

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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# The Scarecrows / Les épouvantails (2019)

Nouri Bouzid

## OVERVIEW

In 2013, eight Tunisian women who went to provide moral support to Syrian rebels in a mission called "sexual jihad" returned to Tunisia pregnant. For the government, the question then arose of whether to treat them as terrorists or as victims. Inspired by this story, *The Scarecrows* inserts itself into the debate by deciding in favor of women's rights and portraying the women as victims. The film, which was shot in Tunisia, won the Human Rights Awards at the 2020 Venice International Film Festival

## SYNOPSIS

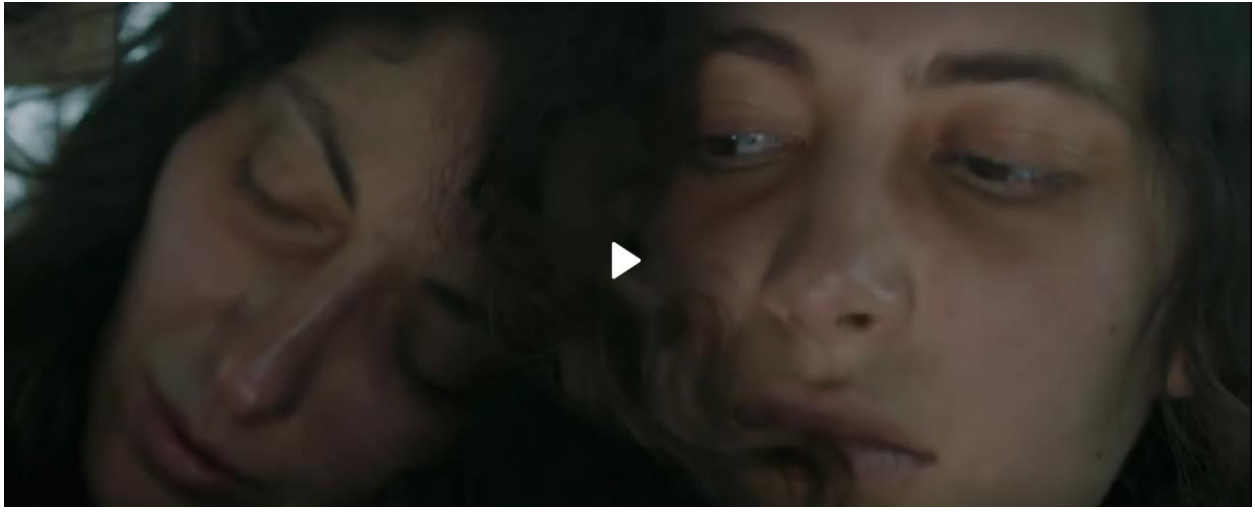
Jouda Ghrissa (Djo) and Zina Soltani, two young Tunisian women, are lured to Syria by their lovers, who sell them to Islamic State terrorists as sex slaves. As a result of these forced relationships, Djo is five months pregnant, and Zina gives birth to a boy child, who is taken away from her. The two women manage to escape, but they are detained in a prison in Tunis, from where they are rescued by a doctor and a lawyer, who can only defend them if they agree to tell their stories. However, for these two victims, to speak is to accept to relive their ordeal. Djo becomes aphasic, only confiding her experience in the pages of a novel she is writing, and Zina is unwilling to cooperate, thus, complicating the task for those who want to help them.

## MAIN CHARACTERS

**Zina** (Nour Hajri): A young Tunisian woman. She has escaped the terrorists in Syria  
**Djo** (Joumene Limam): Friend of Zina. She was also held captive in Syria  
**Saida** (Sondos Belhassen): Zina's mother  
**Dorra** (Fatima Ben Saidane): A Tunisian woman doctor  
**Nadia** (Afef Ben Mahmoud): A Tunisian human rights lawyer. She defends Zina  
**Driss** (Mehdi Hajri): A young Tunisian homosexual. A friend and client of Nadia

