

# Good example of essay on the allegorization of cinematic distribution and or circ...

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



## Introduction

It is a fact that the society in general has attempted to use different strategies to modify the distribution and circulation of movies. Some of these strategies have involved the tweaking of cinematographic techniques to advance the themes and aesthetic aspects of the movie, as a way of increasing film sales. Others have involved modifying the themes in the movie industry to penetrate the market and to conscientize the society towards a desired end. In itself, allegorization refers to the use of symbolic actions and figures or generalizations on human existence in literary works. Normally, allegorization is used to give the themes in the literary work greater impetus, as opposed to the direct communication of the themes. Allegorization can be found in the film, *The Secret of the Grain*.

*The Secret of the Grain* is a Franco-Tunisian film that was released in 2007, having been directed by Abdellatif Kechiche. The movie is cast at the port of Sète where Slimane Beiji, a 60-year-old man attempts his hand in a shipyard job which has become increasingly difficult. Slimane is a divorcee who stays with his family despite the tensions and schisms and is determined to leave a legacy for his children by opening for them a fish couscous hotel business. Slimane is hindered by bureaucratic red tape and attempts to go around it by making a party that involves the officials behind the troublesome bureaucracy as some of the chief guests (Boufares & Kechiche, 2).

In *The Secret of the Grain*, there is an allegorization of the family. It is noteworthy that Slimane's family is somewhat disintegrated since he is divorced from Souad, his first wife who has custody of his children. Slimane

instead involved and living with Latifah and her twenty year old daughter, Rym. In spite of this fragmentation, the family still comes together to aid Slimane's project. In fact, Latifah and Souad dare meet each other in this party. In this light, the family comes to symbolize diligence and commitment as the means to better life. The same may also imply the idea that the family symbolizes the quest for better life. This is so since it is because of the family's coming together, putting aside differences within it and cooperating that Slimane's dreams are actualized.

According to Burnett, the extended family that is being depicted in the film is also used by the author to capture the plight of the immigrant. As a matter of fact, the family is situated in Sète. Immigrants founded Sète which was also dotted with the French population and had therefore become multicultural. Relations between the races were full of friction. The French were at the top of the class strata and the rest of the population at the bedrock (Burnett, 75).

The foregoing helps reinforce the distribution and circulation of the film because it establishes the normative. The society considers values such as unity in diversity and making sacrifices for a higher good as higher and more appealing ideals. In this case, there is no greater incentive to this than to present the normative, specifically, the presentation of the family uniting together in an ideal cause. The family therefore comes to allegorize the plight of the lower class in modern day France.

The crux of the matter in the immediately foregoing is that the film revisits the reality of social dynamics and class relations to build the theme of the move, to push the plotline towards its denouement and to strengthen its

sales. The quest to strengthen the circulation of the film is informed by the fact that it adopts a leftist ideology: the underdogs in the social class are presented as unduly suffering at the hands of an unbridled bureaucratic system; and the presentation of the bureaucratic system as unfavorable (it acts as a barrier to the society as can be seen in Slimane's case) and needing revamping. Themes such as socio-cultural exclusion and marginalization of immigrant Arabs in France and the apt capturing of the plight of the lower class life as a way of challenging the conventional way of thinking and life. This is significant since the society has almost always exhibited preference for leftwing to rightwing ideas. This therefore aids in the distribution and circulation of the movie.

The relationship between Majid, Slimane's son and the bureaucrat's wife also better allegorizes and captures the use of fetishism. Many are easily deceived into thinking that fetishism only involves the use of a physical object to elicit sexual arousal. However, a critical look into what fetishism is reveals that fetishism involves the use of either the physical object or a specific situation to bring about this sexual arousal. In the film, Majid has been having sexual flings with the bureaucrat's wife. This hooks the primary and secondary audience so that it helps in the circulation and distribution of the film. The rationale behind this artifice is the notion that the human and the film's immediate society is largely patriarchal and is therefore more amenable to scenes that involve the portrayal of female nakedness or the penetration of the female or the portrayal of instances where the female is subdued by the male.

However, it is necessary to point out at the inefficiency of this standpoint.

Mostly, this standpoint is usually used by feminists to explain the display of heterosexual relations in films. This informs the lopsidedness that characterizes this standpoint. The logical lopsidedness is seen in the fact that the display of heterosexual relations in films serves both the female and male audience: it is too illogical to state that heterosexual display of affection arouses only the male. Again, the standpoint falls on the reality of the portrayal of homosexual relations in the film industry. The displaying of heterosexual relations in the film is indeed the use of fetishism to favor the circulation and distribution of the film and not the portrayal of the subduing of women.

