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Postcolonial Discourse in the Egyptian Cinema:
an Analytical Comparative Study of Mismar Goha (1952) with Rod Qalbi (1957)

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1. Abstract

This study examines postcolonial discourse in Egyptian cinema through a comparative analysis of *Mismar Goha* **(1952) and** *Rod Qalbi* **(1957)**, two landmark films reflecting Egypt's sociopolitical transformations and struggles for independence. Produced amid the mid-twentieth-century upheavals, both films articulate evolving notions of resistance, nationalism, and modern identity within a postcolonial framework.

The research analyzes *Mismar Goha*, directed by Ibrahim Emarah, focusing on key scenes and symbols—the nail, the Imam's cloak, imprisonment, and popular revolt— to uncover how colonial resistance and identity formation are expressed through allegory and folk tradition. A comparative reading of Ezz El-Ddin Zulfikkar's *Rod Qalbi* reveals contrasting narrative techniques that capture Egypt's transition from colonial subjugation to revolutionary nationalism.

Grounded in postcolonial theory—drawing on Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Frantz Fanon—the study investigates how colonial legacies and the pursuit of national identity are encoded in cinematic language, narrative structure, and character portrayal. *Mismar Goha*, released during the year of the 1952 Free Officers' Revolution, subtly critiques colonial authority through allegorical resistance, while *Rod Qalbi* explicitly embodies Nasserist ideals of social justice, anti-aristocracy, and national liberation.

Through close analysis of mise-en-scène (staging), cinematography, and symbolic motifs, the research traces a cinematic evolution from indirect allegory and cultural memory in *Mismar Goha* to overt ideological expression in *Rod Qalbi*. This transformation reflects a broader shift in Egyptian cinema—from a vehicle of cultural resistance to an instrument of revolutionary propaganda. Ultimately, the study argues that 1950s Egyptian cinema not only mirrored postcolonial anxieties but also actively participated in shaping national consciousness, identity, and political discourse.

Keywords:

Postcolonialism, *Mismar Goha, Rod Qalbi*, colonization, decolonization, liberation, Egyptian cinema.

الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة خطاب ما بعد الاستعمار في السينما المصرية من خلال تحليل مقارن لفيلمي "**مسمار جحا**" (1952) و"**رد قلبي**" (1957)، وهما فيلمان بارزان يعكسان التحولات الاجتماعية والسياسية في مصر ونضالها من أجل الاستقلال. أُنتج الفيلمان في خضم اضطرابات منتصف القرن العشرين، ويعبّران عن مفاهيم متطورة للمقاومة والقومية والهوية الحديثة في إطار ما بعد الاستعمار.

يحلل البحث فيلم "**مسمار جحا**"، من إخراج إبراهيم عمارة، مع التركيز على مشاهد ورموز رئيسية – المسمار، وعباءة الإمام، والسجن، والثورة الشعبية – للكشف عن كيفية التعبير عن المقاومة الاستعمارية وتكوين الهوية من خلال الرمزية والتراث الشعبي.

تكشف القراءة المقارنة لفيلم "**رد قلبي**" لعز الدين ذو الفقار عن تقنيات سردية متباينة تُجسّد انتقال مصر من التبعية الاستعمارية إلى القومية الثورية. استناداً إلى نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار ـ مستعيناً بإدوارد سعيد، وهومي بابا، وفرانز فانون ـ تبحث الدراسة في كيفية ترميز الإرث الاستعماري والسعي وراء الهوية الوطنية في اللغة السينمائية، والبنية السردية، وتصوير الشخصيات.

فيلم "**مسمار جحا**"، الذي عُرض خلال ثورة الضباط الأحرار عام ١٩٥٢، ينتقد السلطة الاستعمارية ببراعة من خلال المقاومة الرمزية، بينما يجسد فيلم "**رد قلبي**" صراحةً المثل الناصرية للعدالة الاجتماعية، ومناهضة الأرستقراطية، والتحرر الوطني. من خلال التحليل الدقيق للميزانسين (فن الإخراج المسرحي)، والتصوير السينمائي، والزخارف الرمزية.

يتتبع البحث تطوراً سينمائياً من الاستعارة غير المباشرة والذاكرة الثقافية في فيلم "**مسمار جحا**" إلى التعبير الأيديولوجي الصريح في فيلم "**رد قلبي**". يعكس هذا التحول تحولاً أوسع في السينما المصرية – من أداة للمقاومة الثقافية إلى أداة للدعاية الثورية.

في نهاية المطاف، تؤكد الدراسة بأن السينما المصرية في خمسينيات القرن الماضي لم تعكس فقط محاولات التخلص من الاستعمار، بل ساهمت أيضًا بفعالية في تشكيل الوعي الوطني والهوية والخطاب السياسي.

الكلمات الدلالية: ما بعد الاستعمار، مسمار جحا، رود قلبي، الاستعمار، مناهضة الاستعمار، التحرير، السينما المصرية.

2. Introduction

Cinema has never been isolated from society in all its aspirations, hopes and even its pains, as it was and still the beating heart of society and the conscience of the nation; reading its thoughts, addressing its minds, building bridges of communication between the past and the present and drawing plans for the future. Egypt's pioneering position in the Middle East, its historical deeply rooted civilization and its unique geographical location, which not only earned it the crown of the head position, but also made it a target for every colonizer and a goal for every occupier. But alas, because of its conscious, united people, who understood the truth about the West and the East, were fully ready for any sacrifice for the sake of freedom and liberation, and so they were. Cinema came to reflect this vibrant pulse and national movement among all segments of society and all its classes, chronicling the renaissance of a people who rejected occupation and refused submission and colonialism.

For a century, the Egyptian cinema has been a living testament to the evolution and profound transformations of Egyptian society. This journey began in 1896 with the first cinema screening in Alexandria. The simple beginnings were marked by curiosity and fascination among individuals with the novelty of this emerging art form. Since then, cinema has continuously interacted with the social and cultural transformations in Egypt, providing a mirror reflecting the course of events and societal developments. The early 1950s marked a critical period in Egypt's history, witnessing the decline of colonial influence and the burgeoning of nationalist movements. Cinema emerged as a vital cultural space reflecting and shaping public consciousness concerning colonial domination and the quest for autonomy. *Mismar Goha "Goha's Nail"* (1952), directed by Ibrahim Emarah, is a seminal work articulating postcolonial resistance through allegorical narrative and potent symbolism.

The Modern Egyptian Theater Company opened its second season at the Royal Opera House on Thursday, October 18, with the play "*Goha's Nail*," written by Ali Ahmed Baktheer and directed by Zaki Tulaimat. Khidr, Abass wrote "*Baktheer decided to make this character, torn between reality and imagination, the subject of a play that addresses the issue of the Nile Valley and the conflict within it between freedom and occupation. The author did not draw Juha from history to achieve his historical existence, but rather from a collection of anecdotes attributed to him, and directed his character—as he imagined and intended—to follow the path he charted to achieve his goal. This play, then, is not a historical play; rather, the author drew its characters from ancient times and conducted events among them that symbolize the reality of our time and, in some instances, almost reveal it.*" (***Literature and Art in a Week***, **Magalat Alresalah** *(The Message' Magazine)* No. 956, in 29-10-1951.

This research applies postcolonial theory, drawing on insights from Frantz Fanon and Edward Said, to analyze how *Mismar Goha* constructs its critique of colonial power and articulates national identity. The film's use of religious symbolism, legal drama, and popular mobilization exemplifies cinematic strategies of negotiating the colonial past and envisioning liberation .In dealing with these two films exactly, the research lives with the people in the two stages of liberation: Decolonization and Postcolonization. The first exemplifies the public struggle against colonization and colonialism which *Mismar Goha* succeeded in presenting such conflict and struggle in the divine national march towards freedom and independence. The other stage; Postcolonization is clearer in the other film: *Rod Qalbi* whatever being a store of the public wrath against colonizers and tyrants. The two films have succeeded in showing the colonized peoples especially Egypt under colonization. At the same time, they uncovered the real will of people to be free and independent, rooting the role of cinema not in antedating events only, but also in shaping and directing them.

