

Masterpieces of Nouri Bouzid: Between Conditioned Advent and Censorship's Extinction¹

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Abstract

Reflecting the Arabic social reality in the film industry has been the main focus of some Arabic cineastes, namely the Tunisian ones.

Whether short or long, professional or hobbyist, Tunisian movies endeavoured to cope with the forbidden trinity, composed of political, sexual and religious axes of criticism which have been mostly rejected due to the political authorities' domination.

This study sets out to probe the partial and total rejections of scripts by focusing on Nouri Bouzid's case.

This choice is stimulated by the magnitude of Nouri Bouzid's interviews, in which he has mentioned many of his movies and script examples that were navigating between conditioned adverts and censorship's extinction.

Keywords: Tunisian cinema, Nouri Bouzid, Censorship, Script Control, religious scrutiny, political oversight, forbidden trinity.

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Résumé

Faire de leurs films des miroirs de réflexion sur la réalité sociale arabe, fût le but de quelques cinéastes arabes et surtout des tunisiens.

Que ce soient des courts ou longs métrages, professionnels ou d'amateurs, la plupart des films tunisiens, tentant de toucher la trinité interdite des axes de critiques religieux, sexuel et politique, furent rejetés, à cause de la domination des autorités politiques.

A travers cet essai, nous allons étudier les refus partiels et globaux des scénarios, tout en nous concentrant sur le cas de Nouri Bouzid.

Ce choix est dû à la magnitude des interviews de N. Bouzid, dans lesquels, il a mentionné à de nombreuses reprises, plusieurs exemples de ses films et scénarios, qui naviguaient entre un avènement conditionné et une extinction par la censure.

Mots Clé : Cinéma Tunisien, Nouri Bouzid, Censure, contrôle de scénario, surveillance religieuse, vigilance politique, trinité interdite.

Censorship is an arbitrary or doctrinal limitation of the human being expression's freedom. A holder of power (an under state or religious or even a private control, such as producers) examines the masterpiece (whether it belongs to literature, theatre, or cinema...) before allowing its issue to the public. In the cinema censorship context, *Marc Ferro* says:²

“The utilization and practice of specific modes of writing are weapons that are linked to the society which produces the film and which receives it. The latter makes itself felt first of all by censorship -all forms of censorship-, including censorship per se and self-censorship”.

This problem stamped the rise of the seventh art in the nineteenth century, and has been disseminated in the Arabic countries until nowadays. Despite the diversity of the habitude, the culture, the history and the geographic position of each Arabic country, to which belong the directors and the scriptwriters, and which influences their points of view while writing their scripts or shooting their movies; all of them share the aim of reflecting the Arabic society's reality through their 'movies-mirrors'

Since their inception in 1907, Arabic movies appearance has evaluated the 7th art's history Table 1, and then showed a progressive competition between Egyptian pioneer movies, and Arabic successors, alternating between Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco, Algeria and so on.

Country	Year	First Movie's Title	Specifications	Director
Egypt	1907	Khedivi Abbes Helmi II's visit to Morsi Aboulabbas School in Alexandria	*Short movie *Documentary *Mute	Aziz & Douris Production
Tunisia	1908	Tunis From an Airship	*Short movie *Documentary *Mute	Albert Chamama Chikli
Syria	1927	The Accused Innocent	*Short movie *Fictional *Mute	Rachid Jalel
Lebanon	1929	The Adventures of Elias Mabrouk	*Short movie *Comedy *Mute	Jordano Pidutti (Italian)
Palestine	1935	Visit of King Abdelaziz Al Saoud to Palestine	*Short movie *Documentary	Ibrahim Hassan Sarhan
Morocco	1956	Our Friend The Teacher	*Short movie *Educational	Laarbi Ben Chakroun
Algeria	1966	Auras' Wind	*Long movie *Historical	Mohamed Lakhdhar Hamina

Table 1: Arabic 7th Art History -Series of First Movies in Every Arabic Country-³

² Cinema & History, Marc Ferro, translated by Naomi Greene. ISBN 0-8143-1905-X p:17

³ This table is the result of different countries' cinema history, collected after a deep investigation on many websites that will be mentioned on the references' list

The increase in Arabic movies' production has led to the emergence of numerous festivals (The first one that had appeared, in the Arabic and African land, in 1966 was Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia). Nevertheless, most of the Arabic movies have been -until nowadays- suffering from censorship.

