

RAJA DISCUSSION GUIDE

The New York Times refers to *Raja* as a French/Moroccan *Pretty Woman*. What do you make of Stephen Holden's comment?

Director Jacques Doillon wrote his script without any stage direction or indication of how something should be spoken. Explore the benefits and challenges of directing a film this way?

How would you describe the strange affair between Raja and Fred? At the beginning, they seem so unlikely together and, indeed, you might ask if they do really come together at any point? Is control indeed a delusion in the film? What did they initially want from each other and what did they ultimately get?

In this film, Raja and Fred don't speak the same language. He doesn't know any Arabic and she doesn't speak much French. Yet he talks to her a lot and, perhaps, more honestly than if they spoke the same language. How do they transcend that barrier and how is it still an obstacle?

Money changes hands, but Raja does not want to sell herself to Fred, and Fred doesn't want to buy her. How central is the role of money in the film to all characters?

Fred says all he wants now is «just sex» -- a relationship that centres on pleasure and conquest. Is that an illusion? What does Fred want in the film?

How is comic relief handled in the film? Who provides it?

The film asks if two potential partners with a glaring disparity in income, age and cultural sophistication have a reasonable chance at love? What do you believe?

What contrasts does the Director create visually? How would you describe the cinematography?