QUEER
CINEMA
in the World

KARL SCHOONOVER
ROSALIND GALT

SPEAKING OTHERWISE
Allegory, Narrative, and Queer Public Space

In chapter 2, we argued that cinema creates spaces in which the global presence of queerness can be experienced, and we insisted that the institutional spaces of distribution and exhibition cannot be fully separated from the immaterial spaces of diegesis and spectatorship. The potential of that relationship between on-screen and off-screen movements is clearly manifest in Abbas Kiarostami's *Ta'm e guilass/Taste of Cherry* (1997), a non-queer film that nonetheless engages queer cinematic intimacy as a means of establishing a transnational space through film form. The film's opening scenes and their reception demonstrate the mutual implication of queerness, narrative space, and the global art-house spectator. Mr. Badii, the film's main character, drives around in a Land Rover soliciting younger men to help him with an as yet undisclosed job. The film brings the spectator into the story formally in a series of point-of-view shots and shot/reverse sequences that knot together our space and diegetic space as a mutual zone of

Fig. 3.1: The point-of-view structure in *Taste of Cherry*'s opening echoes a gay pick-up.

ambiguous reaching out and solicitation, one that is clearly understood by some of the men within the narrative as queer (figure 3.1).

When some reviewers noted how easy it is to read this scene as gay cruising for anonymous sex, other critics and fans jumped to defend Badii's heterosexuality, insisting that he is only looking for human compassion. What is interesting in this discourse is the way that, for the latter critics, the homoerotic implications of the scene would foreclose on its universal ethics (of care for the other). Queer bonds here can represent only specific interests rather than the universal concerns needed to see the film as humanist. But some of the film's major critics suggest another way to read this ambiguous space. Laura Mulvey understands the sequence as "illustrat[ing] this crisscross questioning between screen and spectator, playing on different kinds of uncertainty."[1]

Jonathan Rosenbaum has described the aesthetics of Iranian cinema more broadly in terms of an openness in which "open windows invite exchanges with pedestrians, much as moviegoing (as opposed to video watching) generally entails a private experience within a public space."[2] Both Mulvey and Rosenbaum see cinema as an open threshold in which space for an erotics of humanism might be created. Hamid Naficy goes further, insisting that *Taste of Cherry* is not about suicide at all but about the desire for relationships with others. For him, the introduction of homosexual undertones "subverts the officially sanctioned notions of companionship," making queer relation-

ality precisely the thing that can figure universal ethics.[3] Thus, in *Taste of Cherry* humanism is figured as a kind of queer bonding. Same-sex solicitation becomes a means of disorienting both private identifications and public identities.

Kiarostami himself hints at this effect in an interview with the film journal *Positif*. When asked whether he felt critics were reading homosexuality into the scene, his response was problematic, yet fascinating for the correspondences it suggests: "Of course I deliberately produced this impression. These slightly lecherous undercurrents seemed interesting to me. I really like children. I get a lot of pleasure in talking with them. But I know that someone seeing this from the outside might completely misunderstand what's occurring. It pleased me to mislead [*induire*] the spectator like this, and to return him to his own perversion, to his own fantasies."[4] As Kiarostami recognizes, cinematic narration can take misrecognition and turn it into a kind of revised self-awareness. In the opening of *Taste of Cherry*, it is a *cinematic* construction of intersubjective space and queer intimacy that allows such revisions of subjectivity to emerge. And these forms of openness and intimacy leech back into the pro-filmic world: according to Rosenbaum, one of the first gay hookup sites in Iran was called "Where Is the Friend's House?"[5]

This chapter moves into narrative spaces, asking how queerness emerges across the thresholds of public and private that both cinema and queer identities constantly traverse. Indeed, we do not have to move very far from Kiarostami's ambiguous protagonist to find a more definitively queer automotive encounter in Iranian cinema. The beginning of *Aynehaye rooberoo/Facing Mirrors* (Negar Azarbayjani, dir., 2011)leads the audience to believe that an intimacy shared between two people in a car is a moment of lesbianism. Once again, the spectator is misled by the film, although this misrecognition uncomfortably aligns the viewer with the surveilling gaze of the police. The protagonist, Edi, escapes from the police in the taxi driver Rana's car and, as the narrative evolves, reveals that he is trans. This revelation frightens Rana, not because she is transphobic, but because she is not allowed to be alone in a car with a man. She accepts his gender immediately, and it frightens her. Suddenly, the all-too-public private space of the taxi is breaking Iranian religious law, and Edi's trans identity sets off a series of gendered narrative dangers.

