lines. In each study of a film there are several sections, where I attempted to draw and construct maps and mini maps and create new layouts, offering new possible connections. I have tried to move across the surface and to approach each of the films analyzed here from different directions and angles creating numerous diverse applications. I did not encompass everything and left some of the issues and findings open, with the intention of referring to them as a whole and in additional contexts in the next chapter.

My intention has been to use selected Deleuzian tools, which I found helpful for my research, rather than to elaborate on them sysematically. Whenever I felt necessary, I have given a short explanation of the terms. I would like, however, to point here to the overall direction or application of my analysis. The concepts/tools I have mentioned before will help me find a way out of what Deleuze calls the plane of transcendence and molar lines and thus approach what he calls the plane of immanence and molecular lines. The first is associated with macro politics, ideology, state powers, social order, the Law, the Family, gender, subjects and object. Its nature is to impose limitations, contractions and clear identities, organized by structures, forms and binary machines. As Massumi notes: “Molarization is the in-itself of contradiction [...] Its problem is always to take a *both/and* and make it *either/or*” (1999: 112). I am arguing that the representation paradigm and the genre paradigm are modes of thinking that arise out of or focus on these plane and lines.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that “everything is political, but every politics is simultaneously a *macropolitics* and a *micropolitics* [...] There is a micropolitics of perception, affection, conversation, and so forth” (1987: 213). By using tools like reterritorialization and deterritorialisation, assemblages or machines, I will try to reach the micropolitics of the immanent plane and the molecular lines activated by the films. That is, the manifestation of life as an open and creative

whole that is not governed by fixed forms, organization or structures but rather expresses an ongoing process of connections, compositions, movements, and also impersonal ties and forces. I will use the phrases 'molecular line', 'way out' or 'escape route" to indicate aspects of breaking from the plane of transcendence and the deterritorialisation of molar lines, fixed forms and rigid thinking. I should add that I will be more cautious with regards to the term 'line of flight", since it indicates a more prominent rupture and mutation than the previous two lines.[78]

In addition, it is worth clarifying that the object of this chapter is neither to describe the kibbutz nor the kibbutz sociology. I do not examine whether the films reflect realistically and accurately life in the kibbutz. Rather, the goal of this chapter is the investigation of the films themselves, on the one hand, and the discourse regarding the films, on the other. In other words, I have attempted to position myself in a Deleuzian manner of in-between. I intend to consider these films and the discourse about them in order to examine and depart from the linguistic and conceptual presuppositions of the previous two paradigms. And I also hope to contemplate the world itself, what is out there, the being and becoming of life, including the body and a body with consciousness. The kibbutz, the films and the manner in which language refers to them are all at the center of this chapter.

4.1 – Ideology and Micro-Politics in *No Names on the Doors*

Each of the films that were analyzed in Chapter 3 presents a different articulation of space, territory and place. In each of the films, space is expressed differently regarding its division, topography, points, distances, density, entrances and exits, as well as differences related to the visual nature of space in terms of color, shade and texture. In the case of the symbolic-realistic interpretation, such expressions and extensions disappear from view. Space becomes self-evident, transparent, an unimportant, irrelevant backdrop. As we have seen, such

[78] For a wider discussion on the concepts of planes and lines, see Pisters 1998: 30-32 and Kennedy 2000: 80-81.

interpretation focuses on thematic elements and ideological meanings, or the manner in which film reflects cultural and social changes in kibbutz society.

In fact, we can trace the disappearance of attention to space in symbolic-realistic interpretation if we examine the transition from period to period as described in Chapter 2. The gradual disappearance of the attention paid to space can be mapped. In the first period (1930-1939), film interpretation paid attention to space in terms of settling the land, cultivating the wilderness and physical labor. By the second period (1939-1947), the territory and the place serve only as a background, a backdrop for the story of the absorption of immigrants and survivors (accompanied by ideological interpretation that examines the dominant/hegemonic version as opposed to the historical "truth"). From the third period (1948-1964) onwards, space becomes a background in interpretative discourse, a platform or stage upon which dramas from the life of the nation are enacted and examined. War stories, the tension between Jews of Western and Oriental origin, the struggle between the individual and the collective, and so forth all appear on this stage. From this point, symbolic-realistic interpretation will deal mainly with ideological analysis and value judgments, in the dissection and examination of beliefs and myths, but will relate to space and territory as transparent, as self-evident.

The approach of symbolic-realistic interpretation to space is dual: at one pole the unnoticed space may be found and at the other symbolic-mythic space. The transparent space corresponds with representative and realistic thinking. Since the space appearing in the film is either the same or similar to reality, there is no need to relate to the ways it is represented, since it is "like reality." As was stated in Chapter 1, most early Israeli films, especially films about the kibbutz, were filmed in actual locations, and this contributed to the sense of realism. The second pole corresponds with interpretation that attributes symbolic and mythological meaning to space, establishing meanings that go beyond space, that are transcendental to space.

In this context, such duality creates two effects: regarding the films that were analyzed in the previous chapter, symbolic-realistic interpretation relates to space as to the same space, identical in each of the films, so that multiplicity and

variety become one. Under the signifier "kibbutz," space is the same space, identical to itself, whether one is talking about one film or ten, whether the film is from the 1960s or from the 1990s. It thereby follows that if space is identical or similar in each one of the films, it is transparent and thus unimportant and insignificant. It may be included or generalized under one umbrella of symbolic or mythological meanings, over-codification and extra-textual meanings which are common to all the films, for example, the representation and image of a crisis. Below I will suggest an interpretation of *No Names on the Doors* that indicates an escape route from this duality.

4.1.1 – The Rhizome and the Logic of Multiple Entrances

Deleuze and Guattari ask how readers can enter one of Kafka's works, and they answer: "We will enter, then, by any point whatsoever; none matters more than another, and no entrance is more privileged..." (1986: 3).

Following this logic, I would like to ask: How can one enter a film, a territory, a kibbutz? Are some entrances given priority? Are some gateways more privileged than others? How does the point of entry and what is associated with it change the manner in which a film is interpreted? It is possible to adopt a simple, well-known principle, for example the logic of classical editing or of continuity, manifested in a panoramic extreme long shot that presents the entire space/kibbutz, a shot that establishes for the viewer the time and place in which the story will unfold. That will be followed by cut-ins according to the story line and the dramatic development. This is the familiar entrance that we have seen time and again in films about the kibbutz from the 1930s onwards. It involves a panoramic long shot that shows a settlement surrounded by fields and orchards, cutting or dissolving to a shot of the entrance to the kibbutz, and from here cutting inward to present the characters and the conflicts around which the plot develops.

No Names on the Doors seems to begin with a similar entrance inviting a symbolic-realistic interpretation. The film opens with three scenes: a sequence shot, an establishing long shot that displays the water tower surrounded by trees,

a paved path, a garden illuminated at dusk;[79] a second scene, also a sequence shot, an over-the-shoulder shot in which we see a man sitting at a table and looking out the window at the scenery outside; a third scene depicting a military funeral in the kibbutz that is made up of a number of traveling shots combined with a right and left panning motion.

The opening of *No Names on the Doors*, then, spreads a familiar map before us: the water tower, the trees and the topography are representations of the Kibbutz, in capital K: the archetype of the water tower, the perfectly organized space, the pastoral calm. Behind this peaceful, external facade, the film will reveal the tensions and crises developing within the small community. The melancholy singing of the choir in the first scene, along with the information provided by the narrator in the second scene, already determines the story line, lays out a map, firmly setting the laws of the layout: a small closed community, struggles between individuals, distress, loneliness, crisis. Representational interpretation has exposed the deep structure underneath the surface, namely the shattered dream.

The entrance through this segment simulates a topographical representation of a territory in the form of a circle with a tower at its core surrounded by houses. There is a view from above, from the tower downwards, a hierarchy of gazes. This entrance connects rather smoothly with the second scene, in which the narrator glances out the window and conveys information about the environment to the viewers, the time frame and the characters. It is also echoed in six or seven other shots in the course of the film. The composition is always the same – Noam is sitting near the computer on his worktable, looking out the window and writing the story. This formation is typical of the familiar paradigm of kibbutz films. On the one hand, the viewpoint is that of a character central to the plot that either comes from outside or observes from the sidelines, as in the films *Sallah*, where the viewpoint is that of a new immigrant, *Boy Meets Girl*, where the viewpoint is that of the child from outside, or *Atalia*, where the perspective is

[79] The sequence shot (or long take) presents an entire scene in one long uncut (unedited) shot.

that of the misfit. On the other hand, these viewpoints are subordinated to a view from "above," a narrator or a focalizer. This latter angle is the one favored by symbolic-realistic interpretation, therefore leading to normative, ideological judgment.

In addition, according to the same logic, the repetition of the same composition in which Noam looks out the window constructs content and meanings that express simple formal dichotomies. These include open space as opposed to a closed area, freedom of movement versus stasis and inability to move, freedom in contrast to submissiveness, the private sphere as distinct from the public one. The semiotics of formal dichotomies is responsible for the allocation of metaphors and symbols: the place as a prison, no exit, voyeurism, invasion of the public sphere into the intimate realm of the individual, or the contrast between the small place and the large place (see Chapter 2) all lead to dialectical thinking that creates a synthesis between what the place was or was supposed to be (foundation, source) and what it has become, a synthesis generating ideological judgment stemming from contrasts – the dream and its disintegration, utopia versus dystopia.

Such an entrance and interpretation take place on a molar or segmental line, while the tower and the view from above embody the "eye" of ideology. Such an entrance will dictate an interpretation focusing on political, historical and social power relations: the kibbutz, the myth, the socialist elite and the social crises in the present. These forces will emerge through focusing on the constraints and limitations imposed on the individual by the social organization. Meaning will stem from binary opposites such as the individual versus the collective, past versus present, solidarity versus rivalry. Covertly, such an entrance and understanding are organized by a transcendental plane, that is, that same view from above, from outside.

However, the film effects a deterritorialization of the single possible entrance logic, deterritorializing the hierarchic structure and simplistic formalizations. I use the term deterritorialisation to mean forcing disarticulation, producing a change, freeing up fixed relations and exposing the body (of a character, a

territory or thought) to new organizations: “This is what the completion of the process is: not a promised and pre-existing land, but a world created in its tendency, its coming undone, its deterritorialisation” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 322). Deterritorialisation is thus tied to the possibility of change immanent to a given territory but this change often implies new fixed connections and rigid limitations, that is, reterritorialization. Deleuze and Guattari suggest for example, that memory yields a reterritorialization of childhood (1986: 78-79).

The transition between these three scenes is accomplished by cutting which does not construct or convey the spatial connection between the three different locations (tower, house, and road). From the onset, the film deconstructs the principle of a smooth, hierarchical entrance in favor of distortion and a principle of adjacency. Thus for example the third scene shows the same road without a clear beginning or end. This shot is repeated a number of times, but instead of creating a feeling of sense, logic and organized space, a rational spatial map, it conveys a feeling of disorder and illogic. The road might be an entrance or an exit, in the margins or at the center of the territory. Instead of circular topography with the tower at its center, one perceives a place whose principle of distribution is unknown. Here, already, is a small fragmented and crumbling line, a distortion, avoidance, experimentation.

Furthermore, we can deconstruct the first scene and discover an alternative entrance: the long shot of the tower is also a close-up of light, since it is early morning. In the link with the second sequence, there is a delicate movement of the sun’s rays at dawn. In the first scene, it is still night-time, but in the second scene the bluish gray shades are tinted into the yellow-greens of a delicate, shining morning light. This entrance relates to the gentle motion of light in the course of the film. Instead of one view from above, the viewpoint of one human eye that divides things into “black” and “white” (good versus bad), the light creates a delicate texture of colors and a broad spectrum of shades that appear in the changing colors of the landscape, the trees, the lawn and the gardens. These associations involve live and affective material that cannot be separated from the milieu, the people or the place**.**

4.1.2 – Deterritorialization and Immanence

The multiple entrances principle invites us to enter a space without a map, without clear coordinates. The rhizome changes according to the entrance we have chosen and the points we have linked to this entrance. We will choose a modest, less segmented and more molecular entrance. As mentioned above, the narration in *No Names on the Doors* alternates between one story fragment and another. Thus, the smooth, ideally organized space has already been subverted and given both acceleration and intensity. Windows, doors, glass walls, mirrors and pictures divide almost every shot of the film into a frame within a frame.

Noam (the narrator) is sitting near a table in his room. He is filmed over the shoulder, looking out the window. The exact same composition is repeated alternately seven times. Sometimes nothing can be seen outside the window, revealing the windows of the house opposite, and at times one of the characters crosses our view. The film includes four scenes featuring Adina, the bereaved mother, in her dead son's wooden hut. The view is from outside, through the door. The doorframe divides the frame internally. She is sitting near a large painting, a portrait of her that was painted by her son before he died, which again divides the frame/ screen/ space.

While Adina looks out the door, Mordy looks out the window at the people outside. He sneaks into Simcha's room through the door and leaves by the window. When he passes by the members celebrating in the dining room, the scene is filmed from inside looking out. The glass wall is divided into small squares and Mordy can be seen observing the celebrants. Aya, the nurse, enters and exits through various doors, sometimes entering and sometimes remaining outside. Simcha looks at his reflection in a large mirror. Kuba looks out the window or looks in a large mirror. Eli, the kibbutz secretary, always appears standing in the doorway, either keeping his distance or afraid to enter. Uzi, the bereaved father, arrives at the kibbutz, but since all the doors look the same and there are no names on them, he cannot find the entrance he is looking for.

As stated above, we are not searching here for social or symbolic significance: representation as a transition from content to meaning, but for what it does: the rhizome, how expression works to distort content. The film effects a deterritorialization of the circular topography, the tower with the view from above looking downwards (the all-knowing vision). It establishes a superficial topography with various glances. The surface, however, is not smooth and homogenous but rather fragmented and distorted. It is a network/rhizome rather than an organized structure having one center. Each point-location-door-window is a center from which other points can be seen and reached, but not all at the same time. At times the route is direct (Noam looking directly outside), at times it is diagonal and broken up (the access road) and at times it zigzags among several points (Eli's or Uzi's movements).

The fragmentation and intensity imposed by the windows and doors relieves the space from the dualism of a transparent space / mythic (or symbolic) space. This kind of dualism typifies symbolic-realistic interpretation according to which space is either taken for granted, a transparent stage on which to present social and ideological problems, or a mythic coded space bearing symbolic and allegorical significance. In the film, space is not transparent or self evident, but rather blocked, fragmented, distorted. Yet, the multiplicity and repetition of frameworks prevents or blocks the construction of symbolic metaphoric meanings, such as, windows/frames = social pressure = a prison-like place. The multiplicity does not allow one to create a synthesis or homogenization also due to the fact that each of these elements changes its function according to context and circumstance. Thus, doors can function as thresholds, barriers and deterrents but not only. For example, the door of the memorial room in which Adina is sitting is a barrier that prevents people from visiting the room, whereas in Kuba's case, doors are the link with the outside world and the assistance it can give him.

Two important points emerge from this form of expression. First, windows and doors create a continuous, open expanse. Isolating a specific component and imposing a certain symbolic meaning is misleading. Second, it is impossible to separate between inside and outside or between the milieu and the living material of which it is made up. Life is present and immanent in each and every shot. The

film constantly accentuates what exists between the houses, between the windows and between the doors: earth, plants, water sources (the tower), light and air that constantly change their mass. In other words, it is impossible to separate "ideology" (the superstructure) from existence, from the means of production or production forces (infra-structure). Deleuze, following Spinoza, calls this "univocity": "Expressive immanence cannot be sustained unless it is accompanied by thoroughgoing conception of univocity, a thoroughgoing affirmation of univocal Being" (1992: 178).

This immanence is also emphasized in the way the film interrupts the plot time and again by the camera's movement away from the characters in an attempt to emphasize the molecular agitation of the place: animals, birds, plants, sky, sunrise, sunset, smells and noises. To sum up, one may say that in the surface view and expression of a continuous world there is no depth or height, no external point from which metaphors of height and depth can be created, but only a process and a continuum.

This continuum does not allow the construction of a closed, predetermined system having one center, one mechanism or one single law. In other words, no one view can encompass or include the whole, since the whole is open and exposed in all directions. In this sense, the film nullifies representation as an appearance of something. There is a multiplicity of junctions, parts, ramifications and loose ends (rhizome). It is impossible to determine whether the system is disintegrating or is stagnant, as in the idea of the shattered dream, since it never was static and closed. Rather, it was always dynamic and open, saturated or loaded with possibilities that were either realized or not realized. Furthermore, the continuity and immanence, on the one hand, and the ramifications and loose ends, on the other, instantly cancel the possibility of any *a priori* principle of realization or non-realization. That is, no image can be formulated that from the outset assumes a foundation, a source, something that the system has deviated from or aspired to.

4.1.3 – Parts, Machines and Series

We have established what the system has escaped from, but what has it escaped to? One can find active, vigorous micro-politics beneath the molar lines. The film transforms the clear identities and fixed positions of the molar lines and creates a multiplicity of connections and different coalitions. The formalization and fixed, durable structures upon which symbolic-realistic interpretation focuses – individual versus collective, private and public, the Law, the ideological apparatus - all lose their rigidity in order to proliferate or to escape towards new lines of intensity. The expression – the surface, continuity, a net of connections – is applicable both to the content and to the entire work.

The narration of *No Names on the Doors* alternates between several stories that evolve, in which we can locate four pairs of characters. Familial or pseudo-familial relationships serve as the basis of collective life: the elderly Kuba and his retarded son, Yisrael; the bereaved Adina and her husband; the narrator Noam and the nurse Aya and the two single men, Mordy and Simcha.

These familial-like pairs, which are supposed to impart stability and continuity, are in fact quite precarious. Behind each pair there is a third element, a ghost, a figure of a dead person. The figure of the dead individual influences the various pairs in different ways. Kuba's wife was the one who looked after Yisrael. With her death, Kuba was compelled to cope with the situation, initiate and choose between different alternatives. Ariel, Adina's dead son, imposes on her and her husband a kind of apathy, seclusion and the desire to perpetuate his memory. Aya's boyfriend, who was killed, obligates her to cope with Uzi (his bereaved father) and with Noam. Mordy and Simcha, who are parentless and came to the kibbutz as orphans, constitute a kind of an alternative family.

In addition to the deceased individuals who continue to live, there are live people who are actually already partially dead. In two scenes Kuba has a dream: in the first he dreams of the death of his son Yisrael and in the second he dreams of his own death. Uzi, the bereaved father, who comes to visit Aya in order to find solace, looks tired, burnt out, helpless. Adina, who is busily trying to perpetuate her son's memory, has become a walking shade, a ghost wandering around the kibbutz. The pairs, which have become trios, increase in the course of the film

into quartets. Aya helps Kuba and Yisrael to face the authorities, offers medical help and tries to find a solution for Yisrael's problems. Eli, the kibbutz secretary, takes a stand between stubborn Adina and her submissive husband in order to retrieve Arial's apartment and transfer his bed to Kuba. Uzi, the officer and bereaved father, arrives in the kibbutz to receive comfort from Aya. Saskia, the girl who arrives from Finland, loosens the bond between Mordy and Simcha.

The fourth party has various diverse functions. Saskia breaks up the "family unit" made up of Mordy and Simcha, but she also helps Simcha to find his place in the larger family, the kibbutz, when they attend the kibbutz's Passover celebration together. Eli acts as part of the bureaucratic mechanism when he tries to retrieve Arial's apartment, but also as part of the social mechanism when he tries to help Kuba to get a bed and to find a solution for Yisrael. For Kuba, Aya represents the establishment, but she offers comfort to Uzi in a totally different role.

There is no one law, one unified system having a fixed center and a solid foundation, but rather different parts, mechanisms and machines. By "machine" Deleuze and Guattari refer to networks or entities that are inherently unstable, in constant flux and transfornation. In other words, 'machinic thinking' is a way of thinking that tries to subvert organicist models, presupposed totalities, closed identities and specific ends or intentions: "Because a machine has no subjectivity or organizing center it is nothing more than the connections and productions it makes; it is what it does. It therefore has no home or ground; it is a constant process of deterritorialisation, or becoming other than itself"(Colebrook 2002: 55-56).

If we apply this kind of thinking to *No Names*, then we can say that Adina receives support from the ceremonial mechanism, the large public that accompanies her in the funeral scene (but the ceremony itself is a hybrid between an army/national funeral and a local/kibbutz funeral). As opposed to the public ceremony, she also conducts her own private ceremonies to perpetuate her son's memory. On the one hand, she is the victim of the bureaucratic mechanism when she is asked to vacate the room, becoming involved in the kibbutz's production machine when her son's room is to be rented out to potential tenants, thus

creating another source of income for the kibbutz. On the other hand, this machine supports her, allowing her to sit at home and not go to work. She is trapped in a mechanism of disapproving gazes – the open disapproval of the kibbutz members – but she also returns these gazes twofold: by her own gazes and those of her image in the portrait. Adina is furthermore part of the social care mechanism when she permits her son's bed to be given to Kuba and is also connected through her son's paintings to the art machine.

Aya is an intersection of mechanisms within the social machine. As part of the administrative segment, she tries to convince Kuba to institutionalize Yisrael; as part of the medical mechanism, she attempts to help Kuba. She begs him to take his medicine and offers him help looking after Yisrael. Against her will, she becomes part of the army apparatus when she must deal with the bereaved father. Conversly, she fails in her role as part of the social mechanism when she does not pay attention to Mordy's distress.

Eli, the kibbutz secretary, is part of the legal and bureaucratic mechanism of the social and productive machines, but his position is constantly shifting: he is alternately a judge, an advocate, a prosecutor and a defendant. He is the prosecutor of the productive machine when he demands that Adina vacate the room. He is the defender of the social mechanism when he tries to help Kuba. He acts as a judge when he disparages people to Aya. And he is the victim of the system, since in all these roles he will always be guilty, the person who represents the evils of the administrative system and the insensitivity of the bureaucracy towards the individual. Conversely, Eli, as the representative of the law whose place in the system is supposed to be steady and fixed, is the only character in the film that has no home or no place; no stable point of contact. He spends his time running around outside from one place to another.

The above indicates the creative potential of deterritorialisation to produce invisible series, coalitions and pacts. Noam, Adina and Mordy constitute a series of stationary voyagers. Noam and Adina spend most of their time sitting on chairs, they are static and their activity consists of watching the scenery and the passage of people. They are both filmed from a fixed camera position that emphasizes that they are observers living in their own spiritual world. Mordy, on

the other hand, goes out on a geographical tour, but without leaving the confines of the kibbutz. He pores over the map of Europe in order to locate Finland and he collects data in order to understand where Saskia comes from. Unlike Adina, Noam and Mordy, there is a series of people who spend their time running around, although in actual fact they remain in the same place, namely Eli, Kuba and Aya. The three of them move about incessantly, entering and leaving buildings, walking around the kibbutz yard, negotiating with various parties.

