

The History of Egyptian Cinema

**Hilary Term 2008
St. Antony's College
Hilda Bess Building, The New Room
2-4pm, weeks 1 and 3-7**

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Film Documents Website: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/%7Esant1114/EgyptCinema.html>

Lecture 1 (Week 1, January 16th): The Early Years and Discourses of Nationalism

Lecture 2 (Week 3, January 30th): Patriarchy and Love

Lecture 3 (Week 4, February 6th): Musicals, Dance Films, and Cultural Canons

Lecture 4 (Week 5, February 13th): The Public Sector, Ideology and Economics

Lecture 5 (Week 6, February 20th): Cracks in the Façade: Scepticism Toward the Project of Modernity

Lecture 6 (Week 7, February 27th): Location in Contemporary Egyptian Cinema

No lecture in weeks 2 and 8

Lecture 1: The Early Years (*Determination* and *The White Rose*)

I. National cinema and colonialism

II. Egyptian cinema and "Arab Cinema"

III. Media in Egypt

IV. Studio Misr and the early phase of Egyptian cinema

V. *Determination* (al-Azima), directed by Kamal Salim, 1939

A. The archetype of national identity in Egyptian cinema

B. The "popular quarters," the effendis, and the aristocracy

VI. *The White Rose* (al-Warda al-Bayda`), directed by Muhammad Karim, 1933

A. Stars

B. "Art appreciation" and the emergence of high/low distinctions

VII. Additional films and stars from the early years

A. Umm Kulthum; *Anthem of Hope* (Nashid al-Amal), directed by Ahmad Badr Khan, 1937

B. Nagib al-Rihani; *Salama is Fine* (Salama fi Khayr), directed by Niyazi Mustafa, 1937

C. Yusuf Wahbi and Layla Murad; *Layla Daughter of the Countryside* (Layla Bint al-Rif), directed by Togo Mizrahi, 1941

D. *Black Market* (al-Suq al-Suda`), directed by Kamil al-Tilmisani, 1946

VIII. End of the era: the "cinema of war profiteers"

Lecture 2: Patriarchy and Love (*Long Live Love*)

I. Patriarchy

A. Constructs of family

1. "Honor and shame" and rhetorics of modesty
2. Parallel cousin marriage
3. Arranged and companionate marriages

B. Patriarchy as a construct of authority

1. "Neopatriarchy" (Hisham Sharabi)
2. "Master and disciple" (Abdellah Hammoudi)

C. Patriarchy as a construct of love

1. Connectivity (Suad Joseph)
2. Coercion vs. love

II. *Long Live Love* (Yahya al-Hubb), directed by Muhammad Karim, 1938

A. The dandy and the man of honour

B. Love refracted through the patriarch

C. The film (clips)

D. Mimicry

E. The teleology of companionate marriage

III. Additional films depicting discourses on patriarchy

A. *Girls of Today* (Banat al-Yaum), directed by Henri Barakat, 1957

B. *My Father is Up the Tree* (Abi foq al-Shagara), directed by Husayn Kamal, 1969

C. *A File in Vice* (Milaff fi al-Adab), directed by Atif al-Tayyib, 1986

D. *First Time in Love* (Awwil Marra Tihibb), directed by Alaa` Karim, 2005

Lecture 3: Musicals, Dance Films, and Cultural Canons

I. The emergence of "high/low" canons

A. Modernity as a plural phenomenon

1. The West and "creative destruction"
2. Egypt and the value of continuity
3. Modernity in colonial societies

B. Rationalization and the construction of "taste"

II. Backstage musicals and fear of mimicry

III. Music: the battle of the bands (Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab and Umm Kulthum)

A. The phonograph, the film, and the radio (aka the gatekeeper and the carnival barker)

B. From *takht* to orchestra; *The White Rose*, *Anthem of Hope*, *The Flirtation of Girls* (Ghazal al-Banat, directed by Anwar Wagdi, 1949); the television series *Umm Kulthum* (1999)

IV. Dance: R-E-S-P-E-C-T

A. "They all have to have a dancer."

B. The "Golden Age" (but not for critics): Samiya Gamal, Tahiyya Karioka, Na'ima 'Akif; *The Beau's Hanky* (Mandil al-Hiluw, directed by Abbas Kamil, 1949); *Tamr Hinna* (directed by Husayn Fauzi, 1957); *I Love You* (Bahibbak Inta, directed by Ahmad Badr Khan, 1949)