The director Negar Azarbayjani has spoken of her film's two incommensurate audiences: queer film festivals and religious conservatives in Iran.[6] The difficulty of speaking at once to both of these groups illustrates the stakes, for queer cinema today, of narrating the public. Trans issues are politically

complicated in Iran, where the state response to transsexuality is supportive albeit medicalized, in contradistinction to homosexuality, which is a capital crime.[7] Gender reassignment surgery is sometimes proposed in Iran as a "cure" for homosexuality, overdetermining this narrative misrecognition in different ways. As Rana and Edi talk and drive, however, the film develops a space of caring gazes between them, as their affection becomes more intimate. But the queer nature of this space is redefined, honing a narrational viewpoint for the viewer that overtly disaggregates itself from both the gaze of state control and from a liberal foreign perspective. When in the end Edi flies to Germany, he is escaping forced marriage as a woman and looking forward to transitioning: in some ways, this is a happy ending. Exile is a recurring narrative trope in queer cinema, and especially in trans narrative, as Wibke Straube has argued in her discussion of what she calls "exit scapes."[8] However, the film captures this geography of greater freedom as empty, cold, and strangely lacking in affect. These transnational spaces are haunted by the film's earlier evocations of human relationality and intimacy. Working both with and against the idea of the exit scape, *Facing Mirrors* narrates the need for a queer trans presence both within the national public space of Iran and within the private space of the family.

Facing Mirrors neither advocates Iran's trans policy as an oasis of sexual freedom in an otherwise repressive state nor does it suggest the open liberal arms of Western Europe as a utopia for trans people. Through its allegorical use of space, the film proposes a queer trans politics of gender that cannot be answered by the Islamic Republic's apparently generous policy on medical gender transition. The film's polemic is explicitly feminist in its queer politics: Edi's lack of social mobility and agency is clearly framed by his female gender assignment at birth, which constantly forecloses his movement and constricts the kind of spaces he can occupy. Space, in fact, is deployed across the film as a political problem for queer, nation, and world. The film maps these contested spaces as a means of refusing an easy East–West binary. Across this chapter, we deploy allegory as a framing concept—a practice of spatiality—to draw out queer cinema's resistance to globalization's limiting structure of protected private acts and benign public identity. It is not surprising, then, to find non-Western cinemas struggling to create alternative aesthetic forms that pose queer publicness otherwise.

Saying Something Else in Public

How does cinema narrate queer lives? To pose this question demands that we address the culturally mediated narratives of queerness and publicity.

Wrapped up in the Western optic of coming out is a fraught catch-22 in which queer people are either too closeted or overly blatant.[9] In this context, putting queer people on-screen is a hyperbolic mode of going public. The relationship of public to private spaces is central to queer lives, so the popularity of the coming-out story makes sense as an enduring engine of drama in gay cinema, particularly in the West but also elsewhere. Think, for example, of the British teen drama *Beautiful Thing* (Hettie Macdonald, dir., 1996) or the liberal documentary *Dangerous Living: Coming Out in the Developing World* (John Scagliotti, dir., 2003). Whereas the production of the heterosexual couple is conventionally seen as a basic function of straight narrative (the marriage plot), one might imagine the business of queer narrativity to be the production of the gay subject who comes further and further out. Moreover, films understood as national queer narratives have often functioned as a kind of national coming out, prompting rejection by state authorities, galvanizing lgb t activists, and finding acceptance in the alternative family of lgb t film festivals internationally, as happened with *Fire*.

However, theorists of sexuality and globalization have forcibly rejected the dominance of coming out as a Western model of homosexuality, just as film theory has critiqued the ideological effects of hegemonic forms of narrative. In its representation of gay people, the coming-out narrative forecloses alternative modes of living queerly. Furthermore, in its narrative structure, it reproduces a trajectory that maps disturbingly onto the progress narratives of Western modernity, globalization, and aggressive Westernization in the global South. Queer narrativity, we argue, takes more complex and more critical forms of being public. But if the coming-out narrative is thus a limiting model for queer publicity in the global context, the questions of public and private and of imagining a queer subject do nonetheless underwrite both queer lives and queer narrativity. Thinking beyond Euro-American life worlds, however, the relationship of public and private cannot be determined so easily in advance. The films we address in this chapter turn to allegory as a less deterministic model for figuring queer modes of publicness. Allegory is a narrative form that contains in its very definitions the potential for queer publicity.

Allegory becomes a core concept for thinking queer global visual culture because allegory is literally speaking otherwise in public. From the Greek *allegoria*, the concept's etymology combines *allos* (another, different) with *agoreuein* (speak openly, speak in the assembly), which in turn derives from *agora* (public assembly). Thus, in the everyday understanding of the

term, an allegory is a text that says one thing in public but means another. It speaks out loud and sotto voce. Hidden within what it says publicly is a different meaning. Martin Heidegger pointed to the public aspect of allegory in "The Origin of the Work of Art," in which he says, "The art work is, to be sure, a thing that is made, but it says something other than the mere thing itself is, *allo agoreuei*. The work makes public something other than itself; it manifests something other; it is an allegory."[10] Something queer is being articulated here: the allegory elaborates a kind of epistemology of the closet in speaking something other than itself, artfully speaking a truth without saying it directly. This reading could prompt a direct way of thinking about the queer potential of allegory in world cinema. In this version, films speak something that has to remain hidden or closeted, using allegory as a means around censors, perhaps, to gain access to the world stage and allude to forbidden topics. But something else is at work in this mode of allegory. It speaks in the *agora*, in the public sphere, on the world stage, but it speaks otherwise, it speaks about something else. Allegory refuses the liberal public–private distinction, speaking differently in public and reimagining the terms of representation precisely as a question of publicity and even an assertion of worldliness.