## PLOT

**Out of jail** Djo and Zina are locked up in a prison in Tunis. They pace around their cell like caged animals. Suddenly the cell door opens, and men's voices shout at them to hurry up and get out. Djo, shocked, does not seem to hear them. She sharpens the end of her pencil on the concrete floor of the cell and scribbles words on crumpled sheets of paper. Zina shouts her name to get her out of her stupor and out of the cell. She shakes her, gathers her crumpled sheets into a folder, puts them in a canvas bag, and pulls her towards the exit. **Nadia vouches for Djo and Zina** Nadia, a woman lawyer, explains to Djo and Zina that she has vouched for them. The guards explain to Nadia that Djo and Zina must remain at the disposal of the judge and are forbidden to travel. In her car, Nadia introduces the two women to Dorra, a doctor whom she considers a sister. Nadia wants to know what the police have questioned the two women about, but they remain silent. Nadia's car parks in front of Zina's parents' house, and Zina's mother, who was waiting for them at the gate, comes to meet them.



## DIO

**Dio is frightened.** After leaving the jail, Djo stays with Zina. Djo refuses to go home. Zina explains that her brother might kill her. She says that it is thanks to Djo, who led her to the Lebanese border, that she is still alive. Saida, Zina's mother, suggests that Djo stay with her and Zina. Zina shows Djo a room where she can write at her ease. Nadia gives Zina a cell phone so they can stay in touch. As the call of the Imam is heard in the distance, Nadia tells Zina that at her mother's house, she can pray on time, which makes the young woman angry. Nadia calms her down and takes her aside to ask her questions, to which she doesn't give any answers. Nadia informs her that the illegitimacy of her son, born from an illegal marriage, makes him a child without a name and without any rights before the law.

**Djo's story** Nadia goes up to Djo's room and is surprised to see written on the wall the names of all the girls whose stories are in the book Djo is writing. Each girl's filiation is traced to her mother. Djo allows Nadia to read aloud a few pages from her book. Djo writes that she went to Syria to document and expose the terrorists' crimes of rape and their method of recruiting young girls by giving their families large sums of money to get their daughters. She was taken prisoner and subjected to the horror she went to document. She explains how the terrorists shot the girls who tried to escape from the blessed rape.

**Djo kills herself** Djo climbs onto the roof of the house at the time of the Imam's call to prayer. She puts a scarecrow given to her by Saida on the edge of the roof. She stands on that edge, stretches out her arms, and throws herself to the ground. A small river of blood flows from her head. She dies.

## ZINA

**Protective mother** Zina's mother, who was waiting for them at the gate, comes to meet them. Saida covers her daughter with kisses while crying and takes her inside the house. Dr. Dora and Nadia the lawyer manage to convince a frightened Djo to get out of the car. They all meet in the house. Djo hugs her bag of papers tightly, her eyes faded. Zina looks around, exploring the house, as if she were discovering it for the first time. Then, she runs to lock herself in the shower, fully dressed, under the water, and vigorously scratches her pubic area and her chest, sobbing. Djo and the other three women join her there. Djo asks Djo if she wants to wash and the young woman nods. Dora notices that Djo and Zina are infested with lice, and Dora, Nadia and Saida, Zina's mother, shampoo, wash and dry the two friends, singing to cheer them up. Then, they burn Djo's and Zina's clothes and give them clean ones. Another day, **Nadia** comes to see Saida, Zina's mother. Saida talks about Zina's childhood and confesses that her heart is with Zina, but that she is a little angry with her. She is ashamed of everything that people in the neighborhood say about her and the family. She says she sometimes regrets defending her daughter against her father. She says that when she was a teenager, Zina was a rebellious girl, who wore clothes that revealed her body, who went out a lot and came home late, and who made her father furious. He often beat her. She had a difficult childhood.



