

9/21

Egypt: “wasta” is like cred, if you have it, you can get stuff done
it’s all about who you know
the connections you have are important
if you don’t have a connection with somebody, might need presents
“Cairo is like Athens on acid”

One thing about Egypt, (sim. other Arab countries) people like to make you happy
people won’t tell you outright if something is not doable
learned to tell by the expression on faces something isn’t really doable but doesn’t want to say
also, very hospitable, but in a different fashion from what we’re used to

In Egypt, as in many other countries, considered more desirable to be paler
Egyptian military not too competent (thought Mexican tourists were ISIS, firebombed)
but other than that, Egypt is highly safe; “Cairo is safer than San Francisco”

Mubarak replaced by el-Sisi; as typical, likely a transition from dictatorship to dictatorship
(Abdel Fattah) el-Sisi seems to be good at putting people in prison

Generally, Americans will be followed to keep tabs on the safety of the American
Mostly problematic because the police escorts, on a power trip, would harass Egyptian friends

Today’s lecture was about the Gulf states

Reel Bad Arabs

Topic: portrayal of Arabs in film.

Stereotypes

exceptionally rich but too stupid to know value of money
often trying to buy property in a strongarm manner
tv movie: “the Arabs are trying to simply buy us”
obsession with the blonde, blue-eyed American woman, lecherous

Randomly injected into movies that have nothing to do with Arabs
militaristic stereotype

Female stereotype

Eroticized, then portrayed as a terrorist
Otherwise “bundles in back”

Weighing in on Israel-Palestine

Shown as violent murderers, harsh against women, vindictive

Note: many many of these movies are quite old (70s, 80s, 90s)

True Lies: 1994

Earliest was I think Aladdin

“We never see the suffering Palestinians in camps.”

“We humanize Israelis, but not Palestinians.”

Rules of Engagement: 2000 (in Yemen)

portrayed some humanity in Yemeni, but then depicted as violent

Haven't mentioned matter of proportion

Arabs existing on screen in the realm of regular human interaction in America

Tangent about Timothy McVey bombing

media response: questions about potential Arab cause

Hate crimes and profiling "illustrates the power of film"

Comedians → Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 911 is good

Other good examples

Three Kings (1999)

Kingdom of Heaven (2005): Saladdin embracing religious tolerance

Eager to embrace U.S. films showing them in an honest manner

Syriana (2005)

Hideous Kinky (1998)

Paradise Now (2005) depicts 3 Palestinians with all their qualities