Igor Grubić's installation *East Side Story* (2008) offers an illustration of allegory as a mode of representing homophobic violence. The work consists of two video channels presented at right angles to each other and a series of photographs. On the left-hand video is television footage of neo-Nazis and other aggressive protesters verbally and physically assaulting participants in LGBT Pride parades: here, outnumbered riot police try to protect the Pride marchers and both police and queer people are shown brutalized and bleeding. The attacks took place in 2001 in Belgrade, Serbia, and in 2002 in Zagreb, Croatia. Meanwhile, the right-hand video shows a group of dancers retracing movements and gestures of these events in the streets of Zagreb, largely ignored by passersby. The dance performances on the right-hand projection clearly allegorize the events on the left: the juxtaposition of the two projections makes clear that the choreography is referring to the violence, and the dancers' bodies articulate fear, aggression, confrontation, and injury (figures 3.2–3.3). In the classic definition of allegory, the dancers "say" one thing but are really articulating something else. Here, we are reminded that Craig Owens describes allegory as a structure in which one text is read through another, a model of critique centered on textual revision.[11] In this logic, the video of the dancers overwrites the documentary video of the violence, critiquing the political event in another form and thus rewriting it. It

Figs. 3.2–3.3: The video installation *East Side Story* juxtaposes news footage of homophobic attacks on LGBT Pride marches with choreographed gestures in the same city streets of Zagreb.

is precisely at the level of form that we apprehend the allegory: by reiterating gestures divorced from the events that gave rise to them.

This installation demonstrates the complexity of allegory: it is not just that the dancers represent events of homophobic violence in a different medium. Their bodily movements are not exact copies of what happens in the documentary sequences; they are clearly iterative but not transcriptive in any direct sense. For example, the spectator cannot always tell whether the dancers are performing gestures of the Pride participants, neo-Nazis, or police. *East Side Story* sees the transformation of real-world events into something aesthetic via choreography, photography, and video not simply as a second-order representation but as a form of historiography. Pure documentation does only limited work in figuring the relationship of nationalist politics to queer embodiment, so the documentary video on its own is not sufficient critique. We need the dance, not as an elegy or a testimony, but as a mode of writing, an articulation of the event itself and Grubić's and the dancers' response to it. In shifting our attention from one representational mode to another, allegory produces an amplification that creates a different relationship to what a public event means.

And this is a queer rhetoric. *East Side Story*'s iterative form becomes queerly political in its supplementarity. In fact, Owens discusses the idea of allegory as a supplement: for instance, a classical sculpture is already complete before it is named "virtue," so the approach of modern art criticism is to ignore this added meaning and concentrate on the form itself. Thus, "Allegory *is* extravagant, an expenditure of surplus value; it is always *in excess*. Croce found it 'monstrous' precisely because it encodes two contents within one form."[12] Owens does not make them explicit, but we can hear the wickedly queer currents in allegory here—the extravagant, the wasteful, the excessive, the monstrous, and the duplicitous. Each of these terms has a history of association with homosexuality and, in particular, with that which is suspicious in Western aesthetics.[13] *East Side Story*'s dancers might seem meaningless to the passersby in the street or even to the gallery viewer transfixed by the shocking scenes of violence on the left, unsure how to read the more controlled and abstracted bodies on the right. As Dejan Sretenovic has argued, the piece uses choreographed bodies to evoke the corporeal expressivity of queer sex, as well as the physicality of violence and, by contrast, the neutrality of the passersby.[14] Social positions with regard to homosexuality are figured in these bodies, a series of intersecting vectors that can be thought only through both image tracks in combination.

More than simply reinterpreting the violent attacks in dance, *East Side Story* speaks differently in public. As Sretenovic puts it, "Grubić's interventionist aesthetic act in public space in itself exteriorizes the ambiguity of visibility and invisibility attendant on such artistic practice."[15] On the one hand, this strategy could be seen to smuggle political speech into a seemingly innocuous performance. Spectators in Zagreb's public squares probably do not know that this performance refers to queer pride or violence, and they might respond differently to the choreography if they did. In allegorical terms, Grubić uses the abstract gestures of dance to articulate something hidden. But if there is something invisible in the street performance, there is also something that becomes visible in the finished installation. They do not speak either the language of neo-Nazis or that of the Pride marchers; rather, they reassert public space for queer bodies in a way that is not contestatory but participatory in subtle and covert ways. The dancers are "speaking in public," intervening in everyday spaces, in the midst of quotidian flows of ordinary routines and actions. They are highly visible, standing out by doing something quite different from the usual use of Zagreb's streets, yet they appear oddly invisible, ignored in a way that neither the Pride marchers nor the neo-Nazis wish to be. Sretenovic finds Grubić's work to focus consistently on "marginalised social groups that have become victims of the unfulfilled promises of democracy."[16]

