

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
Martial Frindéthié, PhD

## Sun of Hyenas / Soleil des hyènes (1977)

Ridah Behi

### OVERVIEW

*Auteur* Rhida Behi was born in 1947, in the city of Kairouan at a time when Tunisia was still a French protectorate. He received a master's degree in sociology from Paris Nanterre in 1973 and a doctorate with a thesis entitled *Cinema and Society in Tunisia in the 1960s*, which he obtained in 1977. *Sun of Hyenas* (1977), which he wrote and directed, is the first feature film by this respected Tunisian filmmaker, who began his film career in 1967 with a short film, *The Woman Statue*. *Sun of Hyenas* was awarded the grand prize at the 1979 Damascus International Film Festival. Behi has received numerous recognitions including the Grand Officer of the Tunisian Order of Merit, in 2016, and the Award for Best Director at the Alexandria International Film Festival of the Mediterranean Countries the following year.

*Film* The film shows what happens when a country just out of colonization, too eager to accumulate foreign currency, foolishly opens its economy to foreign investors before having given its natives the opportunity to build a solid middle class, capable of competing against foreign multinational corporations. What happens, as it is shown in this film, is the pauperization of the native population reduced to the rank of unskilled workers; the importation into the country of a specialized workforce from the countries of the investors; and, therefore, the repatriation of large amounts of capitals to the investing countries and the impoverishment of the developing economy. But what is especially telling is the museumification of the host country, frozen in a posture of exotic relic to be preserved for the curiosity of the West. What Behi denounces in this film is a big flaw among African countries that have come out of colonization only to relapse into neo-colonization through the artifice of globalization and the free flow of capital.

*Background* After its independence from France, like its two sisters in the French-speaking Maghreb (Morocco and Algeria), Tunisia has relied heavily on tourism for its economic development and opened its doors to large international hotel chains. The flood of these foreign multinationals (first from the Gulf countries and more increasingly from Europe) attracted by the profit on the coastal villages of the country has not been sensitive to the cultural and economic interests of local populations. Entire sections of Tunisia's cultural life have been destroyed. In this context that intervenes this film of Ridah Behi, as an alarm bell against the detrimental effects of an uncontrolled economic activity that kills the cultural soul of the Tunisian nation.

### CHARACTERS

<i>OMDA/THE OMDA</i>	The village chief
<i>HAJ IBRAHIM:</i>	An unscrupulous businessman in the village
<i>TAHAR</i>	A fisherman who resists the cultural alienation brought in by the hotel complex.
<i>MARIAM</i> :	Tahar's loyal wife
<i>LAMINE</i>	The village store owner/blacksmith

### SYNOPSIS

One day, a small Tunisian fishing village is visited by German investors who, in collaboration with the local authorities, decide to build a seaside resort. Overnight, the boats are abandoned, and the sea is emptied of its fishermen, who are hired on the construction site of the hotel complex. Soon the hotel is erected, the first tourists arrive, and the peaceful life of the villagers is no more but a memory. A man, alone, tries to hold on to an idyllic way of life that is inexorably running towards its end.

## SCENES

### VILLAGE LIFE

**Daybreak in a fishing village** It's daybreak in a small Tunisian fishing village. Lamine, the blacksmith and shopkeeper, is one of the first to get out of bed. He opens his store and the aroma of his coffee begins to attract the first early birds, who include fisherman Tahar and the simple-minded Ali.



**Coffee at Lamine's** The men gather at Lamine's to drink coffee and cheer up Tahar. Lamine tells them the story of how two great cattle and wheat thieves during the colonial period were acclaimed at independence as resistance fighters and became prominent figures in the village. Thus, as rewards, Haj Ibrahim was given the confiscated French colonists' farmland, and Omda Abdelrahman was made chief of the village. Lamine's story lightens the mood, but Haj Ibrahim and Omda do not find it very funny since it reminds people of their past as thieves.



