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Professor Aner Preminger

Israeli Cinema

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Analysis of Arab in Israeli Cinema

Professor Preminger paper analyzing the evolution and representation of the Arab's in Israeli Cinema has become a staple when discussing Israeli cultural and political discourse. After further analysis and reading of this paper I could connect a wide range of similarities between how Arabs are represented in Israeli cinema to how African Americans have been painted in American cinema.

To begin, when reading the statistics about only 6% of films were directly including Arabs in the plots of major productions I found this shocking due the high influx of this minority in the region. Comparing this to the United States where our similar minority group of African Americans were not only poorly portrayed in U.S cinema, yet only casted as either villains or roles were the public would be frightened based on their character. For example, in the film *Birth of a Nation*, released in 1915 was highly controversial for the portrayal of black men as unintelligent and aggressive towards white women along with the Ku Klux Klan being deemed as a heroic force during this time-period. This film has parallels lining up with how Arabs in Israeli cinema wanted to be considered good guys in films similarly to the roles African Americans were given in U.S cinema.

Furthermore, when discussing about pivotal moments in history or turning points in society we commonly look at film as the gateway into this time. For U.S. cinema, the civil rights movement was a cultural shift in how African Americans should be treated and in turn how they are painted in cinema. Leading up to this moment stereotyping African Americans as crooks, rapist, and animals were common in film leading up to the civil rights movement and prominent after civil war ended. However, this correlates to how many Israeli were given roles which didn't correctly portray the stereotype. An example, would be in *Beyond the Walls* how the bad guy was still not a complete accurate image of who Israeli were during this time. Even though the tension and hatred for one another was still real between these two ethnic groups are present in this film. Which in turn shows the true battle between both ethnic groups found in the United States and Israel.

Finally, the humiliation and poverty found during Jewish dominancy has similar ties to how African Americans were treated during the dominance of whites. Similar films released in the U.S discuss and portray true depiction of how minorities were treated under whites throughout history. Thus, revealing another similar connection of how the lack of Arab roles in Israel cinema are correlated to a similar ethnic group found in the United States. For example, *12 years a slave*, *Django unchained*, and *the help* are all examples of how minorities were treated during this time; yet, have only been released within the last 10 years discussing a time dating back over 50 years. Furthermore, this text has replicates and discuss the movers in the industry

such as, Uri Zohar who challenged Israeli cinema by accurately diagnosing the problem of ignoring and denying role of Arabs in cinema. This example brings up how African Americans have been neglected in film and wasn't until the civil rights act in 1964 were stereotypes toned down.

Clearly stated above, the text professor Preminger discusses about the representation of Arabs in Israeli cinema can be linked to similar instances in U.S cinema. Both of which bring to light the cultural and political environment in each of these regions about specific minority groups being portrayed in film. This paper links the relevance of how film is the gateway to a time different than ours today, and has the objective of transforming our mind about what is deemed the norm in cinema.