East Side Story uses the form of allegory to trouble the relationship between public rights and private behavior, a distinction rarely accorded to queer lives and queer bodies. It undoes the conventional social narration of public and private spaces that underwrites liberal subjectivity and heterosexual privilege. Furthermore, the installation poses queer publicness as a strategy for exposing the political failures of postsocialist politics, but one does not simply stand in for the other: in queer allegory one must always move back and forth from one kind of body, image, performance, and politics to another. In contexts in which homophobic violence is mobilized as nationalist resistance to globalized late capitalism, Grubić's piece opens up a means to rethink queer sovereignty and democratic community.

In this chapter, we use the concept of allegory to interrogate the stakes of narrating queer lives. Moving from Fredric Jameson's contested account of national allegory, we propose allegory as an always worldly and geopolitically charged form. The chapter analyzes a series of non-Western films, all of which use allegory to overwrite Western narratives of otherness. They refuse to install the figure of the queer as an avatar of modernization or as the privileged figure who negotiates between global and local. The sections address a

range of films from Guinea, India, Japan, Thailand, China and South Korea, as well as films that could be categorized as art cinema, documentary, popular cinema, and avant-garde. Through these readings, we aim to draw out both the danger and the potential of allegory as a mode of queer worldliness for non-Western cinema.

National Allegory and Queer World Making

Jameson's concept of national allegory forms one of the more influential theories of "Third World literature" and has become a touchstone for narrative theory, harnessing the concept of allegory to the exigencies of the Third World narrative.[17] For Jameson, allegory is necessary to represent the real conditions of the postcolonial nation, since the legacy of colonial oppression alongside the pressures of neo-imperialism do not permit the forms of realist or modernist narratives favored in Western modernity. For critics (and there are many), Jameson's totalizing sweep is itself a colonizing gesture, limiting the complexity of non-Western textuality. Why must *all* Third World narratives do this single thing, asks Aijiz Ahmad?[18] He insists that the so-called Third World is also part of the capitalist system and must, therefore, have experienced some of the separation of public and private that Jameson associates with First World societies.[19] Ahmad therefore refuses a First World–Third World taxonomy, instead considering the world in terms of the global struggles that are legible in all parts of the system. Despite the persistent validity of Ahmad's critique, Jameson's concept nonetheless remains provocative for thinking how texts assert their place in the world.

Jameson's model links the relationship of private and public that defines allegory to the complex geopolitical systems of postcolonial capitalism. For Jameson, Third World texts use the private to allegorize the public, in contrast to the way that private and public operate in Western texts.[20] He asserts that the experiences of neo-imperialism, postcoloniality, and economic subjugation produce a different condition of representability and that the public-private split is one of the places that we can see the effects of this difference. This structure for Jameson includes a split between "the domain of sexuality" and "the public world of classes and the economic."[21] Neither realism nor modernism respond to the particular constrictions of life in the Third World, and an aesthetic analysis must engage with these geopolitical distinctions. This argument enables a queer analysis in its insistence that being in a different relationship to power produces a different way of being public (or private) and therefore a different way of staging this relationship textually. It accounts for the centrality of publicity in constructions of sexual

and gender identities and politics, and it addresses the systems of global capital within which identities and politics are negotiated. Thus, the Jamesonian concept of allegory offers a model for understanding the geopolitics of queer narration as at once complexly local and shot through with the exigencies of global power.

It might seem odd to turn Jameson's argument to queer purpose since one of the critiques mounted against national allegory is its unquestioned gender privilege, as Ahmad has suggested.[22] However, one of Jameson's earliest examples of cinematic allegory, *Dog Day Afternoon* (Sidney Lumet, dir., 1975), has queerness and gender transgression at its core. The protagonist of *Dog Day Afternoon*, Sonny, is a queer man who robs a bank to fund his trans lover's gender transition surgery. Jameson ignores this critical narrative vector in his well-known analysis of the film as allegory. Some of Jameson's first thinking on cognitive mapping emerges from his analysis of the film. He argues famously that the characters and locations form an allegorical structure for the viewer, one that reveals something of the new late-capitalist world order; the uncaring and stultifying systemization of value engineered by large-scale multinational corporations that otherwise are unrepresentable. For Jameson, *Dog Day Afternoon*'s allegorization begins to bring the violent totalizing force of these world systems into view. But what we see as the film's remarkably sympathetic depiction of a queer relationship does not seem to factor into the film's topology according to Jameson. Queer intimacy does not have a place on his map.