Another series is related to time, to characters for whom time has frozen, stopped, namely Uzi, Adina and Yisrael, although in each case frozen time takes a different form. Adina, who seems to be a mature woman at the height of her powers, conducts repetitive rituals of dress (throughout the film she appears in a black dress), permanently seated in the same position and always next to the portrait her son painted of her. In Uzi's case, frozen time is imprinted in the body: despite his being an army officer, he is sloppily dressed, his hair wild and scraggy and his eyes dead. Yisrael is a child trapped in an adult's body, so one can say that chronological time has stopped for him. He loves to eat ice cream and a few times in the film he looks at the clock and says to his father: "Daddy, nine, daddy, ten." It is obvious that he has no sense of time. One can say about Yisrael that as time passes, it both expands and contracts: the older he gets the more childlike he becomes.

Parallel to the frozen time series there is another one, namely of people who have no time, who must hurry. Kuba feels that his strength is running out and that he won't survive much longer. He must quickly find an acceptable and fair solution for his son, Yisrael. Eli the kibbutz secretary is driven by considerations of profit (time is money). Waiting only a short time after the funeral, he asks for Arial's room in order to rent it out. Simcha is in a hurry for entirely different reasons. He needs to organize his apartment and prepare for Saskia's imminent arrival.

Some characters may also be seen as belonging to the artistic machine in different capacities. Kuba is connected to the cinema. In two fantasy sequences, he directs his own death and that of his son, Yisrael. Kuba is the director, the

cameraman, the actor, the soundman and the artistic director. He "directs" the scenes, while in the background we see the same road that appeared in the funeral at the beginning of the film. He "films" in black and white, but instead of the chirping of birds and the lowing of cows, he adds a soundtrack of creaking wheels.[80] Mordy is connected with the theater, musical revues, dance and singing. He dances and sings in two scenes. The first time he appears in front of an audience of one (opposite Noam's window, while the latter observes him), and the second time his audience is made up of cows in the barn. Noam, as stated above, is part of the literary machine. He turns people, events and landscape that he sees through his window into characters in the story he is typing on the laptop computer on his table.

The multiplicity of lines, intersections, coalitions and possibilities takes the place of internally consistent unity, in other words, the kibbutz as a system having one center, one law, one machine. Deterritorialization not only cancels out the possibility of closed identity and fixed ground, but also defines a layout in which relations embody the complex process of adding, joining, composing, adjusting, repeating and so on. This is not a view from above that subjugates and neutralizes space with a minimum of links ("sameness," "identical to itself"), but a place in imminent process in which people find themselves in a multiplicity of different parts, mechanisms and machines.

4.1.4 – Seeking a Way Out, Molecular Lines and the Impulse-Image

All these create an enigmatic array in which the subject finds himself in a complex of lines, intersections and possibilities. We saw in some of the films in Chapters 2 and 3 that the dramatic solutions fluctuated between two poles: submission, abandonment, loneliness and alienation, on one side, or searching for happiness somewhere else, on the other. In *Atalia*, for example, it is the choice between madness and running away. In *No Names on the Doors*, it is possible to find more molecular and less visible, eye-catching lines of resistance and delay. We can adopt the argument of Deleuze and Guattari: "The problem is

[80] Both scenes are reminiscent of the opening scene of *Wild Strawberries*, Bergman, 1957.

not that of being free but of finding a way out, or even a way in, another side, a hallway, an adjacency." (1986: 7-8).

After Kuba fails to convince the general assembly to let his son stay in the kibbutz, he departs, joined by Aya. They walk together at night along the kibbutz's paths, while stillness is all around them. Although part of Kuba's upper body is paralyzed, he says to Aya: "There is nothing like country air, in the dark, when it isn't possible to see much. Then it is easier to smell the fragrances. Smell it, Aya, smell it! How many smells can you identify? Eucalyptus trees, guavas, pines, the cow barns…". At this breaking point, this threshold, Kuba's desire stirred again, body and soul are open to new perceptions, are affected by his surroundings. There is a small escape route, a link with pure and intensive matter that evades signification.

This escape from signification is also connected to the escape from another "enemy" – the non-diegetic music. This music is heard performed by a choir throughout the film, especially accompanied by a melody played on a piano and xylophone. The music is too obvious, over-molded; similar music may be found in other films about the kibbutz, even those from the 1980s. This melancholic music imposes meaning and emotions and reinforces the theme of crisis and wreckage. Kuba's affiliation with a wide register of scents and sounds, such as pines + eucalyptuses + guavas + the cowshed' manure + cows and birds' noises - all imply a transition from the sense conveyed by the music to the percepts of smells and voices. Kuba's outlet, then, is also an outlet of expression: deterritorialization of music that signifies too much.

The above connection with scents and sounds is the lived dimension of audible, visual and tactile transformation produced in a certain situation or encounter. In Deluezian terms, these are affects. The term designates the qualities of change that occur when bodies collide or connect, a modification that can be corporeal but also spiritual, conceptual, mineral or animal. Actually, affect and becoming express the same process: "To the relations composing, decomposing, or modifying an individual there correspond intensities that affect it, augmenting or diminishing its power to act; these intensities come from external parts or from the individual's own parts. Affects are becomings" (1987: 256).

Returning to the film, we observes that Adina does not choose madness, nor, as in *Atalia*'s case, escape. Neither does she opt for scandal, accusations or martyrdom, as in *Noah at 17* or *The Dreamers*. Instead of passively reacting to molarization (either/or), she is active and influential, but on the molecular level. From the point at which she finds herself, she patiently examines the options or lines open to her. She knows and understands that neither a room nor a bed will bring back her dead son. She actually chooses restraint, silence, holding her head up high and meeting others' gazes. Adina finds an outlet through style as expressed in her distinctive clothes, upright posture, calm and restraint and the way in which she looks Eli straight into the eye when he appears in the doorway.

At certain moments in the film, Adina seems to be in another, parallel, universe, a spiritual realm of inhuman, singular forces. This is expressed in the unusual lighting of the room where she sits. Whereas most of the film is lit by sharp, relatively hard light, as in "realism", the room where Adina spends most of her time – her son's studio – is lit in a different, striking way. Delicate rays of light filter in through the windows, which are covered by white curtains, so that a very diffused light is created which produces a special texture of soft shades (white, green, yellow). It is also rather hazy and reminiscent of French impressionist painting, particularly Renoir, perhaps due to Adina's figure and her portrait in the center of the room.

"Molecularity, matter, particles and even fibers become more pertinent to mechanism of desire than the molar plane of psychoanalysis. It has nothing to do with subjectivities but exists through movement, process, rhythm, forces." (Kennedy 81). In other words, Adina's existence is a departure from the molar segmentation of individual versus collective, and also from repressed desire as a result of loss (the son's death) or one unified identity ("the bereaved mother"). She exchanges the limited, hard world for a more flexible, fluid one. The motion of the sun's rays, the rhythm of rays of light or the power and density of color and temperature are part of her style and behavior: with her slow gait, erect posture, restraint and in the context described here, Adina appears to be a kind of moving-portrait.

Mordy's escape begins with becoming-animal, but ends in death. On Passover eve, he goes to the cowshed wearing festive clothes. He pushes the food closer to the cows with his legs, bursts out into a song from the Passover service, and begins dancing in a deliberate, blatant manner for his bovine audience. At the end of the song, one of the cows moos and he pets her, saying "You were good." Mordy's becoming-animal is accompanied by the cow's becoming-human. Mordy connects with the underdevelopment of the body, an animalistic mass, the immanent flow of life. It is worth noting that for a split second, when the song and dance are over, Mordy sways dizzily back and forth. His dizziness expresses a veering between two poles: the over-civilized, all-too-human world of the kibbutz or the cowshed, and the non-human becoming one of animals or cows.

Similarly to Kuba's scene described above, here too the music is deterritorialized and reterritorialized. The scene begins when Mordy goes past the dining room, where the Passover feast is being celebrated. The kibbutz members are all singing together (diegetic music). In the next shot we see Mordy walking in the dark on his way to the cowshed. The community sing-along is replaced by a kind of threatening humming produced by a male choir in a low register (non-diegetic music). The music that has undergone territorialization and over-styling, the togetherness singing, has been taken to a threshold, a crack, where it is transformed into an animal-like sound or howl combined with the cows' mooing. The underdevelopment of the body, the dance with the animals, is also an underdevelopment of the music: an animal-like sound that defies clear semantic definition.

In this scene, Mordy dances and sings: "Glory be to You, glory be to You/ because Yours is the day as well as the night." According to the words' semantic meaning, a link is formed here with another, spiritual dimension. The word "Yours" can signify God, and since it is in the context of Passover, a link is created with emerging from slavery to freedom. In the context of a secular community (the kibbutz), "yours" can also signify Mordy himself, who connects with the glory of the day and the night, the life cycle, affirmative powers of life (Spinoza's connatus). The singing and dancing in the cowshed is also evocative of the first pioneers and the aura of sanctity surrounding their settlement of the land.

The affirmative powers and the connection with the initial drive of the pioneers in this scene, as well as Kuba's and Adina's connections that were described above, can be seen as an impulse-image, which according to Deleuze implies qualities and forces joined with an "originary world": "These are human animals. And this indeed is the impulse: the energy, which seizes fragments in the originary world... The originary world has no existence independent of the geographical and historical milieu which serves as its medium." (1986: 124)

4.1.5 – Body, Mind and Desiring-Machines

The physical and sensual side of Adina's, Kuba's and Mordy's appearance serves to remind us in our conventional mindset that existence is embedded in the body, sensory aspects and affects, as well as in the mind (transcendence). This claim is particularly relevant to symbolic-realistic interpretation, which relates to cinematic text as a reflection and representation of "mind," that is, non-physical components: attitudes, beliefs, myths, ideas and ideologies. For instance, the concentration of a large number of funerals and deaths in the film invites symbolic and allegorical thinking and interpretation: the decline and disintegration of Zionism, the kibbutz elite and the hegemony of the Ashkenazi population and culture. To a large extent, this interpretation creates an *a priori* correspondence between the interpreter's post-Zionist position, (see Chapter 1) and what he or she wishes to find in the film.

Focusing on social tensions and conflicts or the ideological (utopian) associations with a place obscures or ignores physical aspects and material processes. The links and associations with a place are not only, if at all, ideological or based on one value. The multiplicity of connections, parts and mechanisms that were described in the previous section, such as Kuba's, Adina's and Mordy's physiological, sensory experiences, should be understood as states of desire, the immanence of desire. They should be perceived as an expression of the subject's need for a body, not solely a mind.

According to Deleuze, desire is not a subjective aptitude that is blocked by an external factor and waits to materialize. Desire is not actually predetermined, nor is it a movement from the inside outwards (the desire for an object). Rather, desire is created outside by an encounter or matching. It investigates, experiments and drives us – not because of what we already constitute in ourselves, but as a result of the singularity created by our encounters with the outside world. We have seen the manner in which physiological, sensory and affective connections charge desire, as in the empowerment that is generated by Kuba's, Adina's and Mordy's encounters or connections with the outside – the physiological and affective connection with earth, air, light, sound, animals and plants. This is not only a connection with what can be perceived (by the eye) but also a relation with the body's surface (the skin's contact with the outside), and the characters' openness to scents, heat, noise, sounds, rhythms and delicate shades of color and light.

Desire is only desire when it exists in an assemblage or a machine. One cannot talk about desire outside a defined assemblage. Deleuze and Guattari describe desire as a desiring-machine*,* a machine that functions within us as a productive system that transforms us into an organism and molds us while simultaneously and incessantly disintegrating us, a machine that does not cease to create mechanisms and machines within the machine. We observed the functioning of this productivity in the previous section, which dealt with the multiplicity of fragments, mechanisms and series.

I have mentioned before the concept of assemblage. It is a complicate term and I use it to indicate, for instance, the complexity of experiences, perceptions and affections that are abstracted under the signifier or image named 'kibbutz': "Every assemblage is basically territorial [...] The territory makes the assemblage. The territory is more than the organism and the milieu, and the relation between the two" (ibid, 1987: 505). A territory, a place or characters in films are different kinds of assemblages, in the sense that they are collections of impersonal experiences, affects, or intensities. That is, assemblages are multiple entities, before they are organized by machines. The term has a dynamic and active aspect in the sense of connecting something to something else, congregating and adjusting. The originally French term is also related to the

terms terminal, branch or agency, that is a unit from a series that repeats itself and is linked to the other units.

The uniqueness of Kuba, Adina and Mordy lies in the fact that they are situated at the open ends, the periphery or threshold of the social milieu. The elderly widower, the bereaved mother and the bachelor all occupy end positions relative to the social order. These positions are liable to disturb or subvert the stability of the social order, as a parasitic or non-productive member, as a ghost or as a factor undermining the family institution. Yet, we have also seen that these thresholds can express the productive or creative component of the system. They embody possible exists, escape routes, bodily and sensory connections. They also convey desire as experimentation, as a forging of new links between presence and absence, animate and inanimate, human and animal. This is desire as an affirmation of life.

In conclusion, we have seen how film can allow thinking (and interpretation) to create something new and different, and to surpass what is taken for granted and predetermined. We have seen how film makes it possible to escape from rigidly set maps, from inflexible 'laws', from symbolic structures and from dualistic formulas. In other words, how film blocks the entry of the "enemy." The enemy, in this context, is representational thinking, transcendence. As Todd May claims: "Transcendence freezes living, makes it coagulate and lose its flow; it seeks to capture the vital difference that outruns all thought and submit it to the judgment of a single perspective, a perspective that stands outside difference and gathers it into manageable categories" (27).

In addition, we have also examined how the system can escape from the perception of a closed system with one center and one law to a multiplicity of lines of movement, coalitions and mechanisms. These make it possible, at the creative edges of the assemblage to discover a way out, escape routes, the empowerment of desire and mind-body connections.

4.2 – From *Logos* to *Nomos* in *Operation Grandma*

We will continue to examine the various ways a film may be entered. We will also consider whether some entrances are privileged, preferred above others, and how the entrance that is chosen and the points following from it influence the way the film is interpreted. Symbolic-realistic interpretation gives preference and precedence to two motifs represented or reflected in *Operation Grandma*: one is a parody of the kibbutz/ the elite/ the hegemony, and the other - a politics of identities. The parody concerns the values and norms associated with kibbutz, socialism and "old-fashioned" Zionism while a comedy of identities unfolds: three brothers who cannot find their place, or Alon's civilian identity, military identity and identity as disguised in Arab dress. The cinematic image is decoded as a reflection of the *zeitgeist*, a reality that is culturally and ideologically precarious. This interpretation rests on a transcendental plane: a parody based on inter-textual relationships, a preconception based on earlier texts, films, myths, foundations and sources. It is representational thinking, which relies on a pre-prepared structure (the kibbutz past / and present), or characters who function as an allegory or a symbol for a search for identity, preferring fixed points of reference, while assuming that identity precedes difference. This is a kind of genetics that has gone wrong, in other words, a deviation that does not meet with the criteria of "ideal" identity.

In analyzing the film *Operation Grandma*, I have focused on the film's central character, Alon, an army officer and the eldest of the three brothers, who returns to the kibbutz. I will attempt to show how the components connected to this character are in process, how they flow and ramble from place to place. Alon's character represents several dynamics of changing relationships on various levels. This is evident, for example, on the explicit level of characterization: if in 1980s films about the kibbutz, the characters were passive, closed in, depressed, lonely and agonizing, Alon's character is active, enterprising, hedonistic and lusting for life. Alon also differs from kibbutz characters in films of the 1990s and those from the beginning of the 21st century: Those are characters of Ashkenazi Jews who do not fit in, who feel like exiles in their own country and/or are at odds with their surroundings, serving as a metaphor for the disintegration and crisis of the Ashkenazi hegemony, as discussed in the

introduction of Chapter 3. Alon, on the other hand, constitutes an active force that "feels at home" in his place, virtually anywhere he is at.

Alon's movement towards the kibbutz and his orientation in the place/territory is different from such phenomena in other films. As opposed to his brother Benny, who wants to distance himself from the kibbutz as much as possible (by moving to America), Alon draws toward the kibbutz, settling there as a temporary resident, unlike more transient moves back to the kibbutz of other characters for whom the kibbutz is only a way-station - Noa, Sari and Reuben in *She's not 17*, as well as many other characters in kibbutz films from the 1960s (see Chapter 2.). As a "native son" of the place, Alon finds his way around remarkably well, as opposed to Uzi, for instance, who gets lost in the kibbutz in *No Names on the Doors*. On a more complex level, Alon's transition from place to place expresses, establishes and creates three types of relationships between places/territories: within the territory (intra-assemblage), between territories (interassemblagee) and in the infra-territory (a more covert and global movement of impersonal, economic, social and cosmic forces)[81]. I would like to demonstrate, then, not what Alon's character represents (a parody of the Sabra, kibbutz resident, soldier), but rather what he does, what connections and relationships he creates and what qualities he expresses as a character and as a figure.

4.2.1 – Territorial Assemblage and Drifting Lines

Alon returns to the kibbutz, but as a resident, not as a permanent member. This return connects two very different milieus: the army and the kibbutz. Through editing, the film associates and links by opposition these two institutions, establishing a contrast, a dichotomy. The kibbutz is a fixed, permanent place with houses, a swimming pool, a cowshed and especially the cemetery. These are functions and qualities that were territorialized – it is impossible to transport them. The army, in contrast, is characterized by a relatively high degree of mobility. Alon embodies this mobility when he moves from Tel-Aviv to the kibbutz near the Gaza Strip in order to carry out a defined mission with a

[81] The terms intra-assemblage, interassemblagee and infra-assemblage are spelled this way in the original text by Deleuze and Guattari.

deadline.[82] The social structure of the kibbutz is based on equality, is informal and is relatively lacking in a hierarchy. Conversely, the army is an institution constructed according to a clear hierarchy, promotion trajectories and fixed distances between lower ranking soldiers and officers. Alon, for example, insists on carrying out this mission in order to be promoted in rank. The kibbutz, a small rural community, affords a relatively large amount of free time, is inefficient and "improvident" (a surplus of refrigerators is kept in the storeroom), whereas the army is supposed to be a system characterized by efficiency and maximum exploitation of time and resources. Alon's character, as we shall see, makes it possible to escape from and undermine these dualities and dichotomies.

In the sequence showing Alon's arrival at the kibbutz, there are three consecutive scenes. In the first scene the camera follows him with a dolly to the left, as he walks down a path surrounded by grass and landscape gardens. He is welcomed by three children who sing mockingly: "Hey-ho, look who's coming/ Poor Crembo/ A week without having had a shit." The nickname "Crembo" was given to Alon in childhood after he ate 500 Crembos (a chocolate marshmallow treat) in order not to be caught stealing. Alon continues walking, then pauses, turns around and begins chasing after the children. The intensive pace of the pursuit is supported by high-speed electronic techno music. Alon catches one of the boys and throws him down on the grass. After the boy apologizes, Alon punishes him by shoving grass into his mouth, while explaining to the child that the act is not retribution for the insulting nickname, but because the boy's mother, Deborah, the general secretary hasn't given Alon a refrigerator.

In the second scene, Alon continues walking and arrives at the kibbutz swimming pool, where the lifeguard preparing children for a swimming competition is seen. Alon sits down next to Claudio, the carpenter and Deborah's lover, and the two greet one another and joke around. (Claudio greets Alon in Portuguese, indicating that the founding members of this kibbutz came from South America). Alon is an accomplished swimmer who has won several prizes, so Claudio asks him for a "champion's tip" to help his grandson swim faster. To this Alon answers with a straight face: "For a hundred meter race there is only

[82] The military concept of a "base" indicates a temporary location dictated by the duration of time-limited missions.

one way to win a medal: You start at your highest speed, and gradually accelerate." A close-up of Claudio's astonished face conveys his difficulty in understanding the logic and possible application of this advice.

The third scene opens as, while talking to Claudio, Alon notices a Swiss female volunteer sitting at the edge of the pool reading a newspaper. He plays with his sunglasses in order to catch her attention. She notices him and laughs with embarrassment. Afterwards, he walks to the pool, catches her attention, jumps into the water, and disappears. She searches the water, but can't see him. He suddenly surfaces and splashes her. She laughs. The dialogue between them is as follows:

He: Hi.
She: Hi.
He: What's your name?
She: Kirsten.
He: Me Alon.
She: What is Alon?
He: A tree. A very solid one. The best tree in the forest.
She: Are you a soldier?
He: Yes, but I cannot talk about it. The enemy is listening…
She: (Laughs)
He: Want to come to my room? Cup of coffee, fuck of tea?
She: (Laughs)

Alon's flirtation with the girl is cut short when Claudio shouts over to him that he has an important phone call from the army. Alon says to Kirsten: "I must go now, but I will be back," an allusion to Arnold Schwarzenegger's famous statement in *The Terminator*, (James Cameron, 1984). The connection is of course that they are both "terminators".

Symbolic interpretation tends to relate to cinematic images as representative of values, norms and ideologies. The arena of the action – kibbutz, army or school – is perceived as an organization or system that reflects or represents an ideology (or an institution, an ethnic group, a sector in society). In general, this is an

ideology of a state, of the hegemony, in what Kennedy calls 'the organizational plane': “Alongside the plane of immanence Deleuze posits a plane of organization (a ‘molar line’) consisting of forms, the formation of subject, object, themes, motifs, personages, the Law, the State, on a structural and genetic plane” (80)[83]. Yet, this sequence expresses a dynamic and ramified process of different milieus, codes, functions, internal and external circumstances, behaviors, qualities, forces, rhythms and landscapes – a territorial assemblage. This is a social milieu, but also a milieu of plants, animals, water, codes of behavior, linguistic codes and territorial codes, different forces expressed through the body, movement, speeding up and slowing down, and a landscape that inheres and subsists in the human body, its rhythms and its songs.

Alon only returns to the kibbutz to find a place to live in order to carry out a military operation. This movement is a functional expression of external circumstances in the army context (the military mission), but is also a qualitative expression of forces moving from place to place: “In animals as in human beings, there are rules of critical distance for competition... a territorialization of functions is the condition for their emergence as "occupation" or "trades" ” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 321).

“You start at your highest speed, and gradually accelerate.” Alon has distanced himself from the kibbutz/territory in order to compete, to become a professional (in the army). The source of this function is in the intra-assemblage (land, water), that underwent deterritorialization in the body (swimming, running) and reterritorialization of proficiency and professional training in the army (interassemblagee). This is also an expression of external historical, economic and social circumstances (infra-assemblage). The transition from army service that is of limited duration (three years) to permanent army service, which signifies proficiency and professional training, was only initiated by the generation that was born in the kibbutz (the first generation onwards). In other words, only after the conditions were right for establishing a permanent, stable place economically and socially could kibbutz sons from the first generation opt for permanent army service as a means of acquiring a profession and a living – and in sociological terms, class status and differentiation.

[83] The plane of organization is a synonym to the plane of transcendence.