**Haj Ibrahim wants to make his boats profitable** The fishermen with old traditional boats repair their nets while singing. Haj Ibrahim has invested money in modern, motorized boats, which he wants to make profitable. He scolds his fishermen and orders them to take his boats out to sea. While the Haj Ibrahim's fishermen scurry to please their master, the independent fishermen look at them, amused.



**Mind the competition** A villager needs money and comes to offer his land to Lamine, who tells him he will think about it. Old Mahmoud also offers to sell his land to Omda. He refuses to buy it because, he says, Old Mahmoud's land is uncultivable and will be of no use to him. Haj Ibrahim tells him that it is to his advantage anyway that old Mahmoud does not find a buyer for his land, otherwise he and Tahar will buy motors for their boats, give ideas to other fishermen, and soon they will form a fishermen's cooperative that will compete against Omda and him, who own motorboats. Haj Ibrahim tells Omda that he wants to be informed about all the decisions that are made in the governor's office regarding the hotel complex.



### INVESTORS

**Intruders in the village** The peaceful life of the village is disturbed by unusual events. On the water, the villagers' fishing trip is disrupted by large waves caused by the passage of a big boat with people in suits on board. In the air, a noisy plane flies low over the village. The big boat drops anchor offshore and a shuttle brings its occupants to land. A crowd of curious villagers surround and follow them as they explore the beach and the village interior. Ali, Lamine's assistant, runs to warn him that blue-eyed strangers have landed on the beach. Lamine advises him to go and warn Omda, the village chief.



**Explaining the project** The government delegate convenes a consultation meeting with the villagers to address their concerns. The villagers want to know how long the construction project will last and whether the workers will be hired locally or come from abroad. The delegate tells them that the project will last no more than eight months. As for the workers, the engineers and architects will come from Europe and the unskilled labor will be recruited locally. Tahar wants to know what will happen to the fishermen. The delegate answers that the government will help them modernize their equipment by setting up a fishery office. The work of the tourist complex begins. Haj Ibrahim goes behind Omda's back and manages to get old Mahmoud's land for six hundred dinars.



**Hotel Construction** Bulldozers appear in the village. Then comes a parade of businessmen and politicians accompanied by Haj Ibrahim and Omda. The villagers also arrive, curious to know what is going on in their village. It is to lay the foundation stone of a tourist complex that all these people have come to their village. The governor's representative salutes the cooperation of European countries with Tunisia for the economic development of the country, and the local authorities thank the German investors for having chosen to give this village a rapid development. The villagers say they have not understood anything, but they applaud anyway.



**The fishermen abandon the sea** Tahar, his wife, and his son enjoy the beauty of the village with a boat ride and a break on the dunes. Meanwhile, the men of the village have abandoned their boats and have been recruited to work on the site of the hotel complex. Haj Ibrahim is afraid that the transformation of the village will hurt his business. The government delegate reassures him and gives him ideas on how to make his investments profitable. He advises him to build a modern café and a handicraft store on the land he purchased from Old Mahmoud.



**Nothing will stop Haj Ibrahim** A woman from the village goes to Lamine and Tahar, asking them to convince her husband, Salem, who has gone to the construction site to manage Haj Ibrahim's store, to come back. She wants her husband to go back to fishing. Haj Ibrahim has opened a store selling sandwiches, cigarettes, and even alcohol at the hotel construction site. Tahar complains that Haj Ibrahim is allowed to empty the village of its fishermen by keeping them for months on the hotel site. Lamine tells him that the village as they know is dead.



**Lamine becomes Haj Ibrahim's associate** Haj Ibrahim and the Omda come to convince Lamine to join them in the adventure of prosperity. They tell him that it is inconceivable that he continues to work in his miserable forge while everything changes around him. Haj Ibrahim offers Lamine the opportunity to be his partner and to open a French-style store as he has always desired. Lamine accepts but insists that Tahar be released.