The significance of this intimacy to the film's allegory can be seen in a crucial scene in which Sonny, played by Al Pacino, makes a phone call to his lover. The film figures the location of queer contact as one that is possible only via cinematic space. In turn, the film deploys that space thematically to bring into question the possibility of queer intimacy. The scene opens in close-up, with Sonny and Leon intercut as they talk. Narrationally, the spectator is almost fooled into thinking that the film is sharing exclusive access to a private moment, but they quickly realize they have been hoping for an intimacy that can never be achieved. As the conversation continues, the film cuts to a wider shot that reveals that the police have been listening the whole time. According to legend, Pacino demanded that this encounter between his character and his gay lover be shot as a telephone scene and not in physical proximity. We could simply read this scene as a subtle articulation of the epistemology of the closet: queers are deprived of true intimacy. In fact, queers never seem to calibrate their privacy "correctly," and our relations, like Sonny and Leon's, are always either restrictively private or too overtly public.

But this scene also turns up the heat on the film's simmering dystopia, and it underscores its pessimism through a crucial and sudden betrayal of the film's narrational relationship to the viewer. The revelation that others are listening represents one of the first times the film has misled us, and the spectator's sudden realization that the lovers' conversation was never private prompts us to feel sad and cheated. The cold face of corporate capitalism is represented diegetically in the violation of privacy but also cinematically in a cruel twist of the film's narration. Like the sinister hospitality represented by the home-baked cookies that Harrison Ford's evil gay offers in the equally conspiratorial world of *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, dir., 1974), *Dog Day Afternoon*'s false intimacy might force the viewer to reflect back on the destructive powers of late capitalism and how it threatens to reorganize the world in even more inhuman terms. Queerness—and its relationships to publicness and privacy, intimacy and worldliness—transpires to be at the heart of *Dog Day Afternoon*'s allegory of late capitalism. Without Sonny's love and devotion, we have no sense of what global corporate capitalism threatens to eliminate. Sonny's actions in robbing the bank tie queer intimacy to anticapitalist revolt. Although Jameson does not consider it directly, we find queerness to be essential to understanding the film's geopolitical structure.

The centrality of queer bodies to political allegory—and the odd cultural amnesia to which they are subject—is also visible in *V for Vendetta* (James McTeigue, dir., 2005), a film about revolution against a totalitarian state that centers a lesbian love story. As Allison McGuffie has argued, the film enacts a queer critique of repressive social structures and, moreover, closely links queer sexuality with political revolution.[23] Perhaps, given that the film's producers were the trans filmmakers Lana and Lilly Wachowski, it should not be surprising that *V for Vendetta* imagines a rather queer revolution. The film is set in a dystopian future in which a fascistic right-wing regime rules the United Kingdom with military force. The regime insists on conformity and punishes any form of difference, but it is sexuality that emerges as the narrative's decisive difference. The first overt act of refusal comes from Gordon, a gay television presenter with a secret room hiding homoerotic bdsm images and other forbidden objects. By satirizing the regime on his show, he rejects his stringently closeted life and is soon afterward arrested, tortured, and killed.

The central queer story, though, is of Valerie and Ruth. We see their love story in flashback: at first they live an idyllic life in a cottage with a rose garden. Then, during the rise of the oppressive regime, the two women are cap-

tured and tortured to death. Their story ends with Valerie, close to death, affirming her love for Ruth, insisting, "But for three years we had roses." The protagonist Evey finds this story written painstakingly on toilet paper, which Valerie had hidden in the wall of her prison cell. Later imprisoned in the same cell, Evey reads the testimony and is spurred to revolutionary action. We learn that V, the masked revolutionary who mentors Evey, was also radicalized by the same story. The history of Valerie and Ruth gave him the courage to burn down his prison (destroying his face in the process) and to take up arms against the state. Thus, the decisive evidence of the state's oppression is its violence against lesbians, and a story (in the past, a gauzy fantasmatic vision) of lesbian devotion figures that which it is worth fighting and dying for.

V for Vendetta has had a powerful afterlife and has been particularly influential on the vernacular of anticapitalist activism. The Guy Fawkes mask worn by V and by the film's revolutionary citizens has been appropriated by the Occupy movement, by the online activists Anonymous, and by other groups centered on anonymous action. The image of V's mask can be seen stenciled on sidewalks in all of the centers of popular resistance to neoliberal capitalism. The film clearly offers a broad—critics would say, unnuanced—allegory of anticapitalist activism. Yet few of those who view the film as political allegory even recall that Evey's and V's revolutionary acts are motivated by a lesbian love story. In the film's climactic scene, Evey sends the dead body of V and a train full of explosives toward the Houses of Parliament covered in red roses, reminding us that queer intimacy is the very symbol of revolutionary commitment. If the film as a whole allegorizes a generic anticapitalism, then within the text roses figure queer bonds, which in turn bespeak the instigation of revolutionary desire. *V for Vendetta*, like *Dog Day Afternoon*, becomes even more queer when read from the perspective of allegory.