Each of the above scenes expresses a variation on the theme of distance and aloofness and on closing the gap, a manifestation of the behavior and codes of the social milieu and part of the intra-assemblage: "Fat Crembo, a week without having had a shit," as the children sing mockingly to Alon. This is a territorial song, a wall of sound that marks the territory, it amounts to saying: you have penetrated our territory, you have rank and status, and you are older than we are, but we know you. This song also has a social function, implying that Alon has transgressed the norms of the community, so this mocking nickname has stuck to him as a kind of symbolic punishment – 'Crembo'". The song is also part of the local color of the periphery, related to local humor, suggesting the children ostensibly mock Alon, but in fact honor him because he is part of local 'folklore'.

Fight or flight? Alon reacts immediately, running quickly, becoming-animal. Someone has invaded his territory and he reacts aggressively, an impulse that has undergone territorialization (sublimation). He is not only a sports champion, but is also adept at minimizing distance, shattering distance. Distance is a central motif of the film. Alon shatters the distance between himself and Claudio (who could be his father), and he cancels out the cultural and linguistic distance between himself and Kirsten.

The canceled distance is accompanied by speech that has undergone deterritorialization and become the local patois, having been linguistically distorted into a direct, uninhibited form of speech, local codes and humor: "Crembo," "Motti banana" (a derogatory nickname for one of the members), "Alon" (an oak tree in Hebrew). There is a symbiosis and synthesis between the social milieu and the natural surroundings of plants, earth, organic and non-organic matter, the artificial and the natural, earthly powers that have penetrated language. An additional element that is dealt with here is related to revelation, masks and metamorphosis. Alon arrives in uniform, but the children identify this as a disguise and remind him who "the real" Alon is. The magic of the uniform and the image of the warrior have their effect on Kirsten, although they are here linked with qualities of nature, namely trees ("the best tree in the forest"): aggressiveness (with the children), courtship (with Kirsten), camouflage – the becoming-animal (a chameleon?) of Alon.

All these qualities become part of the interaction between inter-assemblages, namely the kibbutz and the army. These qualities, embodied in the figure of Alon, are again unfolded in Alon's relationship with the army. Alon transfers family-community relationships from the intra-assemblage to the army. The way he speaks to his superior officers is direct, without embellishment, without distance, transferring to the army his relationship with Claudio. He cancels out the hierarchy and attacks the officer who attempts to conspire against him, forcing him to undergo a punitive ceremony, as he does in the scene with the kibbutz children. Alon imbues the vertical hierarchical chain of the army with characteristics of the horizontal community network. Time after time, he interrupts important army conferences in order to talk with his brothers, Deborah or Kirsten, these relationships are conducted via the telephone, cellular devices or maps, performances that are consistent with the image of the network.

Alon introduces bits of local dialect into army lingo. Expressions such as "sunburn," "parasite," "don't chase your tail," or "Motti banana," are all examples of linguistic elements whose origin is the territory/kibbutz intra-assemblage: the sun that burns the exposed body of the agricultural worker becomes part of the corpus of secret army passwords; the image of the parasite that damages field crops; the use of a metaphor from the animal world (a tail) or an agricultural one (banana) as examples of simple, direct speech that does not hide behind army ranks and codes.

The sequence of the arrival at the kibbutz that was described above also conveys a sense of subjectivity that is not restricted to one single point of reference and perception, but rather the remarkably rapid transition from one situation to another and the ability to exceed the boundaries of self. ("You start at your fastest speed, and gradually accelerate.") Alon introduces this idiosyncrasy into the army sphere in the way he constantly changes his point of reference, changes his perception. At times he responds from the position of a child at play, at times as an army officer with formal responsibilities, at times as a friend and comrade (in his relation to the female clerk) and at times as a brother or father (in his relations with his brothers).

To sum up this section, there are no clear, permanent boundaries here, but rather a process of expansion and distribution. There is no clear boundary between inside and outside, but rather interactions and components that shift from place to place. The segments of the molar line (the "organizational" plane) – work/free time, adult/child or private/collective – begin to break down and develop new connections.

4.2.2 – From a Theology of Lack to Affirmative Becoming

But what is really striking about Alon, not as a character, but as a figure, is his tempo, his intensive qualities, the quick pace and the force that he brings to the screen. Childhood memories ("Fat Crembo") do not appear as a detriment, an Oedipal memory blocking desire, minimizing it, detaching it from its context. This is neither a desire for a lost object nor a search for a father figure. As Pisters states: "The subject, marked by this lack, desires an object to re-find original wholeness, which is always impossible" (111).

Alon's figure does not express childhood memories, nostalgia or desire lessened by a lack, but a childhood-block, a block that re-establishes desire rather than reducing it, copying it in time, causing it to be deterritorialized and multiplying the connections with it:

Connection 1 – the pursuit after the children: the body – running – stretching the muscles - the friction of the air on warm skin (in summer);
Connection 2 – walking on the grass: the body – the feet – the earth – the smell of earth and grass;
Connection 3 – swimming in the pool: the exposure of the naked body – jumping through the air – the impact of the water – holding one's breath;
Connection 4 – tempo – walking, running, jumping – the connection with the rhythm of the territorial song that the children sing; the child's dance, the game, improvisation, melding with the world: "to improvise is to join with the world, or meld with it" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 111).

These connections express the consistency of a childhood-block, desire as a positive, affirmative force. This desire is reterritorialized into the army, like the struggle with his commanding officer or into his relations with his brothers, for instance, where Alon not only commands them but also plays with them, jokes with them and mocks them. Another example is the anarchy that Alon creates at the cemetery, when child-Alon has no patience for the boring ceremony. Stated differently, Alon does not operate in a homogeneous space-time dimension, the "identical to himself" but in heterogeneous blocks of matter, energy, perception, tempo, colors and smells. Deleuze and Guattari use the term “block” as opposed to memory: “From this point of view, one may contrast a childhood block, or a becoming-child, with the childhood memory: a molecular child is produced” (ibid, 1987: 294). They imply the coexistence of the memory of the child we remember or fantasize (the molar child) with the movement that free itself and breaks away from memory, and is open, as children are, to all kinds of futures and potentialities.

Sexuality-block: courting Kristin, the body's involvement and links. Thus a territorial dance expressing aggressiveness (the chase after the children) is instantly transformed into a territorial courtship dance: glances, eye play, removing one’s shirt to exhibit the naked body, jumping into the water, diving, disappearance, play, surprise. What the above shows is the reterritorialization of the body’s sexual organization - erogenous zones - and its redistribution on the skin’s surface, such as jumping into the water, swimming, the mouth that both speaks and spouts water or chews a candy (in the army scene). The enjoyment of physical actions is manifested in wearing and removing clothes and painting the face with camouflage paints (the first army scene). Instant reactions appear with Alon’s entire repertoire of physical gestures. These include broad arm movements, while arguing with Deborah about the refrigerator, grabbing an opponent’s shirt and projecting head and face alarmingly close, while arguing with Claudio, and the angry outburst and reaction of the body, when he discovers the hole they have dug in the cemetery is too deep.

Nature-block or earth-block is at work as if Alon carries the territory on his body, mobilizing it and inflating it. As he walks, runs, slows down or halts, Alon becomes a rhythmic figure that expresses the affective forces of landscape, soil

and the grass conveying the powers of the earth: gravitation, topography. As Pisters points out: “The rhizomatic subject’s desire is positive. It’s looking for connections and in connecting, the subject becomes something else" (33-34). The figure of Alon is a connective junction of energies and forces, from earth to plant, from plant to animal and from animal to man: running – earth – childhood-block – grass – water – jumping – sexuality-block – the mouth that not only breathes and spouts water, but distorts words, engages in playfulness and improvisation. In addition, this is desire as process, becoming-animal or becoming-child. The body affects and is affected, reacting through motion, pace, rhythm and speed, energies and powers.

Becoming is not emulation or adherence to any sort of model, and this concept must be understood outside the metaphysics of representation. When someone or something undergoes a process of becoming, what he/it becomes changes to the same degree that he/it changes. Becoming connects two heterogeneous terms that cause one another to be deterritorialized. In fact, it constitutes the true sense of the word “desire,” since desire is always a transition through becoming. In other words, the encounter with the territory (the kibbutz) is not only, if at all, a matter of ideas, ideals or ideology nor does it involve things that have undergone individuation. Between the individual and the collective lies a material world to which the body, not only the mind, reacts and responds: the body both influences it and is influenced by it. Alon generates a disturbance in the kibbutz, but to the same degree the kibbutz continues to effervesce in Alon’s body. Territorialized functions and qualities – the earth, the grass, the pool – are reterritorialized in the body, in its rhythm, a body that becomes territory, a melodic landscape.

All that was said above is reminiscent of the concept of “haecceity”: “A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules and particles, capacities to affect and to be affected” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 261).

It is possible to view Alon (and his encounter with the kibbutz) as a representation of the search for identity or as a parody of the figure of the soldier/kibbutz resident, the action-reaction of behavior related to the milieu, social circumstances, norms and values in the historical context of the film (the molar line). . However, it is also possible to think of the rhizomatic subject, a flexible, fluid subjectivity, which challenges rigid molarisation such as adult-child or inside-outside.. The expression of this fluidity could be putting on a form and discarding it, disguising oneself and taking the custom off. Something happens in between, on the surface of the body, the skin, the affective and molecular particles of the body. Summer in the Israeli southern region (with a temperature 45 degrees Celsius or more) seeps into and spreads through the body, the body that is involved in experiencing images and immediate sensations of the material world. "You start at your fastest speed and gradually accelerate" sounds like absurd, impossible logic. But it also constitutes a prioritizing of nonsense and sensibility at the expense of meaning and sense. We can ask here whether this is a representation of "militarism" and "subjecting the private body to the national/military body" or perhaps a Nietzschean "will to power"?

Decoding the representation in terms of militarism, hegemony or the subjugation of the individual body to the national body are all largely universal concepts, structures, orders and laws that are pre-given – what Deleuze calls "*logos",* that is, observing life (or film) from an apparently neutral perspective from outside, and divisions that rely on fixed hierarchies (personal-national, East-West). The figure of Alon, as we have seen, brings us closer to a concept that Deleuze posits in opposition to *logos*, namely *nomos*. This involves observing the various ways in which the figure of Alon distributes, replicates and introduces elements from one territory to another: shifting words, movements, gestures, rhythms, family-community-network relationships, a constant movement of points of reference, play and improvisation.

4.2.3 – The Refrigerator, the Coffin and the Story behind the Story

One cannot bring this analysis to a close without dealing with a number of striking central motifs in the film: the refrigerator, the body and the coffin, the cemetery and other spaces. The refrigerator and the coffin are two objects around which the film's comic situation and parody are constructed. They are a part of the "topography of obstacles" that the brothers have to overcome before they succeed in burying their grandmother. The additional space is the urban expanse, the course the body traverses from the hospital in Netanya via the Tel-Aviv Central Bus Station to the point where the mail delivery van arrives in the kibbutz. It is also impossible to ignore the fact that the three brothers (especially Alon), who have left the kibbutz, return to it. They behave in such a way as to generate disorder and chaos: in the argument surrounding the refrigerator, the squabble regarding the funeral arrangements and the disturbance at the cemetery.

If we take into consideration all the films in the corpus, we will discover that certain leitmotifs reappear. In *No Names on the Doors,* there are four scenes featuring bodies, funerals and cemeteries. In *She's not 17,* there is a sick old man who dies on a wagon harnessed to a horse. In *Mother of the Gevatron,* there is the scene at Rina's funeral and the one in the cemetery at the end of the film. One can also add a series of rivalries and social tensions that develop around various objects: a coffin (*Operation Grandma*), a bed and a room (*No Names on the Doors*), a wagon and a television set (*She's not 17*), to name but a few. In Chapter 3 we saw that these motifs lend themselves to an allegoric reading: the disintegration of the private body as an allegory of the disintegration of the collective (the kibbutz, utopia-dystopia) or the collapse of the hegemony of the elite associated with Zionism in the imaginary national body. These phenomena appear in different contexts and I will attempt to examine their role in *Operation Grandma*.

The parody surrounding the argument concerning the refrigerator and who is responsible for organizing the funeral bear a quantitative nature, i.e., exaggeration or absurdity regarding quantity: there is a surplus of eight refrigerators that are not being used, so Alon demands to be given one of them. The quarrel about who is responsible for the funeral and the burial arrangements is also connected with quantity, in this case a time-span: according to the kibbutz

charter, anyone who has been away for two years or more is to be denied a funeral organized by the kibbutz. The coffin that breaks apart and the overly deep grave are also related to quantity (matching up the size of the box with the size of the burial pit). All of these elements weave a parody of bureaucracy and conservatism, but they are also a manifestation of the encounter between the kibbutz and another external factor.

However, in the intra-assemblage these elements have additional, different aspects. These components acquire a qualitative aspect, since they express a contract, a charter (not a law) that maintains the assemblage so that it won't disintegrate into chaos or anarchy. These are reterritorialized functions: the refrigerator and the funeral arrangements signify the values of equality and communality and a time dimension that is the result of spending a long time in one place – the equal sharing of means of production, forces of production and assets.

The contract/charter is a mechanism of consolidation, whose function is to unite, maintain and stabilize the various energies of the intra-assemblage, i.e., the forces of production and various resources. It may also be stated that the charter expresses the exclusive use value of the goods in the intra-assemblage, whereas Alon (or any encounter with an outside perspective) comprehends mainly the exchange value of those things and relations, meaning efficiency, expediency, value for money, or the symbolic value – the fetishism of goods.

The territorialized functions in the intra-assemblage acquire a new territorial function in the interassemblagee, they are reterritorialized – the establishment and maintenance of a critical, minimal distance from the outside/the external, like the skin that protects the body. This distance is not embodied in physical or topographical boundaries, as clarified by Alon's smooth transition into the territory. Alon is both a foreign body and a known figure. He settles down in the kibbutz, but as a temporary resident, not as a permanent member. This settling down creates an anomaly, a borderline relationship between the inside and the outside. The territorial function of the refrigerator-funeral-charter is to demarcate and maintain the minimum distance between those who belong and those who don't. Alon attempts to break in, to dissolve this minimum distance when he

demands rights based on blood and kinship relations (his parents' and his grandmother's contribution to the kibbutz). The charter, then, also expresses the reterritorialization of kinship relations into a more provisional arrangement.

Alon is both a friend and a foe, and he constitutes one component in a power struggle. The course followed by Alon and his brothers leads to a very particular place – to the cemetery: "There is always a place, a tree or grove, in the territory, where the forces come together in a hand-to-hand combat of energies" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 321). The cemetery is definitely an archetype of internal-external borderline relations: the boundary between life and death, a heterotopy that controls and manages the abject and the dead in a place that is remote and walled in. Foucault mentions the cemetery as a type of heterotopy that exemplifies the transition from primitive societies to modern ones. In the past, the cemetery was within the city or settlement, then, after death began to be perceived as a disease, it was excluded and removed to a distant, walled-in place: "Cemeteries then no longer constituted the sacred and immoral wind of the city, but the 'other city' where each family possessed its dark dwelling" (1994: 181).

Yet, we have seen that the cemetery in the film is close to the cowshed while the cowshed is near the members' houses. Thus, in the kibbutz the principle of exclusion and the distancing of the dead is less rigid and more ambiguous. Two foci are important to our discussion: the cemetery as a space where time accumulates, piles up, and the manner in which the film establishes the cemetery as a junction where functions, forces and qualities of the intra-assemblage, the interassemblagee and the infra-assemblage meet.

By way of the cemetery, the film combines two powers that threaten the territory/kibbutz: the weight of historical time and the shrinking-abstraction of space, while the kibbutz is caught in the middle, in between, in a *cul-de-sac*. On the one hand there is mythical and historical time, the time mounting up in the kibbutz cemetery. In terms of the intra-assemblage, there is a story behind every grave, a living history of people and a place, a private history and a collective narrative. However, like the refrigerator, the corpse and the coffin, time here has volume and weight, more precisely, excess weight. This is time that weighs one down and binds, time that creates an overload of meanings or signification, the

heavy weight of the past, of myths and archetypes, ideologies, expectations and criticisms, disembodied ubiquitous time.

In fact, such a time no longer requires physical space since it has already established itself in the linguistic space of words, books and myths. It refers to everything the kibbutz was, is and had been expected to become. No wonder the coffin breaks apart under such a weight and that the pit is too large! This is a territory overloaded with an excess of ghosts, signs and meanings. There are Oedipal excesses, in other words, the weight of anticipations and criticisms regarding the father figures connected with pioneering – kibbutz - Zionism. There are also excesses of the "self evident", common sense and prior knowledge: “We constantly lose our ideas. That’s why we want to hang on to fixed opinions” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 204).

The treatment of time is also conveyed by the route through which the body arrives in the cemetery, which juxtaposes the collapse of space in the modern era, the spirit of modernism and globalization with a continuous, serial space: houses - cowshed – cemetery - fields and fields bordering on fields of neighboring kibbutzim. The former are simulations of space, technologies that shrink time and obliterate space: Alon organizes the funeral like a military operation, using maps, diagrams and timetables. Space becomes a line on a map and time turns into something functional and operational. Technologies cancel out space: time and again, activities in space are interrupted by ordinary phones, cellular phones or beepers. Alon’s first moment of flirtation with the girl (at the pool) is interrupted by a message on the beeper and the second act of courting encounter, in his room, is interrupted by a phone call from Idan announcing their grandmother's death. Army conferences are interrupted by phone calls from the brothers, while Benny and Idan’s activities are interrupted by phone calls from Alon. The burial ceremony is interrupted because Alon has run out of time. Benny installs satellite dishes, electronic signals and fiber optics that abstract space from its qualitative and material nature.

These two dimensions are constructed as opposing one another by means of the film’s editing and pace. The cinematic portrayal of the scenes set in the kibbutz expresses relatively slow-moving time and spatial continuity: crossing the wide

lawn to the pool; the route the coffin must traverse crossing the main square, passing the cow barns, and continuing through the fields to the cemetery. Conversely, the scenes outside the kibbutz signify a shrinking of space: the frantic scenes in the army; the coffin that leaves the hospital in Netanya and in one cut has already arrived in Tel-Aviv (a distance of 30-40 km.); the movement of the coffin from Tel-Aviv to the kibbutz in the South, which appears in the film in fast motion. Space is condensed and mobilized by means of the fast tempo of the techno music in the background. The hospital, the old people's home or the Central Bus Station are all compressed, crowded and relatively arbitrary spaces. These are anonymous mediating sites where people are weightless and where various practices separate human bodies from the surrounding environment.

The excess weight of time and the shrinking of space are two threatening forces knocking at the kibbutz's doors, threatening to disintegrate the kibbutz from both inside and out. There is no exit and there are no options. This is a place that cannot shrink, land that cannot be made mobile and excess weight of signs and symbols that cannot be shrugged off. The figure of Alon hints at a way out, an escape route: childhood-block and sexuality-block, affirmative desire created by the external contact between bodies. These blocks shake off the excess weight of time and undermine the theology of lack and guilt, while at the same time constituting the earth-block, the connection to the affects of the soil and earth. It is like putting the territory inside one's body, mobilizing it and improvising with it.

The more creative way out, however, is embodied in the cemetery sequence (again, creativity linked to the fringes of the assembly, the cemetery as an edge, a threshold, a border). The cemetery, as stated above, is *the* location where time amasses, the excess weight and ghosts of history, ideology and mythology. At the same time, the cemetery is also the one site that may not be mobilized, may not be moved. If there is one thing more impure than the dead, it is the act of moving the dead from one grave to another, elsewhere.[84] One way out was already hinted at in *No Names on the Doors*: to turn the cemetery into a commercial enterprise, to sell burial plots. The significance of this is to injure the

[84] Although recently, during the disengagement from the Gaza Strip, entire cemeteries were in fact transferred.

sanctity of the site-time, to insert anonymous graves, to rescue the cemetery from the claws of time and excess weight and to accept money for burial plots, thus distorting and undermining the symbolic-mythic value of the place, its transcendental value.

The way out suggested by *Operation Grandma* is more creative. The scene in the cemetery distorts the conventions of the ceremony (the time dimension), restoring to space what was robbed from it: disrupt the ceremonial protocol and distort the respectability of the ceremony. To neutralize current time, the coffin is painted in psychedelic colors of the 1960s and the music dates back to the 20s slapstick comedies combined with carnival music and romantic music – an overloaded sonority that mocks the linear and dialectic synthesis of past-present. In fact, the coffin is turned into a kind of a music box: the burial ceremony is accompanied by a turbulent, sexy Latin rhythm, a slow military march, a fast, compressed tempo of techno music, and mechanical sounds like those heard in animated films.

Time is in fact nullified: instead of singing a respectable song expressing the ethos of the community, the girl sings a sentimental Spanish song unrelated to time, or the excess of clichés and pathos in the secretary's speech. Time is inverted: the ceremony has a prescribed length, but is cut short, speeded up, as well as stretched. At the beginning of the funeral procession, Alon tells everybody they have to rush because there is no time. He also cuts short the eulogy and the song for the same reason. The way the brothers relate to their grandmother's burial displays no emotion or respect for one who, in their own words, was a founding member of the kibbutz. Thus we have found a way out or a modest escape route from the burden of time and the excess of significance and meaning.

The cemetery scene also establishes a way out in face of the threatening power of shrinking, abstract, weightless space. The scene expresses the affective and tactile qualities of the place and the heterogeneity of the space: contact, weight, volume, gravitation, smell, density or dilution: the coffin that must be carried manually and later breaks apart embodies the qualities of woodiness, color, weight and gravitation. The overly-deep pit and Alon who falls into it signify the

tactile qualities of earth, soil and skin contact. The procession that passes through the cow barn and in proximity to the orange groves releases something that may not be verbalized or seen, namely the pungent smell of the manure and the airy scent of the oranges. The scene in which the procession opens with an extreme long shot in which the space "swallows" the people, relates to sparseness, as opposed to the medium shot at the cemetery in which there is a pile-up of people and objects, conveying density and crowdedness.

Compared to the electric and electronic signals lacking volume (telephones, satellites), the abstraction of space (maps) and sterility in every sense of the word (hospitals, old age homes), the scene reflects and sets free qualities that enable a creative way out and a release from the abstract machine of space.

"The visual material must capture non-visible forces. Render visible, Klee said; not render or reproduce the visible" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 342). I began by analyzing the film as a reproduction of what is visible and overt, including a parody of familiar images and clichés, a politics of identity and a comparison between organizations and institutions, as a representation and reflection of a shattered reality. We revealed the fluid boundaries of the territory and the transference of codes and examined the way in which the rhizomic subject and desire operate through blocks. Finally, we arrived at the story behind the story, uncovered the less evident forces that threaten and shatter the territory, and also found a way out, an escape route. The way out is composed of qualities from another order – matter, weight, volume, gravitation, density, crowdedness, sparseness – material-forces and qualities–powers, the preconditions and unlimited potential of all possible realizations (or all possible funerals and cemeteries). This is another plateau that I will attempt to consider in subsequent analyses.