**Inauguration Day** The Minister of Tourism arrives to inaugurate the hotel complex. A reception is held for the minister and his guests. The villagers and local workers who worked on the construction of the hotel watch the ceremony from the sidelines, behind a wall of wire mesh. The minister also announces the construction of a fishery office to be headed by Haj Ibrahim, whom he calls a great patriot. One of the German investors whispers to his partner that Ibrahim is a more reliable local collaborator than ministers and prefects, who in Africa can be dismissed at any time



**The first tourists arrive at the hotel** The first tourists arrive, and the villagers witness scenes unknown to them until then: women and men in bathing suits walking shamelessly on the beach and in the restaurant or lying under the sun, an abundance of food and wine exposed to the sun. And the fishermen have become camel drivers, waiters, postcard and art dealers or gay prostitutes. At Haj Ibrahim's request, Omda recruits young girls from the village to weave carpets to sell to tourists in his craft store.



**Omda has regrets** Omda comes to complain to Lamine that the village is being taken away from them. He says that he feels like a toy in the hands of Haj Ibrahim and the government delegate. Tahar denounces Haj Ibrahim as a greedy man who only thinks of his own interests, and who has even sullied the honor of the village women. Haj Ibrahim promises him that he will make him pay for this insult.



**The beach is forbidden to laundresses** The women of the village come to wash their clothes on the beach. A guard arrives and wants to chase them away under the pretext that they dirty the place. They answer that they have always washed their clothes there, and that it is rather the hotel which pollutes the environment. The guard raises his hand against Mariam, Tahar's wife. The women run to the village to alert their husbands.



**Fishermen go on strike** The men decide to stop delivering fish to the fishery office. They destroy their entire supply. The Prefect asks Haj Ibrahim for an explanation, and Haj promises the prefect that he will find other sources of supply. He tells the prefect (the government local representative) that Tahar is the instigator, and that he has notified the gendarmerie. Omda insists that Tahar has nothing to do with it, but Haj Ibrahim replies that his goal is to kill the beast in order to kill the venom.



## TAHAR: INDEPENDENT FISHERMAN

**Zohra's death** The serenity of the village is shattered by the cries of Zohra, Tahar's first wife, who is in painful labor. The women send for the old village midwife, who arrives riding a donkey. She can do little to save either the baby or Zohra, who bleeds to death, leaving behind an husband and a little boy.



**Tahar will marry Mariam** Tahar is invited to dinner by old Mahmoud. Mahmoud proposes to Tahar to take his daughter Mariam in marriage in order to give little Naji (Tahar's and Zohra's son) the chance to have a mother who cares for him. Tahar agrees to take Mariam as his wife and promises her father to be a good husband to her.

**Mariam is anxious** The village has only two fishing boats working, including Tahar's. Mariam and another woman wait anxiously on the shore, scanning the horizon for signs of their husbands, who have gone to sea and are exposed to a storm. They finally see the two boats and four fishermen arrive and run to greet them.



**Tahar confronts Haj Ibrahim** At the hotel construction site, the workers receive their pay and immediately go to spend it in Haj Ibrahim's store. Tahar goes to the construction site to confront Haj Ibrahim. He accuses him of competing unfairly with Lamine by setting up shop on the site, exploiting the villagers and draining the village of its life. He also accuses him of selling wine.



**Tahar is incarcerated** Tahar is arrested in the middle of the night in his bed and taken to the gendarmerie, where he is incarcerated. Tahar's arrest causes consternation in the village. Haj Ibrahim comes to taunt the villagers by telling them that he has found other sources of supply, and that they are not indispensable. He accuses the villagers of dishonoring the country in the eyes of the tourists. The fishermen return to work for Haj Ibrahim. He boasts to Omda that he knows the villagers well, and that they are cowards who only understand the language of force.



**Mariam visits Tahar** Mariam goes to see her husband in prison. She informs him that Lamine has joined Haj Ibrahim in a wool and carpet business. She tells him that his son waits for him every evening at the port, believing that he has gone fishing, and that her father is saddened by the silence of the fishermen.