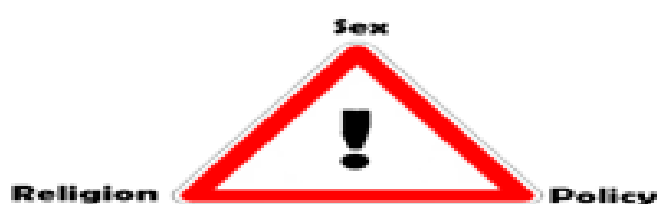


Figure 1: Prohibition's Triangle of the Arabic Cinema = Forbidden Trinity

Whether they were documentary or fictional, most of Arabic movies have been submitted to a prohibition triangle fig. 1, which three corners stand for sex, religion and policy and are called: forbidden trinity.

An intensive connection between the Arabic society's real life and the fantasy, proved by the cineaste's fingerprint, typifies most of the 7th art Arabic masterpieces. But while they intend to reflect religious, political or sexual problems, they find many barriers during the whole steps of their making-of. Worthy of note is that any Arabic movie can be produced only after getting the approval of the related authorities.

Obstructions that encounter the manifold stages of a movie's making-of differ from one Arabic country to another. Censorship's codes are limited to script reading in some countries and affect even the mounting stage in others. Just by studying the different censorship codes in the Arabic countries, we can easily deduce the encountered obstacles imposed by the related authorities while making-of a movie.

Censorship may contain many aspects such as the script reading and control by the concerned ministry (it depends on the movie's treated problem), then the movie's view before according it the exit visa. For example, in Iraq and Syria, power holders do not only rely on this procedure, but they also discuss with the script writer and the filmmaker in every step of the movie making. Further, the film's subject is submitted to a politic and an ideological reading gate.

However, in Algeria there is no censorship code, which makes the laws still vague. A consensus between the filmmaker and the governorate should be reached about what should be shown and said on the movie. For that matter, the law of the *Film Review Organisation in Algeria* includes this quotation:

‘The big advantage of sitting in Alger the cinematographic control commission, made many distributors choose this capital as a commercial head office’⁴

In Egypt, the censorship was so much codified, and the laws’ articles were deeply detailed, which dives the filmmakers in a large auto-censorship wave. The Egyptian theatre and cinema criticizer *Kamel Ramzi* says:

“The Egyptian movie is generally born tied, controlled, in a way that forces the filmmaker to take the right way and avoid treating the forbidden subjects that make him exposed to censorship or even the movie making off’s prohibition!”⁵

Tunisian cinema has lived for a long time under the regime of censorship and auto-censorship. Technical and economic bad conditions which are weakly reserved to the ministry of culture financial expenses, the decrease of the movies theatres’ number since the independence⁶, the sum of the produced movies every year are restricted....

The Tunisian cinema doesn’t live: it survives; however, some Tunisian filmmakers have resisted to those bad coincidences, sustaining the hope of its revival, whatever should be the encountered conditions.

The 60’ and 70’ cineastes, have found a lot of hedges against their movies’ production, the most of which having passed under the control of the SATPEC⁷, which prohibits the production of movies talking about policy such as *Hyenas’ Sun of Ridha EL Behi* which was shot in Morocco.

Its production was refused in Tunisia as it treats the villagers’ right steal problem due to a hotel construction obligation, made by the authorities, which lead to the traditional fishing seaport’s loss.

Nouri Bouzid belongs to this generation, characterised with its insistence, having never renounced to create movies in deep relation with the real life, treating a lot of social problems and even daring to break taboos.

⁴ Centre des archives d’outre-mer (CAOM), 8 CAB 51, anonyme, « Organisation du contrôle cinématographique en Algérie », s.d. (1945).

⁵ Cinema Arabe, Khmaies el Khayati L’Harmattan 1996, ISBN: 2-7384-4372-9, p 51,

⁶ Cinema theatres in Tunisia were 120 before the independence, and nowadays are just 14 cinema halls: http://life-in-cinema.blogspot.com/2009/02/blog-post_19.html.

⁷ SATPEC in French: Société anonyme tunisienne de production et d’expansion cinématographique (Tunisian limited company production and cinematographic-graphics expansion): 1957-1992



Fig 2: Nouri Bouzid
link between the palpable and the imaginary, making his masterpieces as a fantasized reality.

