

None of us felt any particular connection to the students in the movie probably because it was from a much different era and some of their views (e.g. I love America, America is awesome) were somewhat a reflection of that era. This sentiment isn't very prevalent in our culture today (hopefully) and that's probably why we felt some distance between ourselves and the characters. Similarly, we felt like while this message is still very much needed in today's world, it might have been of more use to people of that era.

America has a longstanding history of weaponizing patriotism as a tool for oppression. During this time period specifically, America succeeded in portraying people in the muslim/Arab world as the terrifying '*other*' and patriotism was closely tied with the dehumanization of these people. This portrayal was necessary in order to sway public opinion against these regions of the world to justify America's atrocious actions against Arabs and Muslims (*This was the same tactic they used in justifying their theft of this land from indigenous people*). Hence, sympathizing with the perceived enemy earned a person titles like '*un-american*' and '*terrorist*'. This is just a singular example of the many times that being unapologetically American has been tied to some kind of oppression against marginalized groups. This is probably why the American flag and White American patriotism is so triggering to most oppressed groups.

This is all to say that people of that era and some people today, would greatly benefit from this movie's deconstruction of the negative stereotypes most Americans held against Arabs. This movie was a step in the right direction towards curbing the danger of a single story. We spoke about how our personal views were not significantly shifted in any particular way. I personally felt like it solidified things I already knew but there was not a brand new awakening after watching it.

One thing that stood out to us from the movie was the border scene at the end. It highlighted the fact that racism cannot be minimized to racist acts and cannot be tackled solely by integration. Racism is much, much larger than that, it is ingrained into the very fabric of society, and it is the cement with which global structures were built. It is crucial for us to come to

this understanding in our battle for peace and equity. While this initiative was a step in the right direction, these students spending time together for a couple of weeks didn't magically erase the border restrictions for the Moroccans and it by no means solved racism. Small victories shouldn't be a distraction in our battle against systemic racism.