Queer politics, it seems, have been hiding in plain sight within some of Anglophone culture's most canonical allegories of global capital. What might happen to the processes of figuring totality if we looked queerly at other national contexts for allegory? In considering queer allegory, then, we aim not to replicate forms of critique blind to queer figuration but to consider what light queer narrativity sheds on the tension between visualizing totality and recognizing difference. The debate over national allegory has been enormously productive for film scholars seeking to account for the transnational logics of "world cinema," and any adoption of these logics, we claim, must include the queerness of world cinema. Jameson enumerates some things that

happen in allegorical texts: the staging of a social and historical nightmare, a psychology that must be read in social terms, the problem of narrative closure in a situation with no political solution, and the fabulous becoming more effective than realism to articulate the real. All of these narrative situations speak evocatively to queer experience and begin to limn the possibilities for a queer allegorical text. Jameson's vision of the figurability of the world in national allegory might be more queer than it first appears. As Helen Leung argues, "The question of sexuality has long been present in the politicized cinemas that emerged in the wake of the Third Cinema tradition. It is one of the most powerful allegorical vehicles for the representation of power and its abuses."[24] Or, as John David Rhodes succinctly puts it in relation to contemporary American queer cinema, employing allegory "demonstrates a serious dissatisfaction with available modes of representation."[25] This chapter identifies allegory as a central form of queer narration, one that refuses the relationship of public and private demanded by globalization's subject and offers ways of speaking—and being—otherwise in the world.

The Doubleness of Queer Allegory

The question of allegory is central to *Dakan*/*Destiny* (Mohamed Camara, dir., 1997), which is widely viewed as the first sub-Saharan African film with a gay theme. In it, Manga and Sori fall in love as high school students but are separated by their families. Manga's mother sends Manga to a traditional healer to be cured of homosexuality while Sori's father insists Sori take over the family business and marry. Sori does get married and has a child. Meanwhile, after years with the healer, Manga enters a relationship with Oumou, a white woman he meets through his mother. Both in some way outsiders, the two forge a bond. When the men see each other again in a bar, though, they immediately recognize their mutual desire. Despite their love for their families and apparently genuine relationships with women, Manga and Sori ultimately leave everything behind to be together. At first glance, then, *Dakan* does not seem to be allegorical at all, at least in terms of sexuality. The film was controversial precisely for its *direct* representation of homosexuality, perceived by many African critics as un-African, sinful, or an unwanted relic of European colonialism.[26]

The tensions between Western gay narratives and postcolonial cinema are set in motion in *Dakan*'s international circulation. Premiered at Cannes and shown at several lesbian and gay film festivals in the West, as well as at the Panafrican Film and Television Festival (fes pa co) of Ouagadougou, *Dakan* fits neatly into some of the "universal" narratives favored by the queer

61. Butler, "On Being Beside Oneself," 69.

62. Butler, "On Being Beside Oneself," 74.

63. Ben Golder, *Foucault and the Politics of Rights* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 82–83; Michel Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton (London: Tavistock, 1988), 15.

64. Butler, "On Being Beside Oneself," 74.

65. Butler, "On Being Beside Oneself," 77.

66. At the United Nations' Beijing Women's Conference in 2003, for example, the arguments to include women's sexuality in human rights led to protracted debates that resulted in the removal of language that understood women's sexuality as anything outside heterosexual coupling. In other words, in the specification of sexual rights, lesbian and bisexual women lost protection in the convention's resulting declarations: see the discussion in Petchesky, "Sexual Rights."

Chapter 3. Speaking Otherwise

1. Laura Mulvey, "Kiarostami's Uncertainty Principle," *Sight and Sound* 8, no. 6 (June 1998): 25.

2. Jonathan Rosenbaum, "A Few Underpinnings of the New Iranian Cinema," *Senses of Cinema* 21 (2002), http://sensesofcinema.com/2002/feature-articles/new_iranian.

3. Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 4: The Globalizing Era, 1984–2010*(Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012),215.

4. Michel Ciment and Stéphane Goudet, "Une approche existentialiste de la vie [Interview with Abbas Kiarostami]," (translation ours), *Positif*, no. 442 (1997): 89.

5. Jonathan Rosenbaum, discussion, World Cinemas, Global Networks conference, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, April 28, 2012.

6. Negar Azarbayjani, conversation, post screening q&a, at Flare: London lgbt Film Festival, May 2013.

7. See, e.g., Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema*, 436.

8. Wibke Straube, "Trans Cinema and Its Exit Scapes: A Transfeminist Reading of Utopian Sensibility and Gender Dissidence in Contemporary Film," PhD diss., Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden, 2014.

9. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick puts it, discursive attention to homosexuality "has been impelled by the distinctly indicative relation of homosexuality to wider mappings of secrecy and disclosure, and of the private and the public, that were and are critically problematical for the gender, sexual, and economic structures of the heterosexist culture at large": Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 71.

10. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Clive Cazeaux, trans. Albert Hofstadter (London: Routledge, 2000), 81.

11. Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," *October* 12 (Ð80): 69.

12. Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse," 84.