Nouri Bouzid fig.2 the director and the artist, has always done his utmost to let his unforgettable fingerprint in the Tunisian 7th art, using his own way to not let the audience's vision limited to while the film is playing on the movie theatre, then forget everything once they leave the cinema.

N. Bouzid has instantly made his audience try to connect between his vision and the real life, in order to make a comparison, then find a deep link between the palpable and the imaginary, making his masterpieces as a fantasized reality.

This talent has not been developed out of scratch: *N. Bouzid* has followed his graduation of the bachelor degree, obtained at the age of 18 years old, by studying between 1968 and 1972, on the National Institute of the Spectacles' Arts and the Broadcasting Techniques in Brussels, from which he has obtained his graduation degree with a short making-of that he baptised: *Duel*.

During his studies, he was chosen by his teachers to work as a trainee on *André Delvaux's* French-Belgium movie which has obtained the French price: *Louis Delluc* in 1971.

Then he has worked as an assistant director with many famous directors such as *Steven Spielberg, Abdellatif Ben Ammar, Max Pecas, David Herwing, and Philippe Clair*. When he turned back to his homeland, he worked for one year at the Tunisian Radio-TV foundation *RTT*. Then he was arrested and jailed for five years in the burguibiste period (1973-1979), due to an opinion offense.

He was an active member of *Perspectives* which was a radical group. Such a group was deemed by *Burquiba* as a real threat. In this regard, commenting on *Perspectives*, *Burquiba* said:

"I would reserve the rest of my life for the destruction of those extreme leftist microbes: *Perspectives*⁸".

During his jail, *N. Bouzid* has written a divan of Tunisian free poetry, which was printed and put for sail just in 2013, with the title *Zeyer Kdim* fig.3 which means an old visitor.

⁸ Interview of Nouri N. Bouzid With Shams FM Radio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oc4LOd-T0wI&index=9&list=PLemQZoWezUJAovBcq7ZRNwVj2WJxNHTie>

N. Bouzid made his poems as a mixture of the different feelings that he has had during the five years of his prison. Most impressive is that he wrote all his poems, during one night, a month before he left the prison.

This divan⁹ summarises what *N. Bouzid* has suffered from during those five years of hell, under the police officers torture, with an internal law about their coexistence with the prisoners.

In addition to this only divan that he has published, *Bouzid* has tried to reflect some of his jail's anguish through many of his movies.

Indeed, along with many other directors, *N. Bouzid* endeavoured to reflect in his movies how prisoners were persecuted by police officers, regardless of their accusations...

N. Bouzid's opinions were transferred to the public, in addition to his divan, through his movies. In many interviews, with international TV channels, *N. Bouzid* has concentrated on his most memorable four movies, namely: *Golden Horseshoes*, *Man of Ashes*, *Making Of* and *Mille Feuille*.

In light of these four masterpieces¹⁰, *N. Bouzid* deserves to be named as a pioneer in the Maghreb cinema, who managed to deal with taboos and resist authorities' objection.

He is also deemed a significant figure, as he was the first African and Maghrebian director to approach the unspoken.

N. Bouzid's four masterpieces have alternated between his childhood's mirror, the Arabic women's lawyer and defender, and a gladiator against extremism, terrorism and teenagers' brainwashing.



Fig 4: *Man of Ashes* (1986)

Interviewed in an Italian program labelled *Un Cinema Scomodo*¹¹, (*Uncomfortable cinema*), *N. Bouzid* said that he wrote this movie's script (*Man Of Ashes*)_{fig 4} while he was an assistant trainer. He found this writing a way to escape from everyday's work and stress.

N. Bouzid aimed to portray, through *Man of Ashes*, a period of his childhood, while he had the same age of its youngest protagonist.



Figure 3: *Nouri Bouzid's Divan*

⁹ Interview with Mosaïque FM Radio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI7eYygc5g&list=PLemQZoWezUJAOvBcq7ZRNwVj2WJxNHTe&index=26>

¹⁰ Many of those interviews were gathered in this YouTube channel: #Nouri Bouzid <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC88KGoTeX5A3zapYIzmcGsQ>

¹¹ Interview with an Italian program entitled : Nouri N. Bouzid : Un cinema scomodo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHF1hIzELFI>

Throughout *Man of Ashes*, besides treating the paedophilia's case, in which only little boys were involved, *N. Bouzid* intended to pay a tribute to his Jewish neighbours and friends, with whom he had spent most of his childhood.