4.3 – Repetition and Difference in *Mother of the Gevatron*

The film seems on the surface to be a very conventional documentary belonging to the genre or sub-genre of films documenting the personal and artistic life of a singer, musical band or artist. Like many films in this genre, *Mother of the Gevatron* documents touring, performances, various behind-the-scenes incidents, such as disagreements or quarrels, and various musicians' accounts of the events. Archival material and still photos from family albums are incorporated in the film. Yet, the integration of different images – black-and-white and color photography, stills, a number of reflexive compositions – indicates a potential for categorizing the images differently, as movement-images.

In addition to the concepts from "A Thousand Plateaux" and the "Kafka," books mentioned in previous sections, I have analyzed this film according to the various prominent movement-images that Deleuze suggests in his book, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1986).[85] Deleuze develops here a taxonomy of signs based on a synthesis between the sign's status in the linguistic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce and the perception of time, movement and image in the philosophy of Henri Bergson. Combining the two allows Deleuze to create a theory of non-linguistic signs, thus presenting an alternative to cinematic theories influenced by literary and linguistic theory, but also by theories of spectatorship based on models from the field of psychoanalysis.[86]

I began my analysis of *Mother of the Gevatron* by investigating the function of black and white photography in the film (archival footage). What interested me here was both the similarity to the two previous films and the difference from them. The similarity is that the film is decoded and interpreted within the same thematic and ideological framework as the two previous films, as they are discussed in Chapter 3: the Shattered Dream. It is particularly striking - almost a cliché - that the film reproduces the iconography of most previous films about

[85] In my estimation, the film is close in form to the analysis of movement-image in classical film, as it appears in Deleuze's *Cinema 1*: The Movement-Image, and does not include forms that break or agitate conventional time perceptions, which constitute the main argument in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*.

[86] The allusion here is mainly to the conceptualisation of the sign (signifier-signified) as found in the linguistic theory of Ferdinand Saussure, and its influences on the cinematic theory of Christian Metz.

the kibbutz: the cowsheds, the grain silo, the communal dining room, and the kibbutz center. The obvious novelty is that what was off-screen, extra-textual and inter-textual in earlier films is expressed here both on-screen and on the soundtrack: the lofty, heroic past, the "Golden Age" of the kibbutz. Collective and individual memories are integrated into the film in the form of black-and-white archival material. In this section I will examine whether the repetition of the same enables me to interject a difference in the Deleuzian sense and to create new rhizomatic maps.

4.3.1 – Connection 1: From Action-Image to Relation-Image

Mother of the Gevatron weaves together black-and-white archival footage, shots of the troupe from the 1960s and 1970s, black-and-white stills from the 1940s and 1950s and color footage documenting the troupe's situation in 2003. Archival footage in black and white documents the troupe's tour in buses or transport planes and its appearances before soldiers, as well as performances in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. In addition, a staged clip in which the troupe sings with the kibbutz in the background is presented. The stills include photos of the troupe and pictures from Rina's family album. However, most of the film is shot in color, the action is in the present (2003), and as mentioned above it documents the troupe's demise, the firing of the Rina, the troupe manager, her long-time friendship with her friend, Nika, the troupe's rehearsals for Passover and the live radio broadcast.

The greater part of these images can be included in a category that Deleuze calls action-image. Action-image is the domain of realism, essences and powers actualized in concrete space-time, including various milieus and behaviors: "What constitutes realism is simply this: milieus and modes of behavior, milieus which actualize and modes of behavior which embody. The action-image is the relation between the two and all the varieties of this relation" (1986: 141).[87]

[87] For Peirce, this is the indexical aspect of the sign. The relation between the sign and the object is one of existential ties. As Laura Marks states: "As the realm of the index, Secondness is certainly where the documentary places its chips" (198).

The film offers various expressions of the action-image. Like most films about the kibbutz, it opens with a number of panoramic shots that establish the whole, the kibbutz, the fields, the livestock and the gardens. This opening establishes the various milieus and powers surrounding human beings and instigating action – material, economic, social and cultural powers that act on the individual in the framework of the entity known as "kibbutz." For example, we are shown the relations between the kibbutz and the troupe (who can join and who cannot); the changes and contingencies imposed by a market economy and the entertainment world (the desire to replace the manager in order to modernize and become more attractive); and the long-time friendship between Nika and Rina (which continues despite the many changes undergone by the troupe and the kibbutz).

The last appearance of the troupe in the film includes more up-to-date songs and a large screen upon which clips are shown. This is an attempt to adjust the performance to the spirit of the times and market demands, i.e. not to settle for merely the songs, but to transform the show into an audio-visual presentation, as done by many pop and rock groups. In other words, this scene is an action-image in the sense that economic and cultural forces exert an influence on the troupe, which reacts by changing its repertoire and its style of appearance before an audience.

Like Peirce, Deleuze also connects action-image with a duel of forces: "The action-image in itself is a duel of forces, a series of duels: a duel with the milieu, with others, with itself" (1986: 142). The action-image in the film appears in a few different duels: the first involves the duel prompted by the dismissal of Rina, the troupe's manager. Various figures act and react in different ways, that is, they actualize different forces in the milieu into behavior, action and reaction (action properly speaking). For instance, Rina tends to accept the change placidly, but nevertheless boycotts the troupe's Passover performance. Her relatively moderate reaction is paralleled by a new initiative: she joins another troupe in a neighboring kibbutz. Conversely, Rina's husband is not accepting of the dismissal and his behavior expresses anger, frustration and disappointment whereas the new manager of the troupe accepts the change as natural, rational and unavoidable. Again, the new manager's entrance is an action-image

expression of the actualization of forces, such as the need to become efficient and knowledgeable in a competitive market.

In addition to this duel, and to the troupe's struggle for survival, which involve the changes in repertoire, the film hints at another one. The chief actualization of forces and arrangements in this milieu is the fact that the troupe is made up of amateurs working on a voluntary basis. The rehearsal scenes in the dining room and also the vignettes involving some of the members show that they are tired and losing strength. This indicates that active participation in the troupe is unpaid and rehearsals take place during the members' free time after a day's work in the kibbutz. Thus we witness a struggle involving exhaustion, burnout and aging expressed by slower, heavier, less energetic movements on the part of some of the troupe's members and close-ups of aging, tired faces.

But what interferes with the flow of the action-image, the flow of situation-reaction is the black and white archive footage. In the second sequence of the film, there is a montage of a number of shots in color, long-range shots of a rural community with various buildings. These shots establish the place, the time and the situation (the kibbutz), before the narrative and the action begin. Fundamentally, this is an opening that is familiar from countless films about the kibbutz, as I mentioned in earlier chapters. However, the film does not open with this sequence, but with a black-and-white archival segment. Here we see the troupe singing one of its well-known numbers while traveling by bus to one of its concerts in Israel. As the bus moves towards the horizon, there is a shift to the second sequence, which is shot in color.

Various details of the mise-en-scène (the performance, the costumes, the props), as well as the youthful appearance of the troupe members and the famous song, lead the viewer to assume that we are in the 1960s. As stated above, such archival material is integrated into the narrative. According to Deleuze, here a third element is inserted between the situation and the action (the situation of the troupe and the kibbutz and the dismissal of the manager in the present): the reflection-image.

The reflection-image is an image whose object is relations, and as such it is close to the relation-image (see below). According to Deleuze, the reflection-image remains associated with the action-image and transforms it, thus mediating between actions and relations: “The reflection-image, which goes from action to relation, is composed when action and situation enter into indirect relations: the signs are then figures of attraction or inversion” (1989: 33).

Therefore, the black-and-white archival footage serves as reflection-images, because these are exactly the images that create an indirect relation between the situation and the action. The film’s basic situation is the troupe’s status in the present and the dispute over Rina’s dismissal. Yet, the archival segments – the bus trip, the show for the soldiers or the song festival performance in front of a large audience – do not show “just any” performances, as if pointing to a direct connection between the sign and the object, an indexed relationship. They also bear an indirect relation to the troupe’s present reality, for example, via nostalgia for a glorious past.

The archival footage functions as an intercessor. It “pushes” or forces symbolic and allegoric meaning, and hence allows the symbolic-realistic interpretation to derive abstractions, generalizations, patterns of formal oppositions, analogies, archetypes and symbols. It would turn action-images into representations: “The kibbutz singing troupe is presented as a piece of history frozen in time, sunken in a world of unquestioned, lofty Zionist ideals, in an atmosphere of the aroma of hay, working the land and singing in harmony, while being totally unaware of the numerous social and cultural changes that have taken place around it" (Schwartz 317). In other words, perceptions would be revealed as interpretations and signs mediated by other signs in a chain of semiotic relations.[88]

Deleuze categorizes these dynamics as relation-image. The relation-image includes a dimension of mediation, relation and mental activity: “It is an image, which takes as its object, relations, symbolic acts, intellectual feelings” (Deleuze, 1986: 199). According to Deleuze (and Peirce), the genetic sign of relation-images is the symbol, which is a sign of abstract relationships that establish the whole, relationships related to law, convention, habit or instrumental patterns.

[88] See Bogue 101.

That is, the sign denotes the object through its relation to an interpretant, and the way the interpretant represents the sign is for Deleuze a mental image or relation image.

Put more simply, the basic relation-image in *Mother of the Gevatron* is the mental and intellectual activity that establishes the relation and the pattern between the black-and-white footage and the color footage. The black-and-white material is perceived as representing the past, as a symbol or allegory of the troupe's glorious history and the apex of the nation's socialist ethos. The material in color is perceived as representing the deteriorating, banal, inglorious present. This pattern accelerates the distribution of metaphors and symbolic meanings. Conservatism is placed in opposition to renewal and the troupe is perceived as an allegory of the stagnation of the kibbutz and/or of traditional Zionism as a whole. These new signs are attributes of the mind and are part of a system of signs, meanings and intellectual patterns nourished by a wider system of signs at any given time (historical, cultural and social contexts).

The law at work here is that the relation between black and white and color, or past and present, is one of binary oppositions or duality – the shattered dream, utopia-dystopia. In other words, this interpretation gives priority to a one-dimensional timeline, homogeneous and linear time that has two ideal points: past and present. As Todd May attests: "Bergson calls this conception of time a 'spatialized' conception. It has the character of extension: a line that extends from one point infinitely remote to another point infinitely distant [...] We might say that time is in this way transcendent to what happens" (May 2005: 42).

This type of connection and relation between past and present is supported by the film's editing. For example, in one scene, a black-and-white archival sequence, we see the troupe singing in a large hall filled with cheering people. The next scene, in color, shows Rina onstage in a large hall empty of people, with the echoes of singing and applause having been replaced by silence and emptiness. These two scenes are mediated by a third factor, which translates the image to a relationship of opposites, namely the summit of the past as opposed to the abyss of the present. From habit or convention, mental operations create abstractions and links to a larger whole, for example, perceiving the troupe's situation as a

reflection and allegory for the kibbutz, the kibbutzim as a whole or as part of a social-national decline.

The introduction of action-image, reflection-image and relation-image into the discussion allowed me to point out and analyze one particular mode of making linear, causal and chronological connections between past and present. This relationship also fixates hierarchical judgment regarding high and low, good and bad, correct and incorrect, success and failure. In the following sections, I will suggest other types of connections that afford escape routes from this dominant interpretation. Instead of relating to the connection between black-and-white and color as a representation of past- present, I will relate to it as a phenomenon that generates thought and affords other ways of relating to image and representation.

4.3.2 – Connection 2: Counter-Actualization and Any-Space-Whatever

As mentioned above, the film opens with an archival segment from the 1960s, followed by the first scene that opens the narrative by introducing the two main characters: Rina, the troupe's manager, and her good friend Nika. Their friendship began when the troupe was established in 1948 and continued after Rina left the troupe and until her death. However, this transition from past to present, from the collective to the individual, from the archive to the narrative, is mediated by a very special and unusual sequence, which creates a delay in the construction of the narrative.

The archival segment ends when the bus with the troupe is seen disappearing on the horizon. The diagonal movement of the receding bus and the troupe's singing is suddenly cut off. The film changes to color and the choral singing changes into whistling accompanied by a plucked guitar (of the same melody that was sung by the troupe). On the background of blue sky, the camera tilts down, and a text appears on-screen that seems to move up into the sky (a short informative summary regarding the troupe and Rina). The camera movement stops, and here opens a montage of five still shots from a low angle and from the same distance range:

Shot 1: An extreme long shot of a large brown expanse of cultivated land that fills the lower half of the frame, the upper half being filled by a huge blue expanse of sky. In between, at the point where earth meets sky, we see a group of buildings hidden behind trees and vegetation.

Shot 2: A medium-long frontal shot of a very large two-story public building, a structure divided into concrete pillars supporting a red tiled roof. The building fills most of the frame with a background of blue sky.

Shot 3: A medium shot of the back of a large industrial structure that fills the entire frame similarly to the previous shot.

Shot 4: A medium-long diagonal shot of a huge hay-loft that fills most of the frame, on a background of blue sky.

Shot 5: A close-up shot from a diagonal angle of a public building made of heavy concrete, surrounded by greenery. The building fills two-thirds of the frame and seems to "reach" the blue sky.

Shot 6: A long shot, from a diagonal angle of a huge granary that seems to rise up from the ground and point to the sky.

Following Peirce, Deleuze points out that any specific image is likely to express a number of categories or qualities of the sign. In fact, it is possible to establish that the difference between Peirce's and Saussure's perception of the sign is that Peirce imparts the sign with non-discursive values. The six shots described above can be deciphered as action-images, implying an indexical relationship to situations and life forms that make up the kibbutz. For example, shots 4 and 6 are related to agricultural branches, shot 3 to industrial branches and the other shots to the kibbutz's social and cultural activities. These signs receive meaning within a wider system of signs or discourse, thus they are perceived to be symbols and archetypes or, conversely, clichés and fossilized images of the kibbutz. Due to the connection with the preceding archival sequence, a basic framework of linear, chronological time and a causal relation between past and present are created.

But the montage of buildings stands out from the rest of the film. What makes it unusual is the very special composition, the fact that the shots are static and relatively long. Unlike most of the shots in the film, there are no people in the frame. In addition, the colors are very dominant, expanses in shades of brown and gray under huge spreads of blue sky. Apart from the first shot, there is no sense of depth perspective, but rather of two dimensions only. In other words, it is possible to relate to the quality of the sign/image without delay or mediation, but as qualities-powers, a distinction that brings us close to the affection-image (Peirce's "Firstness").

The six shots slow down the images to a point of cessation and silence, a moment of contemplation before the opening of Rina's story and that of the troupe, i.e., before the characters enter the discourse and direct the viewer towards evaluations and judgments. These images create a deterritorialization of memory and allow a sensual perception of the world before it is organized into abstractions and generalizations, that is, into attributes, meanings and symbols. The images of the montage invite sensual perception and enable the eye to move from top to bottom, from bottom to top and from right to left.

This imagery is multiplied by six – a static shot from a low angle + a wide lens + a building that fills the frame + highly emphasized, prominent color – creating a functional obstruction of the familiar topography (of an omnipotent tower looking down from above - the ideological "eye") and establishing a surface view. There is no meaning here, only sensation, experience. We can look at these enormous buildings and sense that they constitute a silent testimony to experience that cannot be represented, cannot be expressed or heard since every utterance is necessarily accompanied by categories such as "nostalgia," "myth" or "archetype".

The montage of the buildings creates a sensibility of a naked, fresh quality, a sense of life, freedom, huge buildings that appear noble and lofty while at the same time being incomprehensible, puzzling or otherworldly. Space becomes tactile, like flashes of color: the brown expanse of the earth, the grayness of the walls, the red spot of the tiled roof and the breadth of the blue sky. That is an empty, drained space, striped of its everyday use, an any-space-whatever, which

coincides with Deleuze's statement: “Space itself has left behind its own co-ordinates and its metric relations. It is a tactile space” (1986: 109).

Deleuze calls it "lyrical abstraction" which implies a transition from the actual to the spiritual. According to Deleuze, the emergence of any-space-whatever as spiritual space occurs when the protagonist becomes aware of the possibility of choice of faith, a choice to choose. It is a choice between modes of existence but on the condition of not knowing it: "It is a choice which is not defined by what it chooses, but by the power that it possesses to be able to start afresh at every instant, of starting afresh itself, and in this way confirming itself by itself, by putting the whole stake back into play each time" (ibid: 115). In terms of what is expressed by the six shots, this emergence is made possible due to the fact that the composition of every shot alternates between the actual and the virtual, between the soil and the sky, between the earthly and the cosmic. The question arises of who is meant to choose and what is at stake. I suggest considering two different circuits of choice.

The first circuit: The choice in this circuit relates to Rina, the heroine of the film. Rina chooses to continue working and creating for another troupe while continuing her friendship with Nika despite Nika’s continuing to be a member of the troupe. Rina chooses to remain optimistic rather than becoming an angry, bitter person eaten up with resentment (unlike her husband, for example). This choice becomes more acute when she decides to end her boycott of the troupe, a choice expressing acceptance, forgiveness, compassion, solidarity and a belief in the righteousness of her life's path. But this is an apparent and conscious choice, and it is not what Deleuze meant.

The second circuit: The fact that the montage of the buildings appears at the film’s opening suggests to me that this choice to choose is directed at the viewer or the interpreter. Since kibbutz images have long ago become firmly fixed in clichés, the montage of the buildings attempts to create a sense of renewal and freshness. What is left unsaid here makes it possible to look at things from different angles, from any point in space, to create a new awareness, new sensations. In other words, the film invites the viewer to choose between two modes of existence or perhaps two different ways of viewing the film: the view

of the adult who remembers and has seen everything (the molar subject) or the initial exciting experience of a child, becoming-child or a child block.

“When the child was a child, he had no opinions about anything; He often sat crossed-legged, got up and started to run” (Wim Wenders, *Wings of Desire*, 1987). This quotation is from the famous opening sequence of the film (that incidentally also combines black-and-white and color footage) before the camera/the angel begins to hover above Berlin. The reminder of the child’s experience, and perhaps also flying above the city, tie up associatively with the monumental buildings in the opening montage of *Mother of the Gevatron*. It is possible to sense the movement that frees itself and starts afresh: the structures in shots 1-6 arouse amazement and wonder, a sense of magic, and they fire the imagination. Shot 1, for example, conveys the feeling of a flat, wondrous expanse that continues to infinity. Shot 6, with the huge tower that seems to touch the sky, arouses a game-like feeling like going up and down stairs, an adventure that has the excitement of the unknown and unfamiliar.

Regarding this circuit and in light of what has been said up to now, it is possible to establish that the film’s opening provides the viewer with two alternate viewing options and two different choices of perception. One is connected to the first sequence, the black-and-white archival footage, the reflection-image that mediates and pushes the situation and the action towards the relation-image, with all the symbolism of past versus present. However, the second sequence, the montage of buildings and the lyrical abstraction, suggests the possibility of an ethical, ontological choice: “To this end, affect describes the forces behind all forms of social production in the contemporary world, and these affective forces’ ethical, ontological, cognitive, and physiological powers” (Colman, 2005: 12).

The connection with ethical choice is fortified since in the first shot of a number of scenes in the course of the film, buildings appear in a similar composition. This constitutes a type of delay, a cessation of action-images and relation-images, in favor of an emergence of "Firstness," of affects. Marks relates to this quality and to the possibilities of becoming: “In the affection-image, a becoming-other occurs; for as soon as we have sensation or feeling, we change. Thus, in the affection-image there is an enfolding of perceiving self into perceived world” (Marks, 2000: 197).

The affects here are a result of the encounter between the body and the plastic image or the tactile surface. They most likely will have an influence on various and sundry affects and sensations. These may include a sense of grandeur and wonder, a lifting of the spirit, or the way in which the body reacts to color intensity, as the body reacts to the color of the earth or the sky. Yet, these qualities may be admixed with a sense of tragic or pain, a sense of fading or disappearing. This sense of disappearing parallels another means of expression by which it is possible to establish "any space whatever" – empty frames and a deserted area in process of disappearing, as Deleuze identifies in Antonioni's films (Deleuze, 1986: 119-120). In any case, these are affects indicating an experience that is independent of any historical or social situation. We can now say that the montage of buildings and similar shots later in the film create a counter-actualization of meaning or sense and an escape line of becoming.

4.3.3 – Connection 3: The Struggle of Images and In-between Lines

The previous section already implied a problem and presented a kind of struggle between images that are perceived as clichés, archetypes or fossilized signs and a more vital, living, flexible, affective approach. This struggle may be developed, broadened and conceptualized as a simultaneous struggle that takes place on a few planes or layers: a struggle between black/white and color, a struggle between past and present, a struggle between Firstness and Thirdness, in Peirce's terms, a struggle between one rigid identity (on a molar line) and a more flexible, fluid subjectivity (on a molecular line). All of these can generate new thought about the essence and quality of the connection between past and present. It is also possible to read them as innovative thought-images or mental-images.

For example, consider the following sequence, which opens in color, in the present, and makes a transition to a black-and-white archival segment: Rina and Nika meet in a room, exchange impressions, and decide to sing one of the troupe's famous songs in two voices. The song is cut (by a sound bridge) to an archival segment in which we see and hear the two women singing the same song. On the discursive level, with all its historical-cultural ties, we understand this sequence to be a contrast between past and present, nostalgia in the vein of "when we were young and beautiful". But this is not what we sense or perceive

(Firstness and affect): the color section emphasizes vitality, passion, playfulness and improvisation. The camera moves in and out, comes in close, caresses the characters. The song sounds alive, colorful and warm. In contrast, the archival segment is a static medium shot, with the two women standing frozen on the stage, while the sound is jarring and artificial.

The struggle between black/white and color is the struggle between submissive passion and a full-fledged one, between one fixated identity and a more flexible one. One may say, between a permanent, known melody performed accurately but predictably and without inspiration, like the nationalistic songs in the archival segment, and the ability to improvise, to catch the moment, to create a living, fresh, young, loving connection. Another example is what I will call "the hyacinth clip." The sequence begins at night, with a shot of the moon with a dark sky in the background. This opens a montage of six or seven shots, each middle-range shot showing one of the members of the troupe at home, in bed, before falling asleep. One character begins singing, and after every line of the song there is a cross-cutting to another character who continues the next line of the song. The song is a famous Israeli lullaby: "Night after night the moon looks down/ At the flowers that have budded in the garden/ At the hyacinth flower in our little garden/ And the moon says to the clouds/ Rain down a drop or two on the gardens/ Thus says the moon to the clouds."[89]

While the archival clips fixate one identity, a particular time period, a set age, the "hyacinth clip" affords subjectivity that simultaneously dwells on a few time dimensions. Underlying molarization that imposes a clear distinction between child and adult, or a film dealing with age and fading, a possibility of new passion is revealed, a desiring-machine at work. It is a fluid subjectivity of people whom are both old and child alike, both serious (in the archive appearance) and playful. It is a children's song, a lullaby that expresses the renewal and reawakening of desire.