As a side note, the relationship between Majid and the bureaucrat's wife may therefore serve a duality of purpose: to underscore the themes of the movie; and to help in the distribution and circulation of the film by serving as fetishism. The themes that the illicit affair between Majid and the bureaucrat's wife may be underscoring in the film are the debilitated state of the institution of marriage and the reality of human nature which defies class consciousness and divisions. For instance, the latter is underscored by the fact that between Majid and the bureaucrat's wife is a wide chasm of the haves and the have-nots and age-gap yet because of the reality of human nature (of which sexual desires) they are having an illicit affair.

## **Whether the Film Utilizes Reflexive Techniques in Its Construction of Allegory**

Abdellatif Kechiche in *The Secret of the Grain* uses reflexive techniques in the construction of allegory, albeit in a subtle manner. This is seen in the fact that a closer look at the film reveals the mooting of cultural elements and

the persistently disturbing reality of sexuality. This is seen in the instance Majid leaves his father's party with the bureaucrat's wife for a sexual fling, while inadvertently carrying away with him, the couscous that had been prepared for the guests. This happens while the rest of the partying congregation and the bureaucrats are unaware. The reflexivity of the matter is seen in the fact that it is after it is noticed that the couscous is missing that the audience is acquainted with the fact that Majid had left with the couscous. The import of this is that it lets in the audience on the extent to which the affair has suffused over Majid's mind. This makes the audience comprehend the extent to which sexual relations between older adults and younger adults have affect the latter. This is not a one-dimensional establishment of allegorization since the film does not take a simple linear plot or motion (SherryIVint, 22- 5).

### **Whether the Film, Through the Reflexive Deployment of Allegory, Offers Critiques of Industrial Cinematic Distribution and/or Circulation**

The reflexive deployment of allegory does not offer any critique of industrial cinematic distribution and circulation. This is because the film uses traditional and conventional approaches that have been used to display the reflexive development of allegory. Even the use of the star system may not qualify the reflexive deployment of allegory since the star system has been being used as early as the late 19th century. Even if one should tout the use of star system as a critique of industrial cinematic distribution and/or circulation, the argument will be insufficient since the system has not been

exhaustively used. There are very few stars in the film. In fact, only Hafsia Herzi who doubles up in the movie as Rym is a known star (Lincoln, 45-7).

## **Gender/Sexual Representation**

Again, according to Green, the film does not offer any critique of industrial cinematic distribution and circulation in light of gender or sexual representation. This is because the representation of gender or sexual representation is quite normal. There is nothing abnormal in the manner in which women and the female-male relationship are depicted. For instance, it is normal that Souad (Slimane's first and ex-wife) and Latifah have a combative relationship (as is seen in Latifah becoming apprehensive about being in the company of Souad) which can at times turn cordial (as is seen as the party proceeds) (Green, a, 109 - 123).

In almost the same wavelength, the relationship between Majid and the bureaucrat's wife is indeed a social taboo, but is also normal in the modern world, or in a liberal society such as France. The relationship between Majid and the diplomat's wife cannot be said to have been occasioned by factors that will sustain the analysis of gender relations since there are no elements that cast the diplomat's wife as the underdog. In fact, Majid is younger than her and it could turn out that she is the one who seduced and is sexually exploiting Majid (Green, b, 1).

## **The Proliferation of Technology for the Purposes of State and (Neo) Colonial Hegemony**

Chapman contends that the reflexive deployment of allegory is also seen in the film, in the form of the proliferation of technology for the purposes of

state and (neo) colonial hegemony. Specifically, the technology in this case is not physical but is systematic and structural. The imposition of the bureaucratic red tape or bureaucracy is an exemplification in this case. Slimane is unable to open a couscous hotel for children simply because of the bureaucracy that exists in Sète, and not because of any other more valid reason. The fact that the bureaucracy in Sète is largely in the hands of the Caucasian race brings about the aspect of proliferation of technology for the purposes of racial and (neo) colonial hegemony (Chapman, 75- 84). The aspect of the use of technology to impose a state hegemony is difficult to sustain but is only visible in the instance where one considers the oppression of Slimane as an immigrant from the Maghreb is happening at the hands of the French bureaucrats. Nevertheless, the difficulty in sustaining the argument of state hegemony is seen in the fact that Slimane and his entire family are living in France where the bureaucrats also are.

### **The Very Status of Cinema as an Embodiment of Exchange- And Surplus-Value**

The film *The Secret of the Grain* does not also use the status of the cinema as an embodiment of exchange- and surplus-value. The film uses less known filming and distributing outlets such as Pathe Distribution.

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