What characterized *N. Bouzid's* movie is that he always leaves the hero's tragedy till the middle of the movie.

In each movie, the main problem starts when the hero finds himself in a critical situation where he should make a choice.

In *Frifta's* case, the hero has to decide whether to get married or not. Being responsible is so hard for a young boy. It is like a migration from a situation to another, often fraught with difficulties.



Figure 5: The hero *Frifta's* flashback of the Paedophilia's Scene during his childhood



Figure 6: *Frifta's* Jewish neighbour that he considered as a spiritual father

This movie's hero was surrounded by three fathers: a biological one who has violated him during his childhood *fig.5*, an educator one who cared about his rearing and a spiritual one -his Jewish neighbour and friend's father- whose patriarchal kindness was so much appreciated *fig.6*.

Although he was the only adored one between his three fathers, *Frifta* has unfortunately lost him by natural death.

That is why, *N. Bouzid* had announced, through the mentioned interview, that he made this movie as an anthem against the patriarchal families, as no one of the three mentioned fathers has ever helped the main character.

Before its first broadcast on the Carthage Film Festival, the audience was divided between extreme leftists and extreme rightists. Even more, before watching the movie, many of the present audience made a buzz claiming that it was a Zionist¹² movie: this description has followed *Nouri Bouzid* for two years, and stopped just when he directed his second movie: *Golden Horseshoes* in 1988.

¹² Interview with an Italian program entitled : *Nouri N. Bouzid : Un cinema scomodo*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHF1hIzELFI>

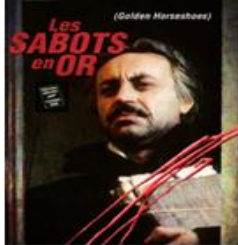


Figure 7: Golden
Horseshoes

Golden Horseshoes is a movie which assumes all the contradictions of an 'in revolt' filmmaker.

In this movie, *N. Bouzid* has tried -from near or far- to reflect the politic terrorism, from which he has suffered during his jail.

The prison's conditions were entirely simulating the reality, but the prison's name and place, the policemen's team and the criminals' characters were totally imaginary.

By making them all as mirrors, *N. Bouzid* has tried to show to the audience, the jail's infernal ambiance, and make them feel as if they were living the same situation; under the jail's bad circumstances, as no one at that time had ever dared to talk about the torture that the policemen were applying on prisoners, especially the ones who were jailed due to their political opinion. *Youssef (H. Rostom)* an extreme leftist and *Abdallah (F. Haddewi)* an extreme rightist were two brothers, who were separated by an ideological difference, and have chosen two opposite political directions, which made everyone of them lives a different life.

In terms of the *Golden Horseshoes*' shooting conditions, *N. Bouzid* obtained¹³ the grant during the last months of the Burguibiste period, and then he continued the shooting during the first year of the dethroned Ben Ali's verdict¹⁴.

Having seen several terrorism, radicalism and brainwashing indices, that threaten Tunisian youth in real life, such as the case of Soliman fusillade and the attempt against the Ghriba's synagogue in Djerba, *N. Bouzid* aimed to send an alert to the audience by *Ekher Film* fig 8, in a bid to illustrate the frustrated and pulled youth, as lost between the desire of freedom and the ideological escape. The most important alert that *N. Bouzid* tried to send through *Making Of*, was a questioning about the Islam value in the Tunisian Modern society.



Figure 8: Making Of

Having anticipated a bad designed future, during which the characters and him would be suffering from a terrorist attack threat, *N. Bouzid* has intervened in three sequences, in which he interrupted the film playing, and discussed with the 'real' Lotfi El Abdelli who played *Bahta's* character.

¹³ Interview with an Italian program entitled: Nouri N. Bouzid : Un cinema scomodo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHF1hIzELFI>

¹⁴ Burguiba's Verdict: since 1957 (2 years after the independence), Burguiba has replaced the kingdom regime by the presidential one

Ben Ali's verdict: November 1987 to 2011: Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution

In one of those three sequences, *N. Bouzid* said: “Trust me! It is a risk you take! Take it with me!”