C. "Proper dance" (but not for audiences); *Love in Karnak* (Gharam fi al-Karnak, directed by 'Ali Rida, 1967)

V. More musical and dance films

A. Films starring Farid al-Atrash and Samia Gamal

B. Films starring Abd al-Halim Hafiz

C. Post "golden age" musical and dance films

Lecture 4: The Public Sector, Ideology and Economics

I. Postcolonial Egypt

- A. Politics
- B. Economics
- C. Culture

II. The 1950s (private sector, Nasser-era)

- A. Genres
- B. Nationalism and state subsidies

III. The public-sector era, 1964-1970

- A. Economics
- B. Institutions
- C. Agendas
- D. End of the era

IV. Films

- A. Literature adaptations; *Chitchat on the Nile* (Tharthara foq al-Nil, directed by Husayn Kamal, 1971, based on Mahfouz); *The Sin* (Al-Haram, directed by Henri Barakat, 1965, based on Yusuf Idris); *Diary of a Country Magistrate* (Yaumiyat Na`ib fi al-Aryaf, directed by Taufiq Salih, 1969, based on Taufiq al-Hakim); *The Lamp of Umm Hashim* (Qindil Umm Hashim, directed by Kamal Atiyya, 1968, based on Yahya Haqqi); *The Earth* (Al-Ard, directed by Youssef Chahine, 1970, based on Abd al-Rahman al-Sharqawi)
- B. History and nationalism; *The Victorious Salah al-Din* (Al-Nasir Salah al-Din, directed by Youssef Chahine, 1964); *Palace Walk* (directed by Hasan al-Imam, 1964); *Sayyid Darwish* (directed by Ahmad Badr Khan, 1966)
- B. Experimentation; Taufiq Salih; *al-Sayyid al-Bulti* (1969); *The Mountain* (Al-Gabal, directed by Khalil Shauqi, 1965); *My Wife and the Dog* (Zaugati wa al-Kalb, directed by Sa'd Marzuq, 1969); *The Mummy* (al-Mumiya`, directed by Shadi Abd al-Salam, 1969 [1975])

Lecture 5: Cracks in the Façade: Scepticism toward the Project of Modernity

I. Cracks in the modernist façade in the 1970s and 80s

- A. War and cold peace
- B. The (re)emergence of Islamism
- C. The *infitah* ("open door," aka neo-liberalism)
- D. Privatization and the cinema

II. The turning point

- A. *My Father is Up the Tree* (Abi foq al-Shagara, directed by Husayn Kamal, 1969)
- B. *Mind Zuzu* (Khali Balak min Zuzu, directed by Hasan al-Imam, 1972)
- C. The play *School of Troublemakers* (Madrasi al-Mushaghbin, directed by Galal al-Sharqawi, 1972 to ~1980)

III. The past and the present

- A. War; *The Bullet is Still in My Pocket* (Al-Rasasa La Tazal fi Gaybi, directed by Husam al-Din Mustafa, 1974); *The Bath House of Malatili* (Hamam al-Malatili, directed by Salah Abu-Sayf, 1973); *Fear* (Al-Khauf, directed by Sa'id Marzuq, 1972).
- B. The Nasser legacy; *We Are the People of the Bus* (Ihna Bitu' al-Atubis, directed by Husayn Kamal, 1979); *Al-Karnak* (directed by Ali Badr Khan, 1975); *The Guilty* (al-Mudhribun, directed by Sa'id Marzuq, 1976).

III. *Infitah* films

IV. "New Realism"

- A. The "old realism"; *Determination*; *Black Market*; *Foreman Hasan* (al-Usta Hasan, directed by Salah Abu-Sayf, 1952); *A Beginning and an End* (Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, directed by Salah Abu-Sayf, 1960)
- B. The signature "new realists"; Muhammad Khan, *Dreams of Hind and Kamiliya* (Ahlam Hind wa Kamiliya, 1988); Khairy Beshara, *Bitter Day*, *Sweet Day* (Yaum Murr, Yaum Hiluw, 1988); 'Atif al-Tayyib, *The Bus Driver* (Sawwaq al-Atubis, 1983)
- C. Mainstream commercial realism; films starring 'Adil Imam, *Ragab on a Hot Tin Roof* (Ragab foq Safih Sakhin, directed by Ahmad Fu'ad, 1979); *Sha'ban below Zero* (Sha'ban taht al-Sifr, directed by Henri Barakat, 1980); *Ramadan on the Volcano* (Ramadan foq al-Burkan, directed by Ahmad al-Sab'awi, 1985).