The emergence of postcolonial discourse in the Egyptian cinema coincided with one of the most transformative periods in the nation's modern history. The 1950s marked a profound political, social, and cultural shift in Egypt, culminating in the 1952 **Free Officers' Revolution** that overthrew the monarchy and ended the British dominance. During this critical juncture, cinema became a potent medium for articulating the aspirations, frustrations, and ideological reconfigurations of society in a process of redefining society itself. This study examines how Egyptian cinema engaged with postcolonial themes by focusing on two pivotal films: *Mismar Goha* (1952), directed by Ibrahim Emarah, and *Rod Qalbi* (1957), directed by Ezz El-Ddin Zulfikkar.

Both films offer rich texts for investigating how Egyptian filmmakers navigated the legacy of colonialism and the formation of national identity during the early postcolonial period. *Mismar Goha (1952)*, released in the same year as the revolution being steeped in folkloric symbolism and allegory. It draws on traditional narratives to subtly critique social hierarchies and foreign domination, while also invoking the collective memory of a pre-colonial cultural ethos. In contrast, *Rod Qalbi (1957)*— produced five years later—serves as a direct ideological expression of the revolutionary regime. It foregrounds themes of class struggle, anti-aristocratic sentiment, and the glorification of the military as the new vanguard of the people. The two films thus represent contrasting cinematic responses to the postcolonial condition: one grounded in metaphor and cultural nostalgia, the other in realism and state-sponsored nationalism.

This comparative study situates both films within the broader theoretical landscape of Postcolonialism, drawing upon key thinkers such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Frantz Fanon. Their concepts: *Orientalism*, *Hybridity*, *Mimicry*, and *National*

Consciousness —offer valuable frameworks for understanding how cinema both reflects and constructs postcolonial realities. In the case of Egypt, a nation negotiating its political independence and cultural autonomy, film becomes more than entertainment; it becomes a site of ideological contestation and identity formation.

Methodologically, the study conducts a close textual analysis of *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi*, focusing on narrative structure, characterization, mise-en-scène (melody and staging), cinematography, and symbolic motifs. It seeks to uncover how each film responds to colonial legacies, engages with emerging national ideologies, and contributes to the creation of a postcolonial cinematic language. The analysis also considers the socio-historical context of production, including state involvement in the film industry, censorship, and the evolving relationship between filmmakers and the political power.

Ultimately, this research argues that the Egyptian cinema of the 1950s played a crucial role in negotiating the postcolonial transition. By comparing *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi*, the study not only traces the aesthetic and thematic shifts in cinematic representations of national identity but also sheds light on how film functioned as a cultural battlefield in the struggle to articulate a truly independent Egyptian modernity. In doing so, it contributes to a broader understanding of postcolonial cultural production in the Arab world and the enduring legacy of cinema as a tool for ideological expression and resistance.

Since its inception, the Egyptian cinema has proven that it is not merely a tool for entertainment. Rather, it has been and continues to be a powerful expressive medium that has contributed to shaping collective consciousness and mobilizing the masses' emotions toward crucial issues, most notably revolution and national and social change. This role was clear in the films of the 1950s and 1960s, where the screen became an arena for symbolic struggle reflecting the people's struggle against colonialism and class oppression.

Films such as "*My Heart Was Restored*" *Rod Qalbi* presented revolution as a dream fulfilled on both the emotional and social levels, linking individual love with collective liberation, affirming that liberation from social tyranny is inseparable from political change. Conversely, works such as "*Goha's Nail*" *Mismar Goha* expressed, through symbolism and humor, the people's rejection of occupation and their denunciation of subjugation. This demonstrates that cinema was not merely a reflection of reality, but also a means of inciting and changing it.

Cinema played the role of the "silent engine" of revolutions, whether through direct discourse, as in post-July films, or through symbolism and satirical criticism, as in

earlier works. It helped the masses imagine a different reality, incited them to reject injustice, and shaped their national consciousness in a way no less influential than political speeches or articles. Thus, cinema proves that it is not merely an art form, but rather a tool for cultural and political change, contributing—consciously or unconsciously—to shaping the contours of national consciousness, resisting colonialism, and shaping the features of modern Egypt. The director Salah Abu Seif said: *"A true national film doesn't raise slogans... but rather confronts you with yourself and makes you see what you haven't seen before."*

2.1. Research Problem

How do *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi* reflect postcolonial discourse in Egyptian cinema, and to what extent do they contribute to the formation of national consciousness and the cultural rewriting of colonial legacies?

2.2. Research Questions

This research attempts directly or indirectly to answer the following questions:

1. How do *Mismar Goha* (1952) and *Rod Qalbi* (1957) reflect postcolonial discourse in their depiction of national identity, class struggle, and colonial legacy in Egypt?

2. In what ways do both films use cinematic language (narrative, mise-en-scène, symbolism) to express resistance to colonial or hegemonic powers?

3. How are social hierarchies—particularly class and power structures—represented in each film, and how do these representations relate to the colonial and postcolonial context of 1950s Egypt?

4. What role does the representation of the "*Other*" (e.g., colonial authorities, aristocracy, military, or foreign powers) play in shaping the films' postcolonial narratives?

5. How do the protagonists in *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi* embody or challenge postcolonial ideologies such as nationalism, liberation, and self-determination?

6. How does *Rod Qalbi*, produced after the 1952 Revolution, differ from *Mismar Goha* in its portrayal of political power and national identity, and what does this indicate about the shifting postcolonial discourse in Egyptian cinema?

7. What are the implications of genre and tone (e.g., romantic drama in *Rod Qalbi*, allegorical or folkloric in *Mismar Goha*) on the delivery of postcolonial themes?

8. How do the films reflect or diverge from dominant state narratives or ideologies in Egypt during the early postcolonial period (1950s Nasserist era)?

2.3. Research Objectives

This research attempts to:

- Explore the manifestations of postcolonial discourse in Egyptian cinema through a comparative analysis of *Mismar Goha* (1952) and *Rod Qalbi* (1957).
- Examine how each film reflects Egypt's socio-political transformation during the early 1950s, especially in relation to colonial legacy, class struggle, and national identity.
- Analyze the cinematic techniques, narrative structures, and character representations used to convey postcolonial themes in both films.
- Assess how *Mismar Goha* utilizes allegory and folkloric elements to subtly critique colonial oppression and social injustice under the monarchy.
- Investigate how *Rod Qalbi*, produced post-revolution, promotes a nationalist ideology aligned with the revolutionary state under Nasser.
- Identify and contrast the portrayal of power dynamics, resistance, and the figure of the 'Other' in both films.
- Contribute to the broader discourse on postcolonial cinema in the Arab world by highlighting the transitional role of Egyptian cinema in shaping national consciousness during the 1950s.

2.4. Study Significance

This study fills a gap at the intersection of film studies and postcolonial criticism concerning Egyptian cinema of the 1950s. It contributes to scholarly understanding of how popular culture (specifically film) helped shape post-independence national identity and cultural memory. The research will be valuable for scholars of Middle Eastern cinema, postcolonial studies, cultural history, and film criticism.

2.5. Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are identified in the following points:

- Both films will likely reflect postcolonial anxieties and aspirations but through different aesthetic and narrative strategies: one perhaps more allegorical or folkloric, the other more melodramatic and modernist.

- Common themes may include reclamation of national dignity, negotiation between tradition and modernity, and subtle critiques of lingering colonial mentalities.
- The focus should be on the social elements that make up the society of the two films, such as gender representation, class, urban versus rural perceptions, and issues of love, marriage, education, work, and so on.

2.6. Study Limitations

- **Time**: This research focuses on the period of 1952 Revolution and the actions and events around that accompanied it. The play of Mismar Goha (the origin form of the film) was written during the 1940s and performed many times throughout that period. The film was produced in 1952 and showed one month before the revolution, in June 1952.
- **Place**: It manipulates the colonized countries especially *__Mismar Goha__* that focuses on Al-Kofah and Baghdad- Iraq with referring to Egypt. However, the film *__Rod Qalbi__* focuses on Egypt only as the heart of revolution and the heart of Arab World that its Revolution did not liberate Egypt only but liberate all other colonized Arab countries. .
- **Topic**: Studying the conditions of the colonized countries especially Egypt and the community's endeavor to liberation in two ways manipulated in the two films. Mismar Goha represents the more public way in a folkloric symbolism, while Rod Qalbi represents the more official way in a social and formal reality.