By those messages, *N. Bouzid* aimed to minimise the risk of his movie’s reject from the audience. Talking about terrorism under the dethroned Ben Ali’s verdict was considered from the authorities as a crime, and from the citizens as a taboo, about which they have never dared to overtly talk about it.

The film is set in 2003, at the same time of Iraq’s invasion by the US military. Through *Making Of* ‘the mirror’ *N. Bouzid* aimed to push the audience to understand that the terrorist attacks are palpable and may sometimes take place in our daily life. This is due to the brainwashing that targets teenagers as they are susceptible to any kind of manipulation.



Figure 9: Bahta’s suicide attempt

Abdallah (Lotfi Dziri), the preacher, pretended to be influenced by *Bahta*’s suffering. He tried to calm him by giving a hand, but the hidden truth was the opposite. Indeed, *Abdallah* found *Bahta* so flexible that he managed to make him try a suicide attempt fig. 9.

Commenting on the audience’s reaction, during the 21st edition of Carthage Film Festival in 2006, *N. Bouzid* said: ‘If I knew that the audience will deeply welcome this movie with such an effervescence, I would have gone so far!’

The last movie we’ll pass through is *N. Bouzid* most recent one that he directed in 2013: *Mille Feuilles* fig.10. Having first presented the script of *Oskot Aïb* movie, which treats the faked virginity social problem, and which was submitted to a 30% of script censorship by the committee, *N. Bouzid* has preferred to bury this script for a late proposition of production, and replaced it by *Mille Feuilles*. Its script idea was born in Egypt between *Joumène Limam*: a Tunisian writer and *Nouri N. Bouzid* while he was a jury president in Alexandria Film Festival¹⁵.

¹⁵ Interview with Nouri N. Bouzid about *Mille Feuilles* movie in Nessma TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMps6cgfz9g>



Figure 10: *Mille Feuilles*

Shooting this movie in Egypt was refused¹⁶ by Al Azhar and the Movie Makers Egyptian Trade Union, although it was defended by Hend Sabri: the Tunisian actress and lawyer; then the *Mille Feuilles* shooting took place in Tunisia.

The story took place between two cousins: Zeineb 21 years old and Aycha 27 years old, during the Jasmine Revolution on January 2011.

These characters had different opinions about the freedom of veil wearing (Aycha wears it and Zeineb doesn't); their surroundings (Aycha's boss and Zeineb's fiancé) refused their points of view.

While the journalists asked *N. Bouzid* about the Arabic version of the title's choice: *Manmoutech*, which means: I do not die, he said:

'By the title *Manmoutech*, I want to answer the aggression feelings and the death threats that were expressed towards me by the protesters who said: [You must die! You should not exist!]

The different masterpieces mentioned above have navigated during *Nouri Bouzid's* film making artistic path between partially and totally censored.

The forbidden trinity has encountered many of his movies, making him sometimes refuse the suggested modifications and maintain the script idea, sometimes accept a one-sided censorship, just on the version of the movie that is projected in Tunisia (the internationally marketed version is the full one); and sometimes kill the movie before its birth due to the huge imposed rate of censorship, which downgrades his main aim.

During most of his career, aiming to establish this strong connection between the fanciful and the tangible; the prohibition triangle was *N. Bouzid's* principal obstacle sitting in front of his own visions' transfer to the audience.

Political, religious or social authorities have made his movies' appearance controlled since the script writing step. He always tried to get around the censorship, by finding parallel expressions ways and forms that allow him to transfer his world's vision to the audience through an indirect way: which is the subtle.

¹⁶ Shooting movies in Egypt is allowed just to Egyptian movie makers, Foreign ones should pay a big amount of money to get the shooting agreement

Aiming to pay tribute to his Jewish neighbours, with whom he spent most of his childhood, *N. Bouzid* made *Man of Aches* as a salutation to their peaceful life in our homeland with the Tunisian Muslims.

Mr. Levi: the Jewish neighbour of Frifta the hero, was present during twelve minutes of the movie, as a spiritual father, to whom he escapes and with whom he spends nice moments,- making him forget the biggest problem from which he suffers during his daily life: the paedophilia's scene that he always remembers, and which took place during his childhood.