[89] The Hyacinth Song." Lyrics: Leah Goldberg, melody: Rivka G'vili.

Furthermore, as I have indicated earlier, the obvious tendency would be to perceive the transitions between black/white and color as an expression of the changes in the relationship between the kibbutz and the State, between the troupe and the kibbutz or between the individual and the collective (within the kibbutz), a relationship fixed in a permanent *a priori* cultural and national geography. However, the "hyacinth clip" implies an escape route to a more complex and molecular relationship between the land and the cosmos, between the land and chaos.

The sequence opens with solo singing from different directions (on-screen diegetic sound) and ends with the final line of the song being sung together by the chorus (off-screen, extra-diegetic sound). The choral singing that closes the sound channel is the background of a shot that closes the picture channel: the darkness of the night slowly dissipates as the sky begins to lighten with the dawn. An extreme long shot shows a huge wheat field stretching from the front of the frame to the horizon and in the direction of the small kibbutz houses and the blue sky.

From the above, a new connection may be derived: a song that is neither a nationalistic song nor a song of longing for the homeland + a space that is simultaneously private and public (or neither) + characters that are both adult and child-like (or neither). The "hyacinth" montage becomes a refrain, of the kind referred to by Deleuze and Guattari: "A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath [..]. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos" (1987: 311). The children's song soothes and offers stability at the heart of the chaos, whether it is the crisis in the troupe, the crises being undergone by the kibbutz or the crisis of aging and the sense of approaching death, as in the sequence shot of Rina's husband lying in a special hospital-type bed. Furthermore, the solo singing blends with the choral singing, and thus the separate and differentiated unite with the place, the earth with the cosmos. There is a feeling of blending with the world and that the world enfolds and embraces you.

The new link between sky and land is already implied by the second sequence of the film, when the camera moves slowly downwards, from the blue sky to the earth, as well as towards the end of the film in the shot sequence in which we see

the troupe standing in a wheat field singing one of its songs (in extra-diegetic sound). The shot is from a crane and opens as a long shot that shifts to dolly-out and tilt-up towards the blue sky. This composition places the troupe within a green wheat field, while the camera's back-and-up movement turns the troupe members who are wearing red and black costumes into red and black blobs in a green expanse.

The further the camera recedes and ascends, the more the people turn into red and black patches that blend in with the green expanse of wheat and the blue expanse of sky. The image begins to dart, to blink, and to create an affinity with a liquid molecular dynamic, a struggle between the firmness of the earth and the fluidity of the sky or the struggle between the madness of the earth and the lofty justice of the sky. This crane shot, together with the building montage and the hyacinth clip are the operation of an artistic-machine, one that breaks with the territorial assemblage, and "it may go beyond all assemblages and produce an opening to the cosmos" (1987: 333).

This shot indicates a new horizon for the troupe, the kibbutz or the kibbutz movement: cutting ties with the earth, finding an escape route from restrictive social frameworks and from economic interests. This also implies being detached from fixed centers, becoming wanderers and nomads, even while remaining in the same place.

One of the expressions of cutting ties with restrictive frameworks, creating new links and a more flexible subjectivity as well as the ability to connect with opposing social classes is expressed in the sequence in which the pop group "Tippex" hosts the Gevatron in a radio broadcast. Here a connection is made between a group that is identified with Middle Eastern Sephardi (oriental) music and a troupe that is identified with Eastern European Ashkenazi music. This collaboration expresses not only the crossing and erasing of ethnic, class and historical boundaries, but also implies local, regional and micro-political options, while ignoring any kind of hegemonic center.

4.3.4 – Connection 4: The Will to Power and the Belief in the Body

I would like to revisit once again the encounter between past and present, between black/white and color. In the more conventional mode, we observe and perceive the negative effects of time: the color footage indicates burnout, crumbling, fading of the body. This is a cycle of deterministic time, in which the archival shots reflect young, joyful life, while the color sequences reflect deterioration and death (Rina's death at the close of the film). Yet, the four sequences that I have analyzed: the montage of buildings, the duet, the hyacinth clip and the sequence in the field all allow for positive reverberation, life-saving rejuvenation, which unravels the cyclical character of time. In other words, this repetition acts as true desire, as a choice that is capable of starting over each time afresh.

Each of these sequences recycles previous cinematic texts. The building montage is a recapitulation of archetypes of kibbutz landscapes; the duet is a repetition of former duets, the dancing and singing in the field echo familiar representations from films of the 1930s and 40s. However, as I explained, this is repetition with a difference and in fact difference without repetition. What makes the difference and unravels the cyclical character of time, above and beyond the elements I enumerated above, is their form of expression or the operation as artistic-machine.

In each of these sequences there is a sense of suspending or multiplying time, delaying, observing and listening. Although they are in fact staged, each of these four sequences conveys an odd feeling of pseudo authentic, documentary shots, which are actually staged. They seem a bit dream-like, hallucinatory, while at the same time being more real than real. In Deleuze's terms, these sequences arrest the narrative, fracture the motor-sensorial schema of movement-image, and create pure optical-sonic images. These, to quote Ronald Bogue: "are visions purely optical situations disconnected from the common-sense coordinates of their standard usages and practices" (109).

In the previous discussion, we have already indicated these optical-sonic qualities and their non-standard use in the four sequences: the shots of the buildings that are cut off and spatially unconnected with one another, the sense

of contemplation, as well as the self-reflexive composition; the camera's movement towards and away from the characters in the duet sequence (as opposed to the static and distant filming of the archival shots), as well as the live, improvised sound compared to the worn-out sound of the parallel archival material; the filming in the field in which the picture slowly loses its contours, its visibility, in which the characters turn into blobs in a big universe; and the hyacinth clip, in which the editing, rather than making a simple connection between past and present, implies different time layers, as well as the expansion of space from a small private space to a space without boundaries – an open whole.

The invisible forces in the four sequences are related to the basic relationship between memory, body and perception. Each perception is connected to a memory that allows the body to function. Memory can be involved with a "lost" past (archival footage) or childhood memories (the children's song). But above all, we need a body in order to act, an affective body, a giving and nurturing body. All this is true, even when the world around us is in crisis, crumbling, and expiring, or when the principles we believed in or the revolution we wished for become impossible, such as, in the case of the kibbutz, a state of equality and class revolution. If so, what is rendered visible is a renewed faith in the body, in the body's strength and power – the will to power. The will to power is not the desire for power but the striving to always act with strength, power, intensity, the strength to influence and create as many nurturing, supportive, joyful encounters as possible (see also Pisters 1998: 80-81, 112-113).

Mika continues to appear with the troupe, despite the difficulties this presents. Her mind tells her to stop, but her body hungers for the nurturing connection with songs, words and music, with the troupe and with her various memories. Rina is already ill and in a wheelchair, but she insists on continuing to work with another troupe outside the kibbutz. The will to power comes to intensive, pure expression in the duet because it conveys camaraderie between women, a mutual giving of the body. Before they begin singing, Rina says that she is only capable of singing the first part and that Mika always sings the second part. Only together, in a duet, is musical harmony created. Their relationship, then, is above all a bodily connection related to the throat, the vocal chords and the diaphragm

– the unique and singular sound of each individual human body. Thus the duet is also the transformation of the body's limitations into an opportunity. It expressed the body's possibility to give, to love, to blend and to affect.

The hyacinth clip and the shot-sequence in the field penetrate the molar line of subjectification and carries it towards the molecular line of becoming (becoming-child, becoming-music, becoming-animal). In these two sequences, the elements that establish the subject are not only, if at all, desire based on lack and a lost object, but primarily plenty and the freedom to create endless nurturing connections: the disorganized body that connects or assemble with day and night, with sunrise and sunset, earth and sky, light and darkness, plants and animals, and the entire wide range of perception of colors, smells, sounds and rhythms, human and inhuman. In other words, the endless range of qualities and powers having no place, no geography, no "ideology" and no history.

In the Deleuzian context, the body is not only a human body, and I would like to conclude this section with the body of the film, the film as body. The body of the film, the application of the cinematic expression, is what allows the connections, the links and the new ideas I raised here. As I have indicated, even though the film seems to be a conventional film of its genre (the documentation of a troupe's life), and despite the fact that the film seems to recycle images and clichés, the film's artistic-machine opens up multiple possibilities, numerous directions of thought regarding ways of relating to the past. In this context, the cinematic expression in these sequences acts as true desire, like a choice that is capable of beginning each time afresh. There is a sense of a world without boundaries as well as imagery that is always open to different interpretations devoid of one definitive meaning.

4.4 – A Brief Interlude

In September, 2006, when I was getting ready to conclude my research, a new film about the kibbutz was released - *Sweet Mud.* Dror Shaul, the director of *Operation Grandma*, directed this film, which won the Israel Film Academy's prize for best film of 2006. It was chosen to represent Israel at the Oscar competition in Hollywood. In January 2007, the film won first prize for a foreign film in the Sundance Film Festival, USA. I thought it was a good opportunity to test my thesis. In the next and final chapter I will summarize the course of my research, and will demonstrate the three methodologies that concerned me over four chapters, and will do so in relation to *Sweet Mud.* Finally, I will present the conclusions and implication of my research.

Chapter 5

Sweet Mud and Thought Without an Image

The film *Sweet Mud* (Dror Shaul, 2006), describes the coming of age of D'vir, a 12-year-old boy, in a kibbutz in southern Israel in 1974. In the course of his bar-mitzvah year, during which he has to perform various tasks, he also has to steer a course between the egalitarian values of the kibbutz and his complex relationship with his mother. D'vir grew up without a father, who committed suicide, and he attempts to support his mother, who is perceived by the kibbutz members as an eccentric, strange woman. The mother, Miri, lives in oppressive isolation and falls in love with Stephan, a middle-aged tourist from Switzerland, whom she invites to the kibbutz. Stephan comes for a visit and expresses his willingness to live in the kibbutz.

The main conflict and turning point occurs over a dog. One of the neighbors, Avram, asks D'vir to chain his dog, in order to prevent the insemination of the neighbor's female dog. Stephan is not aware of this demand, and releases D'vir's dog. The neighbor then tries to hit D'vir, and Stephan strikes the man and breaks his arm. Consequently, he is asked to leave the kibbutz and returns to Switzerland. D'vir, whose elder brother Eyal has joined the army, witnesses his mother undergoing a process of introversion and loss of sanity. He attempts to renew contact with Stephan, in the hope that this will help the family to leave the kibbutz and move to Switzerland. Parallel to these relationships, the film includes various coming-of-age ceremonies of bar-mitzvah age kibbutz children, which mark the transition from childhood to adulthood: a trek where they must navigate by the stars, a swearing-in ceremony in the cemetery, nighttime guard duty in the baby house and a festive final ceremony.

In terms of the symbolic-realistic interpretation, and due to the themes of the outcast and alien, it seems as though *Sweet Mud* connects up with films of the 1980s, which as we remember were severely critical of kibbutz values and ethics (Chapter 2). These films include *Noa at 17* (1982), *Atalia* (1984), *Stalin's Disciples* (1987), *The Dreamers* (1988), and to some extent, *An Intimate Story* (1981) and *Boy Meets Girl* (1982). These films are also set in the near and distant

past, and criticize the values of kibbutz society – the lack of solidarity, the hypocrisy, the intolerance and alienation. Like these films, *Sweet Mud* presents the conflict between kibbutz values and ideology and the needs and desires of the individual. Life in a small closed community severely infringes on the changing personal needs of the individual in the kibbutz, thus the individual/collective opposition is highlighted. For example, the decision of the kibbutz general meeting to expel Stephan, Miri's lover, triggers a process of introversion and mental decline. This dynamic reveals the negative side of communal life: opacity, arbitrariness, strong-arm tactics and malevolence on the part of the members toward the individual. Ideological rigidity is shown to be the source of intolerance, blindness and emotional obtuseness toward the lone individual.

Similarly to many films that were analyzed in the present study, the kibbutz in *Sweet Mud* is presented through the relationship between the exposed thresholds and a real center (the kibbutz hierarchy, the general meeting) or the imaginary locus (Utopia, the vision). Exposed thresholds are those liminal phenomena or situations that the kibbutz does not succeed in containing; thus, they pose a threat to the familial-communal order. These include figures such as temporary residents, unmarried people, widows, people suffering from an illness or disability, who all threaten the ordinary social order; liminal situations such as mourning, illicit romances, unfaithfulness, madness or suicide; a plot structure that specializes time between two extremes: the lofty ideals (the past) contrasted with crumbling reality (the present).

However, in the context of Israeli cinema in the 1980s, these themes are also perceived as a national allegory, as a criticism of Zionist ideals in general, especially those issues that were raised in many other films produced in the 1980s: the attitude to the Arab "other" in the 'conflict films', the attitude to Holocaust survivors, or the attitude to the sexual "other" (in Amos Guttman's early films). Against the background of the Lebanon War, the expansion of colonialism and nationalistic trends in Israeli society, criticism of the kibbutz was only one direction in a body of criticism regarding the Zionist hegemony and its various institutions – the kibbutz, the army, the educational system – the State's ideological and repressive apparatuses.

Sweet Mud seems to continue some of these trends, but also connects with Israeli films of the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century (chapter 3). First, it relates to films about the kibbutz whose thematic material I called "the shattered dream," dystopia versus utopia. The film's open or veiled echo of the crises kibbutz society underwent in the 1990s, the age of privatization, in films like *No Names on the Doors* and *She's not 17*. Secondly, it relates to films of the second immigration generation, films that replace collective with personal memory, or films having an autobiographical, personal and intimate dimension, embedded with feelings of melancholy and loss: *An Imagined Autobiography* (1994), *Sh'chur* (1994), *Desperado Square* (2001), and more. Thirdly, it relates to films from the last decade whose action is remote from the surrounding world – disregarding geographical, social and especially national affairs. Most of the films mentioned above are included in this group as well as films such as *Lovesick on Nana Street* (1995), *Something Sweet* (2004), *Turn Left at the End of the World* (2004), and more. Since *Sweet Mud* includes a few scenes relating to the negative aspects of children's communal sleeping arrangements in the kibbutz, it is important to mention the film's affinity with the "Communal Sleeping" exhibition from summer, 2005 (to which I referred in my Introduction).

As a genre film, *Sweet Mud* embodies rich and ramified intertexts. At first glance it appears to be a summing-up of the history of the kibbutz in Israeli cinema: various educational and coming-of-age ceremonies, from *What a Gang!* (1962), via *Eight Against One* (1964) and *The Valley Train* (1989) to *Operation Grandma* (1999); the appearance of the widow and her struggle in face of repressive kibbutz society and intrusive public opinion, from *The Hero's Wife* (1963) via *Atalia* (1984) to *No Names on the Doors* (1996); the figure of the alien/outcast who arrives at the kibbutz from the city or from another country, and who is not aware of the laws of kibbutz society, from *Sallah* (1964) via *He Walked through the Fields* (1967/8), *New Land* (1994); or the image of the outsider child in *Boy Meets Girl* (1982) and other films directed by Michal Bat-Adam; the hostile attitude towards the weak, ill, old or outsiders , from *Stalin's Disciples* (1987), *Life according to Agfa* (1991), *She's not 17* (2003) or *No Names on the Doors*; the figure of the kibbutz's general secretary (the Law), the kibbutz soldier or, conversely, the girl volunteer, from *The Troupe* (1979) and

Atalia, via *No Names on the Doors* to *Operation Grandma*. The iconography of the kibbutz has not changed significantly: the dining room, the cowshed, the kibbutz yard, the entrance gate, and occasionally some shots of fields and landscape.

In other words, we can see the elementary syntax of the genre, which might be the reason for the success of the film and the wining of prizes:
a. An outcast in the kibbutz (Miri) and the arrival of a visitor/outsider (Stephan)
b. Threshold positions (single-parent family), liminal situations (madness, violence), and rites the passage (the initiation ceremonies)
c. The conflict between the individual and the law (the secretary, the general assembly).
d. Supporters (Eyal, grandma and grandpa), and rivals (the violent member).
e. Open-closed ending: D'vir and the girl riding a bike in the fields, while the issues of his mother, Stephan and the future remain open.

We might also consider the flexible relations between the syntactic and semantic axis. For example, the visitor/outsider can be an Israeli or a tourist, a man or a woman, Ashkenazi or Spharadi, a boy or a girl. Since in the kibbutz every private issue is immediately political, the potential to produce liminal situations is wide, whether the focus is on a widow, a single parent, a bachelor, an animal or a grave. We can clearly notice the tendency of turning the kibbutz into another-different place (Heterotopia), with its unique ceremonies, scandals, attractions and pathologies.

Not surprisingly, the film is considered by large sectors of the public to be an attack on the kibbutz, a demystification of the myth and ethos of kibbutz society, an exposé of the breakdown of yet another institution or entity related to the Zionist-Ashkenazi-hegemonic elite. To quote Shavit: "Something is rotten in the Zionist endeavor…Shaul created this film in order to examine once and for all what went wrong with such a promising project" (2006: 13). Another critic writes: "Dror Shaul burns alive the kibbutz collective of the 1970s, an idealistic way of life, irrational and inhuman, that represses the individual" (Mochiach, 2006: 1). Shmulik Duvdivani presents criticism that is more aware of the film's distortions of reality: "…a kind of unsympathetic, if not hateful, mixture of

perversions, hostility against the anomaly and the stranger, distasteful chauvinism, caricatures that recite tired social slogans, decadence and outright physical and emotional abuse" (2006: 2). Shlomit Lir suggests a rather symbolic interpretation: "The mental inability of the hero's biological mother to function as a responsible adult is in effect a paraphrase of the inability of the kibbutz to function properly" (Lir 2006).

These reactions conform to some of the issues that were discussed in the course of this study. That is, thinking with binary and dual categories such as past/present, individual/collective, rational/irrational, freedom/repression, the dream/the shattered dream, alive/atrophied. As I argued before, such thinking relates to a certain kind of viewing, understanding and interpretation. Spectatorship here rests on prior knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, and in short, the common and obvious meaning. Hanan Hever wrote about the films *Kippur* (2000) and *Desperado Square*: "Their perspective on Israel of the 1970s is one in which the individual rejects reality – but also accepts it in order to survive within it […] Both these films focus on the limited space available to their protagonists and even refrain from locating this private space in the general space and time of Israeli society" (Hever 2001: 238). The lack of privacy and the invasion into the intimate life of the other are certainly painful, bleeding issues in *Sweet Mud* and in kibbutz reality in general. But this is not the point I would like to make, but rather the possibility and especially the lack of possibility of seeing the similarities and connections between this film and the films that Hever analyzes, as well as other films of the 1990s that do not relate to the kibbutz.

The above film criticism seems to make it impossible to pay attention to the fact that *Sweet Mud* also dissects and undermines these routine dichotomies. For example, the space in the film is both closed and broken into, the place is both static and vital, desire is both blocked and erect, and the dead-end story also suggests new beginnings. It is difficult to pay attention to these and other issues when the signifier KIBBUTZ or the transcendental kibbutz comes between the viewer and the screen. In other words, it seems impossible, at least in the field of Israeli cinema, to detach oneself from the representation paradigm and the ethic of right/wrong, proper/improper, true/false, logic/madness, a reflection of reality/the author (auteur) memory or fantasy.

This division between good and evil, adequate or unacceptable, is reminiscent of the first visit to the exhibition "Communal Sleeping: The Group and the Kibbutz in Collective Israeli Consciousness," which I mentioned in the introduction, as well as of the molar "entrance" and the binary machines that dictate metaphorical and allegorical interpretations in *No Names on the Doors*. This division is almost unavoidable since *Sweet Mud* opens with two harsh and crude scenes: in the first scene the soundtrack intensifies the sound of babies crying, heard through a sound detection device. The night guards need to track down from a distance the location of the crying baby (the communal sleeping arrangement), and bring the baby a bottle of milk. In a second scene, D'vir plays with a kestrel in the cowshed, and then the farmer, Avram, arrives to feed the female calves. D'vir hides and witnesses Avram stroking the calf, speaking to her lovingly, taking his pants off, and allowing the calf to perform oral sex on him.

The film, therefore, creates a clear distinction between the good and the bad. Avram is the personification of evil, brutality, egoism and deviance. He is the one beating D'vir and later killing his dog. He causes the expulsion of Stephan and generates the deterioration in Miri's condition. For most viewers, Avram is a synecdoche of deviance and degeneration of communal life in the kibbutz. In contrast, Stephan personifies the worthy in general and the good outside the kibbutz in particular. He is a delicate, educated, pleasant, amiable and good-natured man. Before long, D'vir learns to like Stephan, finding in him a substitute father figure, a friend and a savior. What I intend to examine is whether the film allows "a second visit" and alternative entrances; whether the film affords the same ethical choice presented in *Mother of the Gevatron*; whether the film enables a reference that is beyond good and evil; whether the film tolerates thinking without an image.

Continuing the analysis I suggested in Chapter 4, I would argue that *Sweet Mud* affords an escape from a linear plot that focuses solely on the dramatic and traumatic plot's lines. The film suggests multiple foci, proximity and contiguity between very different situations and experiences, and a zigzag between various states of desire. Among other things, the film succeeds where other films about the kibbutz seem to fail, since for almost the first time, three generations appear

and the protagonist is not an only child.[90] These two aspects allow the film to branch out and break up the macro story of thresholds/center and individual/collective (Miri/general meeting), and to create multiple interpersonal micro-relations, sub-coalitions and sub-spaces within the kibbutz and its surroundings. These may be called the molecular fermentation of the kibbutz, and it generally includes the interaction between the exterior scenes and the interior scenes, the scenes between D'vir and Eyal, between D'vir and his grandfather and grandmother, or between D'vir and the foreign girl. If we pay closer attention, we can see that a large number of these scenes do not necessarily support the central plot line (Miri's mental state, the relationship between Miri and D'vir, Stephan and the kibbutz), but are placed in proximity, next to one another or contiguous to each other.

Furthermore, certain elements entail deterritorialisation and cross different assemblages as the story unfolds. For example, there are seven scenes or more with a solitary Jujube tree on a hill, in the background or the foreground of the mise-en-scène. Sometimes the tree serves D'vir as a hiding place and a refuge from personal and social chaos, and in other scenes as a lookout post and spy-hole. Sometimes the tree is a place of forbidden pleasures (smoking a cigarette), and on another occasion it is a secret meeting place for D'vir and his mother. These are all intra-assemblage particles and milieus. Nevertheless, this tree is also an intersection point between inside and outside, as a border marking or as the end of the known world (for the child protagonist), and a launching pad to the world of imagination and intuition. Thus, it is the crossroad between the territorial assemblage and the interassemblage with its deterritorialisation effects on the body (imagination and intuitions). But the tree framed and shot against the horizon is also an interface between earth and sky, between the infinite universe and the microscopic mineral composition of the earth (the infra-assemblage). In addition, the tree changes its texture and vibrations according to the seasons into which the film is divided. The tree is an island, a homeland and boundless territory.