**Tahar is released** Tahar notices the lethargy of the village, the boats rotting on the beach. He goes to see Lamine's new store and finds him in an exotic outfit selling articles and humiliating himself by courting tourists. His friend comes up to him and embraces him, but Tahar remains unmoved. Tahar goes to see Lamine's old store. He pushes open the door of the back room and finds Ali sitting there, bare-chested, greeting him with a demented laugh. Ali has gone completely mad.



## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### **OMDA** (*Greedy, Naïve, Malleable*)

Omda is a greedy, naive, and manipulable character. As he complains to Lamine, he has become the plaything of Haj Ibrahim and his acolytes.

*Greedy* Omda is a greedy character. Like Haj Ibrahim, he wants to have a monopoly on fishing and has acquired a fleet of motorized boats. He blocks his fellow villagers from being able to afford motorized boats and from forming cooperatives that could threaten his monopoly. As village chief, Omda should be concerned about the prosperity of his constituents, but he is more concerned about his own.

*Naïve* Omda seems to have embarked on an adventure with Haj Ibrahim without considering his friend's capacity for deception. And yet, he should know that the person with whom he was stealing the French settlers' cattle had not changed much. He realizes a little too late that Haj Ibrahim is using him for his own ambitions, and he confesses this to Lamine. However, Omda is too deep in his involvement with Haj Ibrahim to turn back and can only forge ahead, hoping to reap some dividends.

*Malleable* Omda is the plaything of Haj Ibrahim, who manipulates him at will and sends him on degrading missions. He is the one Haj Ibrahim sends to recruit girls to work in his handicraft store in a culture where men do not like their women to be exposed to foreigners' gaze. He is also the one who accompanies Haj Ibrahim to convince Lamine to join him in an economic venture. Haj Ibrahim uses Omda's influence to realize his ambitions.

### **HAJ IBRAHIM** (*Unfair, Ambitious, Corrupt*)

He is an unfair, ambitious, and corrupt character. For him, the end justifies the means; and the end is the accumulation of wealth.

*Unfair* Haj Ibrahim had Tahar imprisoned on false charges. Although Omda tells him that it is unfair for Tahar to be imprisoned for a crime he never committed, Haj Ibrahim does not bother to release him. Tahar dared to contradict him, and for him, the incarceration, although unjustified, should serve as a deterrent to his opponents.

*Ambitious* Haj Ibrahim is a man of excessive ambition. He quickly saw the construction of the hotel complex as a way to make money, and he made sure that Omda would tell him what decisions were being made by the governor. He quickly worked his way up to the investors and political authorities to supplant Omda and become the most important person in the village. Soon, Haj Ibrahim found himself at the decision-making table and made Omda his subordinate.

*Corrupt* Haj Ibrahim is a morally corrupt character. He trampled on social and religious mores to get to the top. Against the precepts of his religion, he sells wine. Against the principles of his community, he turns the village housewives into makers of handiworks for tourists and exposes them to the curiosity of tourists. And against the principles of friendship, he stabs Tahar in the back, a man with whom he used to meet other men from the village to drink coffee and tell funny stories at Lamine's.

## **TAHAR** (*Idealist, Isolated*)

Tahar is an idealist who found himself alone by wanting to cling to a way of life in rapid transformation. He aspired to continue the tradition of fishermen in the tranquility of his village. Unbridled capitalism decided otherwise.

*Idealist* Heartbroken to see the sea barren of fishing boats that used to crowd it and the shore deserted by the laughter of fishermen mending their nets, Tahar resisted the assault of a savage tourism that wanted to get rid of his community's way of life. The forces he was fighting against were far too powerful for his little person and their predisposition to persuasion and coercion was unwavering. In the end, the forces of capitalism defeated Tahar's ideal of keeping his village and its traditional activities untouched.