In the interview of *Un Cinema scomodo*¹⁷, *N. Bouzid* said that the authority has used Mr. Levi's presence in the movie as the main raison of the censorship, instead of the real rejection cause.

It was not *N. Bouzid* revelation about Muslims- Jews' relation that really disturbed the authorities; they were just worried about how the audience would react in front of *N. Bouzid*'s negative vision to them, which can badly influence the audience's revelation to the politic empire.

This made the film production forbidden until the authority won the case and obliged *N. Bouzid* to cut Mr. Levi's funeral ceremony (which contains some Yiddish readings) from the negative copy of the movie. This was against the aim of *N. Bouzid* to express his respect to the Jewish culture, as the Jewish Tunisians were living in peace with the Muslim ones in the Tunisian homeland.

Golden Horseshoes movie's shooting, which coincided with the dethroned Ben Ali's first year, has not found any problem to take place in all the asked plans: roads, bus stations, with fire-fighters...But the scenes of torture in prison were almost conditioned: the prime ministry commanded to paint the prison's wall *fig. 11*, in order to hide the real prisoners' manifestations against the policeman, through which they explain with details what happens in jail.



Figure 11: Painted prison wall to hide the prisoners' confessions



Figure 12: Pissing Torture wearing civil clothes: forbidden in Tunisia's copy of the movie

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHF1hIzELFI>

Besides, and after having shot the scene on which the officer pisses *fig. 12* in the mouth of the prisoner, the prime ministry ordered *N. Bouzid* to reshoot it while the officer is not wearing the uniform, but in civil clothes.

Despite the rejection of those scenes, *N. Bouzid* has insisted to integrate them, because he has yet lived such a situation during his jail in the 70'. Thus these two scenes were shot while obliging *N. Bouzid* to cut them, not in the negative copy like he has done with the *Man of Aches* movie, but just in the copy that was distributed in the Tunisian movie theatres. Worthy of note is that the full copy was internationally distributed, starting by being displayed in Cannes Festival.

Making Of movie's distribution, after having been shot between 2004 and 2005, was forbidden until the end of 2006. Ten years after the movie's appearance, and on the occasion of Bardo Museum's terrorist attack which took place on March 18th, 2015, and led to the death of 21 people, gunned down, most of whom were foreign tourists, Nouri *N. Bouzid* was invited in Tunis 24/7 program¹⁸, as if he predicted what would take place, one decade after his movie's shooting.

Through the script, *N. Bouzid* made *Bahta* refuse killing people although he has undergone a brainwashing, and tried to explode only himself on an empty container terminal in the port of Radès.

By the integration of the '*mise en abime*' technique through three scenes, *Making Of* has sustained an auto-censorship made by its filmmaker.

Since the gestation stage of the movie, its direction became a challenge: while shooting, *N. Bouzid* asked himself many questions such as:

'Have I the right to show that? Will the terrorist and kamikaze demonstration be forbidden?'¹⁹

Besides, the authorities have really stopped the shooting, due to the Soliman attack which accidentally took place in 2006, by a break-dance artist: this was just a coincidence that made the policy doubt on *N. Bouzid* script's likeness with the real attempt case.

In an interview²⁰ with the Italian TV: Link TV, *N. Bouzid* while talking about the circumstances that characterized the *Making Of* shooting, has wondered:

¹⁸ Tunis 24/7 show : March 2015 –After Bardo terrorist attempt
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OgTIdEflrg&index=4&list=PLemQZoWezUJBMwgAyBo600JnSc0KsSHW>

¹⁹ An interview in Afrik.com Newsletter, made on October 2009: <http://www.afrik.com/article17864.html>

²⁰ Nouri N. Bouzid & Lotfi Abdelli in conversation with Peter Scarlet : 2007-Italy:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSEM-4G9Dos>

'Will I be allowed to speak about this? We are forbidden to talk about this topic in the media! I had to be courageous, very lucid, but at the same time I had to be afraid: I needed this fear because it was in me, it was real! (...) Terrorism and fundamentalism are the two legs on which the film walks!'

L. Abdelli has explained that by the alternation between the movie script and the interviews scenes, *N. Bouzid* aimed to make a '*mise en abime*' between fictional characters of an actor and a filmmaker, and the real ones by *N. Bouzid* and *Lotfi El Abdelli* themselves.