2.7. Literature Review

The intersection of cinema and postcolonial discourse has attracted growing scholarly attention in recent decades, particularly in the context of formerly colonized societies seeking to assert new cultural and political identities through film. Within the broader field of postcolonial studies, cinema is increasingly recognized not merely as a form of entertainment, but as a significant ideological apparatus capable of shaping, resisting, and reconfiguring dominant narratives. This literature review situates the current study within existing academic debates on postcolonial theory, Arab and Egyptian cinema, and the role of film in national identity formation.

2.7.1. Postcolonial Theory and Cultural Representation

The foundational texts of postcolonial theory—particularly the works of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Frantz Fanon—have laid the groundwork for analyzing how cultural productions such as literature and film engage with the legacies of colonialism. Said's *Orientalism* (1978) analyze Western representations of the "Orient" as a form of epistemic violence that constructs and maintains colonial

domination. His ideas are useful for analyzing how Egyptian cinema navigates and subverts orientalist portrayals of Arab identity, both foreign and internalized.

Homi Bhabha's concepts of ***Hybridity, Mimicry, and Ambivalence*** offer further tools for interpreting cultural texts within postcolonial contexts. Bhabha's idea of the ***"Third Space"*** (1994) highlights the productive tension where colonial and indigenous discourses collide, generating new forms of cultural expression. These frameworks are particularly relevant in analyzing ***Mismar Goha,*** where folklore and traditional symbolism create an alternative space of resistance within an allegorical narrative structure.

Frantz Fanon's ***The Wretched of the Earth*** (1961) is especially pertinent to ***Rod Qalbi***, with its emphasis on the role of the native intellectual and the revolutionary class struggle. Fanon's assertion that decolonization is always a violent process resonates with the film's portrayal of class conflict and military-led social reform.

2.7.2. Postcolonial Cinema: Global and Regional Perspectives

Postcolonial cinema, as defined by scholars such as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (***Unthinking Eurocentrism,*** 1994), emphasizes the role of the film in challenging colonial narratives and constructing counter-hegemonic visions of national identity. Shohat's work on Third World and Arab cinema is especially important for contextualizing Egyptian film as part of a broader movement of cinematic resistance in formerly colonized nations.

Several scholars have argued that postcolonial films do not merely reverse colonial narratives, but rearticulate identity through indigenous aesthetics, narrative forms, and political concerns. Hamid Naficy's work on "***Accented Cinema***" (2001), although focused primarily on diasporic filmmakers, contributes to understanding how marginal voices appropriate the cinematic form to express postcolonial anxieties and hybrid identities—concerns that are echoed in Egyptian national cinema during the transitional period of the 1950s.

2.7.3. Egyptian Cinema and National Identity

Egyptian cinema has long held a central place in the cultural life of the Arab world, earning the title of "Hollywood of the Middle East." Scholars such as Viola Shafik (*Arab Cinema*, 1998; revised 2007) and Roy Armes (*Third World Film Making and the West*, 1987) have documented the evolution of Egyptian cinema in relation to political, economic, and ideological transformations. Shafik, in particular, provides a detailed account of how Egyptian filmmakers responded to colonial and postcolonial

realities, noting the influence of folkloric tradition, melodrama, and realism in shaping an Egyptian cinematic voice.

The 1950s, especially the years surrounding the 1952 revolution, marked a turning point in the Egyptian film industry. Films such as *Rod Qalbi* (1957) are often cited as exemplary "revolutionary cinema," aligning with the state's efforts to promote social reform and national pride. Joseph Massad (*Desiring Arabs*, 2007) further argues that post-1952 cultural production, including cinema, was heavily influenced by Nasserist ideology, with filmmakers often acting as ideological agents of the state. This ideological alignment is contrasted by earlier films such as *Mismar Goha*, which relied more heavily on metaphor and indirect critique due to pre-revolutionary constraints.

2.7.4. Cinematic Allegory and Political Subtext

The use of allegory in politically charged films has been explored by scholars such as Jameson, who described Third World literature—and by extension, cinema—as inherently allegorical due to the close proximity between the personal and the political. This is particularly relevant in analyzing *Mismar Goha*, which uses traditional folklore and symbolic characters to critique social hierarchies and external domination in a veiled manner.

In contrast, the more direct style of *Rod Qalbi* aligns with state-driven cinematic narratives intended to educate, mobilize, and legitimize the new political order. The film reflects what Shafik refers to as the "Mobilizational Function" of cinema in post-revolutionary Egypt, where films were crafted to mirror the aspirations of the emerging socialist republic and its populist leadership.

2.7.5. Annotated Bibliography

1. **Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.**
   This foundational text analyzes Western constructions of the East as exotic, backward, and inferior. It provides a critical lens for analyzing how Egyptian cinema resisted orientalist narratives, particularly in reclaiming cultural self-representation in postcolonial contexts.
2. **Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.**
   Bhabha's ideas of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence offer tools for interpreting Egyptian cinematic narratives as cultural negotiations between colonial influence and national identity. His theory informs the reading of *Mismar Goha* as a hybrid cultural text.

3. **Fanon, F. (1963).** *The Wretched of the Earth*. **Grove Press.**
   Fanon explores the psychological and cultural effects of colonialism, emphasizing decolonization as a violent, identity-forming process. His work underpins the analysis of *Rod Qalbi* as a film that glorifies revolutionary violence and social transformation.

4. **Shohat, E., & Stam, R. (1994).** *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media.* **Routledge.**
   This text deconstructs Eurocentric cinematic paradigms and promotes the idea of "polycentric" media. It supports the study's positioning of Egyptian cinema as part of the broader Third Cinema movement resisting imperial narratives.

5. **Shafik, V. (2007).** *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity* **(Rev. ed.). AUC Press.**
   A comprehensive history of Arab cinema, including key socio-political influences. Shafik's work offers historical background on both films and the broader shifts in Egyptian filmmaking post-1952.

6. **Massad, J. A. (2007).** *Desiring Arabs*. **University of Chicago Press.**
   Massad critiques the state's role in shaping cultural discourse in the Arab world. His work informs the ideological analysis of *Rod Qalbi* as a product of Nasserist nationalism.

7. **Naficy, H. (2001).** *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. **Princeton University Press.**
   While focused on exilic cinema, Naficy's discussion of marginalized voices and narrative displacement supports readings of early postcolonial cinema as engaging with identity fragmentation.

Conclusion of the Literature Review

While existing scholarship provides a strong foundation for understanding the relationship between cinema and postcolonial identity in Egypt, few studies have undertaken a direct comparative analysis of pre- and post-revolutionary films through the lens of postcolonial discourse. By juxtaposing *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi*, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how Egyptian cinema transitioned from allegorical resistance to ideological assertion in the early postcolonial era. It further aims to deepen our appreciation of the aesthetic and narrative strategies filmmakers employed to engage with the nation's shifting sociopolitical landscape.

2.8. Methodology
2.8.1. Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a **qualitative, comparative textual analysis** methodology, focused on two Egyptian films: *Mismar Goha* (1952) and *Rod Qalbi* (1957). The aim is to explore how each film articulates postcolonial themes through its narrative structure, character development, visual language, and ideological messaging.

2.8.2. Theoretical Framework

The analysis is grounded in **postcolonial theory**, drawing specifically on:

- Edward Said's concept of **Orientalism**
- Homi Bhabha's theories of **Hybridity** and **Cultural Ambivalence**
- Frantz Fanon's analysis of **Colonial Violence** and **National Consciousness**

These frameworks provide tools for interpreting how the films negotiate colonial legacies, assert national identity, and reflect the broader cultural politics of 1950s Egypt.

2.8.3. Data Sources

The primary data consists of the films:
- *Mismar Goha* (1952), dir. Ibrahim Emarah

https://youtu.be/6s2bPwcdLN8?si=U1QALqeI3THDL8Z5

- *Rod Qalbi* (1957), dir. Ezz El-Ddin Zulficar

https://youtu.be/p0qBzqm-dII?si=4V2gtddfs48aY2qp

Supplementary data includes:

- Historical records and press articles from the 1950s
- Secondary literature on Egyptian cinema and postcolonial discourse
- Government and censorship policies related to cultural production

2.8.4. Analytical Procedure

1. **Narrative Analysis**: Study of plot structure, key conflicts, and resolution in each film.
2. **Character Analysis**: Focus on protagonists and antagonists as symbolic agents.