*Isolated* Tahar found himself isolated in his fight to save his village from the perversity of tourism. After months of incarceration, he returned to a village completely transformed and taken over by tourists. His allies of yesterday have been persuaded by Haj Ibrahim. The fishermen have been fooled by foreign investors and their local collaborators. Even Lamine's embrace upon his release from prison leaves him unmoved. He feels abandoned and betrayed.

## THEMES

### **SOCIETY** (patriarchy, class, identity-culture, myth)

**Patriarchy** Family life and social relationships are structured on the basis of the superiority of the father/man and the authority of the rules he sets. Although the mother/woman plays an active role in society, it is primarily the man's presence that is seen as essential in decision-making. Thus, when some strange visitors appear in the village and the perplexed villagers try to understand what they are about, it is at Lamine's place that the men meet, without any female presence, to formulate hypotheses about this intrusion. When the prefect's delegate finally convenes a village meeting to explain to the population the development that the authorities intend to bring to the village and to respond to the villagers' concerns, it is only the men who are present, even though the transformations that the village will undergo with the installation of the hotel complex will affect both men and women. The evidence is that, as Salem's wife complains, the relocation of her husband to the hotel site has destabilized her family unit. The evidence is also that household activities, such as washing clothes at the beach, which is a female activity in the village, is now prohibited in the village by the hotel managers, who want the beaches to be the exclusive preserves of tourists. In the name of male dominance, decisions affecting women's lives were made with little regard to women's insights.

**Class** In this film, there is a beautiful metaphor of Tunisia as a society beset by class divisions. It is the image of the mesh wire fence that, during the inauguration of the hotel complex, separates, on the one hand, the officials, the German investors, their guests, and Haj Ibrahim, and, on the other hand, the villagers and the local workers who built the hotel. This wall that separates them is transparent and therefore allows the privileged and the subaltern classes to see each other without being able to touch each other, and above all to see each other in such a way as to think of those on the opposite side as "other." The privileged are in a space that places them far from this wall. And from there, they look at the poor with disdain while enjoying their hors d'oeuvres, fruit juice, and champagne. And behind the wall of wire mesh, which they touch, against which they crowd, the underprivileged, their mouths watering, envy the privileged, perhaps even curse them for enjoying life without them. In the film, this class disparity is maintained by the unwillingness to train the local workforce or to give a chance to the specialized local workforce. Local politicians, through the voice of the delegate, are proud to explain to the people that engineers and architects will come from Europe and unskilled labor will be recruited locally. This is an ugly practice of foreign direct investments, which always imports specialized workers from the investing nations in the countries in which they invest their money. It is a practice that accentuates class divisions by slowing down the emergence of middle classes in developing countries. It is a flip side of globalization, which continues to enrich the rich and impoverish the poor.

**Identity/culture** When the grandchildren of this small Tunisian fishing village talk about their cultural identity a hundred years from now, they will likely say that they come from a past of artisans rather than fishermen. Very few among them will recall a time when the beaches of their village had more boats than

tourists. They will hardly remember a time when the men spent their days fishing and mending their nets rather than clowning around to entertain tourists; and when the women sold the fresh and smoked fish brought in by their husbands rather than weaving rugs, crafting art, collecting and selling seashells, or dancing for the tourists. Cultural identity is not an immutable stone. It is a interpretative dish, which, depending on the ingredients that go into it and the bowl in which it is mixed, takes on a given flavor. In this small fishing village, the inputs of cultural identity are now as much the habits of the local population as those of the newcomers, which must be accommodated, and to which one must also be accommodated.