Lecture 6: Location in Contemporary Egyptian Cinema

I. The city in Egyptian audiovisual culture

- A. Cairo as the centrepiece of modern life
- B. The city as the centrepiece of modern life → modern life located "anyplace but here"

II. The brave new world

- A. *Sleepless Nights* (Sahar al-Layali, 2003); film clip
- B. Dreamland; suburbia; television advertisement

III. Before the brave new world

- A. Link to the familiar; *Determination* (al-Azima, 1939); film clip
- B. The vibrant city; *Love in Karnak* (Gharam fi al-Karnak, 1967); film clip
- C. Anti-city; *The Guilty* (al-Mudhnibun, 1976); film clip
- D. Mainstream dystopia; *Sha'ban below Zero* (Sha'ban taht al-Sifr, 1980); film clip

IV. The new (neo-liberal) aesthetic of location

- A. Life in Dreamland; "I Swear to God" (Yamin Allah by Asala, ~2004); the erasure of class; music video
- B. The most beautiful place in the world (but I'm embarrassed to show it to you); "How Beautiful is the Country" (Qamar al-Balad by Ahmad Barada, ~2004); the erasure of the urban jungle; music video
- C. Gender and religion; the bourgeoisification of Islam; the erasure of women
 1. "The Teacher" (al-Mu'allim, by Sami Yusuf, ~2005); music video
 2. *Uncovering the Hidden* (Kashf al-Mastur, 1994); film clip
 3. Fayza Ahmad hymn, 1994 vs. Fayza Ahmad hymn, 2003 (televised before the call to prayer)

Readings:

Lecture 1: The Early Years and Discourses of Nationalism

- Readings:* Armbrust, Walter. 1996. *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (chapters 3-4 in particular).
- Crofts, Stephen. 2006. "Reconceptualizing National Cinema/s." In Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemsen eds., *Theorising National Cinema*. London: BFI, pp. 44-60.
- Crofts, Stephen. 2006. "The National Revisited." In Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemsen eds., *Theorising National Cinema*. London: BFI, pp. 29-43.
- Shafik, Viola. 2006. *Egyptian Popular Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press. (Introduction, pp. 1-10; Part I: Nation, pp. 11-116).

- Further Readings:* Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso.
- Higson, Andrew. 1989. "The Concept of National Cinema." *Screen* 30 (4): 36-44.
- Vitali, Valentina and Paul Willemsen eds. 2006. *Theorising National Cinema*. London: BFI.
- Williams, Alan ed. 2002. *Film and Nationalism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Social Anthropology readings weeks 7 (Language and Standardized Identity) and 8 (National Identity):
<http://users.ox.ac.uk/%7Esant1114/MPhilSocAnth.pdf>

Lecture 2: Patriarchy and Love

- Readings:* Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1998. "The Marriage of Feminism and Islamism in Egypt: Selective Repudiation as a Dynamic of Postcolonial Cultural Politics." In Lila Abu-Lughod ed., *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 243-269.
- Armbrust, Walter. n.d. "Long Live Patriarchy: Love in the Time of 'Abd al-Wahhab." (manuscript under review with *History Compass*, <http://www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/history/>).
- Joseph, Suad. 1994. "Brother/Sister Relationships: Connectivity, Love, and Power in the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Lebanon." *American Ethnologist* 21 (1): 50-73.
- Ryzova, Lucie. 2005. "I Am a Whore, But I Will Be a Good Mother." *Arab Studies Journal* v. XII no.2/v. XIII no. 1 (Fall 2004/Spring 2005 combined issue): 80-123.

- Further Readings:* Armbrust, Walter. 2003. "Bourgeois Leisure and Egyptian Media Fantasies." In Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson, eds. *New*

Media and the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 102-128.
Social Anthropology readings weeks 1 (Men, Women, and Family), 2 (Moral Rhetorics of Honor, Shame, and Modesty), and especially week 2 alternative (What's Love Got to Do with It? Case Studies in the Practice of Patriarchy):
<http://users.ox.ac.uk/%7Esant1114/MPhilSocAnth.pdf>

Lecture 3: Musicals, Dance Films, and Cultural Canons

- Readings:*
- Armbrust, Walter. 2001. "Colonizing Popular Culture or Creating Modernity? Architectural Metaphors and Egyptian Media." In Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen and Hans Christian Korsholm Nielson eds., *Middle Eastern Cities, 1900-1950*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Armbrust, Walter. 2004. "Egyptian Cinema On Stage and Off." In Andrew Shryock ed., *Off Stage/On Display: Intimacy and Ethnography in the Age of Public Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 69-100.
- Danielson, Virginia. 1990/91 (Fall/Winter). "Min al-Mashayikh: A View of Egyptian Musical Tradition." *Asian Music* 22 (1): 113-127.
- Danielson, Virginia. 1997. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (particularly chapter on Umm Kulthum's films)
- Dougherty, Roberta L. 2000. "Badi'a Masabni, Artise and Modernist: The Egyptian Print Media's Carnival of National Identity." In Walter Armbrust, ed., *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dougherty, Roberta. 2005. "Dance and the Dancer in Egyptian Films." In Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young eds., *Belly Dance: Orientalism and Harem Fantasy*. Costa Mesa, Cal.: Mazda Publishers, pp. 145-171.
- Racy, Jihad. 2003. *Making Music in the Arab World: The Culture and Artistry of Tarab*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Further Readings: Mass Media readings, Week 5 (Authenticity and the Formation of Canons: Umm Kulthum and Abd al-Wahhab) and Week 6 (The Problem of Dance):
<http://users.ox.ac.uk/%7Esant1114/MPhilMassMedia.pdf>

Lecture 4: The Public Sector, Ideology and Economics

- Readings:*
- Baker, Raymond. 1974. "Egypt in the Shadows: Films and the Political Order." *American Behavioral Scientist* 17, no. 3: 393-423.

