

Realism and Fantasy in Nazareth: Intertextual Reading of the Space in Palestinian films

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Abstract:

This paper examines the cinematic representation of Nazareth, which became the largest Arab city in Israel after 1948. In Palestinian cinema, Nazareth functions as a site where conflicts of memory and identity are negotiated by Palestinian citizens of Israel, who grapple with their historical past while living as a national Arab minority within a Jewish state. The study analyzes several films directed by Palestinian filmmakers in Israel, focusing on the ways in which they construct Nazareth through intertwined representations of memory, space, and identity. By examining the visual and narrative strategies that shape the city's image, the article highlights how cinematic techniques convey competing meanings: on the one hand, attempts to imagine a fantasy of a complete homeland, and on the other, expressions of fragmentation, estrangement, and disappearance. Central to the discussion is the question of how cinema renders the seemingly unrepresentable—erased pasts, fading urban landscapes, or ruptures too profound to be consciously processed. Ultimately, Nazareth in Palestinian cinema emerges as a metaphorical city, at once a symbol of memory, belonging, and identity, and simultaneously a site of alienation and stasis.

Keywords:

Palestinian film, Nazareth, Palestinian filmmakers in Israel, national minority, metaphorical city.