**The angry father**      **FATHER**      Zina's father arrives. He searches the rooms of the house and finds his daughter. Zina gets up and stretches her hand to him. He grabs her, puts her on the ground, and drags her by the hair, demanding that she return to where she came from, and that because of her people talk about him on TV. The women rush to rescue Zina. Saida orders him to leave the house he no longer lives in. He calms down but insists that Zina remain confined to the house. He tells Dorra and Nadia that all the talks about Zina's child being taken from her are false rumors. Zina confides in her mother that she went to Syria with her lover, and that her father knew about it. Saida confronts the father. He says that Zina and her boyfriend vaguely told him that they wanted to get married, and he told them that he would think about it. Another day, Saida, Zina's mother, decides to take her to spend time with her grandmother. Zina's father drives them there in his cab. On the way, he takes a small road and parks the car in a clearing. He asks Saida to wait for him in the car while he talks to his daughter alone. Zina follows him to a ruin. He tells her that the people who claim to help her want to hurt her, that they would have killed her if she were their daughter. Then he suddenly grabs Zina and ties her to a post with a rope he was hiding. Zina's screams alert her mother, who comes running. Saida fights with her husband and manages to untie Zina, but the father holds her by the throat and tries to strangle her. Zina picks up a stone and hits him hard on the head. Her mother tells her to run away, and Zina starts running into the clearing as the father looks on in a daze, bleeding from the head.



**Disloyal boy-friend**      Zina, Nadia and Driss try to track down Salmane, Zina's lover and fake husband. They go to the mosque that Salmane and Zina used to attend. The people they question do not seem to cooperate. Zina leads them to the house where she spent several months with Salmane and other Islamic fundamentalists. The door is locked, and nobody answers. Nadia suspects that Zina is leading them on. She even suspects Zina's mother of collusion with the terrorists because she was in Syria at one time. Nadia arrives unexpectedly at Driss' house and finds Zina there. She drives them to Salmane's hideout, who is surprised and displeased to see Zina and asks her how she got out of Syria. Zina accuses him of selling her. He tells her that her father was in on it. She tells him that he took her child away from her. He replies that he does not know what she is talking about, and that his son is in Istanbul with his mother, his wife. He calls Zina a terrorist and threatens to drag her through the mud. Nadia promises him that he will not get away with it. Zina sobs. Driss comforts her and takes her back on his motorcycle.



## NEW FRIEND

**Zina meets Driss** Driss, a young homosexual student, whom Nadia is defending in court against discrimination, comes to see her at the same time as Nadia's ex-husband arrives drunk at her house under the pretext that he is coming to get his stuff. Nadia lets Driss in and slams the door in her ex-husband's face, telling him that she has thrown away all his things. Driss tells Nadia that he has been banned from all the universities. Nadia introduces Driss to Zina and asks him to make her change her mind about men and get some information from her about her ordeal.

**Zina tells her story** Lying in a hammock, Driss listens to Zina tell him about her Syrian adventure. She went to Syria in search of new sensations. Her body demanded a revolution. The one started in Tunisia had ended too quickly. She went with her husband, who knew the Islamic fundamentalists. Once in Syria, he sold her and disappeared. She realized her mistake when she found herself confined, suffocating in the black fabric of the full veil. She was imprisoned and beaten because she refused the Emir's advances.

**Friendship and attraction between Zina and Driss** Another day, Zina and Driss are washing a white bedsheet in a basin, and their hands intertwine in a sensual game. They take the sheet out of the water, and they proceed to wring it. They spread the sheet like a tent cover themselves with it. Their bodies are intertwined under the sheet. They laugh and fall on the floor. She tells him that it is a pity that she is not a boy. He tells her that he would have hit on her if she was one. Zina asks Driss if he has ever loved a girl. Driss tells her that he is not the right man for her. That he is only attracted to boys. She asks him if he can't find a boy he likes through a girl. He tells her that girls are just friends to him. He had many friends. But they talked a lot, too. And the police came for him one day and did all sorts of atrocities to him that he doesn't want to talk about



## ZINA'S PSYCHOLOGY

**Neighborhood boys attack Zina** One evening, on her way back from Driss' house, Zina is accosted in front of her mother's gate by neighborhood boys who insult, harass and beat her. They tell her that her reputation is tainting the neighborhood, which is inhabited by respectful families, and ask her to go back to the terrorists. Her mother, who hears her screaming, intervenes, chases the young men away and gets her inside.