- Flibbert, Andrew. 2007. *Commerce in Culture: States and Markets in the World Film Trade*. New York: Palgrave.
- Gordon, Joel. 2002. *Revolutionary Melodramas: Popular Film and Civic Identity in Nasser's Egypt*. Chicago: Middle East Documentation Center.
- Nahas, Hashim al-. 1991. "The Role of Naguib Mahfouz in Egyptian Cinema." In Trevor Le Gassick ed., *Critical Perspectives on Naguib Mahfouz*. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press.
- Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam. 1994. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. New York: Routledge. (chapter on "Tropes of Empire" has discussion of *The Mummy*; see also "The Third Worldist Film")
- Vitalis, Robert. 2000. "American Ambassador in Technicolor and Cinemascope: Hollywood and Revolution on the Nile." In Walter Armbrust ed., *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 269-291.

- Further Reading:* Armbrust, Walter. 2000. "The Golden Age before the Golden Age: Commercial Egyptian Cinema before the 1960s." In Walter Armbrust, ed., *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 292-327.
- Armes, Roy. 1987. *Third World Film Making and the West*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (sections on Egyptian film industry and Youssef Chahine)
- Discourse* 1999. v. 21 (1) ("Middle Eastern Films Before Thy Gaze Returns to Thee"; special issue including translation of script of al-Mumiya`)
- Douglas, Alan and Fedwa Malti-Douglas. 1986. "The Mummy: An Egyptian Classic." *Cairo Today* 7 (10): 55-57.
- Gaffney, Jane. 1987. "The Egyptian Cinema: Industry and Art in a Changing Society." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 1: 53-75.
- Gordon, Joel. 1992. *Nasser's Blessed Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gordon, Joel. 2006. *Nasser: Hero of the Arab Nation*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Al-Qahira* 1996. no. 159 (February). (special issue on Shadi Abd al-Salam, director of al-Mumiya` ; includes script)
- Al-Qahirah* 169-170 (Dec. 1996-Jan 1997). (special issue on the cinema, includes articles on the public sector). Armes, Roy. 1987. *Third World Film Making and the West*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (sections on Egyptian film industry and Youssef Chahine)
- Sharaf al-Din, Duriyya. 1992. *al-Siyasa wa al-Sinema fi Misr, 1961-*

1981. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.
Wahba, Magdi. 1972. *Cultural Policy in Egypt*. Paris, Unesco.

Lecture 5: Cracks in the Façade: Scepticism Toward the Project of Modernity

- Readings:* Armbrust, Walter. 1996. *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (chapters 6 and 7)
Malkmus, Lizbeth and Roy Armes. 1991. "Egyptian Realism Old and New." In Malkmus and Armes, *Arab and African Filmmaking*. London: Zed Press, pp. 120-125
Shafik, Viola. 2006. *Egyptian Popular Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.
- Further Readings:* Ferguson, James. 1999. *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Shafik, Viola. 1998. *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity*. Cairo: American University in Cairo. (Chapter 1, "The History of Arab Cinema").
Shammaa, Magdy. 2007. *Shadows of Contemporary lives: Modernity, Culture, and national Identity in Egyptian Filmmaking*. PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Lecture 6: Location in Contemporary Egyptian Cinema

- Readings:* Shiel, Mark and Tony Fitzmaurice eds. 2001. *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*. Oxford: Blackwell. (1. Mark Shiel, "Cinema and the City in History and Theory," pp. 1-19; 2. Tony Fitzmaurice, "Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context"; 3. Geoffrey Noell-Smith, "Cities: Real and Imagined"; 4. Julian Stringer, "Global Cities and the International Film Festival Economy.")
Singerman, Diane and Paul Amar. 2006. *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Middle East*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.
- Further Reading:* Abaza, Mona. 2006. *Changing Consumer Cultures of Modern Egypt: Cairo's Urban Reshaping*. Amsterdam: Brill Academic Publishers.
Elyachar, Julia. 2005. *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Ghannam, Farha. 2002. *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Winegar, Jessica. 2006. *Creative Reckonings: The Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.