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[90] From *I like Mike* via *He walked through the fields* to *She's not 17*, there was always an only child, a very unlikely circumstance in kibbutz families and Israeli society. *Operation Grandma* was an exception to this rule, and part of its magic definitely stems from the interactions among the three brothers).

"On the hilltop stands a cow…" is a popular kibbutz children's song, but also a refrain that one begins to sing over and over again at the end of the single line of the song. This verse-refrain-loop ties in with the image of the tree on the hilltop in the film. The tree is a repetitive refrain and at the same time a soothing lullaby in face of personal-familial chaos. The tree is movement-image that recurs each time with different intensities – as relation-image, as action-image, or as affection-image. The Jujube tree returns like a refrain and a loop that disarticulate linear or hierarchical thinking. All these possibilities and qualities act in proximity and even precede representation of institutional powers. Those intensities are edges of deterritorialization in the assemblage of desire.

The initiation ceremonies that mark the transition from childhood to adulthood and form part of the bar-mitzvah activities may be read in a similar way. On the one hand, they possess a dogmatic dimension that demarcates, delimits and encodes the child's body and mind. These ceremonies express the subject's subordination to an authority figure (the juridical mechanism), to the community (the social mechanism), and in a broader context, to the State (army service, for example). They express the limitations, blockage and lowering of desire. On the other hand, they also allow erection, copying, and the creative productivity of desire, the belief in the strength and forces of the body – the will to power. That is, the will to do everything intensively, and the opportunity to create many fertile, supportive, and happy encounters. As Alon says in *Operation Grandma*: "You start at your highest speed, and gradually accelerate."

The film establishes the protagonist's desire as one based on lack and on a lost object (the father's absence, the mother's silence), but also posits connections and encounters that break through the boundaries of the Self – memory that is neither subjective nor collective, but mineral, topographical, meteorological, perceptual and affective. That is, a childhood-block. Desire is reproduced and erect in the manner in which the protagonist-film-viewer come into intensive contact with day and night (the scenes of navigation and swearing-in), sunrise and sunset, earth and water (the scene between Miri and D'vir in the rain), light and darkness, plants and animals (cows and birds), and the whole wide spectrum that relates to perception of colors, smells, voices and rhythms, some of which are human and some not. For example, the connection of the tree with the earth

and the cosmos that is somewhat domestic (reflection-image) and somewhat animal-like (impulse-image).

The navigation hike hints at the educational mechanism of studying the land and Sabra culture, the coding of the body and its subordination to the hegemonic values of kibbutz/State. But this hike, like other scenes in the film, does not occur in a vacuum. The qualities and the intensities of the territorial assemblage accede personal and social affairs. Those Initiation ceremonies as indoctrination do not take place in the classroom (as the classroom lesson about the sexual organs). That is, they are manifestation of deterritorialisation.

The navigation hike, like other scenes in the film, expresses the dis-organization and disarticulating of the organism/body: leaving-walking-running, breathing-sweating-accelerated pulse, muscles-dryness-land-topography, greenery-meteorology-tree, hiding-lookout-peeping, temptation-sexuality-enjoyment-freedom-adventure, rhythm-crowdedness-sparseness, sun-sky-light-shadow-heat-cold = intensity, instead of extended signifying chain. These and other encounters are the opposite of blocked or repressed desire. It expresses the intersection of heterogeneous elements that cannot be minimized to one molar instance ("sex" or "Oedipalization"). That is, what we have here is not a structure but a desiring-machine, not sentiments but affects, not subjectivity but haeccity. Or, in the words of Brian Massumi: "A supple individual lies between the molecular and the molar […]. It has boundaries, but fluctuating ones. It is the threshold leading from one state to another" (1999: 55).

As a childhood memory and trauma, the film manifests an Oedipal construction of the subject (the father's absence), a pre-Oedipal aspect (the desire to merge with the mother), and the territorialisation of the body into a disciplinary site (the lesson on male and female sex organs, the initiation ceremonies). At the same time, the initiation ceremonies as well as the tree scenes and other scenes are expressions of matters that precede individuation and subjectification. These are encounters of becoming-other: becoming-hunter, nomad, explorer, a bird on a tree. That is, a substrate that is a non-formed and non-organized body or concepts: a Body without Organs.

The following words from Deleuze and Guattari seem very relevant here: "The BwO is a childhood block, a becoming, the opposite of child memory. It is not the child before the adult, or the mother before the child: it is the strict contemporaneousness of the adult, of the adult and the child, their map of comparative densities and intensities, and all of the variations on the map" (1987: 164). In other words, the BwO swings in *Sweet Mud* between the surfaces that stratify it (Oedipalization, Subjectification) and the plane that sets it free (the film as artistic-machine). The BwO that I refer to here is not necessarily the biological body (the characters) but can refer to a film as a political body or a collective body.

It must be said here that the various initiation and coming-of-age ceremonies educate toward remaining in the kibbutz (reterritorialization), but at the same time release potential forces, flows, thresholds and movements of deterritorialization. That is, they carry the non-formed territory and mobilize it. This complex array embodies the folding and unfolding of life, and this relates to the body-protagonist, body-film and body-kibbutz. There is no beginning and no end. There is neither structure nor foundation. Rather there is a process, experimentations and immanent changes. That is, to find the opportunity to make these arrays productive and influential – in the kibbutz and outside it. For example, the productivity of the items in the "Communal Sleeping" exhibition, or in Shaul's case, the making of a film…!

Thus the film alternates in a zigzag between different, varied segments and affords a way out and an escape route from binary and dual thinking or realistic-symbolic interpretation. *Sweet Mud* uses images such as the fence and the entrance gate or the scene at the general meeting. These images establish formal contrasts and an allocation of metaphors and symbols: a shrinking, closed, claustrophobic and paranoid place. Space receives symbolic and metaphoric attributes and values, thus becoming abstract and a kind of scientific knowledge. But the film, as was described above, also restores to the territory what was stolen from it: matters and affects, touch and smell, particles and fibers. When D'vir rides the bike at the end of the film, the unlimited expanse of the earth seems to move up and down. On the one hand, there is reflective film viewing, viewing that turns the image into meaning and concepts within a sign system that

is known in advance. On the other hand, there are images that express sensations, experiences, energies and forces that cannot be determined to have one meaning. That is, a zigzag between domestic and violent images, between intellectual thinking and the under-development of the body. If so, the film is to a large extent a counter-actualization of one rigid and fossilized meaning. It offers images and signs that are not yet or not only symbols, but are also in the realm of the potential or the virtual.

To return for a moment to the two "harsh" scenes that open the film (the crying infants and bestiality) and to the metaphysics of good and evil, adequate or unacceptable, we could now briefly delineates several additional rhizomatic options: first, the oscillation between the domestic and violent images or between the intellect and the under-development of the body corresponds with the contrast between Avram and Stephan. But it also resonates with subdued and obedient desire (Stephan) as opposed to erect and displaced desire (Avram). In other words, Dvir's identification with Stephan suggests a kind of illusion and escape to more comfortable and harmonious life, while Avram's figure offers options of compilation, combination, finding a way out and a will to power. In Nietzschean terms, Avram is closer to Dionysius and Stephan to Apollo. Avram also plays the piano and sings, personifying, thus, the irony of life, the subtle and the brutal, life and death.

Secondly, on a more abstract level, one might contend that beyond good and evil, adequate or unacceptable, the film's opening scenes describe an intensive diagram or map of thresholds and escape lines – a social field whose basic characteristic is that everything escapes it and everything is deterritorialized. It is a kind of collage or assemblage that both connects between images but also creates and establishes another impression. The films produced in the thirties about the early days of the kibbutz displayed images of settlement and productivity that constituted territorialization and reterritorialization – the demarcation of the land, indicating fields and buildings, bringing the herd into the corrals, members walking toward the dining room, children gathering in a play ground. In contrast, the opening of *Sweet Mud* while connecting to and reverberating with these images, but at the same time also delineates another picture. It is an image of animals escaping from the corral, something that

constantly gets loose, escapes, becomes undone. The babies' weeping, which breaks out from the babies' house, also escapes from the frame, Dvir who fled the children's house in order to play with the kestrel in the cowshed and then runs in the fields like a free animal. Avram, the cowshed, and the calves are means of production and forces of production that suddenly function as anti-production, dis-organ-ized: the calf consumes Avram and Avram consumes the calf. Like the tree on the hill and like the rites of passage, these scenes designate the freeing of labor-power from specific means of production.

At the end of *Operation Grandma* the youngest brother, Idan, says: "We've never visited [the kibbutz] again." It is interesting, then, to compare the return to the kibbutz in *Sweet Mud.* Why does Dror Shaul return there and what difference does this return make? *Operation Grandma* was a film about distancing oneself, as the three brothers distanced themselves from the kibbutz. The film emphasized motifs of transience, wandering and homelessness (Alon is a temporary resident, Benny immigrates to America) – freedom embedded in choosing not to choose. The film emphasized elements of competition, ostentation and aggressiveness toward authority (the kibbutz, the secretary). The parody emphasized and ridiculed the organizational and functional dimensions of the kibbutz. *Sweet Mud*, on the other hand, returns to memory and trauma, but also to aggression's "escort": courtship and sexuality. Courtship and sexuality embodied in the plot but moreover, at the expressive and stylistic level of the film. It rediscovers the expressive aspects of the place, the rhythms, the colors and the sounds, the affective impulses, all which are invisible to the plane of transcendence or to the representation paradigm. It reaches the plane and lines where the land is no more and not always-already a symbolic territory (the kibbutz as a metonymy of Zionism or of the State).

Sweet Mud re-gathers the forces and energies that were scattered in all directions in the earlier film. The film constitutes a transient journey that releases new forces and escape routes in face of considerable mobility and a "dead end" in the earlier film (the funeral, leaving the kibbutz). The soundtrack is a case in point: *Operation Grandma* included an eclectic and random mixture of musical styles, including trance music, carnival music, comic animation music and Spanish songs. Conversely, in *Sweet Mud* there is one musical motif that recurs

throughout the film, a melody played on an accordion and a trumpet. A concise, tempting, mysterious and hypnotic motif: “The melodic landscape is no longer a melody associated with a landscape; the melody itself is a sonorous landscape in counterpoint to a virtual landscape" (ibid. 318). The accordion and the trumpet express courtship and temptation, love and parting, wandering and nesting, refrain and loop – the Jujube tree on the hilltop. Once there was a cow and later a tree that enters the boy’s body, which is transformed unto a film.

Conclusions

I hope that the research study I have presented here will contribute to the body of research about Israeli cinema. I believe that this study has the potential to change present categorization and classification, as well as to suggest a renewed, fresh perspective on Israeli films, both those that have already been released and those that will be produced in the future. As I stated at the beginning of the research, I have been selective in my analysis of Israeli cinema and clearly used only a few of the ideas from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, with and without Felix Guattari. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest some implications of the research regarding Israeli cinema in general.

I believe that my slightly different, alternative analysis of each of the films here and in chapter 4 contributes to the "reshuffling" of the film interpretation cards. For example, it is possible to take the connections that I had created in the analysis of *Mother of the Gevatron* – movement-image, counter-actualization, any-space-whatever or the body and the will to power – and connect them to other films discussed in this chapter, as well as to other films that were not referred to here. Thus, we might address the recurring image of the dirt road in *She's Not 17* and instead of a symbolic reading of it as a "border", a "no man's land" or liminality, to offer new rhizomatic maps and relate to these images as any-space-whatever and a level on which the characters confront the need to choose an existential choice.

We might also apply the ideas of multiple entrances, parts and machines from *No Names on the Doors* to other films. That is obviously relevant to *Sweet Mud*, where the one-year plot is divided to four seasons, and each season suggests a different entrance, different intensities and different affects. Each season expresses a different individuality (haeccity) and multiple exchanges between the body and the surroundings.

We should also reconsider the films from chapter 2, and introduce an alternative classification. That is, a classification that is not based on representation, genre, and ideology but rather on the internal forces and intensities of the images. For example: we can treat films from the thirties as Zionist propaganda films, as representation of the dominant ideology and the socio-cultural context. But we should also refer to the impulse-images and affect-images of those films. After all, these films express numerous encounters with animals, plants, soil, minerals, water, and so on.

There are films that focus mainly on molar confrontations, like *Atalia* or *Sallah*. On the other hand, there are films like *He Walked Through the Fields*, where molar confrontations are open to molecular movements. Within the symbolic-realistic interpretation, Uri, the protagonist, represents the dilemma of the national-heroic figure that gives up private life for the sake of serving the nation. I would argue that the choice he made is not a moral and conscious decision but rather an expression of a will to power and the need for a distance to compete, since he finds in the army an opportunity to experiment with new thresholds and new intensities. Outside the family and without a home, Uri, like Alon, D'vir and other protagonists, frees himself from territorial bonds.

I would like to emphasize one important conclusion here. We have learned about the cyclical appearance of the kibbutz on Israeli screen, over seven decades. I would argue now that the recurrence of kibbutz films precedes representation, genre, socio-cultural context and national boundaries. In other words, it precedes the kibbutz as a signifier of origin, Zionism, socialism, or collectivism. I suggest that it is more like a cyclical return to the potential of the kibbutz as a singular body, with its unique heterogeneous constellation of machines, assemblages,

forces, sensations, affects and lines. It is a return to the unique and virtual Body without Organs.

What I mean is that the encounter between the film-body and the kibbutz-body reactivates all sorts of relations with animals, soil, minerals, plants and so on, but also reactivates flows of detrritorialisations. After all, isn't Stephan the medieval knight on a white stallion who comes to rescue the girl from the last feudal fortress (kibbutz) in Israel? Does the Jujube tree, an African desert plant, not remind us of the desert at the thresholds of our over-domesticated homeland? Do not the exchanges and translations of many letters in *Sweet Mud* remind of ancient oral traditions?[91]

In chapters 4 and chapter 5, I adopted Brian Massumi's motto from the introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*: "The question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make possible to think? What new emotions does it make possible to feel? What new sensations and perception does it open in the body?" (x). I have attempted to distance myself from questions such as: do these films accurately reflect reality? Is it an authentic representation or a false one, a just or an unjust representation? I also tried to engage and disengage myself with fixed categories, stigmas and over codification, all of which are patterns that block thought and interpretation.

I believe that I have demonstrated that it works, that it is possible to set aside the discourse concerned with representation and identity and instead create thought and texts that express what is actually in the midst of a process and becoming. I have used various concepts derived from Deleuze and Guattari's "tool box" and suggested a different reading to films about the kibbutz. Those tools helped me to create new rhizomatic maps, connections, links and thoughts concerning these films.

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[91] Miri cannot read and write French so every letter she receives or writes to Stephan has to be translated

We should take into account that the relation between past and present is not necessarily a causal, contrastive relation, and neither a relation between ideal whole and fallen fragments. Past and present, myth and ethos are only some of the components that exist in proximity, next to one another, alongside additional forces. Or, in the words of Deleuze: "[…] We must not pass along the event, but plunge into it, go through all the geological layers that are its internal history (and not a more or less distant past)" (1989: 254-5). Instead of causal and visible relations, there are external relations, relations of indifference or affiliation that have not yet come to discursive expression. Instead of asking why the order is breaking down and what are the historical and cultural reasons for this, it is possible to focus on the plane of immanence or invent new classification regarding the ontology of images.

These shift beares ethical implications. Symbolic-realistic interpretation expresses a kind of reactive ethics. This ethics presumes a whole, a given unity, intention and purpose regarding the subject, films and concepts. Following Deleuze and Guattari, I suggest active ethics, ethics that do not presume identity, intention and purpose. Let us think with our cinema as if the end is not predetermined and life is not aiming at a particular goal. There are breaks, new beginnings, escape routes and a striving to increase and maximize the forces of life.

Such an approach might lead us outside or beyond context and synchronicity. Israeli films do not necessarily refer to our contemporary socio-cultural contexts, nor should they be taken automatically as reflecting a confrontation between major and minor ethnic groups within Israeli society (East-West). We should ask ourselves whether imported post-colonial and gender studies have not themselves carried the risk of colonizing our bodies and minds, in regard to spectatorship of our films.

The most recent substantial and excellent research on Israeli cinema was written by Yael Munk (2005). She divides Israeli films from the 1990s and onwards into two types. The first type of film deals with a post-Sabra world, a world in which the Ashkenazi Israeli, the symbol of hegemony, turns into a stranger and an exile in his own land and/or is involved in personal and family conflicts related to a

shaken identity. The second group contains films that feature Oriental Jews and other excluded ethnic minorities. These films are generally set in Israel's geographical periphery. According to Munk, those films express a locality cut off from the political sphere and the Zionist-Ashkenazi world, and therefore suggest resistance and subversion to dominant ideology, a distinct Heterotopy or "Third spaces".

The issues that I have raised in the course of my research challenge Munks' division and presuppositions. According to Chapter 3, kibbutz films belong to the first group (the theme of the shattered dream, utopia and dystopia). However, if we do not assume *a priori* that the kibbutz is a metonymy for the State and the hegemony, and if we move from a temporal perspective to a spatial one, as Munk suggests, then kibbutz films definitely express locality, exile, and a kind of detachment from national politics. Therefore, my research suggests alternative and new options. I believe that I could write on *No Names on the Doors* and the other films in relatively the same manner. I could have used concepts such as exile, Diaspora, minority, repressed memories, trauma, absence, or heterotopy (to some extent that is what I did in chapter 3).

I would argue now that those terms are just one dimension or organization of the social field (molar moments). If we stick to these organizations as ideal points, we constitute a single uniting principle. We have replaced "majority" with "minority", "ideology" with "post-ideology", "reality" with "memory", "home" with "exile". Those ready-made concepts embody oppressive effects not because they are not true but because they block thoughts and lines of escape and dissect desire as process. We should be able to consider our cinema as a **cinema without organs**. We should be able to go beyond those stratifying moments, forms or concepts, and explore the non-formed and non-organized experiences, affects and becoming. We should be able to approach our films in respect to their movements of deterritorialisation**,** the operation of machines and the various assemblages at work.

Apilog: A Line of Flight…

Let us search for the affirmative forces beyond nation and beyond ideology. Let us reach beyond representation and the visible. Let us open ourselves to other sensual experiences such as touch, sound or smell. Let us search for those lines and forces that are valuable in themselves. Let us think without an image.

I hope that I have used Deleuze and Guattari's "toolbox" to create movement and change. The "movement" that I generated – by the act of thinking and writing about and together with the films – indicates the creative potential of the films and thought about them, releases thinking from the obvious, and exposes it to new organizations, new sensations and perceptions. Instead of returning to the identical or the similar – the old territory, the kibbutz, the ethos and the myth – I allowed thought to be exposed to new interactions and new application concerning the subject, concepts and being. I have suggested a real break from the dominant interpretation and thus created my own Line of Flight: "Create the opposite dream: know how to create a becoming-minor" (Delueze and Guattari 1986: 27).

Dutch Summary - Nederlandse Samenvatting

Sinds eind jaren zeventig begon het onderzoek naar de Israëlische film zich te ontwikkelen en vaste voet te krijgen, en wijdde zich aan het indelen in periodes en genres van ongeveer vierhonderd speelfilms die in Israël sinds 1920 en tot het begin der jaren negentig gemaakt werden. Voor dit onderzoek werden verschillende theoretische benaderingen toegepast, maar deze dienden voornamelijk om de Israëlische film te kenmerken als een reflectie van onderwerpen, problemen en conflicten in de Israëlische maatschappij, waarbij het zwaartepunt gelegd werd op de ideologische betekenis van de films en de ideologische recencies daarop. **Het onderzoek dat ik heb uitgevoerd toont, onderzoekt en past deze methodologische benaderingen toe en gaat daarna over op een nieuwe onderzoeksmethode die gebaseerd is op het nomadisch denken van Deleuze en Guattari**. Om dit zo duidelijk mogelijk te brengen, heb ik films gekozen die nog niet als speciaal genre van de Israëlische film bij een onderzoek betrokken waren – ongeveer vijftig speelfilms en documentaire films, gemaakt in de jaren 1930-2006, die over de kibboets gaan of op de kibboets betrekking hebben.

Het eerste hoofdstuk gaat over de methoden die op het gebied van het interpreterend beschrijven van de Israëlische film in gebruik zijn bij het akademisch onderzoek, en doet verslag over de assemblage van concepten en gedachtenpatronen die uit zo'n interpretatie tevoorschijn komen: representatie, realisme, genre, auteur, homologie, ideologie, oost-west tegenstellingen. Mijn these is dat onder invloed van benaderingen vanuit het structuralisme, het post-marxisme en voornamelijk het post-kolonialisme, het onderzoek van de Israëlische film zich voornamelijk concentreert **op de politiek van representatie in het kader van de nationale film**. Ik heb deze methode de naam "symbolisch-realistische interpretatie", of "het representatieve paradigma" gegeven. Dat is dus een interpretatie die zich vooral bezighoudt met de inhoud en de thematiek van de film als vertegenwoordiging en reflectie van de werkelijkheid (realisme), en met de ideologisch-nationale strekking van die representaties. Omdat ik voor een onderzoek gekozen heb dat zich bezighoudt met films over de kibboets, heb ik aan het eerste hoofdstuk wat historisch en maatschappelijk achtergrondmateriaal toegevoegd voor de lezer die misschien niet vertrouwd is met de geschiedenis van de kibboets.

Het tweede hoofdstuk gaat over de manier waarop de kibboets in de Israëlische film van de jaren dertig en tot eind jaren tachtig voorgesteld wordt. Ik verdeel dit tijdperk in vijf verschillende perioden en voer een textuele, contextuele en intertextuele analyse uit. Ik onderzoek elementen van het plot, de thematiek, iconografie en ideologie die uit de voorstelling van de kibboets in de films afgeleid kunnen worden, en de manier waarop die in iedere periode veranderen. Ook probeer ik verband te leggen tussen deze elementen en de veranderde thematiek, genre en ideologie in de Israëlische film en de Israëlische cultuur. In mijn uiteenzetting over iedere periode integreer ik recensies over deze films door verschillende onderzoekers. Tegelijkertijd voer ik ook een analyse uit die wijst op de kenmerken van een speciaal genre van dit corpus. Het onderkennen van syntactische en semantische bijzonderheden maakte het mij mogelijk aspecten te laten zien die het representatieve paradigma over het hoofd gezien heeft. Hieronder de verdeling en een samenvatting van de bevindingen:

Plaatsing en waarden gehecht aan productie: 1930-1939 – de periode waarin de eerste films in Palestina gemaakt werden, films die de immigratie naar Palestina en het oprichten van kibboetsen in de grensgebieden weergaven en verheerlijkten. Deze films legden de focus op het moeilijke leven in de kibboets, en gaven op die manier uitdrukking aan de waarden die de kibboets aan het produceren hechtte en aan de zionistische idee van hergeboorte van de Jood als vrij, zelfstandig en productief mens. Het inlassen van het Hebreeuwse lied en de horadans in deze films getuigt van de poging van de kibboetsen een nieuwe, unieke, "inheemse"cultuur op te bouwen en ook uitdrukking te geven aan waarden zoals solidariteit, harmonie en de combinatie van het materiële en het spirituële.