**Zina picks up the full veil** Zina veils herself and wears a black dress. She returns to the courtyard where she lived with her lover before going to Syria. The courtyard is now empty. She lies down on a bench and dozes off. A young man who was spying on her wakes her up and tries to rape her. She knees him in the lower abdomen and escapes. She runs down the street and, tired, falls asleep on a public bench. A passerby wakes her up and she moves. Young girls in jeans make fun of her outfit that they find outdated and ask her if it is to scare children that she wears clothes that nobody wears in Tunisia anymore.

**Zina disappears** In Nadia's car, Zina is panic-stricken. She sees herself being tortured by terrorists in Syria. She sticks her head out the window and starts screaming. Nadia stops the car and Driss offers Zina some water. She calms down and gets back in. Zina asks Nadia to stop so she can use the bathroom. Zina goes into a café full of men and disappears. Driss goes after her but cannot find her. Driss promises Nadia that he will find her and asks her to go home calmly. Later on, Driss finds Zina. Driss finds Zina balancing on the tracks of a railroad. He convinces her to come with him to the house where he is house-sitting. She asks him not to tell Nadia that he has found her.

**Zina goes to Driss's** Zina returns to Driss's house to wait for him in her full veil. Driss arrives and is frightened. She reveals herself, and he tells her, reassured, that she gave him a big scare. He tells her that the police are looking for her, that her mother, Nadia, and Dorra are worried, and that according to Facebook she is dead. She tells him that she is happy to see him and asks him not to tell anyone that he has seen her. She takes shower and changes clothes.

**Zina wants to kill herself** Zina asks Driss if he has ever loved a girl. Driss tells her that he is not the right man for her. That he is only attracted to boys. She asks him if he can't find a boy he likes through a girl. He tells her that girls are just friends to him. He had many friends, but they talked a lot, too. And the police came for him one day and did all sorts of atrocities to him that he doesn't want to talk about. Zina tells him she wants to kill herself. He begs her to stay alive for her son, and that he would help her raise him, and that he would not lock her up. Zina hugs him and tells him that he is a good man, and that he must not change.

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### Open to New experiences

**Zina** Zina is a flirtatious, adventurous, and idealist character, who has been disillusioned by her trip to Syria. She had romanticized it as a thrilling adventure, but she got more than she was prepared for.

*Flirtatious* Zina's mother tells Nadia that, as a child, Zina liked to dress in a way that would drive the neighborhood boys crazy. She would leave the house early, dressed in little tight dresses, and come home late, which infuriated her father. Driss also noticed this flirting side of Zina, which he reports to Nadia.

*Adventurous* Zina says she went to Syria in search of a thrill, as a response to her body's demand for a revolution, something different from what she had experienced in Tunisia. The Tunisian revolution, she says, was short-lived. She needed a longer ecstasy and stronger excitements. Such an appreciation of life requires an adventurous soul.

*Idealist* Zina had romanticized her trip to Syria. She went there as one goes to a fair, with the idea that she would have fun with her lover. Unfortunately for her, the reality was quite different. Once in Syria, her lover sold her, and left her to the whims of the terrorists, who beat and abused her.

*Disillusioned* Until she reconnected with her lover in Tunis, who rejected her and told her that he would drag her through the mud if she tried to contact him again, Zina was convinced that she was in true love

with him and that he had no idea what had happened to her. She was disappointed to learn that the man she thought she was married to was part of a human trafficking ring, and that she was just another commodity to him.

### **Conscientious**

**Nadia** Nadia is a determined and suspicious lawyer. Resolute to defend Zina to the end, she remains, nevertheless, wary of her client's sincerity. She believes that Zina is leading her on to protect the terrorists, which Driss finds insensitive.

*Determined* A human rights lawyer, Nadia was determined to see her defense of Zina through to the end, despite Zina's reluctance to help her. Her defense of victims of discrimination like Zina and Driss has earned her many threats and beatings. However, unperturbed, she does not let herself be impressed and forges ahead with the mission she has given herself.

*Suspicious* Nadia suspects that Zina is hiding things from her and protecting the terrorists. She shares her misgivings with Dr. Dorra and with Driss, who finds her suspicion of Zina insensitive.

