

Anthropology & Sociology of Development (ANSO)

Academic year 2016 - 2017

Screening the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Competing and Complementary Narratives through Cinematic Representations

ANSO065 - Autumn - 6 ECTS
Wednesday 16:15 – 18:00 (room S1)

Course Description

A consistent body of knowledge about the history and the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been produced by local and international researchers issued from different social science disciplines. However, to date, few attempts have been made to combine that knowledge with the narratives produced on the conflict by films, both fictions and documentaries. This seminar will aim at examining, in a socio-political and historical perspective, the role of film directors, mainly Israeli and Palestinian. These film directors are both artists and social actors who play(ed) a role in (re)shaping (inter)national and local narratives, which support or challenge official histories and collective memories.

Since the late 1940s, a number of key events have kept feeding the Israeli and Palestinian official national narratives in order to assert the respective claims to political legitimacy and/or victimhood. On the Israelis' side, the 1948 War, namely the war of independence fought in the immediate aftermath of the British Mandate, materialized in the creation of their new State. On the Palestinians' side, the same war ushered into in a *Nakba*, i.e. a 'catastrophe'. Not only they lost 78% of their homeland, but the *Nakba* meant as well a huge population displacement and the beginning of the Palestinian refugees' plight, an unsettled issue to date for which Israel claims no responsibility at all.

Two main selections of films produced over a time span of 35 five years will be studied: those related to the Arab and Jewish societies before, during and after the 1948 war; and those related to the displacement of the Palestinians. The cinematic representations produced by Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers over time will constitute the main bulk of the seminar's debates and analyses.

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Syllabus

1. ORGANIZATION

During the fall 2016, the seminar will take place each Wednesday from 4.15pm to 6.00pm, starting on Wednesday the 21 of September.

Attendance to the sessions of the seminar is compulsory. Students are required to read the compulsory texts and watch the movies (made available on a special website for the seminar) before each session.

2. SESSIONS OF THE SEMINAR AND OF THE WORKSHOP, COMPULSORY READINGS

The list of the compulsory readings will be available on the support material webpage, and the movies will be accessible as well on line.

The full **sessions' contents and calendar** will be distributed and presented during the first week of the spring semester, i.e. on Wednesday, September 21st.

During the seminar, we will screen and analyze a selection of films produced over a time span of 35 years and representing three main 'generations of movies':

- those from 1980 to 2003, i.e. until the end of the first Intifada, which coincides with the Agreements signed by the PLO and the Israeli Government in Washington on September 2003;
- those produced during the 'Oslo years', i.e. during the aborted peace process in the 1990s (1994-2000);
- and those from the second Intifada onwards (2001-2015).

The evolving political contexts of the three above-mentioned periods have contributed to shape, on the one side, the subjectivities of the Jewish filmmakers in Israel and from the diaspora; on the other side, the same contexts have also largely influenced the Palestinian film directors residing in Israel, in the West Bank and Gaza, or from the Palestinian diaspora in the Middle East, Europe and North America.

The filmic narratives produced during the past three decades by Jewish (Israeli) and Palestinian film directors are not always conflictive, they are often complementary in challenging the political narratives about the past (the 'official histories') put forward by their respective governments. Furthermore, many cinematic representations are instrumental as well to 'echo or give voice to' the silenced memories of members of both the Israeli and Palestinian national communities.

The seminar is taught primarily in **English**. Questions and oral presentations, as well as the final papers, may be formulated/written in English or in French.

3. EVALUATION AND GRADING

The evaluation is based on regular attendance, participation in the debates, texts' and movies' critical presentations during the seminar, the pre-final oral presentation of the paper during the last session of the seminar, and the final written paper.

Students will work around a number of topics developed in the second part of the seminar. The final papers will be co-signed by groups of 3-4 students.

This course is granted 6 ECTS: attendance/participation (1 ECTS), presentations of texts and movies during the seminar (2 ECTS) and final paper (3 ECTS). Each ECTS is equivalent to 25-30 hours of work.

General Resources on Israeli and Palestinian cinemas and filmmakers

Written :

- ARMES, Roy, 2010, *Arab Filmmakers of the Middle East. A Dictionary*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- ARMES, Roy, 2015, *New Voices in Arab Cinema*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Bresheeth, H. and Hammami, H. (eds.), 2006, *The Conflict and Contemporary Visual Culture in Palestine and Israel*. Special double-issue, No. 80/81, Vol. 20, issue 3-4, of 'Third Text' (London, Routledge)
- DABASHI, Hamid (ed.), 2003, *Dreams of a Nation: on Palestinian Cinema*. New York, Verso.
- GERTZ, Nurith and KHLEIFI, George, 2008, *Palestinian Cinema. Landscape, Trauma and Memory*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- GINSBERG, Terri and LIPPARD, Chris, 2010, *Historical Dictionary of Middle Eastern Cinema*. Toronto, The Scarecrow Press.
- HALBREICH-EUVRARD, Janine, et SHYMAN, Carol, 2015, *Israéliens, Palestiniens. Les cinéastes témoignent*. Paris, Editions Riveneuve.
- HILLAUER, Rebecca, 2005, *Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers*. Cairo, The American University of Cairo Press.
- SCHOUMANN, Hélène, 2012, *Dictionnaire du cinéma israélien*. Paris, Editions Cosmopole.
- SCHWEITZER, Ariel, 2013, *Le nouveau cinéma israélien*. Liège, Editions Yellow Now.
- SHAFIK, Viola, 2007, *Arab Cinema. History and Cultural Identity*. Cairo, American University Press.
- SHOHAT, Ella, 2010, *Israeli Cinema. East/West and the Politics of Representation*. London, I.B. Tauris.

Audio-visual :

UNE HISTOIRE DU CINEMA ISRAELIEN de Raphaël Nadjari, 2009, 209mn. (2 DVD – Hebrew subt. Français)

Résumé : la première partie (1932 - 1978) s'attache au mouvement sioniste et à l'existence même d'un état en perpétuelle quête d'identité et de reconnaissance, la seconde période (1978 - 2007) présente un cinéma plus politique et plus polémique, reflet d'une société civile multiforme et non consensuelle. Le documentaire contient d'innombrables extraits de films et d'entretiens avec d'éminents spécialistes (réalisateurs, auteurs, écrivains, critiques, journalistes...).

Ella SHOHAT and Rasha SALTI on Israeli and Palestinian Cinema :

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikxZ_Yq2u_U&list=PLo50nocDy3TTusS4U07ZQ9UIQSE34EtZ

Websites :

<http://palestinefilmfoundation.org/index.asp>

<http://www.israelfilmcenter.org/israeli-film-database/filmmakers?onpage=10&type=directors&page=27>