3. **Visual and Aesthetic Analysis**: Examination of cinematography, mise-en-scène, music, and iconography.
4. **Contextual Analysis**: Situating each film within its socio-political and historical moment.
5. **Comparative Analysis**: Juxtaposing the two films to identify ideological and stylistic shifts before and after the 1952 revolution.

3. Discussion
3.1.   Full Film Analysis

3.1.1. Postcolonial Literature and Colonization (Historical and Cultural Context)

a. What is Postcolonial Literature?

Postcolonial literature is a powerful and transformative genre that gives voice to the formerly colonized, challenging dominant historical narratives and reshaping modern storytelling. Emerging in the aftermath of colonial rule, this body of literature reflects the struggles, resistance, and identity crises faced by individuals and nations after the end of imperial domination.

Through novels, poetry, and essays, postcolonial writers explore themes of cultural hybridity, displacement, oppression, and resistance, offering alternative perspectives to those found in traditional Western literary canon. Authors from Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia, and beyond have used literature as a means to reclaim histories, interrogate colonial legacies, and affirm their cultural identities. (Nissy Preth, Postcolonial Literature:A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism, 21 February 2025, INCA University)

 Postcolonial literature refers to literary works produced in the aftermath of colonial rule, particularly in countries that were previously colonized by European powers. This body of literature seeks to **expose, critique, and challenge the legacy of colonialism**—not only its political and economic structures but also its cultural, linguistic, and psychological impacts. Postcolonial writers often reclaim **indigenous voices**, **reinterpret history**, and **question colonial narratives** that have long dominated representations of the colonized world.

b. The Legacy of Colonization

Colonization involved the control of one nation by another, typically involving exploitation of resources, suppression of local cultures, and imposition of foreign systems of governance, language, and education. Colonizers often presented themselves as bringing "civilization," while in reality, they disrupted native societies, economies, and identities.

The **aftermath of colonization** left enduring marks on:

- National identities
- Language and education systems
- Class structures
- Cultural self-perception
- Gender roles and representation

Postcolonial literature engages with these effects, often highlighting:

- **Hybridity** (a mix of native and colonial cultures)
- **Alienation and identity crisis**
- **Resistance and reclamation**
- **Subversion of colonial discourse**

c. Key Themes in Postcolonial Literature

- **Resistance to colonial power (Resistance and Decolonization)**
- **The struggle for identity and self-definition (Identity and Hybridity)**
- **Exile and displacement**
- **Memory, trauma, and rewriting history**
- **Language as a site of struggle (e.g., writing in colonial vs. native languages)**
- **Race, Gender, and Oppression**

d. Major Theorists & Figures

- **Frantz Fanon**: Explored the psychological effects of colonization (*Black Skin, White Masks*; *The Wretched of the Earth*)
- **Edward Said**: Introduced the concept of **Orientalism**, showing how the West constructed the East as inferior
- **Homi K. Bhabha**: Discussed **hybridity**, **ambivalence**, and the "third space" in postcolonial identity

- **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**: Advocated for decolonizing the mind and literature by returning to indigenous languages

e. Important Concepts

- **Hybridity** (Homi Bhabha) – The blending of cultures that occurs under colonialism.
- **Mimicry** – The colonized subject imitating the colonizer, often in a subversive way.
- **Orientalism** (Edward Said) – The Western depiction of Eastern cultures as exotic, backward, and inferior.
- **Subaltern** (Gayatri Spivak) – Refers to marginalized groups outside the power structure; she famously asked, *"Can the Subaltern Speak?"*

f. How Postcolonial Literature Shapes Modern Narratives

Postcolonial Literature can shape both movie and modern writing through the following aspects:

1. Decentering the Western Canon

Postcolonial literature has challenged the dominance of Western literary traditions by expanding the definition of "great literature" to include voices from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.

2. The Rise of Global Literature

Today's literature increasingly reflects the fluidity of identity in a globalized world, with postcolonial themes influencing authors beyond former colonies. Writers like Zadie Smith, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Mohsin Hamid explore themes of migration, multiculturalism, and postcolonial legacy in contemporary contexts.

3. Impact on Film, Media, and Popular Culture

Postcolonial narratives have inspired films, television, and art that critique colonial legacies, such as:

- The movie "Black Panther", which reimagines Africa without colonialism.
- Literature-to-film adaptations like "The Namesake" (2006) and "Wide Sargasso Sea" (1993).

4. Influence on Social and Political Thought

- Postcolonial literature has contributed to activism and policy debates on decolonization, reparations, and cultural identity.

- Thinkers like Edward Said (Orientalism, 1978) have shaped discussions on how the West represents non-Western cultures.

g. **Conclusion: The Future of Postcolonial Literature**

Postcolonial literature remains a dynamic and evolving field, continuing to challenge historical narratives, cultural assumptions, and global inequalities. As the world grapples with issues of migration, identity, and historical accountability, the voices of postcolonial writers are more relevant than ever.

By reshaping modern storytelling, postcolonial literature ensures that <u>knowledge</u> history is not just told by the victors, but by those who endured, resisted, and redefined their own destinies.

3.1.2. Postcolonialism and Egyptian Context

In Egypt, postcolonial literature and cinema often explore:

- The transition from British occupation to national independence
- The role of monarchy and revolution
- Cultural and class struggles during decolonization
- The emergence of nationalism and anti-colonial resistance

Postcolonialism in the **Egyptian context** is a rich and complex field that explores how Egypt's experience with **colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, identity, and resistance** has shaped its modern literature, culture, and thought. While Egypt was never formally colonized in the same way as many African nations, it was **occupied and heavily influenced by Britain (1882–1956)** and also had a long history of **Ottoman rule**. These layered experiences make Egyptian postcolonial discourse unique.

3.1.3. Historical Background: Egypt and Colonialism

- **Ottoman Rule (1517–1798)**: Egypt was nominally under Ottoman control.
- **French Occupation (1798–1801)**: Napoleon's short-lived invasion introduced Enlightenment ideas and Western influence.
- **British Occupation (1882–1956)**: Britain occupied Egypt under the guise of protecting its interests in the Suez Canal. It retained significant control until the **1952 revolution** led by Gamal Abdel Nasser.

• **Post-1952 Period**: Egyptian nationalism, anti-colonialism, and efforts toward **pan-Arabism** intensified under Nasser's leadership.

3.1.4. Key Postcolonial Themes in Egyptian Literature

1. **Nationalism and Identity**: Exploration of what it means to be Egyptian after years of foreign rule.
2. **Language and Cultural Tension**: The divide between Arabic and colonial languages (especially French and English), as well as classical vs. colloquial Arabic.
3. **Resistance and Liberation**: Both political and cultural resistance to imperialism and neo-colonialism.
4. **Modernity vs. Tradition**: Tension between Western modernization and indigenous cultural traditions.
5. **Islam and the West**: Exploration of religious identity and its role in resisting or accommodating Western influence.