### **Agreeable**

**Driss** Driss is a friendly, reliable, and compassionate character. Like Zina, he is a pariah of Tunisian society. Therefore, he understood her anguish the moment they were introduced, and he supported and defended her against Nadia's suspicions that she might try to protect the terrorists.

*Friendly* Driss is a friendly and open character. He immediately finds himself on good terms with Zina and befriends her. He opens his door for her when she needs a place to stay and listens to her when she wants to talk. And when she confides in him that she wants to end her life, he begs her to think of her son and promises to help her raise him.

*Reliable* From her first meeting with Driss, Zina understood that she could count on him to keep a secret and confided in him, telling him the reasons for her departure to Syria, and the torture she experienced there. She returned several times to take refuge at his place, to shower and change clothes. He promised to keep her whereabouts secret, and he did, until Nadia, arriving unexpectedly, found Zina at his house.

*Compassionate* Driss tells Dorra and Nadia that he recognizes himself in Zina's situation, and that he too is persecuted by Tunisian society for his sexual orientation. He gets angry when Nadia suspects Zina of protecting terrorists. He tells her that Zina is not a danger, but that she is in danger.

## **THEMES**

**SOCIETY** (patriarchy, gender, religion)

*Patriarchy* In *The Scarecrows*, Bouzid returns to one of his favorite themes, patriarchy, the power of the controlling father, who, by imposing his law on the woman, keeps her in a situation of physical as well as mental incarceration. Here, the role of the inflexible patriarch falls to Zina's father, who clings to a traditional ideal of honor and family pride to be preserved in the virtuous bodies of the women of the family. Zina's father has fought his daughter's unconventionality from her very adolescence. He has resented her carefree attitude until the day she left for Syria. Did he encourage her to go and cleanse herself in fundamentalism or perhaps did he agree to send her to Syria so he will not be looking at her depravity? His daughter's lover says that he knew about and even got paid for her going to Syria. In any case, the father saw Zina's return from Syria as the return of shame and dishonor. He was going to remedy it by way of an honor killing. As the father lures Zina into a remote area to execute her, she performs a gesture of ultimate humiliation. She hits her father with a stone and escapes from his control. From the confined space in which she found herself in Syria, in her mother's house, under the judgmental gaze of the neighbors, Zina kills the father, or at least his influence over her, and frees herself, taking her independence in the open space of the green prairies.

*Gender* The world of *The Scarecrows* is a curated dualism, where all the men are bad, and all the women are good. On the side of the bad people, we have Zina's lover (her illegal husband) who lures her into the

trap of Syria, sells her to terrorists, and threatens to humiliate her when she reappears in Tunisia. There are also the fundamentalists, who imprisoned, beat, and raped Zina and Djo. The bad guys are also to be found among the men in Tunis who refuse Zina a place in society, among the sympathizers of the Islamic fundamentalists, including her father, and among the boys of the neighborhood. On the good side, there are all the women who do their best to help Djo and Zina overcome their ordeal. It is Nadia the lawyer who has made it her mission to defend them at all costs. It is Dorra the doctor who treats them. It is Saida, Zina's mother, who, despite her doubts, lodges them, comforts them, and comes running to the aid of her daughter when her father tries to kill her. On the good side, there is also Driss, the homosexual. If Driss is good, it is because, as Nadia suggests, he does not really figure as a man. He is, instead, the gentle side of men, their feminized and good side. Bouzid's dichotomies developed along the gender axis in *The Scarecrows* are far too simplistic.

*Religion* The book that Djo writes feverishly questions the hypocrisy of Muslim fundamentalists: Can rape be sanctioned by Islam? Is rape permissible under Islamic law? Indeed, fundamentalists, who claim Islamic purity, and who go to war to spread their pure version of Islam, are the same people who violate this law with the institution of sexual jihad and forced sexual relations before marriage. So, the questions posed by Djo's book are relevant. Are the terrorists' rapes allowed, even blessed, by Islam? If so, are the results of those acts, the loss of virginity before marriage, the pregnancies that ensue, and the children who are born from rape, blessed by Islamic law? If so, why, then, the persecution of the women who return from these horrors? Why are they stigmatized as outcasts? Why do their children have no name, no identity, and no individual rights?