13. We return to the question of the aesthetic in chapter 5. See also Rosalind Galt, *Pretty: Film and the Decorative Image* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Karl Schoonover, "Wastrels of Time: Slow Cinema's Laboring Body, the Political Spectator, and the Queer," *Framework* 53, no. 1 (2013): 65–78.

14. Dejan Sretenovic, "The Figuration of Resistance," in *East Side Story Catalogue* (Belgrade: Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art, 2008), 5.

15. Sretenovic, "The Figuration of Resistance," 7.

16. Sretenovic, "The Figuration of Resistance," 5.

17. Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65–88.

18. Aijiz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" *Social Text* 17 (1987): 4.

19. Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" 13.

20. Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," 69.

21. Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," 69.

22. Ahmad reveals the silently gendered nature of Jameson's text. "His is, among other things, a gendered text. For it is inconceivable to me that this text could have been written by a US woman without some considerable statement, probably a full-length discussion, of the fact that the bifurcation of the public and the private, and the necessity to re-constitute that relation where it has been broken, which is so central to Jameson's discussion of the opposition between first-world and third-world cultural practices, is indeed a major preoccupation of first-world women writers today, on both sides of the Atlantic": Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" 24.

23. Allison McGuffie, "Queering the Revolution: The Political Force of Deviant Sexuality in *Mädchen in Uniform* and *V for Vendetta*," paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies conference, Philadelphia, March 6–9, 2008.

24. Helen Hok-Sze Leung, "New Queer Cinema and Third Cinema," in *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michele Aaron (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 159.

25. John David Rhodes, "Allegory, Mise-en-Scène, aids : Interpreting *Safe*." In *The Cinema of Todd Haynes: All That Heaven Allows*, ed. James Morrison, 68–78 (London: Wallflower, 2007), 75.

26. See Marc Epprecht, *Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of aids* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008).

27. A similar scenario is outlined in Skadi Loist and Ger Zielinski, "On the Development of Queer Film Festivals and Their Media Activism," in *Film Festivals and Activism: Film Festival Yearbook 4*, ed. Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin (St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies Publishing House, 2012), 67. Writing about the first queer film festivals in the post-Soviet nations, they describe the support and sponsorship of various "international agencies" and

"foreign cultural agencies" (i.e., embassies, institutes, etc.), writing, "With the prospect of joining the European Union, the governments of the interested countries had to demonstrate their commitment to human rights as detailed by the [European Union]."

28. David Stratton, "Destiny," *Variety*, March 31, 1997, http://newsreel.org/video /DAKAN.

29. Lieve Spaas, *The Francophone Film: A Struggle for Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 224.

30. Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," 71–76.

31. Stephanie Selvick, "Queer (Im)possibilities: Alaa Al-Aswany's and Wahid Hamed's *The Yacoubian Building* and Adaptation," in *lgbt Transnational Identity and the Media*, ed. Chris Pullen (London: Palgrave Macmillan: 2012), 131–45.

32. Omar Hassan, "Real Queer Arabs: The Tensions between Colonialism and Homosexuality in Egyptian Cinema," *Film International* 43 (2011): 18–24.

33. Thérèse Migraine-George, "Beyond the 'Internalist' versus 'Externalist' Debate: The Local-Global Identities of African Homosexuals in Two Films, *Woubi Cheri* and *Dakan*," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2003): 46.

34. Migraine-George, "Beyond the 'Internalist' versus 'Externalist' Debate," 52.

35. Migraine-George, "Beyond the 'Internalist' versus 'Externalist' Debate," 53.

36. Alexie Tcheuyap, "African Cinema and Representations of (Homo)Sexuality," in *Body, Sexuality and Gender: Versions and Subversions in African Literatures*, ed. Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 143.

37. Thérèse Kuoh-Moukoury, cited in Tcheuyap, "African Cinema and Representations of (Homo)Sexuality," 143.

38. Abdoulaye Dukule, "Film Review: *Dakan* by Mohamed Camara," *African Studies Review* 44, no. 1 (2001): 19.

39. Rebecca Romanow, *The Postcolonial Body in Queer Space and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 5–6.

40. Roy Armes, *African Filmmaking: North and South of the Sahara* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 153.

41. Gayatri Gopinath, "On *Fire*," *glq* 4, no. 4 (1998): 633.

42. Ratna Kapur, "Too Hot to Handle: The Cultural Politics of *Fire*," *Feminist Review* 64 (2000): 53–64; Jigna Desai, "Homo on the Range: Mobile and Global Sexualities," *Social Text* 20, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 65–89. See also Shohini Ghosh, *Fire: A Queer Film Classic* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010).

43. Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 157.

44. Similarly, Gopinath argues for the importance of a spatial analysis to geopolitical concerns. "By depicting the privatized, seemingly sanitized domestic space as a site of intense female homoerotic pleasure and practice, both 'The Quilt' and *Fire* interrogate the teleological Euro-American narrative according to which lesbian sexuality must emerge from a private, domestic sphere into a public, visible identity": Gopinath, "On *Fire*," 635.