3.1.5. Postcolonial Theory & Egypt

While Egyptian thinkers are less often cited in global postcolonial theory than Indian or Caribbean scholars, Egypt's experience intersects with broader postcolonial discourses, especially in:

- **Edward Said**: Though born in Jerusalem, Said was of **Palestinian-Egyptian** descent and educated in Cairo. His theory of **Orientalism** was deeply influenced by his experiences in colonial and postcolonial Arab contexts.
- **Frantz Fanon's influence**: His writings on decolonization (especially in ***The Wretched of the Earth***) resonated with Nasserist and pan-Arab ideologies.
- **Historically as a connection between Colonizer and Colonized**, Egypt occupies a **hybrid postcolonial position**. Though technically a British "protectorate," it experienced:

  - **Direct colonial occupation** (1882–1956)
  - A long-standing **imperial heritage** (Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Islamic, Ottoman)
  - A powerful **anti-colonial nationalist movement** led by figures like Ahmed Orabi, Saad Zaghloul and later **Gamal Abdel Nasser.**

This gives Egyptian literature a distinct postcolonial character. Not just about colonial trauma, but also about modernity, revivalism, and cultural redefinition. Postcolonial literature in Egypt offers a multifaceted reflection on what it means to live in the afterlife of empire. It moves beyond simple oppositions (colonizer/colonized, East/West) to explore:

- Ambiguity, fragmentation, and identity crises

- Continuing struggles with power, representation, and self-definition

- The role of language, gender, and memory in shaping national consciousness

3.2. The Critical Film Study
3.2.1. . Introduction: Egyptian Cinema and Society

For a century, the Egyptian cinema has been a living testament to the evolution and profound transformations of Egyptian society. This journey began in 1896 with the first cinema screening in Alexandria. The simple beginnings were marked by curiosity and fascination among individuals with the novelty of this emerging art form. Since then, cinema has continuously interacted with the social and cultural transformations in Egypt, providing a mirror reflecting the course of events and societal developments. The early 1950s marked a critical period in Egypt's history, witnessing the decline of colonial influence and the burgeoning of nationalist movements. Cinema emerged as a vital cultural space reflecting and shaping public consciousness concerning colonial domination and the quest for autonomy. *Mismar Goha "Goha's Nail"* (1952), directed by Ibrahim Emarah, is a seminal work articulating postcolonial resistance through allegorical narrative and potent symbolism.

The story of the film was taken from a drama with the same name: *Mismar Goha,* written by Ali Ahmed Bakatheer during 1940s and performed many times before being made as a film first introduced in 23 June 1952 (one month only before the 1952' Revaluation), the dawn of the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. *"Goha's Nail – Mismar Goha"* is one of the most prominent symbolic plays in modern Arabic literature. It was written by the Yemeni Egyptian writer Ali Ahmed Ba-Katheer (1910–1969), a pioneer of Arab theater committed to national and humanitarian issues. The text belongs to the post-colonial era, during which Arabic literature witnessed a flourishing of symbolic and experimental trends. Ba-Katheer was among the first to use folklore in a contemporary manner to express issues of freedom and justice. The writer chose the character of Goha, a satirical traditional symbol, to embody the struggle of the Arab people against the forces of tyranny and corruption, and to make the "nail" a symbol of the imprescriptible right.

The Modern Egyptian Theater Company opened its second season at the Royal Opera House on Thursday, October 18, with the play "*Goha's Nail,*" written by Ali Ahmed Baktheer and directed by Zaki Tulaimat. Khidr, Abass wrote "*Baktheer decided to make this character, torn between reality and imagination, the subject of a play that addresses the issue of the Nile Valley and the conflict within it between freedom and occupation. The author did not draw Juha from history to achieve his historical*

existence, but rather from a collection of anecdotes attributed to him, and directed his character—as he imagined and intended—to follow the path he charted to achieve his goal. This play, then, is not a historical play; rather, the author drew its characters from ancient times and conducted events among them that symbolize the reality of our time and, in some instances, almost reveal it." (**_Literature and Art in a Week_**, Magalat Alresalah *(The Message' Magazine)* No. 956, in 29-10-1951.

For the second film dealt with in this study: **_Rod Qalbi_**, introduced in 1957, Yousof Alseba'y wrote it in 1954 after two years of the Egyptian Revaluation that antedated to a new era of the Egyptian history. It is a mixed film between political, social and sentimental issues. Before the July 1952 Revolution, an impossible love story develops between Ali, the son of a poor gardener, and Injy, the daughter of an aristocratic Pasha: Prince Isma'eel. The two grew up in the same palace, where Ali's father worked in the prince's household, but the class gap stands as an insurmountable wall between their hearts. Ali is an ambitious, pure-hearted young man who joins the Military Academy, dreaming of a future that will change his reality. His brother Hussein joins the Police, and each seeks to prove himself in a society that recognizes only lineage and social status. Injy, meanwhile, experiences an internal struggle between her sincere love for Ali and the constraints of family and tradition.

When Ali's father dares to ask her for marriage to Ali, a harsh shock arrives: the Pasha rejects the offer with contempt and expels Ali's father from the palace. The family is shattered, and Ali's father is paralyzed by the humiliation. Ali's life changes radically, and love becomes a catalyst for revolt against this unjust reality. Years pass, and the spark of the July 23 Revolution erupts, and Ali becomes one of the **Free Officers** who participate in making history. The revolution opens new doors to the dream of social justice and overthrows the thrones of feudalism.

After the revolution, Ali is tasked with liquidating the Pasha's property—Injy's own palace—where he confronts his past and meets Injy again. However, the confrontation does not go smoothly; her brother, Alaa, rejects change and attempts to fail in killing Ali, succeeding in injuring him, to be killed by Ali later. In the end, after a long period of pain and absence, Ali and Injy reunite in a new era that no longer recognizes class, but rather humanity and truth. Their meeting is a triumph for love and justice together.

This research applies postcolonial theory, drawing on insights from Frantz Fanon and Edward Said, to analyze how **_Mismar Goha_** constructs its critique of colonial power and articulates national identity. The film's use of religious symbolism, legal drama, and popular mobilization exemplifies cinematic strategies of negotiating the colonial past and envisioning liberation .In dealing with these, two films exactly, the research lives with the people in the two stages of liberation: Decolonization and

Postcolonization. The first exemplifies the public struggle against colonization and colonialism, which *Mismar Goha* succeeded in presenting such conflict and struggle in the divine national march towards freedom and independence. The other stage; Postcolonization is clearer in the other film: *Rod Qalbi* whatever being a store of the public wrath against colonizers and tyrants. The two films have succeeded in showing the colonized peoples especially Egypt under colonization. At the same time, they uncovered the real will of people to be free and independent, rooting the role of cinema not in antedating events only, but also in shaping and directing them.

The emergence of postcolonial discourse in the Egyptian cinema coincided with one of the most transformative periods in the nation's modern history. The 1950s marked a profound political, social, and cultural shift in Egypt, culminating in the 1952 **Free Officers' Revolution** that overthrew the monarchy and ended the British dominance. During this critical juncture, cinema became a potent medium for articulating the aspirations, frustrations, and ideological reconfigurations of society in a process of redefining society itself. This study examines how Egyptian cinema engaged with postcolonial themes by focusing on two pivotal films: *Mismar Goha* (1952), directed by Ibrahim Emarah, and *Rod Qalbi* (1957), directed by Ezz El-Ddin Zulfikkar.

Both films offer rich texts for investigating how Egyptian filmmakers navigated the legacy of colonialism and the formation of national identity during the early postcolonial period. *Mismar Goha (1952)*, released in the same year as the revolution being steeped in folkloric symbolism and allegory. It draws on traditional narratives to subtly critique social hierarchies and foreign domination, while also invoking the collective memory of a pre-colonial cultural ethos. In contrast, *Rod Qalbi (1957)*— produced five years later—serves as a direct ideological expression of the revolutionary regime. It foregrounds themes of class struggle, anti-aristocratic sentiment, and the glorification of the military as the new vanguard of the people. The two films thus represent contrasting cinematic responses to the postcolonial condition: one grounded in metaphor and cultural nostalgia, the other in realism and state-sponsored nationalism.

This comparative study situates both films within the broader theoretical landscape of Postcolonialism, drawing upon key thinkers such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Frantz Fanon. Their concepts: *Orientalism*, *Hybridity*, *Mimicry*, and *National Consciousness* —offer valuable frameworks for understanding how cinema both reflects and constructs postcolonial realities. In the case of Egypt, a nation negotiating its political independence and cultural autonomy, film becomes more than entertainment; it becomes a site of ideological contestation and identity formation.

Methodologically, the study conducts a close textual analysis of *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi*, focusing on narrative structure, characterization, mise-en-scène (melody and staging), cinematography, and symbolic motifs. It seeks to uncover how each film responds to colonial legacies, engages in emerging national ideologies, and contributes to the creation of a postcolonial cinematic language. The analysis also considers the socio-historical context of production, including state involvement in the film industry, censorship, and the evolving relationship between filmmakers and political power.