## **FLAW**

*Fear* The Arabic title of *The Scarecrows* is "The Dolls of Fear." These little scarecrows that Zina's mother makes are a reflection of Tunisians' fear of anything that does not fit into their notion of "normal." Driss is a scarecrow. He frightens people with his sexuality which feminizes Tunisian masculinity. Zina is a scarecrow who sullies the name of the father by her overflowing desires and by the fact that she had a child outside the framework prescribed by religion, that of marriage. Zina's father would have wanted her to stay in Syria, out of sight of the community, as many unmarried mothers do, who choose exile to save their family from shame. Djo, to whom Saida gives a pregnant doll, is also a scarecrow. Her pregnancy is the protuberant proof that she has violated the holy law prohibiting premarital sex. She cannot go home for fear that her brothers will kill her. All these scarecrows are projections of societal fears that plague conventional morality.

## **RELATIONSHIPS (marriage, desire, sexuality)**

*Marriage* Marriage is the Tunisian institution that assigns individual identity and rights. Zina had a child in Syria by her lover and illegal husband. Since this marriage has not been validated by the competent authorities, and no certification has been issued for it, the marriage is considered as if it had never taken place. Things could have stopped there. This fake marriage could have only affected the fake bride and groom. The worst is what Zina's lawyer, Nadia, points out to her: that the child who was born of this sham marriage is a child without a name, without an identity, and without rights, that is to say, without the right to inheritance in Tunisian society. This child is like any other child born in Tunisia out of wedlock. If Zina is able to find her son, his life in Tunisia will still be one of social and professional shunning because he will have to bear his mother's name in school and in his professional life as well as bear the discrimination that comes with his being a "bastard."

*Desire* The realm of desire is thought of as an individual, selfish realm, unwilling to suffer social restrictions. Yet, desire is constantly under the threat of institutionalization and legislation as soon as one becomes a member of society. Thus, for example, Zina, as her mother Saida tells us, is a girl who, since her adolescence, has always wanted to make her body a display that attracts attention. Her father will fight her desire on ultraconservative religious bases because for him, the desires of Zina are a dishonor for the family and a sin before God. Similarly, Driss's desire, dictated by his homosexuality, does not fall within the framework of Tunisia's Islamic orthodoxy. Driss's desire is perceived as a force that erodes the machismo on which the identity of the Tunisian male is built. It is therefore fought. Zina and Driss have anti-societal, anti-familial desires. They disturb the Tunisian social order. They are the weeds in the beautiful garden of



the Tunisian conscience that ought to be removed. Thus, one person in the crowd that gathers to protest Driss's presence at the courthouse shouts that Driss deserves to die. Thus, Zina's father tries to kill her.

*Sexuality* Must we see in *The Scarecrows* a gesture which betrays Nouri Bouzid's confession to a tamed, unassuming sexuality? Everything in the experience of Zina suggests it. Of Zina, Driss tells Nadia that she is a tease. Her mother says that she is a provocateur, a girl with precocious and insatiable sexuality, who, as a teenager, already drove her father crazy by wearing tight dresses that made the neighborhood boys fantasize, and which frightened them at the same time. And it is Zina herself who tells us that she went to Syria to look for strong sensations, which in Tunisia ended too quickly, an allusion to pleasures that were too short. Zina is a woman whose excessive lust strikes a false note in the sanitized, ordered, and repressed orthodox sexuality of the Tunisian Islamic society. Her excess is *haram*, sinful. And she pays for this sin with the high price of kidnapping, beating, incarceration, and rape. Zina is the example that should not be followed at the risk of ending up like her. Is that one of the lessons that Bouzid, despite himself, but precisely because of the culture in which he bathed, wants us to draw from *The Scarecrows*?