**Myth** The myth that tourism brings people together is debunked in this film. Here, tourism museumifies and alienates local people. Tourism asks them to freeze themselves in an exotic posture to entertain the spectators, reinforcing the stereotype of their strangeness. Thus, for example, a mosque is built in the vicinity of the hotel, not so much to allow Muslims to practice their faith in peace, but rather to allow tourists to take pictures and film them. Similarly, a man sitting outside his door, palms facing the sky, praying, is mistaken by tourists as a beggar, with whom they film themselves putting a coin in his hand. And even Lamine, who was so lucid and so critical of the harmful effects of tourism, has fallen into the game, dressing in a goofy way to attract tourists to his wool and carpet store. Tourism, here, is less a vehicle for understanding the other than a tool for reinventing the other and commodifying that other. Tourism reinvents the culture of the other in its own way, in the way that gives it intoxicating feelings. This is not to say that some people are not enriched by it. The Tunisian politicians as well as Haj Ibrahim and Omda have been enriched by it. But they got rich by distorting their compatriots and their culture.

**PSYCHOLOGY** (loss, otherness, isolation, psychosis)

**Loss** When the fishermen of the village sit on the shore, staring at the watery horizon, tallying up what tourism has brought them, they can only quantify it in terms of losses—the loss of an environment that has been stolen from them, of a culture that has been ripped away from them, and of a dignity that has been trampled on. From the very first hours of the arrival of the German investors, Omda, who was present at the meeting with the government authorities, already confided to Haj Ibrahim that the Germans had bought the whole village. And if this is only a metaphor, the villagers will see over time that nothing belongs to them anymore, and that everything is lost. First, it is the tourists who take over their living space and force them to be simple spectators of the trampling of their customs: the time of the independent fisherman who goes up the sea according to his mood is over. Henceforth it is to the Fishery Office, which Haj Ibrahim directs, that one must be accountable. The freedom to use the beach as one wishes is over. The laundresses are no longer welcome there by decree of the hotel. Gone is the sacredness of the woman, protected from the prying eyes of the foreigner. They are now carpet weavers exposed to the curiosity and cameras of tourists. And with that, the villagers' honor as men, based on the sacredness of their women, is lost. When Mariam is slapped by the hotel guard, who wants to prevent her from washing her clothes on the beach, she runs to the men shouting, "We were chased away, we were beaten, in this defenseless village, without men." And the worst loss for these male villagers is the loss of their manhood. And to prove to themselves that they still have an ounce of dignity, they stop working for Haj Ibrahim. But this is only for a short time. The need to survive forces them back to work for their tormentor.

**Otherness** The logic of tourism is to play on the idea of the strangeness of the other and their unfamiliar environment. When this strangeness is not explicit enough, it is spiced up or new ones are created. In this small coastal village, life has been reorganized in such a way as to make the inhabitants and their environment into artifacts of the European tourist's other, objects of Europe's desire for exoticism but also of its comfort. To satisfy the appetite for exoticism of the European tourist, the utilitarian space of the villagers is transformed into a playful space. The sea becomes a tourist trail to explore; the fisherman's boat becomes a vessel not for fishing but for touring; prayer loses its spiritual aspect and becomes a spectacle to be repeated several times a day for the tourist's voyeuristic camera; the girls are removed from their family spaces and converted into carpet weavers; Lamine is dressed in a burlesque outfit to satisfy the curiosity of tourists in front of his new handcraft store; Ali is made a camel driver by Haj Ibrahim. And for the comfort of European tourism, the beach is forbidden to the women of the village, a fisherman becomes a gay prostitute, and Haj Ibrahim passes from his usual tea to champagne, and from his Muslim tunic to a polished three-piece.

**Isolation** Tahar's determination to resist the destruction of the peaceful life of the village has cost him both physical and moral isolation. Tahar and Lamine were among the first villagers to understand the implications of the hotel project for the village, and he denounced it. He protested against the exodus of the fishermen who abandoned the sea to grab picks and shovels at the hotel construction site, thus emptying the village of its men and its main activity of fishing. He protested against the store of Haj Ibrahim, who perverted the morals of the villagers by selling them alcohol. For his denunciations, Tahar was arrested and isolated in a prison, far from his wife and son. Upon his release, when he returned to the village, Tahar realized that he was more isolated than ever. Those for whom he had fought, and even Lamine, his greatest ally in that fight, had all capitulated. They had become props for the resort. He was now alone in clinging to a way of life that was inexorably heading towards its evanescence.