Ultimately, this research argues that the Egyptian cinema of the 1950s played a crucial role in negotiating the postcolonial transition. By comparing *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi*, the study not only traces the aesthetic and thematic shifts in cinematic representations of national identity but also sheds light on how film functioned as a cultural battlefield in the struggle to articulate a truly independent Egyptian modernity. In doing so, it contributes to a broader understanding of postcolonial cultural production in the Arab world and the enduring legacy of cinema as a tool for ideological expression and resistance.

Since its inception, the Egyptian cinema has proven that it is not merely a tool for entertainment. Rather, it has been and continues to be a powerful expressive medium that has contributed to shaping collective consciousness and mobilizing the masses' emotions toward crucial issues, most notably revolution and national and social change. This role was clear in the films of the 1950s and 1960s, where the screen became an arena for symbolic struggle reflecting the people's struggle against colonialism and class oppression.

Films such as *Rod Qalbi* presented revolution as a dream fulfilled on both the emotional and social levels, linking individual love with collective liberation, affirming that liberation from social tyranny is inseparable from political change. Conversely, works such as *"Goha's Nail" Mismar Goha* expressed, through symbolism and humor, the people's rejection of occupation and their denunciation of subjugation. This demonstrates that cinema was not merely a reflection of reality, but also a means of inciting and changing it.

Cinema played the role of the "silent engine" of revolutions, whether through direct discourse, as in post-July films, or through symbolism and satirical criticism, as in earlier works. It helped the masses imagine a different reality, incited them to reject injustice, and shaped their national consciousness in a way no less influential than political speeches or articles. Thus, cinema proves that it is not merely an art form, but rather a tool for cultural and political change, contributing—consciously or unconsciously—to shaping the contours of national consciousness, resisting

colonialism, and shaping the features of modern Egypt. The director Salah Abu Seif said: *"A true national film doesn't raise slogans... but rather confronts you with yourself and makes you see what you haven't seen before."*

3.2.2. *Mismar Goha* (1952) Allegorical Resistance and Cultural Memory

Plot Summary:
Set in a folkloric Egyptian village, *Mismar Goha* follows the character of Goha—a symbolic trickster figure—as he navigates a corrupt, unjust society. The story revolves around the legend of a misplaced nail (*mismar*) and gradually reveals the tension between local traditions and imposed authority.

Themes and Interpretation:

• **Allegory and Symbolism:** The nail represents unresolved historical trauma and lingering colonial control. Goha, drawn from Arab folklore, acts as a cultural memory-bearer who subtly resists oppression through wit and subversion.

• **Postcolonial Subtext:** The film critiques class injustice and foreign domination through allegory rather than direct confrontation—a necessity in pre-revolutionary Egypt under censorship.

• **Hybridity and Cultural Identity:** The film blends traditional narrative with modern cinematic form, reflecting Bhabha's "Third Space" where resistance is enacted through hybridity.

• **Visual Language:** The rustic village setting, traditional music, and stylized performances reinforce indigenous cultural values.

Conclusion:
Mismar Goha operates as a veiled act of resistance. Its subtle critique reflects the constraints of the pre-1952 political environment, yet its use of cultural symbols points toward an emergent postcolonial identity rooted in folk tradition.

3.2.3. *Rod Qalbi* (1957) Revolutionary Cinema and Nationalist Propaganda

Summary of Comparative Insights

Feature	*Mismar Goha* (1952)	*Rod Qalbi* (1957)
Narrative Style	Allegorical, symbolic	Realist, melodramatic
Political Tone	Subtle resistance	Explicit revolutionary ideology
Representation of Power	Corrupt authority as metaphor	Military as heroic liberator
Thematic Focus	Tradition, identity, memory	Class struggle, nationalism
Aesthetic Techniques	Folkloric, theatrical	Cinematic realism, emotional appeal
Historical Context	Pre-revolution censorship	Post-revolution state alignment

3.2.4. Symbolism and Postcolonial Resistance
3.2.4.1. Postcolonial Resistance in *Mismar Goha*
1. The Nail as a Metaphor for Resistance

One of the film's central motifs is the "nail" placed in the protagonist's home. This seemingly mundane object acquires profound symbolic meaning, representing subtle, persistent resistance to colonial domination. As the film narrates, Goha insists on keeping the nail as a condition for selling his house, symbolizing the assertion of national presence and sovereignty despite external control. This act echoes what Homi Bhabha describes as "the mimicry and mockery" inherent in colonial resistance — a small, almost invisible act that destabilizes hegemonic authority without direct confrontation (Bhabha, 1994). The nail becomes a tangible assertion of agency, an emblem of cultural survival and defiance embedded within everyday life.

2. The Removal of the Imam's Cloak: Decoding Symbolic Dispossession

Another poignant scene involves the forcible removal of Goha's cloak during his deposition as Imam. The cloak, traditionally a symbol of religious authority and communal respect, becomes a contested signifier. Its removal signifies not only the stripping away of official power but also the colonial attempt to dismantle indigenous spiritual and cultural identity.

Drawing from Fanon's analysis of colonial violence (Fanon, 1963), this scene dramatizes how colonial powers seek to fracture the social fabric by targeting symbols that unify and legitimize resistance. Goha's standing without the cloak, however, suggests an enduring resilience, implying that identity transcends institutional vestments.

3. Imprisonment and the Emergence of Revolutionary Consciousness

The film's depiction of Goha and his nephew Hamad's imprisonment marks a critical turning point. The confinement symbolizes the coercive mechanisms employed by colonial and authoritarian regimes to suppress dissent. Yet, the prison also serves as a site of ideological consolidation and resistance. Goha's refusal to capitulate under pressure and his steadfast adherence to principles despite incarceration illustrate the dual role of prisons in colonial contexts—as spaces of both repression and revolutionary awakening (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986). This dialect highlights how physical constraints paradoxically nurture political resolve.

4. The Popular Uprising: Collective Liberation and Nation-Building

The climactic scene where the populace storms the prison to liberate Goha and Hamad signifies the transition from individual resistance to collective action. This moment symbolizes the burgeoning national consciousness and the popular will to overthrow colonial domination. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983), the film captures the emergence of a shared national identity forged through communal struggle. The breaking of prison walls metaphorically represents dismantling colonial structures and reclaiming sovereignty.

5. Visual Language: Body Language, Costume, and Color

Mismar Goha employs a rich visual vocabulary to reinforce its postcolonial themes. Goha's upright posture during imprisonment, despite physical constraints, conveys unyielding dignity and defiance. Conversely, the submissive body language of colonial officials reveals their precarious legitimacy. Costume design delineates social hierarchies: the colonial governor's ornate robes and red uniforms starkly contrast with Goha's humble attire, emphasizing class and power divisions. Color symbolisms such as the predominance of earth tones for commoners and vivid reds for oppressors—visually encode the conflict between subjugation and resistance.

3.2.4.2.   Symbolism in *Mismar Goha*

Mismar Goha is an allegorical political–satirical film that uses the famous "**Nail of Goha**" tale to critique tyranny, corruption, occupation, and the manipulation of law. The film carries deep post-colonial meanings, portraying resistance against external domination and internal collaborators.

1. The Nail as the Core Symbol of Colonial Control

In the classical story, Goha sells his house but keeps a single nail on the wall—using it as a legal excuse to enter the house, interfere, exploit, and eventually reclaim it. In the film, the nail symbolizes:

a. Colonial Presence

A tiny legal pretext used by foreign powers to maintain influence. How empires dominate nations through technicalities, treaties, and manipulated agreements.

b. A Symbol of Endless Interference

Just as Goha keeps returning because of the nail, colonial powers: never truly leave, stay involved through advisors, soldiers, treaties, or economic control.

c. The Illusion of Independence

The house owner "owns the house," but not really—because the nail remains. This mirrors many postcolonial states that gained formal independence while retaining: foreign military bases, foreign economic control and foreign political influence. Thus, the nail means partial freedom / controlled sovereignty.

2. Goha as a Symbol of Colonial Empires

Goha, in the film version, is not the innocent folk hero; he becomes manipulative, cunning, able to twist the law to his benefit. He represents British colonial power (primarily), or any empire that ruled by exploiting loopholes, using "soft power" rather than overt violence. His repeated returns to the house symbolize: Colonialism dressed in legal, diplomatic, or economic disguise.