### **PSYCHOLOGY** (isolation, alienation, otherness, therapy)

*Isolation* When Zina wears the conspicuous full veil, which the young women in jeans see as outdated, is Zina seeking to end her isolation or is she on an investigative mission to find her child? The world to which Zina has returned, that of her mother, her lawyer, her neighbors, and her judges, does not seem to make any genuine room for her. It is a world that suspects her of collusion with her captors. Her mother confides to her lawyer that she is a little angry with her daughter. Her lawyer asks Zina if she really intends to help her in her investigation or if she is leading her on. Driss asks her if she was orgasming under the assaults of her kidnappers, and her neighbors, including the youngest men, order her to leave the neighborhood. Isolated, could it be that by taking up the full veil, Zina is trying to reconnect with the terrorists? In any case, in Syria as in Tunisia, Zina is an isolated, suspected, and stigmatized character, who is seeking her balance. Zina's instability or difficulty to make a place for herself in one or the other of these two worlds translates into a cinematic metaphor dear to Bouzid: a subject trying to balance themselves on the narrow track of a railroad, as seen with Farfat in *Man of Ashes*.

*Alienation* The Syrian experience of Zina and Djo, their incarceration, beating, and rape by the fundamentalists, which resulted in Djo's unwanted pregnancy and Zina's child being taken away from her, caused both women a deep trauma, an alienation from society. For Djo, this alienation manifests itself as confinement into aphasia and into her nervous writings about permissible rape. Djo never finds her place in society and commits suicide. For Zina, this alienation takes the form of running away, refusing to open up to those who want to help her, whom she suspects of insincerity because they stigmatize her as a terrorist and a willing party in her ordeal.

*Otherness* Zina, Djo, and Driss are marginalized characters whose otherness is celebrated in the film. Nonetheless, one should be careful not to make their torments the identity of their difference. The character of Driss, banned from all universities in Tunisia, though fictional, is taken from a real-life event, where, in 2015, six Tunisian students were sentenced to three years in prison and banned from their city of Kairouan. And the lawyer, Mrs. Karkni, who passionately defended them, is a woman of Nadia's determination. At a time when the fear of difference stiffens us *The Scarecrows* allows us to see a very humanized Driss, approachable and full of compassion, who invites us to shed our anxieties about our family values, which too often are reduced to the value of genitals. It is this societal and familial obsession with the body, and specifically, with genitalia, that marginalizes Zina, who tells us that for her father all parts of her body are sexual, while she sees sex only as a part of her body.

*Therapy* There is a therapy session between Zina and Driss that would be of interest to theorists of psychology and psychoanalysis. Lying in his hammock, Driss elicits from Zina, seated on a chair, answers that Nadia the lawyer could not get from her. Here, the positions, and therefore the roles, are reversed, because in psychoanalytical practice, it is the patient, the analysand, who is in the position of the couch, the position of vulnerability, and the analyst, who, seated in the chair, in the dominant position, makes the patient speak. So why this reversal of position, where it is Zina in the chair who speaks and Driss on the divan (the hammock) who listens? It is quite simple that Driss is both Zina's analyst and her analysand, and vice versa, because both are victims of society, and both are at the same time each other's therapist. By

listening to each other, they recognize each other as suffering, and support and heal each other. They both have something to bring to the other. And it is this dynamic of mutuality, sharing, entanglement of victimized and marginalized bodies, which we find in the scene where they wring out a sheet and turn it into a tent that unites them in a movement that borders on the sexual act.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. A scarecrow is usually a dummy in the form of a human in old clothes which is set in the open field to scare away birds that feed on crops. Why do you think the filmmaker chose the title of his film to be *The Scarecrows*? Who do the dummies refer to, and whom do they scare?
2. Zina's lover tells her that her father was paid to send her to Syria. If this assertion is true, what do you think would be the reason for the father's decision?
3. In your culture/country, what is the legal status of children born out of marriage? Are there dispositions/laws put in place to ensure that children born out of marriage have the same rights as other children? Explain.
4. What are some of the arguments people use to oppose homosexuality? Discuss the soundness of these arguments as they relate to the character Driss.
5. What do you think of the end of the film? What would become of Zina?
6. The film leaves many things unsaid. What events or connections would you have liked to see more developed that would have given you a better understanding of the film?