

father, and brute, although his performance often feels self-conscious and staged. But while the film may not break new ground, it has been at the center of digital debates. It was the first film to be produced by Netflix and was simultaneously screened in movie theaters and made available online. Returning to the initial frame of a hollowed out television set through which we watch children play football, we see that the television is not merely a symbol of the layers of adaptation that this story has undergone, from book to film to digital event, but also points toward the fraught nature of framing. This frame is, after all, entirely Western, as a young African boy's story is consumed digitally by millions in the global North while ironically remaining unavailable (except in pirated versions) to Africans themselves.

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**Avie Luthra, director.** *Lucky*. 2011. 100 minutes. Zulu, English, and Hindi, with English subtitles. South Africa. Film Movement. No price reported.

Lucky (Sihle Dlamini), the young protagonist of Avie Luthra's film *Lucky*, is anything but lucky. An expansion of the South African filmmaker's earlier short of the same name, *Lucky* demonstrates the many challenges facing a young Zulu boy who dreams of receiving an education. The narrative opens with Lucky as a ten-year-old waiting at his village's local bus stop for someone who never appears. Shortly after, his mother's coffin unexpectedly arrives in the village. Recognizing that he will now have to make his own way in the world, Lucky leaves the village and travels to Durban. His mother dreamed of giving her son access to education, and he is determined to follow her plans. Upon arriving in the city, however, he is shocked and dismayed to realize that his uncle (James Ngcobo) has no intention of following his mother's wishes, and that the uncle has squandered the money his mother left for his school fees on alcohol.

The one totem that his mother has left him is a cassette tape. The tape holds Lucky's mother's final message, and Lucky works under the (misguided) assumption that her words will provide clear guidance in the face of his constant struggles. At first he is unable to access her words, but once he notices that his uncle's elderly Indian neighbor Padma (Jayshree Basavra) owns a tape player, he sneaks into her house in order to play it. At first the woman misinterprets his plan and beats him, believing that the young black child is preying on her because of her age and stealing from her. Later, however, Padma, who does not understand Zulu, identifies the hurt and sadness in Lucky's response to his mother's words and finds a local taxi driver to translate the tape for her. She takes pity on the boy, first allowing him to sleep on her balcony and then attempting to find him a more

permanent and stable home. Lucky has no intention of returning to his village. He wants an education in order to fulfill his mother's dreams and knows that he can only have a limited future in the remote, rural area.

Just as the cassette tape establishes Lucky's relationship with Padma, it eventually reunites him with his possible biological father (Vusi Kunene) and proves to be central to all of his other relationships. Thus the disembodied voice, while not providing Lucky with explicit instructions, resonates far beyond the room that holds the cassette player. His mother's words carry Lucky along his journey, and the recording tells his mother's story as a single mother dying of AIDS (it is intimated that she worked as a prostitute in the city) whose existence would otherwise be lost or quickly forgotten. Just as the words recorded on the tape point to the importance of marginal, everyday histories, Lucky's mission is to ensure that he, too, is not marginalized or forgotten.

Stories about orphans in search of family connections and education often have the tendency to become cloying and overly sentimental. This film presents Lucky's situation starkly, without such embellishments. Though Lucky and Padma develop a close friendship, her initial distrust of and prejudicial attitude toward black South Africans is a theme that persists throughout the narrative. Dlamini's performance, similarly, never drifts into that of a stereotypically lost child. Lucky is serious and often sad throughout the film, but more than anything, he is determined. By demonstrating the continued cultural clash in the modern Rainbow Nation, *Lucky* makes the compelling case for a reexamination of contemporary prejudices and a reclamation of the too-often marginalized stories of the country's disenfranchised.

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**Merzak Allouache, director. *Madame Courage*.** 2015. 90 minutes. Arabic with English subtitles. France/Algeria. Baya Films, Neon Production. No price reported.

The story of *Madame Courage* starts with a secondary character from the director's previous film, *The Rooftops* (2013). This character, seemingly a representation of Algerian youth, has succumbed totally to the power of the psychoactive drug called "Madame Courage," which apparently is now *en vogue* not just in Algeria but in the entire region of the Maghreb. Merzak Allouache obviously remains troubled by the social problems of youth, which he first addressed in his initial film, *Omar Gallato* (1977), a masterful portrayal of the malaise of youngsters in postindependence Algeria.

From the first scene, in which we see Omar, the main character, being chased by a group of young men, it becomes clear that he has done something wrong. In the following scene we see him, in broad daylight and in public, stealing a necklace from a young woman, Selma, who was simply