**Psychosis** Ali, though simple-minded, was well integrated into his community. He had his references, a job which validated him, and he participated in the men's meetings as much as any other man. Before the arrival of tourism in the village, Ali was a jovial man, always displaying a big smile. He could be seen joking with the men of the village at Lamine's café or happily tending to the bellows at Lamine's forge. The construction of the hotel complex, the reorganization of village life, and the new values brought by tourism cause Ali to lose his smile and his references. Now a camel driver, busy walking tourists to the beach, Ali does not find his new position rewarding. To Haj Ibrahim, who asks him what he is doing while holding the reins of a camel ridden by a tourist, Ali answers that he is busy dragging two animals behind him (the camel and the tourist). As tourism increases, Ali returns to the backroom of Lamine's forge. When Tahar is finally released from the prison where Haj Ibrahim and his cronies had held him, he returns to visit Lamine's old store, where he finds a bare-chested Ali in the back room, who greets him with a demented and thunderous laugh. The changes in the village have finally driven Ali into madness.

**FLAW** (dishonesty, greed/ambition)

**Dishonesty** Lamine likes to tell a story about Haj Ibrahim and Omda, which, if it makes the villagers laugh, annoys the two companions because it reveals an aspect of their personality that they would have liked to keep secret: their dishonesty. Indeed, Lamine tells us that Omda and Haj Ibrahim were two cattle thieves who robbed the farms of French colonists, and who on independence, rather than being treated as the thieves they were, were rewarded as resistance fighters because their crimes had targeted colonists and not natives. Those who made our two thieves heroes failed to see that if the natives were as rich as the settlers, they would also be victims of their crimes, and that the crimes these two thieves committed against the settlers were the very indication that they were of bad character, and therefore unfit for public responsibility. Obviously, in the anti-colonial frenzy, this judgment was lacking in the authorities, who made the two thieves into heroes and notables of their village. And Haj Ibrahim and Omda never ceased to be what they were, common thieves, who from independence to the construction of the resort, found all sorts of tricks to enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow villagers.

**Ambition** Omda and Haj Ibrahim are ambitious men for whom the end justifies the means. To get rich, these two men have destroyed the social fabric of the village. To prevent other fishermen from competing with him, Omda, who owns a fleet of motorboats, has kept them fishing with archaic means, using any available means to ensure that his fellow fishermen can never afford to buy motorboats. For example, Omda refuses to buy the land of old Mahmoud under the pretext that it is not arable, but in reality it is to prevent old Mahmoud from having the resources to acquire a motor. As for Haj Ibrahim, who sees Tahar as an obstacle to his ambitions, he has him arrested and imprisoned. Haj Ibrahim wants Tahar's incarceration to be a dissuasive factor for all those who would stand up to him. Against his own religious principles, he sells alcohol to the workers, and he himself ends up drinking champagne with the German investors. He desecrates the customs by making prayer an attraction for the tourists' cameras, and he brings in girls from the villages to work as carpet weavers for the tourists' gaze and cameras. Everything for him is allowed as long as he makes money out of it.



## QUESTIONS

1. How do you interpret the title of this film, 'Sun of Hyenas'?
2. Does the image of the foreign investors landing in the village by the sea and the plane flying over the village at a low altitude suggests anything to you? What is the filmmaker's purpose in choosing these dramatic effects?
3. What does tourism bring to developing countries? What does tourism take away from them?
4. What kind of tourism is needed for a greater win-win relationship between tourists and the native populations that host them?
5. At the end of the film, when Tahar gets out of prison, almost all the villagers have jumped onto the hotel bandwagon. Was Tahar's resistance really worth it? Elaborate on your answer.