According to *L. Abdelli*, the international filmmakers' vision to the Islam Religion was always wrong. *Making Of* aim was just to correct this false point of view, and convince the international audience that the Islam is a peaceful belief.

After having finished the movie's shooting, the Ministry of the Culture has forbidden its distribution for one year. In spite of that, this censorship has increased the *Making Of* value and made it win 17 prizes in different festivals²¹.

Trying to treat the '*faked virginity*' "taboo" *N. Bouzid* preferred that the *Oskot Aib* scenario does not see the light, as the committee composed of *Ferid Boughdir* and *Abdellatif Ben Ammar*, has asked him to remove a rate exceeding 30% of the scenario.

Refusing this high rate of censorship, *N. Bouzid* has renounced the production of this scenario and replaced by the one of *Manmoutech*. Through this movie, *N. Bouzid*'s script was up to date with the headscarves subject, by placing it in the post-revolutionary context.



Figure 13: The peaceful exchange of the opposite opinions

Having been banned under the overthrown *Ben Ali*'s dictatorship, during which the veil wearing was forbidden, *N. Bouzid* insisted to show that "The Two-headed Tunisia" was a reality and the freedom of expression and behaviour of each other is fully respected.

We do not care about the differences *fig. 13*; the most important is what the citizens hope to share such as freedom and peace in their homeland. That is why *N. Bouzid* aims to reflect the balance that characterizes the Tunisian society through the defended friendship between the two characters

²¹ Ibn Rushd Fund for Freedom of Thought: Ibn Rochd Award 2007

. If the same movie was shot just before the revolution, and due to the fusion of religious problem like the freedom of wearing the headscarves and the political one which concerns the taking side choice, *Mille Feuille* would never see the light.

Fortunately its shooting took place after the Dignity Revolution, when the expression's barriers disappeared, when the police dares no more to tie up the citizens due to their opinion.



Fig 14: Torture's snapshot allowed in *Mille Feuille* after the revolution.

Movies before the revolution were simply obedient to the politic authority's control. No Tunisian filmmaker has ever dared to show in his movies the torture footage or any thing that concerns the behaviour of the 'political police'.

This was conditioned in *N. Bouzid*'s movie before the revolution, as in *Golden Horses*, the plans of pissing on the prisoner's mouth and the prisoners' complaint on the wall, were forbidden in the Tunisian copy of the movie and allowed in the international one. But in *Mille Feuille* which was shot in 2012, such snapshots were fortunately allowed *fig. 14* to be added on a movie.

Through this analytical passage between those four bouzidian masterpieces, we can deduce that *N. Bouzid* has always tried to touch the taboos, although he yet knows that the authorities would not allow him to do. He had evocated the forbidden trinity to highlight what the Tunisian and Arabic societies suffer from, by navigating between the palpable and the phantasmagorical.

Studying *N. Bouzid* movies in depth, we can easily compare our real life to a human face, which is sometimes sad and depressed, and sometimes happy and full of hope.

N. Bouzid movies present a mirror which reflects this human face, with its happiness and sadness, power and weakness. *N. Bouzid*'s camera replaces the human being's eyes and his movies are nothing but a duplicate truism.

The dreamlike trim that is added by this cineaste who intends solely to make the viewer distinguish the reflexive fingerprints between *N. Bouzid* and the other directors, since this author adds his own spices to each movie's dish differently, overcoming the censorship triangle, daring to treat the Arabic community's taboos, so that the audience recognises his artistic signature, without any doubt.

Inspired by his five years of jail during which he suffered from torturing, the fundamentalism that the humanity undergoes during the terrorist attacks that may happen anytime all over the world, the brainwashing which can be applied on the innocent teenagers' minds, making them become assassins, *N. Bouzid* has always tried to reflect the portrait of a youth, frustrated and torn between the desire of freedom and the ideological loophole.

This cineaste calls the audience to deduce that the break dancer and the practicing teenager, the veiled and the abloom woman may live together on a land full of agreement, understanding, accordance, circumstances sharing and respect, without the domination of anyone of them.

This is just a wake-up scream from *N. Bouzid* to the Tunisian and Arabic societies, calling them to contribute together, in a peaceful and balanced life, savouring the freedom of expression and the religion choice, in addition to the coordination between different points of view and intellectual levels. In so doing, we can lead a peaceful life on the same territory.

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