3. The New Owner as a Symbol of the Colonized Nation

The man who buys the house yet loses control over it represents: the ordinary Egyptian citizen, the exploited colonized subject, or the newly independent nation trying to assert sovereignty. His constant frustration reflects: the failure of legal resistance against colonial cunning the imbalance of power the humiliation endured under occupation. His suffering is symbolic of Egypt's struggle under British presence (1882–1956).

4. The Law Itself as a Symbol of Colonial Tools

One of the film's strongest symbolic layers is its portrayal of the law as neutral but manipulable. Colonial States are the Masters of Legal Manipulation. The occupier uses decrees treaties, legal privileges and commercial agreements to maintain dominance. In the film: whatever the law supports Goha but it does not support him as the rightful homeowner. In a colonized society, justice does not serve the oppressed; it protects the oppressor. This echoes Fanon's critique of colonial legality.

5. Symbolism of Resistance

The film embodies post-colonial resistance through several narrative elements:

a. The Increasing Rebellion against Goha

As Goha becomes more intrusive, the owner—and society—becomes more aware that: "legal rights" are weapons of domination independence require more than papers resistance is necessary. This reflects the Egyptian anti-colonial awakening.

b. Destruction of the Nail = End of Colonialism
When the nail is finally removed, it symbolizes breaking the last remnant of foreign control destruction of the colonial loophole reclaiming full sovereignty. The removal of the nail equals the 1952 revolution and the 1956 evacuation of British forces.

c. Popular Solidarity

The film often shows people sympathizing with the oppressed homeowner. This represents collective national awakening popular resistance movements refusal to be silent under humiliation

6. The House as a Symbol of the Nation

The house symbolizes: Egypt itself colonized homelands in general land, identity, heritage, and dignity Goha's repeated invasions represent foreign troops entering at will colonial administrators interfering in national affairs the invasion of culture and privacy. Reclaiming the house symbolizes national liberation.

7. Satire as Post-Colonial Weapon

The film uses humor as a form of resistance: laughter exposes tyranny satire weakens the oppressor's image mockery turns fear into courage. Post-colonial theory considers satire a powerful anti-colonial tool because it: delegitimizes authority empowers the oppressed through ridicule reveals the absurdity of occupation. By making Goha ridiculous, the film symbolically undermines the authority of colonial powers.

Conclusion

Mismar Goha is far more than a comic folk story. It is a post-colonial allegory in which: the nail represents lingering colonial influence, Goha represents cunning imperial power, the house represents the nation, the homeowner represents the colonized people, removing the nail represents national liberation and the end of occupation. The film thus articulates a powerful message: ***Freedom cannot exist as long as even a single "nail" of colonial control remains.***

3.2.4.3.   Symbolism and Post-Colonial Resistance in *Rodd Qalbi*

Rodd Qalbi (Return My Heart), directed by Ezz El-Ddin Zulficar, is one of the foundational post-revolution Egyptian films. Produced only a few years after the 1952 Egyptian Revolution, it functions as both cinematic propaganda for the new nationalist order and a symbolic narrative of resistance against colonial and class oppression. The film's symbolism constructs a post-colonial identity by celebrating the overthrow of corruption, feudalism, and foreign influence.

1. Symbolism of Class Struggle
a. Ali as the "New Egyptian"
Ali, the poor gardener's son, symbolizes: the rise of the marginalized classes the collapse of aristocratic privilege the transformation of Egypt from social stagnation to social mobility His love for Enjy represents the forbidden union between classes, which becomes possible only after the revolution. Symbolically, Ali examplifies the nation reclaiming dignity.
b. The Feudal Palace
The palace of the aristocratic family functions as a metaphor for: the ancien régime (feudal class) colonial-backed elites' exploitation, injustice, and rigid hierarchy. When the revolution dismantles such structures, the palace loses its power—symbolizing the collapse of the colonial-social order.

2. Symbolism of Colonial Resistance

Even though the film does not depict British officers directly, the aristocratic class is portrayed as the cultural and political extension of colonial rule. Thus, the film encodes anti-colonial resistance through indirect symbols:
a. The British Absence as a Presence
The absence of explicit British character itself is symbolic: The film avoids direct confrontation due to censorship, yet their legacy is embedded in the oppressive class structure. The British as the invisible hand behind: feudal wealth military humiliation national oppression. Thus, the revolution is implicitly shown as a decolonizing act.
b. The Military as a Symbol of Liberation

Ali joins the military is symbolic on multiple levels: the army = the instrument of national salvation military unity replaces colonial divisions the July 23 officers represent collective resistance. The film glorifies the Free Officers as saviors of the nation.

3. Symbolism of Love as National Allegory

The love story between Ali and Enjy is not just romance—it is an allegory of the nation. Enjy represents Egypt: beautiful, oppressed, controlled by aristocracy. Ali represents the common Egyptian citizen: deprived of rights yet hopeful. Their forbidden love symbolizes the people's separation from their own country under colonial-feudal rule. Their reunion after the revolution symbolizes national reunification and liberation. Love becomes a political message to announce that "True union is possible only when the nation becomes free".

4. Symbolism of Violence and Resistance
a. The Shooting of Ali's Father
Ali's father being shot by the aristocrat is a symbolic act: the end of patience with injustice the exposure of the cruelty of the old regime the spark of rebellion. It symbolizes the martyrdom of ordinary Egyptians under colonial-era oppression.

b. Fire, Destruction, and Rebirth
Scenes of fire and destruction surrounding the revolution represent: the burning of old Egypt the creative destruction required to build a new society purification and rebirth. This is classic post-colonial symbolism of nation-building through struggle.

5. Cinematic Techniques Supporting Post-Colonial Themes
a. **Lighting Dark**, shadowed scenes depict oppression injustice hopelessness before the revolution
Bright, open lighting symbolizes liberation clarity the dawn of a new national identity
b. **Music Nationalist** songs (especially the famous title song) act as symbolic weapons of resistance, reinforcing patriotism collective solidarity emotional rejection of imperial/feudal power

6. Post-Colonial Narrative Structure
The film adopts a narrative typical of post-colonial cinema:
1. Oppression — the aristocracy controls wealth, laws, and honor.
2. Awakening — Ali becomes aware of his rights and identity.
3. Resistance — joining the military, challenging the old order.
4. Revolution — overthrowing corrupt elites.
5. Rebirth — nation and love both restored.
This mirrors Frantz Fanon's model of decolonization: violence → resistance → national rebirth

Conclusion

Rod Qalbi uses symbolism extensively to construct a post-colonial narrative of liberation. Its imagery, characters, and plot elements collectively portray: the fall of colonial-era elites, the rise of the common citizen, the rebirth of national identity, and the triumph of revolutionary justice. The film stands as an early example of Arab post-colonial cinema, embedding political messages within romance, drama, and patriotic imagery.

3.3. Comparative Study of *Mismar Goha (1952) and Rod Qalbi (1957)*
3.3.1. Contextual Background

Rod Qalbi ("Return My Heart"), directed by Ezz El-Ddin Zulficar, was released in 1957, a pivotal time post the 1952 Revolution in Egypt. Unlike *Mismar Goha*, which centers on colonial occupation and resistance, *Rod Qalbi* focuses on social and class struggles within Egyptian society, exploring themes of love, betrayal, and societal change amid a stratified social order.

3.3.2. Themes of Resistance: Individual vs. Collective

While Mismar Goha emphasizes collective resistance against an external colonial power, symbolized through popular uprisings and legal battles, Rod Qalbi explores the tension between individual desires and societal expectations, set against the backdrop of class conflict. The protagonist's romantic struggles become metaphors for broader social liberation and transformation.

3.3.3. Visual Symbolism and Cinematic Language

Both films employ costume and setting to reflect social hierarchies and power structures. In *Mismar Goha*, the stark contrast between the colonial officials' ornate garb and the humble dress of common people visually underscores oppression and resistance. *Rod Qalbi* similarly uses clothing—elegant dresses and urban settings versus rural simplicity—to highlight class distinctions and cultural divides.

