

Representation of Abortion in Selected Film and Television

By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that the representation of abortion provides a platform which reveals women's societal and gendered positions, and provides a critique of the hypocritical attitudes to which societies subject women. I will be considering various representations of abortion in six films and two television shows. The films are Alexander Kluge's *Part-Time Work of a Domestic Slave* (1973), Cristian Mungiu's *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* (2007), Mike Leigh's *Vera Drake* (2004), Fruit Chan's *Dumplings* (2004), The Pang Brothers' *Re-Cycle* (2006) and Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (2012). The two television shows are FX's *American Horror Story* (2011—) and ABC's *Grey's Anatomy* (2005—). Each text provides a unique representation of abortion, often situating the issue within particular physical, social, political and cultural locations. In presenting a close reading of each text, I will show how the representation of abortion in each chapter relates to differing social, political and cultural ideologies. I will argue that there is a developing sense of the lived realities of women, which include, but are not limited to, issues of alienation, autonomy, agency and identity. Such lived realities, I will contend, are constructed within societies that, aware or not of the fact, are dominated by patriarchal influences.