Opvang van Holocaust overlevenden en heropvoeding: 1939-1947 – een periode waarin de films de gevolgen van de tweede wereldoorlog en de holocaust tot de stichting van de Staat Israël weergaven (1948). Beschrijvingen van vestiging op het land en werken in de landbouw zijn voorbij en in plaats daarvan wordt de kibboets voornamelijk voorgesteld als een instituut dat bijdraagt aan de opvang van kinderen, nieuwe immigranten, vluchtelingen en holocaust overlevenden. De kibboets verandert van een plaats waar gewerkt en geproduceerd wordt tot een plaats van opvoeding en overgangsceremonies die de

nieuwe immigranten tot subject van het zionisme maken. Nieuwe immigranten, overlevenden en anderen maken zich los uit hun vorige levenservaringen en proberen te aarden in een nieuwe onbekende plaats. Ze bevinden zich aan de rand van de gemeenschap, ze maken een liminale ervaring door. Gedurende het plot ondergaan ze een leerproces, een heropvoeding en tot slot worden ze geaccepteerd als gelijkwaardige partners in de groep. Mijn analyse wijst ook op consolidatie van de syntactische elementen van het genre, en op zijn flexibiliteit en efficiëntie.

Heroïsme en grensgebieden: 1948-1964 - in deze periode stonden de films onder invloed van de onafhankelijkheidsoorlog en de stichting van de Staat Israël. De kibboets, die een belangrijke bijdrage geleverd had aan de stichting van de Staat Israël, wordt op opvallende wijze vertegenwoordigd in films met verhalen van heldenmoed en opofferingsgezindheid in de oorlog. De films tonen de overgang aan van het expressieve naar het instrumentale bij het weergeven van de kibboets. De kibboets wordt een instrument in dienst van de staat ten koste van de plaatselijke aspecten van de kibboets zoals werk, familie en het collectieve leven. De aarde heeft in deze films al geen symbolisch-spirituële waarde meer, maar een instrumentele waarde, een plaats die bezet gehouden en beschermd moet worden. De ruimtelijke taal van de staat overheerst de ruimtelijke taal van de kibboets en geeft alleen de elementen die de nationale strijd verheerlijken weer. Ik laat zien dat uit oogpunt van het genre het aspect van de kibboets weergegeven werd als bekend "merknaam", wat het de filmindustrie mogelijk maakte een breed, heterogeen publiek te bereiken. Ik wijs ook op de "functie van vroege signalering", dat wil zeggen, films die het begin van genre-veranderingen in het filmsysteem aangeven, waarbij de status van de kibboets in de Israëlische maatschappij daalt.

Nieuwe modellen en verdwijning van de kibboets: 1964-1980 – in deze periode wordt de representatie van de kibboets kleiner. In de narraties van die tijd dient de kibboets als beginpunt of overgangsstation, wat gezien kan worden als uiting en reflectie van de dynamiek in de Israëlische maatschappij: de overgang van het socialistische klimaat naar een meer vrije en individualistische maatschappij betekent ook een overgang naar het maken van persoonlijke films en ethnische melodrama's in een urbane omgeving. In de film is de kibboets al

niet meer een plaats waar je heengaat en blijft wonen, maar een plaats waar je doorheen komt, langsreist of uit weggaat naar een andere plaats. Ik zet uiteen waarom de kibboets niet pastte bij de thematiek van persoonlijke films die zich bezighielden met existentialistische onderwerpen in de grote stad (Tel-Aviv), en ook waarom de kibboets niet pastte bij de ethnische melodrama's die gebaseerd waren op de tegenstelling tussen de rijkaards uit de westerse landen en de armen uit de oosterse landen. Deze films toonden personages die ervoor vochten om zich een financiële en maatschappelijke status te verwerven, onderwerpen die vreemd waren aan de ethos van de kibboets in de jaren zestig en zeventig. Algemeen gezegd, vanaf het begin van de jaren zeventig en tot het begin van de jaren tachtig verdween de kibboets uit de Israëlische films. I wijs ook op genre elementen die beginnen te veranderen, zoals bijvoorbeeld de overgang van de kibboets in een ander soort plaats – een heterotropie.

Niet meer dezelfde ruimten : 1980-1990 – In de jaren tachtig gaat de Israëlische film zich weer bezighouden met de nationale politiek en met de zionistische ideologie als deel van de politieke discussie die op gang kwam ten gevolge van de Libanese oorlog in1982, en die het bijzonder kritiek uitoefende op het uitdiepen van de kolonisatie en de onderdrukking van civiele bevolking in de Gazastrook en op de Westelijke oever. Naast films die zich bezighielden met het Israëlisch-Arabische conflict werden ook films gemaakt die kritiek leverden op de Israëlische maatschappij in haar benadering tot vreemdelingen en afwijkenden van de norm. In deze groep vallen enkele films op die directe en indirecte kritiek uitoefenen op de waarden van de kibboetsmaatschappij. De films uit die tijd brengen de mythe van de kibboets aan het wankelen in een proces van demystificatie. In plaats van een harmonische, gelijkwaardige en solidaire maatschappij wordt de kibboets voorgesteld als een plaats vol conflicten en ruzies, een plaats waarin de utopische dromen van sociale rechtvaardigheid uitgelopen zijn op een gewelddadige en meedogenloze maatschappij. De kibboetsmaatschappij, die in vorige periodes gekenmerkt werd als een solidaire maatschappij die de enkeling steunt, wordt nu blootgesteld als een conservatieve maatschappij die de behoeften en de wensen van het individu onderdrukt.

Deze bevindingen vormen een belangrijke achtergrond voor het begrijpen van het belangrijkste corpus van films die in mijn onderzoek betrokken zijn en een deel van het project dat ik voorstel. Mijn plan was te onderzoeken of de films van de jaren negentig en van de jaren tweeduizend en hun interpretaties een vervolg zijn van de periode daarvoor, en of deze films een andere, nieuwe interpretatie- en benaderingsmethode mogelijk maken. In het derde hoofdstuk – **Een droom spat uiteen: 1990-2006** – Geef ik een uitvoerige beschrijving van de veranderingen in de Israëlische maatschappij, zoals bijvoorbeeld de grote immigratiegolf uit de voormalige Sovietunie, die één van de oorzaken was voor het maken van nieuwe films over ethnische minderheden. Ik beschrijf ook de moeilijke economische en sociale crisis die veel kibboetsen ondergaan, en het privatisatieproces dat sinds eind jaren tachtig in de kibboets plaatsvindt. Dit hoofstuk is grotendeels gewijd aan een uitgebreide analyse van een klein filmcorpus over de kibboets, die een coherentie van dit corpus laat zien uit oogpunt van de traditionele categorieën van de conceptie van cinematische weergave: narratie, thematiek, genre, mythen en ideologische betekenissen.

De analyse van deze films wijst op een thematiek en een inhoud die ik bij "een droom spat uiteen" of "van utopia naar dystopia" genoemd heb. Deze films betekenen de afbraak van de mythen en archetypen die met de kibboets geïdentificeerd waren, en dat geldt ook voor de films over de kibboets uit eerdere perioden. Mijn analyse wijst onder andere op het gevoel van vervreemding tegenover de kibboets, het feit dat je je daar niet meer kunt thuisvoelen en het verschijnen van motieven van rondzwerven en tijdelijkheid. Deze onderwerpen komen op extreme manier tot uiting in films, bijvoorbeeld door de dood, zelfdoding, verdrijving, verlating en het gevoel van vervreemding en tijdelijkheid. Al deze films tonen een minimaal, marginaal bestaan, waarin het subject er niet in slaagt een eenheid te vormen met plaats en tijd. De personages zijn blijven steken tussen twee werelden, ze zijn al niet meer in de kibboets, maar voelen zich ook niet thuis op een andere plaats. Deze voorstellingen drukken een breuk uit met één identiteit, de dominantste, en zijn de antithese van het klassieke zionistische ideaal, het oprichten van een nationaal tehuis en de idee van "nooit meer ballingschap".

In het vierde hoofdstuk – **Van representatie tot rhizoom** – maak ik een uitgebreide analyse van drie films die ik ook in het vorige hoofdstuk geanalyseerd heb. Ik laat zien dat het mogelijk is uit te breken uit de beperkende symbolisch-realistische interpretatie en het genre paradigma, en uit dichotomiën zoals oost-west, individu-collectief, centrum-randgebied of zelfdeterminatie-ballingschap. Het was een uitdaging een groep films ter hand te nemen met een corpus van kennis dat ogenschijnlijk al bekend is – de kibboets en films over de kibboets – en daaruit een nieuwe landkaart, nieuwe connecties en andere ontsnappingslijnen te creëren. Ik laat zien dat het mogelijk is met behulp van begrippen uit de "gereedschapskist" van Deleuze en Guattari de geest te bevrijden van begrenzende beelden en van een denkwijze die op geaccepteerde kennis gebaseerd is. Met behulp van begrippen zoals rhizoom, deterritorialisatie en reterritorialisatie, wording, machines, verschillende assemblages en bewegings-beelden heb ik nieuwe landkaarten gecreëerd, nieuwe connecties gelegd en nieuwe percepties gevonden. Ik wil hierbij wel zeggen dat ik deze begrippen niet probeer uit te leggen, maar ze voornamelijk gebruik om mee te spelen en te experimenteren.

Bij de analyse van de eerste film toon ik de mogelijkheden van ontsnapping aan het dualisme van transparante ruimte-symbolische ruimte met behulp van het begrip rhizoom en het principe van vele ingangen (multiple entrances). In plaats van een ingang die een hierarchie bouwt van betekenissen en gedachten-beelden als vanuit een toren met een blik van bovenaf – het "oog" van de ideologie –, laat ik zien hoe de film beweging over een heel gebied mogelijk maakt, een beweging in de ruimte waarvan de coördinaten niet van te voren bekend zijn met een deterritorialisatie van tegenstellingen en dichotomiën zoals gesloten-open ruimte, vrijheid-capitulatie, privé-publiek, enkeling-collectief. Ik leg uit hoe de expressie de inhoud beïnvloedt en de idee verstoort van een gesloten maatschappelijk systeem met één vast, stabiel centrum ten gunste van een proces waarin mensen onderworpen zijn aan een wordingsproces en deel uitmaken van een veelheid van fragmenten, mechanismen en machines. Ik toon lijnen van tegenstellingen en lijnen van afkomst van enkele personages, het warmlopen van de passie en een koppeling aan positieve krachten door middel van lichamelijke en materiële connecties.

In de analyse van de tweede film verlegde ik de focus van vragen over weergave en identiteit naar onderwerpen die de complexiteit van de kibboets begrijpen als een territoriaal assemblage dat samengesteld is uit een veelheid van coden, functies, innerlijke en uiterlijke omstandigheden, gedrag, ritmes en intensiteiten. Mijn focus ligt op de hoofdpersoon, door wie ik laat zien hoe die aspecten zich bewegen tussen de verschillende assemblages – inter-assemblage, intra-assemblage en infra-assemblage. Deze beweging en dit nomadisme maken mogelijk segmenten te verlaten zoals werk-vrije tijd, volwassene-kind, ten gunste van daden met behulp van heterogene massa's materiaal, energie, ritme, kleuren en geuren. Bovendien geef ik verschillende manieren aan waarop de film de theologie van gebrek en schuldgevoel (theology of lack and guilt) achter zich laat en zich losmaakt van de dreigende en verbrokkelende krachten van tijd en ruimte met behulp van een volheid van sonoriteit en het omzetten van de ruimte tot iets materiëels en bruikbaars.

Bij de analyse van de derde film, een documentaire over een zangkoor in de kibboets, was mijn focus gericht op de interactie tussen passages uit het archief in zwart/wit en gekleurde passages. Met behulp van de taxonomie van Deleuze en Guattari – actie- reflectie- en relatiebeeld – leg ik uit hoe betekenisvolle begrippen op een lineaire, chronologische en causale tijdas opgebouwd worden. Daarna laat ik zien op welke manier de film zich uit deze concepten losmaakt door middel van uitdrukkingen zoals contra-actualisatie, any-space-whatever, en het maken van een ethische keuze. Ik stel voor de verschillende beelden op te vatten als een strijd tussen verschillende tijdniveaus, tussen de eerstheid (firstness) en de derdheid (thirdness), en ik verbind dit met het affect-beeld, met het refrein, met verbindingen tussen hemel en aarde en met de repetitie die het ronddraaien van de tijd in een destructieve cirkel verstoort.

Het vijfde en laatste hoofdstuk vat ik mijn onderzoek op twee verschillende manieren samen. In het eerste deel geef ik in het kort een voorbeeld van het hele onderzoek met behulp van één film over de kibboets, een film die net uitkwam toen ik dit onderzoek beëindigde en die zowel in Israël als in het buitenland prijzen won – "Sweet Mud" (Dror Shaul, 2006). Ik voer een ideologische analyse en een genre analyse uit, en laat daarna zien hoe de film ook anders geïnterpreteerd kan worden, bijvoorbeeld door te zigzaggen tussen

gedomesticeerde en beestachtige beelden. Het tweede deel van dit hoofdstuk houdt zich bezig met het samenvatten en conclusies trekken uit bredere esthetische, politieke en ethische contexten: ik laat zien dat het mogelijk is de stappen die ik heb voorgesteld ook bij vroegere films uit te voeren, zodat een alternatief voorgesteld kan worden voor de bestaande indelingen van de Israëlische film. Ik beweer dat de symbolisch-realistische interpretatie de uiting is van een soort reactieve ethiek, en naar de methode van Deleuze en Guattari stel ik een actieve ethiek voor, een ethiek die niet bij voorbaat het bestaan van gelijkheid, eenheid bedoeling en doel aanneemt; ik beweer dat films aan een analyse onderworpen moeten worden die boven nationale en territoriale contexten uitgaan, het verleden tegenover het nu, en synchronisme; ik stel voor de Israëlische film te zien als **film "zonder organen"** (Deleuze en Guattari).

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Eldad Kedem, Tel Aviv, Israel, March 2007

Filmography*

Again, Forever (Roman Be'Hemshachim) 1985
dir: Oded Kotler; sc: Yitzhak Ben Nir; ph: Hanania Bar; cast: Haim Topol, Galia Topol, Ephrat Lavi, Uri Levi, Aanat Topol, Natan Datner.

A*lila* 2003
dir: Amos Gitai; sc: Mari-Jose Sanselme; ph: Renato Berta; cast: Yael Abecassis, Uri Klauzner, Hana Laszlo, Ronit Alkabetz, Amos Lavi, Lupo Berkowitch, Liron Levo.

An Imagined Autobiography (*Autobiographia Dimionit*) 1994
dir, sc: Michal Bat Adam; PH: Yoav Kosh; cast: Michal Bat Adam, Gedalia Besser, Liat Goren, Shira Lew-Munk, Michal Zoharetz, Avi Kleinberger.

Appointed, The (Hameyu'ad) 1990
dir: Dan Wachsmann; sc: Dan Wachsmann, Shmuel Hasari, Razi Levinas; ph: Ilan Rosenberg; cast: Shuli Rand, Tzvi Shissel, Ronit Elkabetz, Yitzhak Ne'eman, Shabtai Conorti, David Danino.

Atalia 1984
dir: Akiva Tevet; sc: Zvika Kertzner; ph: Nurith Aviv; cast: Michal Bat-Adam, Yiftach Katzur, Yossi Pollack, Dan Toren, Raphael Klatchkin, Gali Ben-Nir.

August Snow (Sheleg Be'Ogust) 1993
dir, sc: Hagai Levi; ph: Jorge Gurvich; cast: Rami Hoyberger, Avigail Arieli, Gali Ben-Nir, Yaackov Banai, Yossi Yablonski.

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*The order of films is arranged according to the English title. The transcript of the Hebrew is in brackets. If not otherwise mentioned, the film was produced in Israel. Index: dir=director; sc=screenwriter; ph=cinematographer; narr=narrator.

Avanti Popolo 1986
dir, sc: Rafi Bukaee; ph: Yoav Kosh; cast: Salim Dau, Suheil Haddad, Danny Roth, Dani Segev, Tuvia Gelber, Barry Langford.

Awodah 1935
Documentary. dir, ph: Helmar Lerski**.**

Barbecue People (Ha-Mangalistim), 2003
dir: David Ofek, Yossi Madmoni; sc: David Ofek, Yossi Madmoni, Lior Shefer; ph: Shai Goldman; cast: Raymonde Abecassis, Yigal Adika, Israel Bright, Machram Huri, Victor Ida, Dana Ivgy.

Beitar Provence 2001
dir: Ori Inbar; sc: Yuval Fridman; Ph: Dror Moreh; cast: Ze'ev Revach, Itay Turgeman, Eli Altonio, Moshe Folkenflick, Osnat Hakim, Vladimir Friedman.

Belfer 1978
dir: Yigal Burshtein; sc: Yigal Burshtein, Shimon Yisraeli; ph: Adam Greenberg; cast: GadiYagil, Avner Hizkiyahu, Talia Shapira, Hanna Laslau, Jacques Cohen, Raphael Klatchkin.

Birds in Neutral (Tziporim B'nyutral) 1996
dir, sc: Eyal Shiray, Galit Eshkol; ph: Giora Bejach, Moishe Ben-Yaish; cast: Dana Berger, Tsaki Bochlin, Maor Cohen, Assi Levy, Dana Modan, Eyal Shiray.

Blazing Sands (Cholot Lohatim) 1960
dir, sc: Raphael Nussbaum; ph: Yitzhak Herbst; cast: Dalia Lavie, Hillel Ne'eman, Uri Zohar, Avraham Barzilai, Oded Kotler, Gila Almagor.

Blind Mans Bluff (Golem Ba'Maagal) 1993
dir: Aner Preminger; sc: Aner Preminger, Tal Zilberstein; ph: Yaakov Eisenman; cast: Hagit Dasberg, Icho Avital, Gedalia Besser, Nicole Casel, Albert Cohen, Danny Litani.

Bonjour Monsier Shlomy (Ha-Kochavim Shel Shlomi) 2003
dir, sc: Shemi Zarhin; ph: Itzik Portal; cast: Oshri Cohen, Arieh Alias, Esti Zakheim, Aya Steinovitz, Yigal Naor, Albert Iluz.

Boy Meets Girl (Ben Lokeyach Bat) 1982
dir, sc: Michal Bat-Adam; ph: Nurith Aviv; cast: Gai Eldor, Hillel Ne'eman, Dina Limor, Ilan Dar, Tami Spivak, Esther Zebko.

But Where Is Daniel Wax? (Le'an Ne'elam Daniel Vax) 1973
dir, sc: Avram Heffner; ph: Amnon Salomon; cast: Lior Yanai, Yishai Shahar, Esther Zebko, Yael Heffner, Yosef Carmon, Zivit Abrahamson.

Campfire (Medurat Hashevet) 2004
dir, sc: Joseph Cedar; ph: Ofer Inov; cast: Michaela Eshet, Hani Furstenberg, Moshe Ivgy, Maya Maron, Assi Dayan, Oshri Cohen.

Ceasefire (Hafuga) 1950
dir, ph: Amram Amar; sc: Roger Attali, Amram Amar; cast: Esther Frieder, Nissim Mizrachi, Ruth Gavrielit, Yitzhak Frej, Eliezer Behar.

Charlie and a Half (Charlie VeChetzi) 1974
dir: Boaz Dvidson; sc: Eli Tavor; ph: Amnon Salomon; cast: Yeuda Brkan, Ze'ev Revach, Arieh Elias, Edna Fliedel, Chaya Katzir, Geuli Nuni.

Children of the Steps (Yaldei Hamdregot) 1984
dir: Yigal Pe'eri; sc: Yigal Peeri, Shosh Wolman; ph: Gadi Danzig; cast: Osi Hillel, Adi Goren, Hagit Bracha, Machlouf Elbaz, Ofer Gabai, Telma Plotkin.

Clouds Over Israel (Sinaia) 1962
dir: Ilan Eldad; sc: Moshe Hadar; ph: Marco Yackovalevich; cast: Shimon Yisraeli, Yiftach Spector, Dina Doron, Ehud Banai, Shaike Levi, Navah Shan

Cup Final (G'mar Gavia) 1991
dir: Eran Riklis; sc: Eyal Halfon; ph: Amnon Salomon; cast: Moshe Ivgi, Muhammed Bakri, Salim Dau, Bassm Zuamut, Yousuf Abu-Varda.,

Dan Quixote and Sa'adia Pancha (Dan VeSa'adia) 1956
dir: Naten Axelrod; sc: H Halevy; ph: A Ben Dor; cast: Mordechai Dagan, Abraham Kastro, Mriam Noyman, Sara Benvenisti, Shimson BarNoy, Shmaryahu Pitkis.

Desperado Square (Kikar Ha-Halomot) 2001
dir, sc: Benny Toraty; ph: Dror Moreh; cast: Joseph Shiloach, Yona Elian, Mohammed Bakri, Uri Gavreil, Nir Levy, Sharon Raginiano.

Devarim (*Zihron Devarim)* 1995
dir: Amos Gitai; sc: Gilad Evron, Madi Levy; ph: Renato Beta; cast: Assi ayan, Amos Gitai, Amos Shoov, Sharon Hacohen, Yuval Havkin, Leah Koenig.

Distance, The (Hamerchak) 1994
dir, sc: Dan Wolman; ph: Victor Bilokopitov; cast: Haim Hadaya, Genya Chernik, Ruth Farchi, Yitzhak Shiloh, Miriam Nevo, Batsheva Noam.

Dream of My People (Chalome Ami) 1933
Documentary; dir, ph: Bloome A J; sc: M Feinstein. Narr: Tzvi Schuyler.

Dream No More 1950
dir, sc: Joseph Krumgold; cast: Avraham Doryon, Chava Alberstein, Yehuda Ben-Moshe, Joshua Weiner, Yisrael Getler, Clair Epstein.

Due to That War (B'glal Hamilchama Hahi) 1988
Documentary; dir, sc: Orna Ben-Dor; ph: Oren Shmukler.

Eight Against One (Shmona B'Ekevot Achad) 1964
dir: Menachem Golan; sc: Uriel Ofek; ph: Yitzhak Herbst; cast: Shike Ophir, Bomba Tzur, Geula Gill, Elisheva Michaeli, Eitan Priver.

Electric Blanket, An (Smicha Cheshmalit Ushema Moshe) 1995
dir, sc: Assi Dayan; ph: Ofer Ianov; cast: Shmil Ben-Ari, Uri Klausner, Rivka Neuman.

Everlasting Joy (Osher Lelo Gvul) 1996
dir, sc: Igal Bursztyn; ph: Jorge Gurvich; cast: Ariel Zilber, Dnny Steg, Yael Almog, Shira Farber, Yigal Adika, Alex Peleg.

