

Anna Lyubynetska: The Films of Abdellatif Kechiche

The thesis sets out to analyse five feature films by the French-Tunisian director and scriptwriter Abdellatif Kechiche each from the aspect of narrative, characters and performance, image, sound and themes. What the writer manages to do is show how each film differs greatly from one another and yet finds common threads that confirm Kechiche as a recognisable auteur. Anna also defines Kechiche as a Beur filmmaker, while pointing out how much he cannot be narrowly characterised or labelled as such. In fact, she makes a good case for Kechiche as one of the most original of contemporary directors.

The thesis is to be welcomed at a time when Kechiche had reached a peak of fame after winning the Palm d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for *Blue is the Warmest Colour* (*La Vie d'Adele*) in 2013 and further consolidating his international reputation. What Anna cleverly points out is how the director depicts the lives of 'the other' (generally the Arab) in French society, while avoiding being overtly didactic. In fact, the thesis explores the way Kechiche is as much a French director with roots in French classical literature and theatre, as a Maghrebian director, deep in Arab culture.

There is also a fresh approach to the perennial discussion of 'realism' in the cinema, derived from Kechiche's claim that he doesn't want his cinema 'to look like life, I want it to actually be life.'

Anna's approach to the subject is coolly objective, never overly praising or damning, although it is clear what qualities she admires in the films and, occasionally, what faults they may contain. This rare negativity is displayed in the chapter on *Black Venus* (2010), Kechiche's sole period piece. The fact is that the thesis is a thorough investigation into Kechiche's oeuvre with hardly any gaps.

Anna has appended the thesis with an excellent, filmography and bibliography and scholarly attributions, acknowledging all the apt quotes used.

I heartily recommend the thesis for a Master's degree.

Ronald Bergan

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Bergan", is written below the printed name.