The use of color and lighting in *Rod Qalbi* further accentuates emotional and social contrasts, employing shadows and soft lighting to evoke intimacy and tension, a divergence from *Mismar Goha's* more direct and symbolic visual language.[i]

3.3.4. Portrayal of Authority and Social Change

In *Mismar Goha*, authority is depicted as foreign, oppressive, and external, focusing on colonial power. The film culminates in a collective overthrow symbolizing national liberation. Conversely, *Rod Qalbi* presents authority as internal social structures - class elites and patriarchal norms -challenged through personal and emotional rebellion rather than overt political confrontation.

3.3.5. In-depth Symbolic Analysis of *Rod Qalbi* (1957)
1. The Love Story as a Metaphor for Social Liberation
The central romantic plot in *Rod Qalbi* is not simply a personal affair but allegorically reflects tensions between tradition and modernity, class division, and the desire for social emancipation. The heroine's struggle to reconcile her feelings with societal expectations mirrors Egypt's own efforts to navigate postcolonial identity.

This aligns with Homi Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994), where identities are negotiated through conflict and fusion rather than binary opposition. The film portrays emotional turmoil as a microcosm for national psychological struggles.

2. Costume and Setting as Markers of Class and Power

Costuming is carefully deployed to visualize class distinctions. The wealthy elite's luxurious attire—silks, tailored suits, and elaborate jewelry—contrast with the modest dress of working-class characters. This visual code critiques the persistence of social inequality despite the formal end of colonial rule. Urban settings such as grand villas and nightclubs juxtaposed with rural and working-class neighborhoods emphasize the societal divides and highlight ongoing internal struggles in nation-building beyond mere decolonization.

3. Authority and Resistance: Internalized vs. External Oppression

Unlike *Mismar Goha*, where the antagonist is an external colonial governor, *Rod Qalbi* explores how authority and oppression are internalized within societal institutions and cultural norms. Patriarchal family structures, class expectations, and social stigma serve as mechanisms maintaining status quo. The protagonist's personal rebellion—refusing arranged marriages or breaking class boundaries—symbolizes broader resistance against these internal oppressions. This reflects Fanon's assertion that postcolonial struggles extend beyond the colonizer's departure to address internal coloniality (Fanon, 1963).

Comparative Summary

Aspect *Mismar Goha* (1952) *Rod Qalbi* (1957)

Aspect	*Mismar Goha* (1952)	*Rod Qalbi* (1957)
Primary Conflict	External colonial occupation	Internal class and social structures
Resistance Mode	Collective popular uprising	Individual emotional and social rebellion
Symbolism	Nail, prison, religious attire	Costume, setting, romantic relationships
Visual Style	Symbolic, direct contrasts	Emotional, nuanced lighting and mise-en-scène (staging)
Authority Figures	Colonial governor and officials	Patriarchal family elders and social elites
Outcome	National liberation and state-building	Social negotiation and personal emancipation

4. Results, Recommendations and Conclusion

4.1. Results and Findings

1. Representation of Postcolonial Identity:

• *Mismar Goha* portrays the struggles of the Egyptian people against colonial exploitation through satire and social critique.

- *Rod Qalbi* reflects the nationalist ideals that emerged after the 1952 Revolution, emphasizing liberation, unity, and the reconstruction of Egyptian identity.

2. Shift in Ideological Discourse:

- The earlier film *Mismar Goha* criticizes corruption and foreign influence using symbolic and allegorical storytelling.
- The later film *Rod Qalbi* aligns with state propaganda, glorifying the Free Officers and the ideals of independence and social reform.

3. Cinematic Expression:

- Both films use cinematic language—music, framing, and dialogue—to articulate postcolonial consciousness.
- *Rod Qalbi* is more romanticized and idealistic, while *Mismar Goha* maintains a tone of irony and skepticism toward power.

4. Social Class and Resistance:

- *Mismar Goha* focuses on the common man's resistance to oppression and injustice.
- *Rod Qalbi* reinterprets class relations under the new nationalist regime, promoting social mobility and equality.

5. Transformation of Egyptian Cinema:

- The transition between the two films marks a broader shift in Egyptian cinema—from pre-revolutionary critique to post-revolutionary nation-building.
- Cinema became a tool for ideological dissemination, shaping public perception of independence and modernity.

4.2.   Recommendations and Suggestions

1. Further Academic Exploration

- Conduct deeper comparative analyses between Egyptian and other Arab or African postcolonial cinemas to highlight shared themes of resistance, identity, and cultural hybridity.
- Extend the study to include later Egyptian films (1960s–1980s) to trace the evolution of postcolonial discourse through shifting political and cultural climates.
- Employ interdisciplinary methods—combining postcolonial theory with film semiotics, cultural studies, and historical analysis—to enrich understanding of cinematic language in a national context.

2. Re-examining Canonical Films

- Encourage re-screenings and critical reevaluations of *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi* in film festivals and academic institutions to spark dialogue on Egypt's postcolonial legacy.
- Digitally restore early Egyptian films to preserve historical authenticity and allow for contemporary reinterpretation.

3. Cinematic Representation and Storytelling

• Filmmakers should revisit postcolonial themes with contemporary relevance—such as neo-colonialism, globalization, and cultural identity—to connect past struggles with present realities.

• Future works should balance ideological narratives with nuanced character development, ensuring that postcolonial cinema remains socially conscious yet artistically independent.

4. Cultural and Educational Policy

• The Egyptian Ministry of Culture and educational institutions should promote courses and workshops on film and postcolonial theory, highlighting how cinema shapes national consciousness.

• Support research grants and film archives that preserve Egypt's cinematic heritage as a key resource for understanding postcolonial transformation.

5. Global Context and Collaboration

• Foster international collaborations between Egyptian filmmakers and global scholars to situate Egyptian postcolonial cinema within broader decolonial frameworks.

• Encourage translation and subtitling of classic Egyptian films to expand their accessibility and academic reach worldwide.

6. Critical Reflection and Renewal

• Scholars should critically assess how postcolonial discourse in Egyptian cinema evolved from state propaganda to more diverse, independent voices.

• Promote critical reflection on how new forms of media (digital streaming, online film criticism) can revitalize postcolonial themes for younger audiences.

4.3. Conclusion

Films such as "*My Heart Was Restored*" *Rod Qalbi* presented revolution as a dream fulfilled on both the emotional and social levels, linking individual love with collective liberation, affirming that liberation from social tyranny is inseparable from political change. Conversely, works such as "*Goha's Nail" Mismar Goha* expressed, through symbolism and humor, the people's rejection of occupation and their denunciation of subjugation. This demonstrates that cinema was not merely a reflection of reality, but also a means of inciting and changing it.

Both *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi* serve as vital cinematic texts reflecting Egypt's complex postcolonial condition. While *Mismar Goha* foregrounds collective resistance against foreign domination, utilizing potent symbolism and collective action narratives, *Rod Qalbi* explores the internal dynamics of power and identity, revealing how social hierarchies and patriarchal norms perpetuate oppression even after colonial rule.

Together, these films illustrate the multifaceted nature of postcolonial discourse in Egyptian cinema, highlighting how cultural productions negotiate history, identity, and power. They underscore cinema's crucial role as a space for both representing and shaping national consciousness and liberation struggles.

Ultimately, this research argues that the Egyptian cinema of the 1950s played a crucial role in negotiating the postcolonial transition. By comparing *Mismar Goha* and *Rod Qalbi*, the study not only traces the aesthetic and thematic shifts in cinematic representations of national identity but also sheds light on how film functioned as a cultural battlefield in the struggle to articulate a truly independent Egyptian modernity. In doing so, it contributes to a broader understanding of postcolonial cultural production in the Arab world and the enduring legacy of cinema as a tool for ideological expression and resistance.

Cinema played the role of the "silent engine" of revolutions, whether through direct discourse, as in post-July films, or through symbolism and satirical criticism, as in earlier works. It helped the masses imagine a different reality, incited them to reject injustice, and shaped their national consciousness in a way no less influential than political speeches or articles. Thus, cinema proves that it is not merely an art form, but rather a tool for cultural and political change, contributing—consciously or unconsciously—to shaping the contours of national consciousness, resisting colonialism, and shaping the features of modern Egypt. The director Salah Abu Seif said: *"A true national film doesn't raise slogans... but rather confronts you with yourself and makes you see what you haven't seen before."*

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