



Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen

Yosefa Loshitzky

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The struggle to forge a collective national identity at the expense of competing plural identities has preoccupied Israeli society since the founding of the state of Israel. In this book, Yosefa Loshitzky explores how major Israeli films of the 1980s and 1990s have contributed significantly to the process of identity formation by reflecting, projecting, and constructing debates around Israeli national identity.

Loshitzky focuses on three major foundational sites of the struggle over Israeli identity: the Holocaust, the question of the Orient, and the so-called (in an ironic historical twist of the "Jewish question") Palestinian question. The films she discusses raise fundamental questions about the identity of Jewish Holocaust survivors and their children (the "second generation"), Jewish immigrants from Muslim countries or Mizrahim (particularly the second generation of Israeli Mizrahim), and Palestinians. Recognizing that victimhood marks all the identities represented in the films under discussion, Loshitzky does not treat each identity group as a separate and coherent entity, but rather attempts to see the conflation, interplay, and conflict among them.

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