45. For more on how the film fits into histories of same-sex relations in Indian culture, see Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, eds., *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 213–15.

46. Desai, "Homo on the Range," 84.

47. Gopinath, *Impossible Desires*, 132.

48. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 2009).

49. The British dvd translates the Japanese *gai boi* as "queen," which is used as distinct from "drag queen."

50. Mark McLelland, "From the Stage to the Clinic: Changing Transgender Identities in Post-war Japan," *Japan Forum* 16, no. 1 (2004): 6.

51. Abé Mark Nornes, "The Postwar Documentary Trace: Groping in the Dark," *Positions* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 45.

52. Aaron Gerow, interview with Toshio Matsumoto, *Interview Box 9* (1996), http://www.yidff.jp/docbox/9/box9-2-e.html.

53. Mika Ko, "'Neo-documentarism' in *Funeral Parade of Roses*: The New Realism of Matsumoto Toshio," *Screen* 3, no. 2 (2011): 378.

54. Ko, "'Neo-documentarism' in *Funeral Parade of Roses*," 380.

55. B. Ruby Rich, *New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 18.

56. Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse," 72. Drawing from Owens, Rhodes describes the working of queer allegory, writing, "Allegory works via a set of similarities and differences, repetitions and departures. The similarities and repetitions are usually what tip us off in a given text to the operations of allegory; the differences and departures are what give the allegory substance and meaning": Rhodes, "Allegory, Mise-en-Scène, aids," 74.

57. Matsumoto, quoted in Taro Nettleton, "Shinjuku as Site: *Funeral Parade of Roses* and *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief*," *Screen* 55, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 19.

58. Homay King, "Girl, Interrupted: The Queer Time of Warhol's Cinema," *Discourse* 28, no. 1 (2006): 98–120.

59. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 71.

60. de Lauretis, "Desire in Narrative," in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, 103–57.

61. The Greek film *Strella* (Koutras, 2009) offers a more optimistic queer reading of Oedipus. Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou discuss the film in terms of queer self-making, and Butler points out that while some viewers might want it to end in a moment of Oedipal catastrophe (similar to the actual ending of *Funeral*), it continues beyond tragedy to a new form of living: Judith Butler and Athena Anthanasiou, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 61. Indeed, Marios Psaras reads the film's Oedipal family reunion as utopian: Marios Psaras, "Family, Nation and the Medium under Attack: Queer Time and Space in the 'Greek Weird Wave,'" PhD diss., Queen Mary, University of London, 2015.

62. McLelland, "From the Stage to the Clinic," 7.

63. Matsuda Masao quoted in Ko, " 'Neo-documentarism' in *Funeral Parade of Roses*," 384.

64. Ko, " 'Neo-documentarism' in *Funeral Parade of Roses*," 387.

65. Nettleton, "Shinjuku as Site," 14, 16.

66. Nettleton, "Shinjuku as Site," 18.

67. Nettleton, "Shinjuku as Site," 13.

68. Matsumoto, quoted in Nettleton, "Shinjuku as Site," 20.

69. Nettleton, "Shinjuku as Site," 17.

70. Gerow, interview with Toshio Matsumoto, 11.

71. Stephen Heath, "Narrative Space," in *Questions of Cinema* (London: Palgrave, 1981), 19–75.

72. Jihoon Kim, "Between Auditorium and Gallery: Perception in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Films and Installations," in *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*, ed. Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 125–41.

73. Peter Jackson, "Capitalism and Global Queering: National Markets, Parallels among Sexual Cultures, and Multiple Queer Modernities," *glq* 15, no. 3 (2009): 372.

74. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 67–72.

75. Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse," 74.

76. Benedict Anderson, "The Strange Story of a Strange Beast: Receptions in Thailand of Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Sat Pralaat*," in *Apichatpong Weerasethakul*, ed. James Quandt (Vienna: Synema and Austrian Film Museum Books, 2009), 158–77.

77. Carla Freccero, "Queer Times," in *After Sex: Writing since Queer Theory*, ed. Janet Halley and Andrew Parker (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 17.

78. Bliss Cua Lim, "Queer Aswang Transmedia: Folklore as Camp," *Kritika Kultura* 24 (February 2015): 178–225.

79. Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October* 43 (Winter 1987): 197–222.

80. Philip Rosen, "History, Texuality, Nation: Kracauer, Burch and Some Problems in the Study of National Cinemas," in *Theorizing National Cinema*, ed. Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen (Berkeley: University of California Press and British Film Institute, 2006), 17–28.

81. Chris Berry, "East Palace, West Palace: Staging Gay Life in China," *Jump Cut* 42 (1998): 84–89.

Chapter 4. The Queer Popular

1. Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*. New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

2. See, e.g., Richard Dyer, *The Culture of Queers* (London: Routledge, 2002); Richard Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia," in *Only Entertainment*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 19–35; Richard Dyer, "Judy Garland and Gay Men," in *Heavenly Bodies: Stars and Society* (London: Routledge, 2013), 137–91; Richard