Every Bastard a King (Kol Mamzer Melech) 1968
dir: Uri Zohar; sc: Eli Tavor, Uri ohar; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Pier Angel, Yehoram Gaon, Oded Kotler, William Berger, Tami Tzafroni, Uri Levy.

Every Mile a Stone (Even Al Kol Meel) 1954
dir: Aryeh Lahola; sc: Aryeh Lahola, Haim Hefer; cast: Yosef Yadin, Hanna Meron, Orna Porat, Margalit Oved, Zlman Levioush, Arieh Elias.

Exodus (US, 1960)
dir: Otto Preminger; sc: Dalton Trumbo; novel: Leon Uris; cast: Paul Newman, Eva Marie Saint, Ralph Richrdson, Peter Lawford, Lee J. Cobb, Sal Mineo.

Faithful City (Kirya Ne'emana) 1952
dir: Joseph Leytes; sc: Joseph Leytes, Ben Barzman; ph: G. Gibson; cast: Jamie Smith, Ben Josef, John Slater, Rahel Marcus, children of the Israel Goldstein Youth Village.

Fellow Travellers (Magash Hakesef) 1983
dir: Judd Ne'eman; sc: Amnon Lord, Judd Ne'eman; ph: Hanania Bar; cast: Gidi Gov, Yossi Pollack, Shmulik Krause, Yousuf Abu-Varda, Daliah Shimko, Suheiru Hany.

First Love (Ahava Rishonah) 1982
dir, sc: Uzi Peres; ph: Avi Karpik; cast: Gila Almagor, Yiftach Katzur, Hanan Goldblatt, Yri Levy, Debby Hess.

First film of Palestine, The 1911
Documentary; dir, sc, ph: Murray Rosenberg

Five Days in Sinai (Chamisha Yamim Besinai) 1969
dir: Maorici Lucidi; sc: Adiano Bolzoni; ph: Andre Feher; cast: Assi Dayan, Ze'ev Reach, Savi Dor, Franco Giornelli, Katya Christina.

Foreign Sister (Ahot Zara) 2000
dir, sc: Dan Wolman; ph: Itamar Hadar; Tamar Yerushalmi, Askala Marcus, Zvi Salton, Miriam Nevo, Neli Tagar, Yosi Asafa.

From the Other Side (Mineged) 1970
dir, sc: Menachem Binetzki; ph: Yoram Pirotzky; cast: Rahel Levi, Rafi Tzur, Rahel Ravid, Asher Tsarfati, Shmuel Wolf.

Gentila 1997
dir, sc: Agor Shif; ph: Jorge Gurvich; cast: Nir levy, Jenya Dodina, Avshalom Polak, Yftach Katzur, Miri Fabian, Yigal Adika.

Gift from Above (Matana MiShamayim) 2003
dir, sc: Dover Koshashvili; ph: Laurent Dailland; Yuval Segal, Ronit Yudkevitz, Rami Heuberger, Moni Moshonov, Lior Ashkenazi, Becky Griffin.

Girl from the Dead Sea, The (Fortuna) 1966
dir, sc: Menachem Golan; ph: Yitzhak Herbst; cast: Pierre Brasseur, Saro Urzi, Mike Marshall, Gila Almagor.

Great Promise, The (Dimat HaNechama Hagdola) 1947
Docudrama; dir: Joseph Leytes; sc: hulamit Bat Dori; ph: Lipsky.

Hedva and Shlomik (Hedva VeShlomik) 1971
Tv-Series. Dir: Shmuel Imberman; sc: Yehonatan Geffen, Orna Spector; ph: Nissim Leon; cast: Yael Aviv, Menachem Zilberman.

He Walked Through the Fields (Hu Halach Be'Sadot) 1967/8
dir: Yoseph Millo; sc: Charles Heldman, Moshe Shamir, Yoseph Millo; ph: James Allen; cast: Assi Dayan, Iris Yotvat, Shraga Friedan, Yosph Millo, Gideon Ziner, Yossi Graber.

Hero's Wife, The (Eshet Hagibor) 1963
dir: Peter Frye; sc: Batya Lancet, Yosef Netzer; ph: Marco Yaacobi; Cast: Batya Lancet, Gideon Shemer, Shmuel Omani, Baruch Kelem, Lili Kelem, Eitan Ivry.

Highway Queen, The (Malkat Hakvish) 1970
dir: Menachem Golan; sc: Menachem Golan, Gila Almagor; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Gila Almagor, Yehuda Barkan.

Hill 24 Doesn't Answer (Giva 24 Aina Onah) 1954/5
dir: Thorold Dickinson; sc: Peter Frye; ph: Gerald Gibbs; cast: Yitzhak Shiloh, Edward Mulhare, Michael Wager, Zalman Levioush, Margalit Oved, Haim Eynav.

Hole in the Moon (Chor Belevanah) 1964
dir: Uri Zohar; sc: Amos Kenan; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Uri Zohar, Avram Heffner, Shoshana Shani, Ze'ev Berlinski, Shmuel Kraus, Arik Lavie.

How Come? (Yossele, Ech Ze Karah) 1989
dir: Ron Tal; sc: Yisrael Wessler, Naftali Alter; ph: Avi Karpik; cast: Dov Navon, Avigail Arieli, Tzvi Korman, Osnat Ofer, Moshe Prester, Yehonadav Pearlman.

I Like Mike 1961
dir: Peter Frye; sc: Peter Frye; ph: Leon Nissim; cast: Batya Lancet, Ze'ev Berlinski, Gideon Zinger, Ilana Rovina, Haim Topol, Geuli Nuni.

Illegals, The (Al Tafchidunu) 1947
Docudrama; dir, sc: Meyer Levin; ph: Jean-Paul Alphen; cast: Tereska Torres, Yankel Mikalowith.

Intimate Story, An (Sipur Intimi) 1981
dir: Nadav Levitan; sc: Nadav Levitan, Dalia Mevorach; ph: Gadi Danzig; cast: HavaAlberstein, Alex Peleg, Shmuel Shiloh, Shmuel Wolf, Orna Sapir, Dan Toren.

Kadosh 1999
dir: Amos Gitai; sc: Eliette Abecassis, Amps Gitai; ph: Renato Berta; cast: Yael Abecassis, Yoram Hattab, Meital Barda, Uri Klauzner, Yussuf Abu-Warda, Leah Koening. Is-fr.

Kedma Verso Oriente (Kedma) 2002
dir: Amos Gitai; sc: Amos Gitai, Mordechai Goldhecht; ph:Yorgos Arvanitis; cast: Andrei Kashkar, Helena Yaralova, Yussuf Abu-warda, Moni Moshonov, Juliano Mer, Menachem Lang.

Kippour (Kippur) 2000
dir: Amos Gitai; sc: Amos Gitai, Marie-Jose Sanselme; ph: Renato Berta; cast: Liron Levo, Tomer Russo, Uri Klauzner, Yoram Hattab, Guy Amir, Juliano Mer.

Land of Promise (Lechayim Hadashim) 1934
Documentary; dir: Yehuda Leman; sc: Maurice Samuel; ph; Charles W. Herbert; narr: David Ross.

Late Marriage (Hatuna Meuheret) 2000
dir, sc: Dover koshashvili; ph: Daniel Schneor; cast: Lior Ashkenazi, Ronit Alkabetz, Moni Moshonov, Lili Koshashvili, Aya Steinovitz, Rosina Kambus.

Life According to Agfa (Hachayim Alpi Agfa) 1991
dir, sc: Assi Dayan; ph: Yoav Kosh; cast: Gila Almagor, Shuli Rand, Irit Frank, Avital Dycker, Dani Litani, Smadar Kalchinsky.

Lookout, The (Shuroo) 1990
dir: Savi Gabison; sc: Savi Gabizon, Yonatan Aroch, Yochanan Raviv; ph: Yoav Kosh; cast: Moshe Ivgi, Sharon Hacohen, Sinai Peter, Keren Mor, Shmuel Edelman, Ahuva Keren.

Lovesick on Nana Stree (Chole Ahava B'Shikun Gimel) 1995
dir, sc: Savi Gabizon; ph: Yoav Kosh; cast: Moshe Ivgi, Hanna Azoulai-Hasfari, Avigail Arieli, Tuvia Gelber, Shmil Ben-Ari, Menashe Noy.

Mashehu Matok (2004)
Dir: Dan Turgeman; sc: Ofir Babiuf; ph: Ofer Yanov; cast: Ayelet Zurer, Tamar Keinan, Avital Abergel, Dan Turgeman, Raymond Abecassis, Rami Danon.

Mother of the Givaatron (Ima Shel HaGivaatron) 2003
Documentary; dir, sc: Shahar Magen, Ayelet Gil; ph: Dani Ostrer.

My Father's House (Beit Avi) 1947/8
dir: Herbert Kline; sc: Meyer Levin; ph: Floyd Crosby; cast: Ronnie Cohen, Irene Broza, Yithak Danziger, Yoseph Millo, Zalman Levious, Raphael Klatchkin.

My Michael (Michael Sheli) 1975
dir: Dan Wolman; sc: Dan Wolman, Esther Mor (based on a novel by Amos Oz); ph: Aadam Greenberg; cast: Oded Kotler, Efrat Lavie, Irit Mohr-Alter, Moti Mizrachi, Rafael Tzvi, Devora-Halter-Keidar.

New Land (Aretz Chadasha) 1994
dir: Orna Ben-Dor; sc: Kobi Niv; ph: Amnon Zlayet; cast: Ana Bukstein, Michael Phelman, Etti Ankri, Shuli Rand, Rami Danon, Asher Tsarfati.

92 Minutes of Mr. Baum, The (Mar Baum) 1997
dir, sc: Assi Dayan; ph: Avi Koren; cast: Assi Dayan, Shira Geffen, Sarit Seri, Tomer Sharon, Gil Alon, Idan Alterman.

Noa At 17 (Noa Bat 17) 1981
dir, sc: Yitzhak Tzepel Yeshurun; ph: Yitzhak Oren, Yaackov Saporta; cast: Daliah Shimko, Idit Tzur, Shmuel Shiloh, Moshe Havazelet, Adi Ne'eman, Osnat Ofer.

No Names on the Doors (Ein Shemot Al Hadlatot) 1996
Dir, sc: Nadav Levitan; ph: Valentin Belonogov; cast: Meir Suissa, Dani Bassan, Hava Alberstein, Mosko Alkalai, Avi Pnini, Dorit Lev-Ari.

Oded the Wanderer (Oded Hanoded) 1932
dir: Haim Halachmi; based on story by Tzvi Liebeman-livne; ph: Natan Axelrod; cast: Shimon Finkel, Shimon Pevsner, Shifra Ashman, Menacem Gensin, Michael Klinger, Moshe Chorgal.

On a Clear Day You Can See Damascus (B'Yom Bahir Ro'im et Damescus) 1984
dir: Eran Riklis; sc: Eran Riklis, Gavriel Bronstein; ph: Gavriel Bronstei; cast: Eli Denkner, Joseph Bee, Liron Nirgad, Esther Shamir, Muhamed Bakri, Dan Wachsman.

Once Upon a Time (Va Yahi Be'yamei) 1932
dir: Haim Halachmi; sc, ph: Natan Axelrod; cast: Moshe Chorgal, Ilana Srinitzka, Yehezkel Friedman, Baruch Hadari.

Once We Were Dreamers (Hacholmim) 1988
dir: Uri Barbash; sc: Benny Barbash, Eran Preis; ph: Amnon Salomon; cast: John Shea, Arnon Zadok, Kelly McGillis, Christine Boisson, Ohad Shachar, Roberto Pollack.

One of Us (Echad Mi Shelanu) 1989
dir: Uri Barbash; sc: Benny Barbash; ph: Amnon Salomon; cast: Alon Aboutboul, Sharon Alexander, Daliah Shimko, Dan Toren, Arnon Zadok, Shaul Mizrachi.

Only Today (Rak Hayom) 1976
dir, sc: Ze'ev Revach; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Ze'ev Revach, Efrat Lavie, Jacques Cohen, Ilan Dar, Miri Suryano, Raphael Klatchkin.

Operation Grandma (Mivtza Savta) 1999
(TV). dir, sc: Dror Shaul; ph: Yaron Scharf; cast: Rami Heuberger, Ami Smolartchik, Tzach Shpitzen, Anat Weitzman, Rosina Kambus, Hugo Yarden.

Out of Evil (Mi Klalah Le Bracha) 1947-1950
dir: Joseph Krumgold; based on a novel by Yehuda Yaari; ph: Alphonso Frenguelli, Leroy Phelps; cast: Azaria Rappaport, Nahum Buchman, Esther Margalit-Ben Yoseph, Roberta Hodes.

Over the Ruins (Me'Al Hachuravot) 1938
dir: Natan Axelrod; based on a story by Tzvi Lieberman-Livne; ph: Natan Axelrod; cast: Yehuda Gabai, Danya Levine, Kelman Konstantiel, Yoma Ben-Artzi, Yosef Cohen.

Palestine in 1896.
Documentary; dir, ph: Louis and August Lumière.

Paratroopers, The (Masa Alunkot) 1977
dir: Yehuda (Judd) Ne'eman; sc: Daniel Horvitz; ph: Hanania Bar; cast: Gidi Gov, Michael Warshaviak, Yair Rubin, Moni Moshonov, Dov Glickman, Jette Monte.

Passover Fever (Leyl Lasedah) 1995
dir, sc: Shemi Zarhin; ph: Amnon Zlayet; cast: Gila Almagor, Yoseph Shiloah, Alon Aboutboul, Miki Kam, Arieh Moskoneh, Anat Wachsman.

Pick a Card (Afula Express) 1997
dir: Julie Shles; sc: Amit Lior; ph: Itzik Portal; cast: Zvika Hadar, Esti Zakheim, Aryeh Moskona, Orli Perl, Natan Zahavi, Pini Kidron.

Pillar of Fire (Amud Ha'Esh) 1959
dir: Larry Frisch; sc: Hugh Nissenson, based on a story by Larry Frisch; ph: Chaim Shreiber; cast: Michael Shilo, Lawrence Montaigne, Nehama Hendel, Moshe Yaari, Amos Mokadi, Uri Zohar.

Quarry, The (HaMachtzayva) 1990
dir: Roni Ninio; sc: Ira Davir, based on a story by Ehud Ben-ezer; ph: Nissim Leon; cast: Uri Gavrieli, Sasson Gabai, Hannah Azoulai-Hasfari, Ahuva Batz, Salim Dau, Adi Muchktar.

Rebirth of a Nation (Eretz Yisrael Hamitchadeshet) 1923
Documentary; dir, ph: Ya'akov Ben Dov.

Repeat Dive (Tzlila Chozeret) 1982
dir, sc: Shimon Dotan; ph: Dani Shneur; cast: Doron Nesher, Liron Nirgad, Danny Muggia, Ze'ev Shimshony, Yair Rubin, Mosco Alkalai.

Return to Zion (Shivat Zion) 1921
Documentary; dir, ph: Ya'ackov Ben Dov.

Sabra (Chalutzim) 1933
dir: Alexsander Ford; sc: Olga Ford; ph: Frank Weinmayr; cast: Raphael Klatchkin, Aharon Moskin, Shimon Finkel, Hannah Rovina, Yehoshua Bartinov, Pesach Bar-Adon.

Saint Clara (Clara Hakedosha) 1996
dir, sc: Ari Folman, Ori Sivan; ph: Valentin Belonogov; cast: Lucy Dubinchic, Halil Elohev, Johnny Peterson, Maya Maron, Maya De-Fries, Tal Feigenboim.

Sallah (Sallach Shabbati) 1964
dir, sc: Ephraim Kishon; ph: Floyd Crosby; cast: Haim Topol, Gila Almagor, Arik Einstein, Shraga Friedman, Zaharira Harifai, Natan Meisler.

Sands of Beersheba (Mordei Ha'Or) 1964
dir, sc: Alexander Ramati; ph: Wolfgang Suschitzky; cast: Diana Becker, Tom Bill, David Opatoshu, Paul Stesino, Oded Kotler, Uri Levy.

Sh'chur *1994*
dir: Shmuel Hasfari; sc: Hannah Azoulai-Hasfari; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Ronit Elkabetz, Gila Almagor, Yaackov Cohen, Amos Lavie, Hannah Azouli-Hasfari.

She's Not 17 (Lo Bat 17) 2003
dir, sc: Yitzhak Yeshurun; ph: Amnon Salomon; cast; Shmulik Shiloh, Idit Tzur, Dina Doron, Dalia Shimko, Maya Maron, Roni Boochsbaum.

Sima Vaknin is a Witch (Sima Vaknin Mechashefa) 2003
dir, sc: Dror Shaul; ph: Amnon Zlayet; cast: Tiki Dayan, Lior Ashkenazi, Ami Smolartchik, Sharon Elimelech, Rotem Abuhab, Itzik Cohen.

Stalin's Disciples (Yaldei Stalin) 1987
dir, sc: Nadav Levitan; ph: Gadi Danzig; cast: Shmuel Shiloh, Yossi Kantz, Hugo Yarden, Rahel Dobson, Aharon Almog, Ezra Dagan.

Summer of Avia, The (Hakayitz Shel Avia) 1988
dir: Eli Cohen; sc: Gila Almagor, Haim Bouzaglo,Eli Cohen, based on a book by Gila Almagor; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Gila Almagor, Kaipo Cohen, Marina Rossett, Eli Cohen, Avital Dycker, Dina Avarech.

Sweet Mud (Adama Meshugaat) 2006
Dir, sc: Dror Shaul; ph: Sebastian Edschmid; cast: Tomer Steinhof, Ronit Yudkevitz, Pini Tavger, Shai Aviv, Henri Garcin, Joseph Karmon.

Tel Aviv-Berlin 1987
dir, sc: Tsipi Trope; ph: Gadi Danzig; cast: Shmuel Vilozhny, Rivka Neuman, Anat Harpaz, Zohar Aloni, Yosef Carmon.

They call me Shmil (Koreym Li Shmil) 1973
dir: George Ovadiah; sc: Yigal Lev; ph: Marciano Satini; cast: Paul Smith, Uri Zohar, Yona Elian, Joe Geoffrey, Rahel Forman, Moshe Solo.

They Were Ten (Hem Hayu Asarah) 1960
dir: Baruch Dienar; sc: Gabriel Dagan, Baruch Dienar, Menachem Shuval; ph: Lional Banes; cast: Leo Filler, Yisrael Rubinshik, Amno Kahanovich, Ninette Dinar, Oded Teomi, Bomba Tzurt.

Thin Line, A (Al Chevel Dak) 1980
dir, sc: Michal Bat-Adam; ph: Nurith Aviv; cast: Gila Almagor, Alex Peleg, Liat Pansky, Avner Hizkiyahu, Yitzhak Havis, Miri Fabian.

This is the Land (Zot Hi Ha'Aretz) 1935
Docudrama; dir: Baruch Agadati; sc: Avigdor Hmeiri; ph: Hans Lahny; cast: Shmuel Rodensky, Raphael Klatchkin, Moshe Chorgal, Yitzhak Katz, Meir Teomi, Bezalel London.

Three Days and a Child (Shlosha Yamin Veyeled) 1966
dir: Uri Zohar; sc: Uri Zohar, Dan Ben-Amotz, Amatsia Hiuni; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Oded Kotler, Yehudit Soleh, Jarman Unikovsky, Illy Gorlitzky, Misha Oshorov, Stella Ivni.

Time of Favor (Ha-Hesder) 2000
dir, sc*:* Yoseph Cedar; ph: Ofr Inov; cast: Aki Avni, Tinkerbell, Idan Alterman, Assi Dayan, Abraham Celektar, Amnon Volf.

Tomorrow is a Wonderful Day (Adama) 1947/8
Docudrama; dir: Helmar Lerski; story: Ziegfried Lehman; ph: Sasha Alexander; narr: Sam Batler.

To Dance in Jerusalem 1902
Documentary: dir, sc: Thomas Edison

Troupe, The (HA-Lahaka) 1979
dir: Avi Nesher; sc: Sharon Harel, Avi Nesher; ph: Yaackov Kallach; cast: Gidi Gov, Liron Nirgad, Sassi Keshet, Dovale Glickman, Meir Suissa, Dafna Armoni.

Trumpet in the Wadi, A (Hatzotzra Ba-Vadi) 2002
dir: Lena Chaplin, Slava Chaplin; sc: Amit Lior; ph: Itzik Portal; cast: Alex Sendrowitz, Khawlah Hag-Debsy, Raida Adon, Salwa Nakkara-Hadad, Yitzhak Ne'eman, Imad Gabarin.

Turn Left at the End of the World (Sof HaOlam Smola) 2004
dir: Avi Nesher; sc: Sara Eden, Avi Nesher, Ruby Porat Shoval; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Neta Gerty, Liraz Charchi, Aure Atika, Jean Benguigui, Parmeet Sethi, Kruttika Desai.

Under the Domim Tree (Etz Hadomim Tafus) 1995
dir: Eli Cohen; sc: Gila Almagor, Eyal Sher; ph: David Gurfinkel; cast: Kaipo Cohen, Juliano mor, Riki Blich, Orly Perl, Ohad Knoller, Genia Katzan.

Under Western Eyes (Leneged Einayim Ma'araviyot) 1996
dir, sc: Joseph Fitchhadze; ph: Shai Goldman; cast: Eyal Shehter, Liat Glick, Ezra Kafri, Yehuda Lazarovitch, Ludmila Loben, Gideon Shemer.

Valley Train, The (Rakevet Ha'Emek) 1989
dir: Yonathan Paz; sc: Yaackov Lazar, Nissim Zohar, Hanan Zass; ph: Ofer Yanov; cast: Dan Turgeman, Neta Moran, Ami Ushpitz, Tom Yoel.

Vulture, The (Ha'Ayit) 1981
dir, sc: Yaki Yosha; ph: Ilan Rosenberg; cast: Shraga Harpaz, Shimon Finkel, Nitza Shaul, Hanna Meron, Andy Richman, Ami Weinberg.

What a Gang! (Chavura She'Ka'Zot) 1962
dir: Ze'ev Havatzelet; sc: Yisrael Wessler Shaul Biber, Bomba Tzur; ph: Nissim Leon; cast: Yoss anai, Bomba Tzur, Oded Teomi, Avner Hezkiyahu, Gila Almagor, Miriam Sharon.

Wooden Gun, The (Roveh Chuliot) 1979
dir, sc: Ilan Moshenson; ph: Gadi Danzig; cast: Yehudit Soleh, Michael Kafir, Leon Young, Ophelia Shtruhl, Louis Rosenberg, Arik Rosen.

Yana's Friends (Ha-Chaverim Shel Yana) 1998
dir:: Arik Kaplun; sc: Arik Kaplun, Semyon Vinkur; ph: Valentin Belogonov; cast: Evelyn Kaplun, Nir Levy, Shmil Ben Ari, Mosko Alkalai, Dalia Friedland, Vladimir Friedman.

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